



PETER RELPH

SEVEN LAST
WORDS

FOR CHOIR AND VIOLONCELLO

PETER RELPH
SEVEN LAST WORDS

PIECE FOR CHOIR AND VIOLONCELLO

(2023)

TEXT

I

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. (Luke, 23:34)

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

II

Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. (Luke, 23:43)

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

III

Woman, behold thy son! and Behold thy mother! (John, 19:26-27)

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

IV

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mark, 15:34)

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

V

I thirst. (John, 19:28)

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

VI

It is finished. (John, 19:30)

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

VII

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. (Luke, 23:46)

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

INSTRUMENTATION

Choir SATB (with divisi)

Violoncello

Seven Last Words was written for the Bristol Contemporary Choral Music Festival 2023.

Duration: c. 15 minutes

Cover Photo: Juan Sánchez Cotán - Crucifixion of Jesus (c. 1603). Public Domain:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Juan_S%C3%A1nchez_Cot%C3%A1n_-_Crucifixion_of_Jesus.jpg

More information: peterrelph.com

PERFORMANCE NOTE

Throughout the piece, a circle at the tip of a hairpin indicates *dim. al niente*, or "to nothing."

Seven Last Words was written for the Bristol Contemporary Choral Music Festival 2023.

SEVEN LAST WORDS

From the Biblical Text

PETER RELPH

I. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

$\text{♩} = 50$

Violoncello

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Fa - ther,

Fa - ther,

Fa - ther,

Fa - ther,



4

Vc.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Fa - ther,

Fa - ther,

Fa - ther, almost a whisper

Fa - ther for - give them;

Fa - ther, almost a whisper

Fa - ther for - give them; for

6

Vc. *stagger breathing*

A. Fa - - - - - ther,

T. *3* for they know not what they do. *3* Fa - ther for - give them;

B. *3* they know not what they do. *3* Fa - ther for - give them; for

8

Vc. *ff* *pp* **A**

S. *mf* Fa - ther for -

A. *mf* Fa - ther for -

T. *3* for they know not what they do. *mf* Fa - ther for -

B. *3* they know not what they do. *mf* Fa - ther for -

12

S. *f* give them; for they know not what they do.

A. *f* give them; for they know not what they do.

T. *f* give them; for they know not what they do.

B. *f* give them; for they know not what they do.

16

Vc. *pp* *mf*

S. *p* *mf* *pp* *almost a whisper* *ppp* 3 3
 Fa - ther, Fa - ther for-give them; for they know not

A. *p* *mf* *pp* *almost a whisper* *ppp* 3 3
 Fa - ther, Fa - ther for-give them; for they know not what they do.

T. *p* *mf* *pp* *ppp*
 Fa - ther, Fa - - - - -

B. *p* *mf* *pp* *ppp*
 Fa - ther, Fa - - - - -



20

Vc.

S. 3 3
 what they do. Fa-ther for - give them; for they know not what they do.

A. 3 3
 Fa-ther for-give them; for they know not what they do.

T. 8
 - ther,

B. 8
 - ther,



23

Vc. *ff* *p*

II. Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

27 $\text{♩} = 66$

Vc. *pp*

S. *pp* $\text{♩} = 66$
Ve - ri - ly

S. *pp*
Ve - ri - ly

A. *pp*
Ve - ri - ly I say

T. *pp*
Ve - ri - ly I say

B. *pp*
Ve - ri - ly I say



31

Vc. *mf*

S. *mf*
un - to you

S. *mf*
un - to you

A. *mf*
un - to thee, To -

T. *mf*
un - to thee, To -

B. *mf*
un - to thee, To -

35

Vc.

S. *pp*
pp

S. *pp*

A. *pp*

T. *pp*

B. *pp*

To - - - - - day - - - - - shalt - - - - -

To - - - - - day - - - - -

- - - - - day - - - - - shalt - - - - - thou

- - - - - day - - - - - shalt - - - - - thou

- - - - - day - - - - - shalt - - - - - thou



39

Vc.

