A NEW VIEW OF THE APOCALYPSE. PRESENTING THE REDEMPTIVE VISION OF PEDRO JORGE

FROM THE ASHES: ORATORIO FOR ORCHESTRA, SOLOISTS, NARRATOR, PROJECTIONS AND CHOIR, GL29

BY

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To my family, especially my Mother and Father for their love, dedication and support.
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Chapter 1: Genesis of the Work

This document offers background information for my oratorio *From the Ashes*, GL 29, which was inspired by the *Silabas de Apocalipse* (*Syllables of the Apocalypse*) by the Portuguese poet Pedro Jorge (b. 1936). With approval from the poet, I adapted and translated the work and Richard Arnest assisted with the English underlay. My musical voice was inspired by the goal of fusing various harmonic languages and idioms of Western classical music: tonal, atonal, modal, and serial approaches to harmonic organization, and the use of leitmotifs and folk songs.

In 2002, the Portuguese Catholic poet Pedro Jorge published a new poem about São João de Deus, the 16th century Portuguese patron saint of hospitals and the sick. I met Jorge during the festivities surrounding the release of the work and we felt an immediate bond. We became friends, and several years later Jorge showed me a text he had written in 1971 describing his unique vision of an apocalypse. He challenged me to write an oratorio on the subject.

Influenced by the *Book of Revelation*, Jorge’s apocalypse uses a similar framework but with different images and events. In the *Book of Revelation*, John writes seven letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. In Jorge’s *Silabas de Apocalipse* (*Syllables of the Apocalypse*), the unidentified protagonist (perhaps Jorge himself) writes seven letters to the peoples of the world: the slums of the north, the barrios of the south, and so on. The letters warn that the earth will be destroyed because of the selfishness and incompetence of human leaders. There are no biblical figures or references, and salvation is ultimately achieved through the birth of the sunflower.

In the *Book of Revelation*, the Lamb with the seven horns and seven eyes appears on earth and calls seven heavenly creatures who will be given seven trumpets to destroy everything that lives. In Jorge’s vision it is a chameleon who is sent to destroy the planet. Each of the seven times the chameleon opens its mouth, it emits evil in the form of a grotesque animal - War, Fear, Disease, Greed, Pollution, Anguish and Oppression - which helps it to complete the task of destruction.
In John’s vision, “the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it [the New Jerusalem]” \(^1\) are rescued from the destruction and will become part of the New Heaven, New Earth and New Jerusalem. In the Sílabas, the survivors gather near a charred tree. From that tree a Sunflower (which may or may not be a reference to Christ) bursts, and mankind is reunited around it.

What motivated Jorge to write such a work? We don’t know for sure, but its roots may be found in 1970s Portugal. From 1926 to 1974 Portugal was under dictatorial regimes \(^2\), the most emblematic of which was the so-called “New State”, embodied by the figure of António de Oliveira Salazar. He ruled the country from 1933 to 1968 and, even though he was not in power in 1971, his legacy and ideas were still dominant.

Between the 40’s and the 70’s, political parties were forbidden, freedom of expression and freedom of the press very restricted, as official censorship was established. Hundreds of people died and thousands more lived in fear: Political activists were jailed or forced into exile. During those years the country met poverty and famine, mainly in the rural areas. One other aspect worth mentioning was the international isolation of the country, because the regime refused to let go of ancient colonies in Africa and Asia. Portugal was a sort of a “pariah” State within the UN and in Europe. This tension led to the colonial war (1962/74) and culminated in the revolution that occurred on the 25\(^{th}\) of April 1974. This one-day revolution, led by the army, was known as the Carnation Revolution: it was a peaceful revolution (only two or three people were accidentally killed) and the troops put carnations in the barrels of their guns.

Jorge was strongly affected by this pre-1974 environment and wrote the Sílabas to express his hopes for a new order and a new philosophy.

When Pedro Jorge challenged me to write an oratorio based on his Sílabas de Apocalipse, he was intrigued by the magnitude of the opportunity to create a work for full orchestra, soloists

\(^1\) Revelation 21:27, King James Bible.
\(^2\) The first regime was the Military Dictactorship (1926-1928), the second was the National Dictactorship (1928-1933) and the third was the “New State”, a corporativist regime that ran from 1933 until 1974.
and chorus. The possibilities were almost infinite and the legacy of the genre put extra weight on the task.

