

COLLECTION
BBVA FOUNDATION - NEOS

Wolfgang Rihm
Vigilia

WOLFGANG RIHM'S "VIGILIA"

In the Catholic liturgy, Vigils is the nocturnal part of the canonical hours, which are spread over the entire day. In formal terms, they consist of a series of prayers, psalms, and hymns from the so-called Gregorian hymnal. *Vigilia*, too, satisfies the principle of concatenated form: instrumental and vocal ensembles are heard seven times in alternation before joining forces at the end of the 'Miserere'. The instrumental and vocal sections differ in character. The vocal writing in the sung sections constantly recalls the age of early vocal polyphony as well as sixteenth-century madrigals. Melody, harmony, and rhythm reign supreme. With few exceptions there are no dynamic marks. The instrumental movements are different in kind: rather than representing introductions to or commentaries on the vocal sections, they invoke a field of tension in which the vocal numbers are embedded. The clarinet and horn are stationed apart from the rest of the ensemble, heightening the impact of this field of tension. Here, too, there are echoes of imitation and cantus firmus techniques, albeit fewer than in the vocal ensembles. Yet the instrumental movements, called 'Sonatas,' are marked by extreme dynamic contrasts typical of Rihm's music altogether. The sung texts, in Latin, are taken from the Biblical Good Friday story and its liturgical and mystical adjuncts.

Vigilia is devoted to the contemplation of Jesus' Crucifixion, enhanced by nocturnal metaphors. The contemplation it evokes is pensive and tranquil. Rather than functioning as practical or artistic music for the liturgy, *Vigilia* seeks to depict the attitude of a man who, though intellectual and agnostic, finds himself on cultural terrain deeply imbued with the Christian spirit. *Vigilia* has been performed several times with one voice to a part. The present version, in which each part is taken by four singers, arose at my suggestion, with Wolfgang Rihm's approval.

Rupert Huber

Translation from the German: J. Bradford Robinson

TEXTS FROM THE ANONYMOUS TRADITIONAL RESPONSORIES FOR THE HOLY WORK LITURGY

Sonata I: grave (ma non tanto) – più lento – meno mosso (quasi lento)

I. (from Matthew 26:38 / Mark 14:34)

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem: sustinete hic et vigilate mecum: nunc videbitis turbam, quae circumdabit me: vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

Sorrowful is my soul even unto death. Stay here, and watch with me. Now you shall see the mob that will surround me. You shall take flight, and I shall go to be sacrificed for you.

Sonata II: lento

II. (from Isaiah 53:2.4f. / 1 Peter 2:24)

Ecce vidimus eum non habentem speciem, neque decorem: aspectus eius in eo non est: hic peccata nostra portavit et pro nobis dolet: ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras: cuius livore sanati sumus. Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit.

Lo, we have seen him, without form or comeliness. His look is gone from him. He has borne our sins and mourns for us. But he was wounded for our transgressions, and with his stripes we are healed. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

Sonata III: agitato – un poco meno mosso (quasi andante) – agitato

III. (from Matthew 27:51f. / Mark 15:38 / Luke 23:42,45)

Velum templi scissum est: et omnis terra tremuit: latro de cruce clamabat, dicens: memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum. Petrae scissae sunt, et monumenta aperta sunt, et multa corpora et corpora sanctorum, qui dormierant, surrexerunt.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain, and all the earth trembled. One of the malefactors to his side cried out, saying: Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom. The rock was rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.

Sonata IV: calmo

IV. (from Matthew 27:45f. / Mark 15:33f. / Luke 23:44,46 / John 19:30)

Tenebrae factae sunt, dum crucifixissent Jesum Judaei: et circa horam nonam exclamavit Jesus voce magna: Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti? Et inclinato capite, emisit spiritum. Exclamans Jesus voce magna, ait: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum ...

There was darkness over the earth when the Jews crucified Jesus; and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice: My God, why hast thou forsaken me? And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Jesus cried with a loud voice and said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ...

Sonata V: lento – più mosso (ma non troppo) – pesante

V. (*from the Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:12,16*)

Caligaverunt oculi mei a fletu meo: quia elongatus est a me qui consolabatur me: videte, omnes populi, si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus. O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte: si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

My eyes are darkened by my tears, for he is far from me that comforted me. See, ye people, if there be a sorrow like unto my sorrow. All ye that pass by, behold and see if there be a sorrow like unto my sorrow.

Sonata VI: lento (quasi corale) – più lento – andante con moto – pesante (grave)

VI. (*cf. Jeremiah 2:13 / John 7:38, 10:11*)

Recessit pastor noster, fons aquae vivae, ad cuius transitum sol obscuratus est: nam et ille captus est qui captivum tenebat primum hominem: hodie portas mortis et seras pariter Salvator noster dirupit. Destruxit quidem claustra inferni, et subvertit potentias diaboli.

Our Shepherd is departed, the fount of living water, at whose passing the sun was darkened. For even he was made captive who was holding captive the first man. Today the gates of death and their bars as well our Savior has destroyed. Indeed He has destroyed the strongholds of the underworld and overthrown the powers of the devil.

Sonata VII: l'istesso tempo – meno mosso – più mosso ... – meno mosso (quasi lento)

VII. (*from Psalm 88[87]:5-7 / Psalm 51[50]:3*)

Aestimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum: factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio, inter mortuos liber. Posuerunt me in lacu inferiori, in tenebrosis, et in umbra mortis. Miserere.

I am counted with them that go down into the pit. I am as a man that has no strength, free among the dead. They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the shadow of death. Have mercy.

Miserere (*fragments of Psalm 50[51]:3-14,16-21*)

Misere mei, Deus [...] amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea: et a peccato meo munda me [...] cognosco: [...] peccatum meum contra me est semper [...] peccavi [...] malum [...] feci [...] in iniquitatibus conceptus sum [...] incerta et occulta sapientiae [...] asperges me [...] lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor [...] dabis gaudium et laetitiam: exsultabunt ossa humiliata [...] omnes iniquitates meas [...] cor mundum crea in me, Deus [...] ne projicias me [...] confirma me [...] libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus [...] exsultabit lingua mea [...] labia mea aperies: [...] os meum annuntiabit [...] holocaustis non [...] spiritus contribulatus: cor contritum [...] Deus [...] benigne fac [...] Sion: ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem. Tunc [...] tunc [...]

Have mercy upon me, O God [...] wash me thoroughly from my iniquities and cleanse me from my sin [...] I acknowledge [...] my sin is ever before me [...] I have sinned [...] I have done evil [...] in sin did my mother conceive me [...] the inward parts, the hidden part [...]

purge me [...] wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow [...] make me to hear joy and gladness, that my broken bones may rejoice [...] all my iniquities [...] create in me a clean heart, O God [...] cast me not away from thy presence [...] restore me [...] deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God [...] my tongue shall sing aloud [...] open my lips [...] my mouth shall be by thy messenger [...] not in burnt offering [...] a broken spirit, a contrite heart [...] O God [...] do good [...] Zion, build the walls of Jerusalem [...] Then [...] then [...]

Translation: J. Bradford Robinson