S. *f*
f

S. *f*

A. *f*

T. *f*

B. *f*

thou - - - - - be - - - - - with - - - - -

shalt - - - - - thou - - - - - be

- - - - - be - - - - - with

- - - - - be - - - - - with

- - - - - be - - - - - with

43

Vc.

S. me in

S. with me in

A. me in

T. me in

B. me in



47

Vc.

S. *pp* pa - ra - dise.

S. *pp* pa - ra - dise.

A. *pp* pa - ra - - - dise.

T. *pp* pa - ra - - - dise.

B. *pp* pa - ra - - - dise.

III. Woman, behold thy son! and Behold thy mother!

52 ♩ = 50 accel. poco a poco

Vc. *ppp*

S. *ppp*
 stagger breathing
 unis.

A. *ppp*
 stagger breathing

T. *ppp*
 stagger breathing

B. *pp*
 Wo - man, be - hold thy son! and Be - -



B

57 (♩ = c.54) accel. poco a poco

Vc. *pp*

S. *pp*
 (♩ = c.54) accel. poco a poco

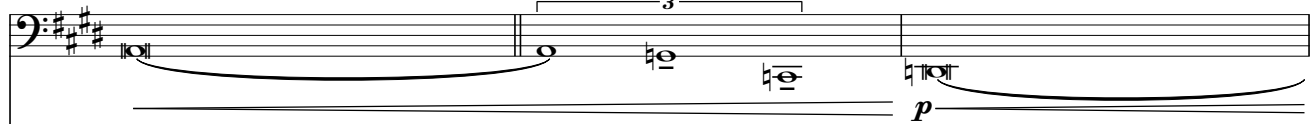
A. *pp*
 stagger breathing

T. *pp*
 Wo - man, be - hold thy son! and be -

B. *p*
 - hold thy mo - - - ther!


C


(♩ = c.60) *accel. poco a poco*

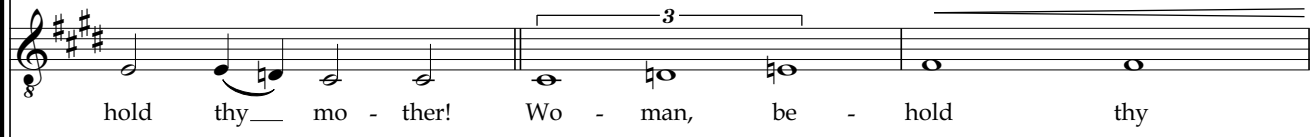
Vc.  *p*

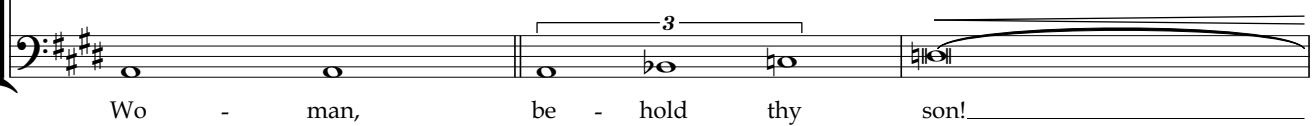
C

(♩ = c.60) *accel. poco a poco*

S.  *p*
man, be - hold thy son!

A.  *p*
man, be - hold thy son!

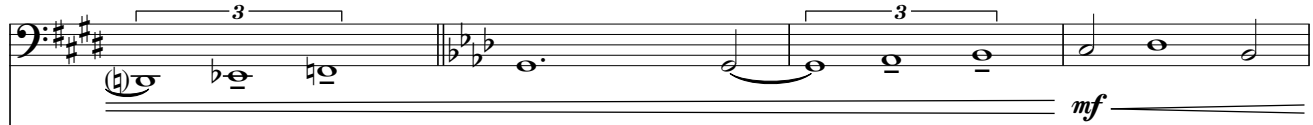
T. 
hold thy mother! Wo - man, be - hold thy

