



Verdi's Requiem : Theresa Bernstein : Circa 1918

Greetings!

Psalm 130

A song of ascents.

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

2 Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

6 I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

I was reflecting the other day that I have been singing in choirs for almost 50 years! One of the genres that I learned to love is the Requiem Mass. Most major composers wrote for this format, which is Christian worship to be used as the funeral

liturgy. Most are written in Latin, so once you learn the pronunciation of the words, all that is left to learn is the music. The words are always the same, but each composer creates different music.

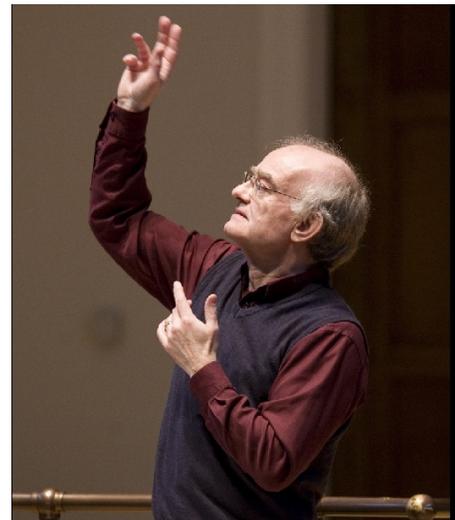


One such requiem that is different is from the pen of John Rutter, the famous English contemporary composer and conductor. His requiem is a mixture of English and Latin, a twist of the genre indeed!

Today's scripture is included in Rutter's piece. His setting to Psalm 130 is the second piece in the requiem. Beginning with a prominent cello solo written in C minor, this beautiful setting is mournful and plaintive as the text unfolds in the first 6 verses of the Psalm. Then with a key change the whole mood of the piece changes for verses 7 and 8 into a glorious harmonic chorus.

Requiem by John Rutter is a musical setting of an adaptation of the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass. Rutter completed the work in 1985. *Requiem* was first performed on October 13, 1985, at Lovers' Lane United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas by the Sanctuary choir and orchestra and directed by Allen Pote.

Rutter wrote the piece on the other side of his father's death. This great loss in his life led him to contemplate his own life. What did he want to say? What did he want to write? What kind of music would be the punctuation on a storied music career?



John Rutter is a person of the Christian faith. His sacred choral music is some of the most sought after for its beauty and messages, coming from scripture or paraphrases of sacred text. I enjoy singing his music because of its beauty, but also for the technical difficulty. Good music, good texts, and complex phrasing that results in unusual and distinctive harmonization – this is what Rutter is known for in the sacred choral music world.

When composing, musicians usually start with a text, especially if it is scripture. Psalm 130 has been set by a myriad of composers over a millennium, both in Hebrew and Christian traditions. We'll use this text for our closing conversation. After you spend some time on the text and the conversation, listen to the music provided in this [link](#) from *Requiem* by John Rutter.

Conversation

- Out of what depths would you like to emerge?
- How does God listen to your complaint? How does your complaint connect with

the complaints of others?

- In what ways is the human condition one of complaint and restoration?
- What do you hope for in the Lord? And how does that impact your relationships with others, both people you know well and others that you interact with?
- Is there someone you know who needs encouragement to hope in the Lord? Can you offer that gift?

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Todd D. Anderson, West Ohio Superintendent
Ohio River Valley District, United Methodist Church