The apocalyptic theme is found in almost every form of art, with its dynamic images of destruction and the often present, and even more interesting, implied question of what might come afterward. In music, the *Dies Irae* section of the Requiem Mass envisions the final days of the planet, while the *In Paradisum* paints the picture of the better place to follow. Requiem settings by Mozart (1791), Berlioz (1837), and Verdi (1874) include powerful settings of the *Dies Irae*; Duruflé (1947), Fauré (1887/1890) and Carrapatoso (2004) include settings of *In Paradisum*. Britten’s *War Requiem* (1962) intersperses the liturgical texts with poetry of Wilfred Owen (1893-1918), ultimately resolving the horrors of World War I into a meeting between former enemy soldiers in the afterlife. John Tavener states that the essence of his *Requiem* (2007) “is contained in the words ‘Our glory lies where we cease to exist.’ ” That is, when one’s false self is extinguished, the true self shines forth, and we have, in a way, become one with God.

Oratorios titled “*The Apocalypse,*” using the Revelation text as a framework were composed by both Tavener (1993) and Eugene Goossens (1953). Franz Schmidt’s (1937) oratorio, “*Das Buch mit Sieben Siegeln*” (*The Book of Seven Seals*) is the most relevant oratorio written until today based on the Book of Revelation. There is at least one opera with this subject, *Antikrist* by the Danish composer Rued Langgaard (1893-1952), in which the despondency and pessimism of the modern world is overcome through God.

In the world of visual art, apocalyptic scenes may be found in *The Four Horsemen* (1498), Albrecht Dürer’s set of fifteen woodcuts based on the Book of Revelation, as well as *The Last Judgment*, the triptych painting by Hieronymus Bosch (1504-1508). Contemporary artists have also based apocalyptic work on the end of the world - or at least a world - as brought about by the atomic bomb (Bruce Conner, *Bombhead*, 1989-2002) or disease (Keith Haring, *AIDS Apocalypse* series, 1988-1990). In literature the theme has been explored by Mary Shelley (*The Last Man*, 1826), Edgar Allan Poe (*The Conversation of Eiros* and *Charmion*, 1839), Richard
Jeffries (After London, 1885), and H.G. Wells (War of the Worlds, 1897). It has also achieved modern commercial success in the form of the Left Behind series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins (1995-2007). Cinematic treatments and video games are especially powerful forms by virtue of being able to provide both aural and visual cues. Some examples of the use of the apocalypse theme on film are by Stanley Kubrick (Dr. Strangelove, 1964, the bomb), Francis Lawrence (I am Legend, 2007, viruses and mutants), Alex Proyas (Knowing, 2009, a solar flare destroys the Earth and the protagonists are taken by aliens to another planet), and the infamous Ed Wood (Plan 9 from Outer Space, 1959, aliens create zombies to try to stop humans from creating a doomsday weapon which will destroy the universe). In video games, Gary Schynman (Dante’s Inferno, 2010), Inon Zur (Fallout, 1997) and Martin O’Donnel (The Last of Us, 2013) have variously depicted the Apocalypse and what might happen afterward.

Such wide-ranging artistic treatments of apocalyptic themes were a difficult act to follow. However, there are two elements that make my oratorio different from all of the other works. One was the unique plot of Jorge’s vision, never before subjected to artistic treatment. The other was my approach to the medium, which incorporated projections and spoken word in addition to vocal and orchestral music. I used projections to represent the scenes described in the story and transport the listener to the place of the action, so that they become involved in the events. I asked André Alves, a Portuguese artist who lives in Oporto, to make the drawings for the projections, based on the poem. I chose him because he is, like me, a young Portuguese artist and I thought it would be interesting to have someone from the generation born after the Revolution illustrating the text and create an intergenerational dialogue with Pedro Jorge’s poem. The images can be found in Appendix II.

The use of spoken word adds an extra layer to the work: drama. The Evangelist acts as storyteller or narrator and speaks, rather than sings, the words of Pedro Jorge.

Chapter 2: Analysis

1. Structural Overview
I structured *From the Ashes* in three movements, each based on a loose arch “form.” I do not mean the usual A–B–C–B–A arch form, but simply use the term “arch” to refer to the repetition of music at the end of a section or movement that was first presented at the beginning of that movement or section. The arch also plays a role in the overall form: the leitmotif used in the beginning of the work appears again at the end of the oratorio.