B. 
Wo - man, be - hold thy son!



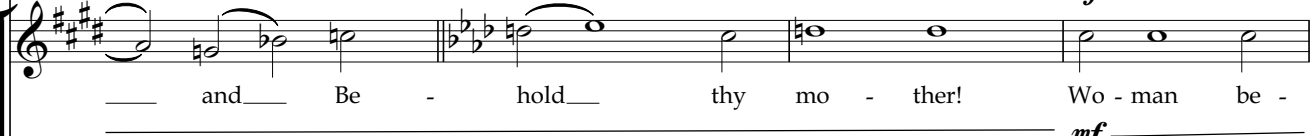
D


(♩ = c.66) *accel. poco a poco*

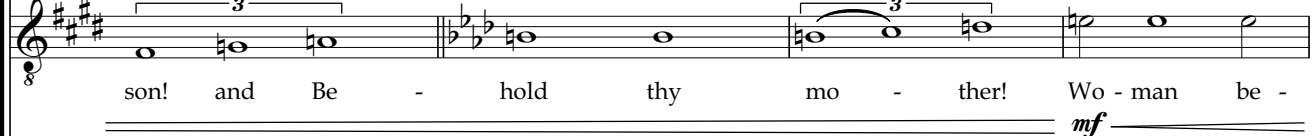
Vc.  *mf*

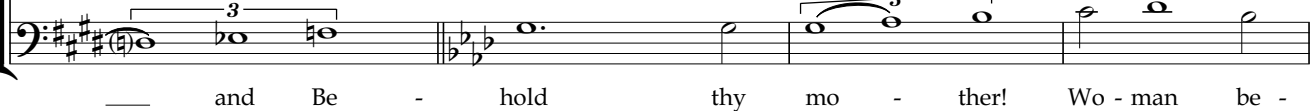
D

(♩ = c.66) *accel. poco a poco*

S.  *mf*
and Be - hold thy mother! Wo - man be -

A.  *mf*
and Be - hold thy mother! Wo - man be -

T.  *mf*
son! and Be - hold thy mother! Wo - man be -

B.  *mf*
and Be - hold thy mother! Wo - man be -

67

$\text{♩} = 72$

Vc.

S. hold thy son! and Be -

A. hold thy son! and Be - - -

T. hold thy son! and Be -

B. hold thy son! and Be - - -



69

Vc. *f*

S. *f* hold thy mo - - - ther!

A. *f* hold thy mo - - - ther!

T. *f* hold thy mo - - - ther

B. *f* hold thy mo - - - ther

F

72 $\text{♩} = 76$

Vc. *ff* *fff*

F

$\text{♩} = 76$

S. *ff* *fff*

Wo man _____ be - hold _____ thy son! _____ thy son! _____

A. *ff* *fff*

Wo man _____ be - hold _____ thy son! _____ thy son! _____

T. *ff* *fff*

Wo man _____ be - hold _____ thy son! _____ thy son! _____

B. *ff* *fff*

Wo man _____ be - hold _____ thy son! _____ thy son! _____



G

76

Vc. *sffz* *mf* *ord.*

G

S. *p*

and Be-hold thy mo - ther!

A. *p*

and Be-hold thy mo - ther!

T. *p sub.*

and _____

Be - - -

B. *p sub.*

and _____

Be - - -

79

Vc. *sffz* *mf* *sffz* *mf* <

S. and Be - hold thy mo-ther! thy

A. and Be-hold thy mo - ther! thy

T. - - - - hold and Be-hold thy mo - ther!

B. - - - - hold thy



82

Vc. *sffz* *mf* *sffz* *sffz* *f* *fff*

S. mo - - - ther! slide *fff*

A. mo - - - ther! slide *fff*

T. and Be-hold thy mo- ther! and Be - hold thy mo-ther!

B. mo - - - ther! slide *fff*

IV. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

85 $\text{♩} = 66$

Vc. *ord.*

ffff
feroce

S. $\text{♩} = 66$
ffff
My God,

A. *ffff*
My God,

T. *ffff*
My God,

B. *ffff*
My God,



90 *ord.*

Vc. *ffff*
feroce

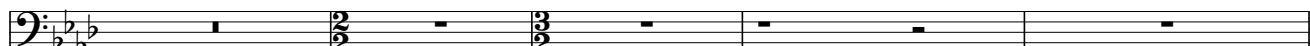
S. *fff*
My God, *ff*
My

A. *fff*
My God, *ff*
My

T. *fff*
My God, *ff*
My

B. *fff*
My God, *ff*
My

95

Vc. 

