



sacrifice

Reginald Unterseher

Commissioned for the 2010 Byron Gjerde Memorial Choir Festival, "Sacrifice" was inspired by the compelling and disturbing images of the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico and the Upper Big Branch mine disaster in West Virginia. These were 2010's most visible examples but certainly not the last in a long list of man-made disasters in pursuit of oil and coal. It is full of rage, grief, and despair, a reflection on modern society's dependence on power from fossil fuels and the cost in environmental destruction and the lives of miners and oil rig workers. It is about the power they give us, and the power we surrender to them and to the amazing machinery we have invented, machinery that is integral to modern society. "The ancient bodies, the ancient blood"—what is oil and coal, physically? We have tapped into that power, that enormous power, but at what cost? Do we have, as a species, the wisdom and ability to manage our destiny, or have we already gone too far? This lyric represents the darkest, most pessimistic view, our fears rather than our hopes. The music is intense, dark, with a heavy, driving rhythmic structure featuring a large percussion section.

**Merciless, relentless
digging drilling drilling digging
Ravenous, insatiable,
digging drilling drilling digging**

**We worship these gods we created
to bend all the world to our will
We sacrifice
the ancient bodies, the ancient blood
We sacrifice
the hands that dig, that drive the drill
We sacrifice
the future world, what might have been
We give them all to the flame**

**Birds drown, fish gasp on the shore,
ice melting, the sea takes the land
sky dark, air suffocates
The people multiply
The people divided
Greed without end.**

**We level the mountains, burn the sea,
behead the hills, choke the valleys
to draw earth's dark blood to worship these
gods we created to bend all the world to our will**

**We pour out our sacrifice
on the blazing pyre.**

**the bodies and the blood
the blood and the bodies**

----Sheila Dunlop & Reginald Unterseher

for the 20110 Byron Gjerde Festival

Sacrifice

SATB divisi, percussion (two snares, Bass drum,
tom-toms, tam-tam, suspended cymbal, brake drums,

Reginald Unterseher
6 September 2010

$\text{♩} = 128$

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

$\text{♩} = 128$

Brake Drum

Suspended Cymbal

Tam-tam

Snare Drum 1

Snare Drum 2

Tom-toms

Bass Drum

This musical score consists of ten staves. The top four staves are for SATB voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The bottom six staves are for percussion: Brake Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Tam-tam, Snare Drum 1, Snare Drum 2, and Tom-toms. The Bass Drum staff includes a '4' at the end of the measure. Measure 1 starts with a single note in each voice and each of the first three percussion staves. Measures 2-3 show a repeating pattern of eighth-note pairs in the first three percussion staves. Measures 4-5 show a similar pattern with some variations. Measures 6-7 show a more complex pattern with eighth-note pairs and sixteenth-note figures. Measures 8-9 show a continuation of this pattern. Measure 10 concludes with a dynamic marking of **p**.

p

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6

S.

A.

T.

B.

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

p

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D. 8

A

9

S.

A.

T. 8 *p with bitter intensity*
Mer-ci-less, re -

B. *p*
Mer-ci-less, re -

Br.D. A

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D. 12

14

S.

A.

T. 8
lent - less, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

B.
lent - less, dig- ging, drill- ing, drill- ing, dig- ging,

removed for security
thanks for understanding
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16 *p* *mf*

S. dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

A. dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

T. dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less

B. dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, Mer - ci - less, re - lent - less,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

