

OLIVER KNUSSEN

*Requiem*

*Songs for Sue*

for soprano and fifteen players

Op. 33

(2005–06)

FULL SCORE

FABER *ff* MUSIC

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*Requiem – Songs for Sue* was commissioned for MusicNOW,  
the new music chamber series of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra,  
and was written for Claire Booth to sing

The first performance was given by Claire Booth and musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the composer, in Orchestra Hall, Chicago as part of the MusicNOW series, on 3 April 2006

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## TEXTS

### 1

Is it true, dear Sue?

Of whom so dear

The name to hear

Illumines with a Glow –

As intimate – as fugitive –

As Sunset on the snow –

On such a night, or such a night ...

On such a dawn, or such a dawn –

Would anybody sigh

That such a cherish'd figure

Too sound asleep did lie ...

So quiet – Oh how quiet ...

As quiet as the Dew – she dropt

As softly as a star –

For what are stars but Asterisks

To point a human life?

I see thee better – in the Dark –

I do not need a light –

But spill the dew

And take the moon –

And choose this single star

From out the wide night's numbers –

Sue – for evermore!

*from poems of Emily Dickinson*

## I

Cuando murió su amada  
pensó en hacerse viejo  
en la mansión cerrada,  
solo, con su memoria y el espejo  
donde ella se miraba un claro día.  
Como el oro en el arca del avaro,  
pensó que guardaría  
todo un ayer en el espejo claro.  
Ya el tiempo para él no correría.

## II

Mas pasado il primer aniversario,  
¿cómo eran – preguntó – , pardos o negros,  
sus ojos? ¿Glaucos? ... ¿Grisés?  
¿Cómo eran, ¡Santo Dios!, que no recuerdo?...

## III

Salió a la calle un día  
de primavera, y paseó en silencio  
su doble luto, el corazón cerrado ...  
De una ventana en el sombrío hueco  
vio unos ojos brillar. Bajó los suyos  
y siguió su camino ... ¡Como éstos!

*Antonio Machado ('Los ojos')*

## I

*When his beloved died  
he thought he'd grow old  
in the closed-up mansion  
alone with his memories and the mirror  
which she had looked into one clear day.  
Like the gold in a miser's chest  
he thought to hold onto  
the past in the clear mirror.  
Time, for him, would pass no more.*

## II

*But after the first anniversary had passed  
Were they – he asked himself – brown or black,  
her eyes? Green? ... Grey?  
How were they, Holy God? Don't I remember? ...*

## III

*Setting out on the street one day  
in spring, in silence he carried  
his double loss, his heart closed ...  
From a window in a dark hollow  
he saw a flash of eyes. Lowering his glance  
He continued his walk ... Like those!*

3

Time will say nothing but I told you so,  
Time only knows the price we have to pay;  
If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,  
If we should stumble when musicians play,  
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,  
Because I love you more than I can say,  
If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,  
There must be reasons why the leaves decay;  
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,  
The vision seriously intends to stay;  
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,  
And all the brooks and soldiers run away;  
Will Time say nothing but I told you so?  
If I could tell you I would let you know.

*W. H. Auden*

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*'If I Could Tell You' by W. H. Auden. Copyright © 1945. All rights reserved.*

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Bist du noch da? In welcher Ecke bist du? –  
Du hast so viel gewusst von alledem  
und hast so viel gekonnt, da du so hingingst  
für alles offen, wie ein Tag, der anbricht ...

*from Rainer Maria Rilke*  
*('Requiem for a friend')*

*Are you still there? In what corner are you? –*  
*You knew so much of all these things*  
*could do so much, as you went forth*  
*open for everything, like a day, which dawns.*

*translation by Alexander Goehr*  
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## INSTRUMENTATION

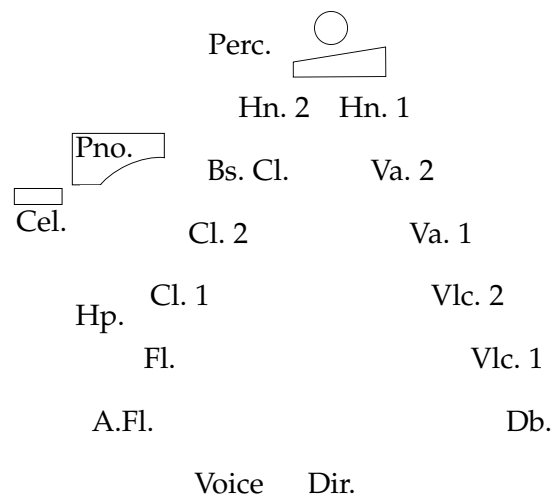
Flute  
Alto Flute  
2 Clarinets in B $\flat$   
Bass Clarinet  
  
2 Horns in F  
  
Percussion (1 player):  
Marimba and Tam-tam  
  
Harp  
Piano (= Celesta)  
  
2 Violas  
2 Cellos  
Double bass

The score is notated in C

Instrumental parts available on hire from the publishers

Duration: approximately 13 minutes

## SUGGESTED SEATING PLAN





5

Fl. *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

A. Fl. *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

Cl. 1 *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

Cl. 2 *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

B. Cl. *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

Hn. 1 *sfz* *f* *sfz* *f* *p* *f* *f* *sfz*

Hn. 2 *sfz* *f* *sfz* *f* *p* *f* *f* *sfz*

Perc. *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

Pno. *sfz* *f* *sfz* *mf* *sfz* *mf* *pesante*

Hp. (table) *sfz* (ord.) *f* *mf* *f*

Voice

Vas. 1 *sfz* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Vas. 2 *sfz* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Vlc. 1 *sfz* *ff furioso, sulla corda* *p* *f* *fp* *f*

Vlc. 2 *sfz* *ff furioso, sulla corda* *p* *f* *fp* *f*

Db. *sfz* *ff* *mf* *sfz* *sfmf* *f* *mf*