

Composer's Note

This work was written in memory of a dear friend, the composer Toru Takemitsu, who died earlier this year, 1996.

In three sections, the first, Introit, is concerned with one's initial difficulty in accepting the death of another. Following this, the music of the second and third parts, Kyrie and In Paradisum, is calm and gentle. Kyrie, the longest section, is shaped by three plainsong phrases, thrice repeated and subsequently played an octave higher, sounding three times in all. Each time, a lullaby-like melody is heard in counterpoint above the chant. Finally, the peaceful In Paradisum contains brief reminders of a question that Toru once asked: 'Peter, where do the birds go to die?'

I might add that in combining koto with plainsong of the Roman Church, and both with string orchestra, I hope that I am making a statement about Australia. In too few countries can different cultures co-exist as they do here.

Little Requiem was commissioned by the Australian Chamber Orchestra, with assistance from the Performing Arts Board of the Australia Council. It was first performed by this orchestra, conducted by John Harding, with Satsuki Odamura, soloist, in SCEGGS Hall, Sydney, on 20 June, 1996.