16

19

S. *p*
dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

A. *p*
dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

T. *p*
8 dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

B. *p*
dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging, dig-ging, drill-ing, drill-ing, dig-ging,

Br.D. || - - - - -

S. Cym. || - - - - -

T.-t. || - - - - -

S. D. 1 || (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note)

S. D. 2 || (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note) (dotted eighth note) (sixteenth note)

Tom-t. || - - - - -

B. D. || - - - - -

20

B

21 *mf*

S. Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

A. Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

T. 8 Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

B. Ra-ven - ous, in - sa - tia - ble,

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

B

mallets

p

ff

ff

ff

24

S. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

A. *f*
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

T. *f*
8 We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

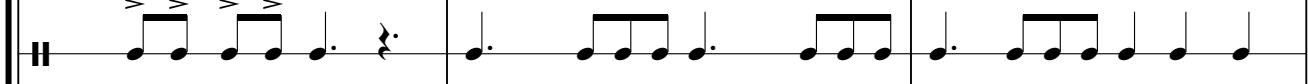
B. *f*.
We wor - ship these gods we cre - at - ed to

Br.D. 

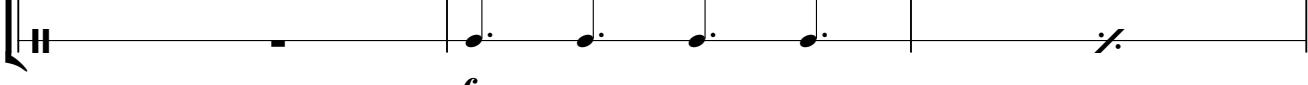
S. Cym. 

T.-t. 

S. D. 1 

S. D. 2 

Tom-t. 

B. D. 

f

27

S. bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

A. bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

T. bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

B. bend all the world to our will We sac - ri - fice the

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

legato

marcato

mf

4

4

34

marcato

S. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

A. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

T. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

B. fice the hands that dig, that drive the drill, We sac - ri -

Br.D. **II** - - - -

S. Cym. **II** - - - - **p** - - - -

T.-t. **II** - - - - - - - -

S. D. 1 **II** - - - - - - - -

S. D. 2 **II** - - - - - - - -

Tom-t. **II** - - - - - - - - **II** - - - - - - - -

B. D. **II** - - - - - - - -

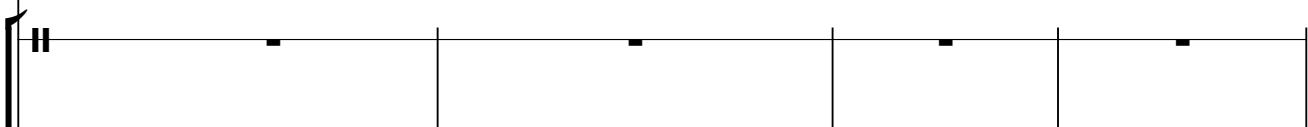
38

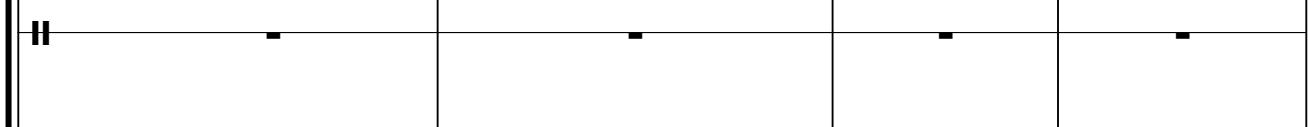
S. *mp*
fice the fu - - ture world, what might have

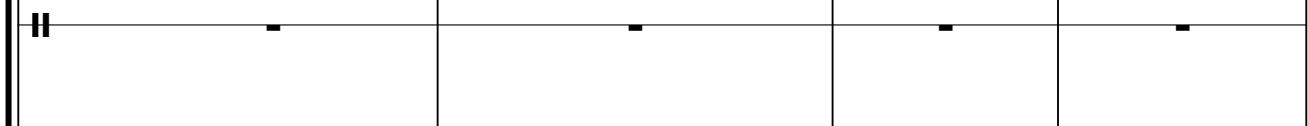
A. *mp*
fice the fu - - ture world, what might have

