

Program Notes for Transformations of Darkness and Light

Transformations of Darkness and Light was commissioned by the National Kidney Foundation to commemorate fifty years of organ transplantation, and premiered on July 29, 2004, as part of the 2004 Transplant Games. The piece has four movements, each with a literary text relating to the varied emotional experiences of those whose lives have been affected by this lifesaving process. The word *Transformation* refers to the many personal changes in individual lives as well as the development of medical and surgical techniques over the last fifty years. The composition was conceived in the spirit of inspiration and hope. Composer Linda Tutas Haugen states: "My goal was to write an artistically excellent and meaningful piece of music that would be performed for many years to come. I hope this work will touch people's hearts through music, as well as raise awareness about transplantation, and the need for organ donors."

I. Journey and Celebration

... In the worst years of our madness the memory of this sky had never left me. It was this that in the end had saved me from despair.... In Tipasa, the world is born again each day in a light always new.... In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me lay an invincible summer.

Albert Camus, from *Return to Tipasa*

This movement portrays the struggles and victories that have been a part of organ transplantation. The contributions of physicians and the medical community, and of transplant recipients and their families, exhibit courage, perseverance, and the triumph of the human spirit in the face of great difficulty and uncertainty. Musically, the movement begins and ends with a pulsing in the timpani and low instruments which represents this process of struggle and overcoming challenges that continues today.

II. An Empty Place

In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners of my room; I find her not.

My house is small and what once has gone from it
can never be regained.
But infinite is thy mansion, my lord, and seeking her
I have come to thy door.
I stand under the golden canopy of thine evening sky
and I lift my eager eyes to thy face.
I have come to the brink of eternity from which
nothing can vanish--no hope, no happiness, no vision
of a face seen through tears.
Oh, dip my emptied life into the ocean, plunge it
into the deepest fullness. Let me for once feel that lost
sweet touch in the allness of the universe.

Rabindranath Tagore, from *Gitanjali*, LXXXVII

The second movement reflects the losses involved in transplantation. The sudden deaths of donors, as well of the deaths of those who received transplants and died, their respective family experiences, and the losses endured by the surgeons and nurses, are honored in this movement. The musical material, like the Tagore text, reflects a deep grief, but also contains a significant sense of hope. This movement is set for strings only.

III. Each Thing is Everything Forever

Although I die, I shall continue
to live in everything that is.
The buffalo eats the grass
and I eat him.
When I die the earth eats me
and sprouts forth new grass.
Therefore, nothing is ever lost
and each thing is in everything forever.

Chief Luther Standing Bear, Lakota

This movement depicts the interconnectedness and continuum of all life. It begins with a repeated pattern or ostinato that continues throughout the entire movement played by different instruments in various forms. The musical setting reflects the simple beauty of the text as it speaks of the transfer of life from one form to another.

IV. Rebirth and Spirits Dancing

... All mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated....

As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all; but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness.

Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? but who takes off his eye from a comet when that breaks out? Who bends not his ear to any bell which upon any occasion rings? but who can remove it from that bell which is passing a piece of himself out of this world? No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main

any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne, from *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, 1623

The final movement celebrates the “rebirth” experienced by transplant recipients while remembering the gifts from the organ donors. The text reiterates the connection and relationship between human beings, and articulates a sense of responsibility to mankind. The movement includes in its instrumentation, thirty-one sets of wind chimes, spaced throughout the concert hall. The use of wind chimes was inspired by a memorial wind chime tower constructed at St. Olaf College in 2003 to commemorate the lives of young people who died while students at the college, some of whom became organ donors. A four-note hymn tune fragment that focuses on the words “light of my soul” is also used intermittently.

The Woodstock Chimes used in these performances were custom-made by Garry Kvistad of Woodstock Percussion, Inc. specifically for this composition, and are provided thanks to a generous gift by the University of Minnesota Transplant Program (Minneapolis, MN). These wind chimes are dedicated to the thousands of organ donors, patients, families, caregivers, and researchers who have made transplant surgery a life-sustaining reality.