S. *f* _____ *mf*
 God, my God, why hast


A. *f* _____ *mf*
 God, my God, why hast


T. *f* _____ *mf*
 God, my God, why hast

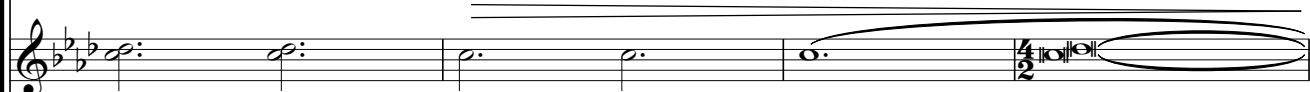
B. *f* _____ *mf*
 God, my God, why hast

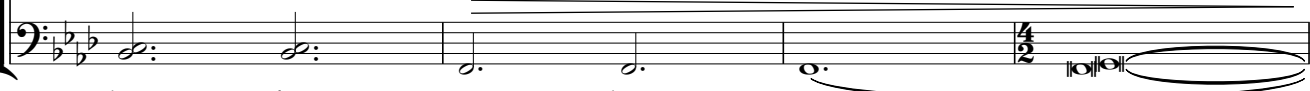


100 stagger breathing

S. 
 thou for - sa - ken me.

A. stagger breathing

 thou for - sa - ken me.

T. stagger breathing

 thou for - sa - ken me.

B. stagger breathing

 thou for - sa - ken me.

104

Vc. *ppp*

S. *pp*
E - loi, E-loi, la-ma sa-bach-tha - ni?

A. *pp*
E - loi, E - loi, la - ma sa - bach - tha - ni?

T. *pp*

B. *pp*



106

Vc. *p*

S. *pp*
My God, my God, why hast thou for-sa - ken me?

A. *pp*
My God, my God, why hast thou for - sa-ken me?

T. *pp*

B. *pp*

108

Vc. *mf* *trem.*

S. E - loi, E - loi, la - ma sa - bach - tha - ni?

A. E - loi, E - loi, la - ma sa - bach - - tha - ni?

T. 8

B. 8



110

Vc. *f* *ord.* *trem.* *ord.*

S. My God, my God, why hast thou for - sa - ken me?

A. My God, my God, why hast thou for - sa - ken me?

T. 8

B. 8

112

Vc. *ff* *feroce* trem. ord.

S.

A.

T.

B.



115

Vc.

V. I thirst.

$\text{♩} = 66$

118

ord.

Vc.

124

Vc.

S.

A.

129

Vc.

S.

A.

133

Vc.

S.

A.

T.

B.

137

Vc. **H**

S. **H**

A. **H**

T. *pp* *mf* *pp*

B. *mf* *pp*

thirst. I thirst. I thirst. I thirst.



142

Vc.

T. *mf* *pp*

B. *mf* *pp*

thirst. I thirst.



145

Vc.

B. *mf*

thirst.

VI. It is finished.

150 *mf* $\text{♩} = 50$

S. Solo
It _____ is fin - - ished. It _____ is
barely audible

S.
ppp
Mm. _____
barely audible

A.
ppp
Mm. _____
barely audible

T.
ppp
Mm. _____
barely audible

B.
ppp
Mm. _____
barely audible

153

S. Solo
fin - ished. It is *ff* fin - - - - ished. _____

156 *pp*

S. Solo
_____ It _____ is _____ fin - ished. It

S.
pp
It is fin - - ished.

A.
pp
It is fin - - ished.

T.
pp
It is fin - - ished.

B.
pp
It is fin - - ished.

160

S. Solo

is _____ fin - ished. _____ It is fin - - ished.

S.

A.

T.

B.

It is

It is

It is

It is



163

S. Solo

It is fin - ished. *ff* it is fin - - - - ished...

S.

A.

T.