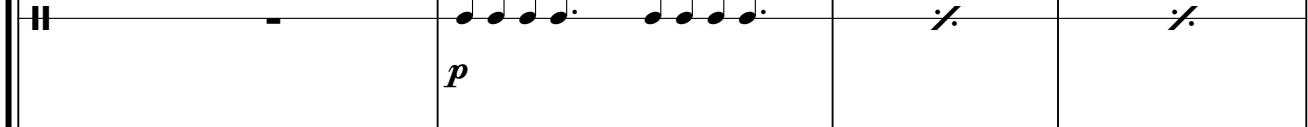
T. *mp*
8 fice the fu - - ture world, what might have

B. *mp*
fice the fu - - ture world, what might have

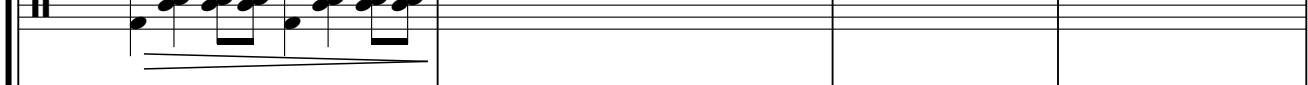
Br.D. 

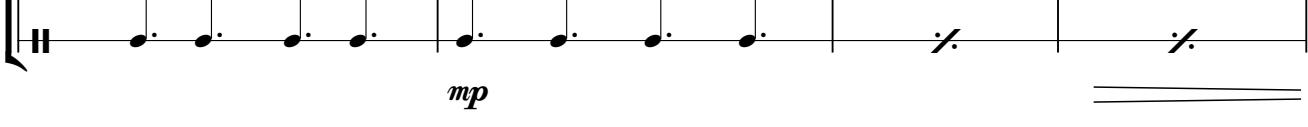
S. Cym. 

T.-t. 

S. D. 1 
p

S. D. 2 
p

Tom-t. 

B. D. 
mp

46

S. A. T. B. Br.D. S. Cym. T.-t. S. D. 1 S. D. 2 Tom-t. B. D.

55

S. *mp* ————— | *p* ————— | *mp* ————— | *p* ————— |
 drowned, _____ fish gasp on the shore, _____ ice _____

A. *mp* ————— | *p* ————— | *mp* ————— | *p* ————— |
 drowned, _____ fish gasp on the shore, _____ ice _____

T. *mp* ————— | *p* ————— | *mp* ————— | *p* ————— |
 8 drowned, _____ fish gasp on the shore, _____ ice _____

B. *mp* ————— | *p* ————— | *mp* ————— | *p* ————— |
 drowned, _____ fish gasp on the shore, _____ ice _____

Br.D. **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 S. Cym. **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 T.-t. **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 S. D. 1 **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 S. D. 2 **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 Tom-t. **II** ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— | ————— |
 B. D. **II** **x** 8 **x** **x** **x** **x** **x** **x** **x** **x** **x** **x**

drum stick **p**

12

62

S. melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

A. melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

T. melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

B. melt - ing, the sea takes the land.

Br.D. :| :| :| :| :| :|

S. Cym. :| :| :| :| :| :|

4

T.-t. :| :| :| :| :| :|

S. D. 1 :| :| :| :| :| :|

S. D. 2 :| :| :| :| :| :|

Tom-t. :| :| :| :| :| :|

B. D. :| :| :| :| :| :|

16

68

S. *mp* sky dark, air

A. *mp* sky dark, air

T. *mp* sky dark, air

B. *mp* sky dark, air

Br.D.

S. Cym. 8 12

T.-t.

S. D. 1 4

S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D. 20 24

75

S. **D** *mp*

A.

T. *mp*

B. *mp* *mp*

Br.D. **D**

suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

suf - fo - cates. The peo - ple

Br.D. **D**

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves represent vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The bottom staff represents the Bassoon (Br.D.). The music is in 2/4 time. The key signature is B-flat major, indicated by two flats in the key signature. Measure 75 begins with the soprano, alto, and tenor singing "suf - fo - cates." followed by a fermata. The bass and bassoon then enter with "The peo - ple." The dynamic is marked "mp". Measures 76 and 77 show the same pattern. The bassoon part ends with a double bar line.

79

S. mul-ti - ply, _____ The peo - ple di - vid - ed _____

A. mul-ti - ply, _____ The peo - ple di - vid - ed _____

T. 8 mul-ti - ply, _____ The peo - ple di - vid - ed _____

B. mul-ti - ply, _____ The peo - ple di - vid - ed _____

Br.D. || - - - - -

S. Cym. || : : : : :

T.-t. || - - - - -

S. D. 1 || : : : : :

S. D. 2 || : : : : :

Tom-t. || : : : : :

B. D. || : : : : :

84

S. Greed with - out end greed

A. Greed with - out end greed

T. Greed with - out end greed

B. Greed with - out end greed

Br.D.

S. Cym. 8 12

T.-t.

S. D. 1 16 20 mf

S. D. 2 8 12 mf

Tom-t. 4 8 mf

B. D. 36 40 mf

90

S. — with - out end. ah

A. — with - out end. ah

T. — with - out end. ah

B. — with - out end. ah

Br.D. ||

S. Cym. 16

T.-t. ||

S. D. 1 24

S. D. 2 16

Tom-t. 12

B. D. 44

94

S. A. T. B. Br.D. S. Cym. T.-t. S. D. 1 S. D. 2 Tom-t. B. D.

20 4 4 48

Measure 8: Soprano (S.) starts on a note, Alto (A.) starts on a note, Tenor (T.) starts on a note, Bass (B.) starts on a note. Percussion (Br.D., S. Cym., T.-t., S. D. 1, S. D. 2, Tom-t., B. D.) play sustained notes.

Measure 9: Soprano (S.) starts on a note, Alto (A.) starts on a note, Tenor (T.) starts on a note, Bass (B.) starts on a note. Percussion (Br.D., S. Cym., T.-t., S. D. 1, S. D. 2, Tom-t., B. D.) play sustained notes.

Measure 10: Soprano (S.) starts on a note, Alto (A.) starts on a note, Tenor (T.) starts on a note, Bass (B.) starts on a note. Percussion (Br.D., S. Cym., T.-t., S. D. 1, S. D. 2, Tom-t., B. D.) play sustained notes.

Measure 11: Soprano (S.) starts on a note, Alto (A.) starts on a note, Tenor (T.) starts on a note, Bass (B.) starts on a note. Percussion (Br.D., S. Cym., T.-t., S. D. 1, S. D. 2, Tom-t., B. D.) play sustained notes.

Measure 12: Soprano (S.) starts on a note, Alto (A.) starts on a note, Tenor (T.) starts on a note, Bass (B.) starts on a note. Percussion (Br.D., S. Cym., T.-t., S. D. 1, S. D. 2, Tom-t., B. D.) play sustained notes.

97

S. 8: ah we

A. 8: ah we

T. 8: ah we

B. 8: ah we

Br.D. 98

S. Cym. 24 98

T.-t. 98

S. D. 1 98

S. D. 2 98

Tom-t. 98

B. D. 98

molto marcato

101 **E**

S.

A.

T.

B.

Br.D.

S. Cym.

T.-t.