B.

fin - - ished

fin - - ished

fin - - ished

fin - - ished

167

Vc. *pp*

S. Solo *pp* *ppp*

S. *ppp*

A. *ppp*

T. *ppp*

B. *ppp*

It is fin - ished. It is fin - ished.

It is fin - ished. It is fin - ished.

It is fin - ished. It is fin - ished.

It is fin - ished. It is fin - ished.

It is fin - ished. It is fin - ished.



I

173 *Lacrimosa*

Vc. *mf* *pp*



178

Vc. *f*



182

Vc. *pp*

VII. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

187 $\text{♩} = 48$
ord.

Vc. *pp*

S. *pp*
Fa -

A. *pp*
Fa - ther,

T. *pp*
Fa - ther,

B. *pp*
Fa - ther,



191

Vc. **J**

S. *mf* **J** *ppp*
ther, Fa - - - ther, Fa - ther, in -

A. *mf* **J** *ppp*
Fa - - - ther, in - to thy

T. *mf* **J** *ppp*
Fa - - - ther, in - to thy

B. *mf* **J** *ppp*
Fa - - - ther, in - to thy

195

S. to thy hands I com - mend my spi - rit.

A. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

T. hands I com - mend my spi - rit.

B. hands I com - mend my spi - rit.



198

Vc. *pp* *mf* *mf* *pp*

S. Fa - - - - - ther, in - to

S. Fa - - - - - ther,

A. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com mend my spi - rit.

A. mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

T. in - to thy hands I com - mend my spi - rit.

B. Fa - - - - - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

Vc. *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf*

S. thy hands I com - mend my

S. in - to thy hands I com -

A. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com mend my spi - rit.

A. mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

T. Fa - - - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

B. mend my spi - rit. Fa - - - ther,



Vc. *p* *p* *mf* *f* *mf* < *f*

S. spi - rit. Fa - - - - - ther in -

S. mend my spi - rit. Fa - - -

A. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands I com -

A. mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands

T. mend my spi - rit. Fa - - -

B. in - to thy hands I com - mend my

Vc.

S. *mf* to thy hands I com - mend my spi -

S. ther in - to thy hands I com - mend my

A. *mf* mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands

A. I com - mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in -

T. *mf* ther, in - to thy hands I com -

B. *mf* spi - rit. Fa - - - - ther,



Vc.

S. *f* *mf* rit. my

S. *f* *mf* rit.

A. I com - mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in -

A. to thy hands I com - mend my spi - rit.

T. mend my spi - rit. Fa - - -

B. in - to thy hands I com - mend my

215

Vc.

S. *f* *ff* *f* *rit.* *f* *3*
spi - - - - -

S. *ff* *f* *3*
my ___ spi - - - - - rit.

A. *f*
to thy hands ___ I ___ com - mend my ___ spi - rit.

A. *f*
Fa - ther, in - to thy hands ___ I ___ com -

T. *f*
ther, in - to thy hands I com -

B. *f*
spi - rit. Fa - - - - ther,



218

Vc.

S. *fff* *ff* *3*
my ___ spi - - - - - rit.

S. *fff*
my ___ spi - - - - -

A. *f*
Fa - ther, in - to thy hands ___ I ___ com -

A. *f*
mend my ___ spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands ___

T. *f*
mend my spi - - - rit. Fa - - - -

B. *f*
in - to thy hands I com - mend my

221

Vc. *ff*

S. *ff* my spi - - - - -

S. *ff* rit. my spi - - - - -

A. *ff* mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in - to thy hands

A. *ff* I com - mend my spi - rit. Fa - ther, in -

T. *ff* ther, in - to thy hands I com -

B. *ff* spi - rit. in - to thy hands I com -

224

Vc. *fff* *fff*

S. *fff* rit. my spi - - - - - rit. *fff*

S. *fff* rit. my spi - - - - - rit. *fff*

A. *fff* I com - mend my spi - rit. *fff*

A. *fff* to thy hands spi - - - - - rit. *fff*

T. *fff* mend my spi - - - - - rit. *fff*

B. *fff* mend my spi - - - - - rit. *fff*