S. D. 1

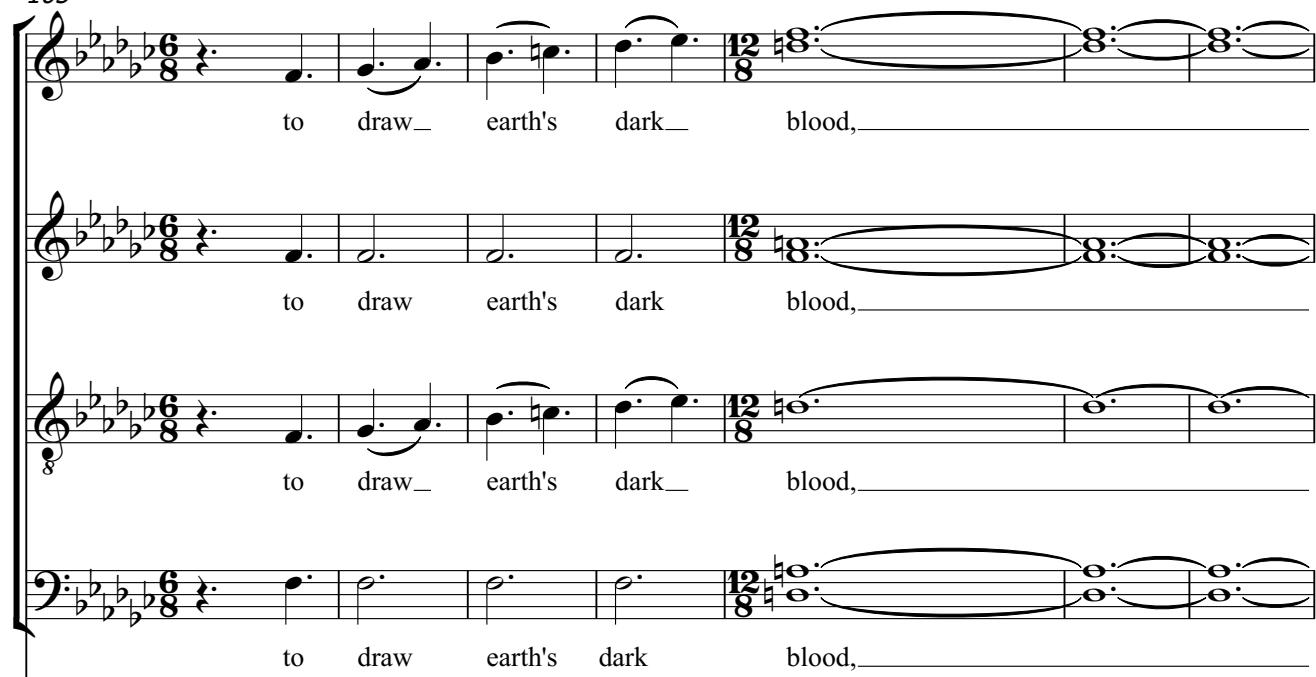
S. D. 2

Tom-t.

B. D.

ff

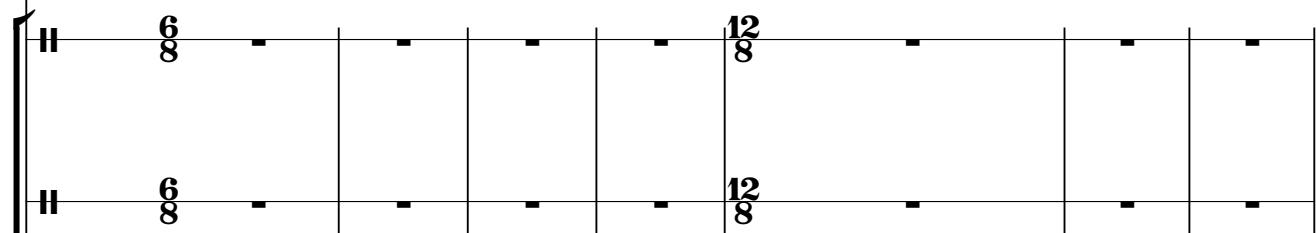
105

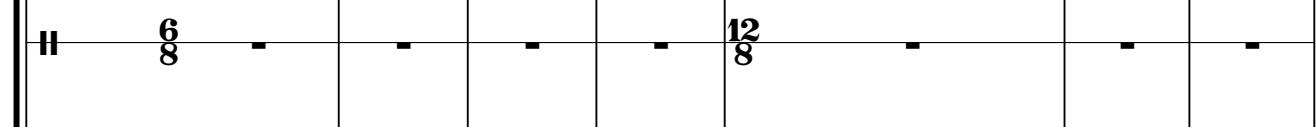
S. 

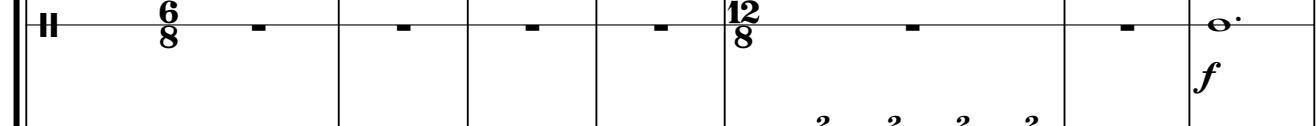
A. 

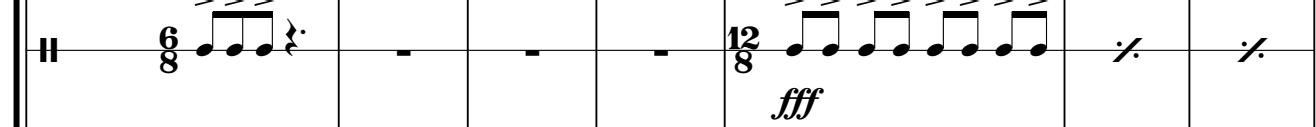
T. 

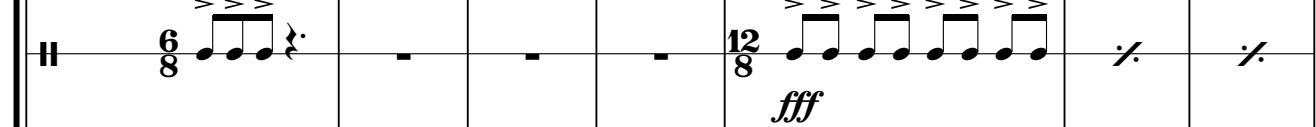
B. 

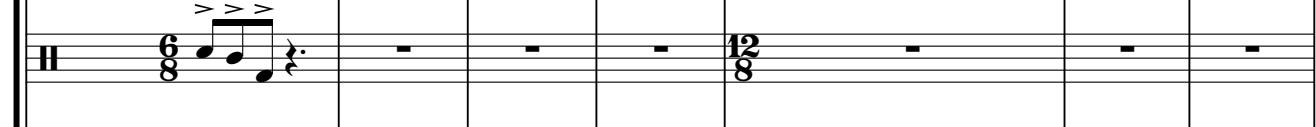
Br.D. 

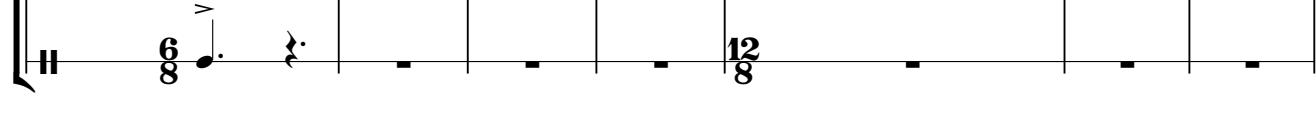
S. Cym. 

T.-t. 

S. D. 1 

S. D. 2 

Tom-t. 

B. D. 

112

S. A. T. B. Br.D. S. Cym. T.-t. S. D. 1 S. D. 2 Tom-t. B. D.

to to to to

F

117

S. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

A. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

T. 8 wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

B. wor-ship these gods we cre - at - ed to bend all the world to our

F

Br.D. *drum stick*

S. Cym. *mf*

T.-t.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t. *ff*

B. D.

120

S. will We pour_ out_ our_ sac-ri-fice,
A. will We pour_ out_ our_ sac-ri-fice,
T. will We pour_ out_ our_ sac-ri-fice,
B. will We pour_ out_ our_ sac-ri-fice,

Br.D. || - - - - | - - - - | < . > .

S. Cym. || : 4 : | - - - - | - - - - | - - - - |

T.-t. || - - - - | - - - - | - - - - | - - - - |

S. D. 1 || - - - - | - - - - | - - - - | < . > . > . > .

S. D. 2 || - - - - | - - - - | - - - - | - - - - | < . > . > . > .

Tom-t. || : 4 : | - - - - | - - - - | - - - - |

B. D. || : 8 : | - - - - | - - - - | - - - - |

123

S. - on the blaz-ing pyre

A. - on the blaz-ing pyre

T. 8 on the blaz-ing pyre

B. - on the blaz-ing pyre

Br.D.

S. Cym. *p* *mp* *mf* *f*

T.-t. *ff*

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

Tom-t. *ff*

B. D. *f*

128

S.

A.

T.

B.

S. D. 1

4

S. D. 2

4

Tom-t.

B. D.

4

8

8

8

8

G

135

S.

A.

T.

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

12

12

12

12

G

in all parts, gradually becoming more and more whispered, until at the end, there is almost no audible pitch, but the words are still clear **p**

the blood and the

p

p

p

p

138

S.

A. bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the

T.

B. *p* the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

B. D.

140

S.

A. blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the

T.

B. *p* the bod - ies and the blood the

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

B. D.

<img alt="Musical score for system 140 showing five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Bassoon (B. D.). The Alto and Bass staves have lyrics. Measure 1 consists of four measures of rests followed by a measure of a dotted half note. Measures 2-4 show eighth-note patterns. Measure 5 shows eighth-note patterns with a dynamic 'p' over the bass staff. Measures 6-7 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 8-9 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 10-11 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 12-13 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 14-15 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 16-17 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 18-19 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 20-21 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 22-23 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 24-25 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 26-27 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 28-29 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 30-31 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 32-33 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 34-35 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 36-37 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 38-39 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 40-41 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 42-43 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 44-45 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 46-47 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 48-49 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 50-51 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 52-53 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 54-55 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 56-57 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 58-59 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 60-61 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 62-63 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 64-65 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 66-67 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 68-69 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 70-71 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 72-73 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 74-75 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 76-77 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 78-79 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 80-81 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 82-83 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 84-85 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 86-87 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 88-89 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 90-91 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 92-93 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 94-95 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 96-97 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 98-99 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 100-101 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 102-103 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 104-105 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 106-107 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 108-109 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 110-111 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 112-113 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 114-115 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 116-117 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 118-119 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 120-121 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 122-123 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 124-125 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 126-127 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 128-129 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 130-131 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 132-133 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 134-135 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 136-137 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 138-139 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 140-141 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 142-143 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 144-145 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 146-147 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 148-149 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 150-151 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 152-153 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 154-155 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 156-157 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 158-159 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 160-161 show eighth-note patterns. Measures 162

142

S. bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the
A. the blood and the bod ies the blood and the bod ies the blood and the
T. *p* the bod - ies and the
B. blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies

S. D. 1 // ✕ //

S. D. 2 // ✕ //

B. D. // ✕ //



144

S. bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the
A. bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the
T. blood the bod - ies and the
B. the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the

S. D. 1 // ✕ //

S. D. 2 // ✕ //

B. D. // ✕ //

pp 20 // ✕ //

pp 20 // ✕ //

20 // ✕ //

146

half whispers

S. bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the

A. blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies the blood and the bod-ies

T. ⁸ blood the bod - ies and the

B. bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the blood and the bod - ies the

S. D. 1

S. D. 2

B. D.



148

S. bod - ies and the blood the bod - ies and the blood the

A. the blood and the bod ies the blood and the bod ies the blood and the

T. ⁸ blood the bod - ies and the

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