The Prologue serves as an introduction to the story and provides background. Two scenes then advance the plot and allow the visualization of the story, developing the musical and textual themes that were introduced in the Prologue. The Prologue is in an A–B–A form with a coda/chorale at the end. The first scene is in a cantata form. The second scene is an operatic scena. I connected the movements with music based on traditional Portuguese folk themes, used as structural links and transitions.

2. Orchestration

The orchestration (2 flutes, 2 oboes, clarinet and bass clarinet, bassoon and contrabassoon, bass trombone and tuba, with 4 percussionists, piano, harp, organ, and strings) allows some instruments to occasionally play special roles. For example, the bass trombone and tuba are very important in the presentation of the leitmotifs. Percussion interrupts the flow, often to announce and present another monster. The next sections provide a more detailed discussion.

3. Prologue: The Warning

The 11 minute Prologue is divided into four parts: A–B–A’–Chorale. A projection at the back of shows a chandelier with seven branches. The Evangelist tells of seven letters sent to seven human populations, confronting them with their errors and promising redemption for those who have been wronged. Mankind witnesses the destruction of the earth and says goodbye to the planet. The following table illustrates the organization of the Prologue.
Table 1. Prologue Structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Forces</th>
<th>Tonal Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>mm. 1–54</td>
<td>Tutti, except soloists</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Presentation of the seven Letters</td>
<td>mm. 55–109</td>
<td>Orchestra, choir and projections</td>
<td>C (mm. 55–73) A (mm. 74–107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>Witness of the Destruction</td>
<td>mm. 108–143</td>
<td>Tutti, no projections</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorale</td>
<td>Farewell to Earth</td>
<td>mm. 144–73</td>
<td>Orchestra, Evangelist and choir. No projections</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. First Scene: Destruction

First Scene is 16 minutes long and written in in cantata form, divided into nine small sections. The first section introduces the Chameleon, which is the source of the evil and destruction to come. Sections 2–8 portray the seven evils or monsters, which come from the mouth of the Chameleon over seven nights: War, Fear, Disease, Greed, Pollution, Anguish, and Oppression, with a concluding Finale as Section 9. The sections are separated by musical bridges, which correspond to the seven nights of destruction and the appearance of each different evil. By the end of the scene, the surface of the earth has been destroyed. The following table illustrates the organization of the First Scene.

Table 2. First Scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Forces</th>
<th>Tonal Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Presentation of the chameleon</td>
<td>mm. 1–30</td>
<td>Tutti, except soloists</td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First night</td>
<td>War</td>
<td>mm. 31–69</td>
<td>Tenor and bass duet</td>
<td>A minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second night</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>mm. 70–111</td>
<td>Soprano solo</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third night</td>
<td>Disease</td>
<td>mm. 112–137</td>
<td>Alto solo</td>
<td>D minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth night</td>
<td>Greed</td>
<td>mm. 138–175</td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
<td>Declamation, spoken text D minor/D Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth night</td>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>mm. 176–194</td>
<td>Full chorus</td>
<td>Cacophony (no tonality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth night</td>
<td>Anguish</td>
<td>mm. 195–225</td>
<td>Female chorus String quartet</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The structure of this movement resembles that of a Baroque cantata: it begins with a choral introduction, followed by an aria, in this case a duet. The tonal structure of the movement is in an arch, with the return to D, here in the major mode. The sixth monster, Anguish, is a chorale. Solo sections and the solos are distributed to create diversity and contrast between chorus and soloists. The soloist quartet in the Finale functions as a chorale in the sense that it is a reflection of what is happening.

5. Second Scene: Hope

Second Scene is an opera scena, a dramatic episode that consists of a variety of numbers with a common dramatic theme: redemption. In this scene the survivors unite and celebrate their survival and their opportunity to create a new life.

After three days and nights of darkness, the survivors appear. They experience fear, uncertainty and despair when they see the Earth’s surface has been destroyed. However, as they realize they have been saved, relief comes in and they hum a tune of joy and gratitude because they are alive. Far away they observe a very tall tree that was carbonized by the fire. As they approach it, a gigantic sunflower (Girassol) erupts from the tree. Other survivors see the giant sunflower from afar and congregate there, causing what remains of mankind to be reunited in this spot. The Evangelist finishes the story with vows of a bright future for mankind. The chorus sings the final Alleluia, an a cappella prayer. The prayer is brutally interrupted by the Destruction leitmotif, warning the new society about the danger of committing the same mistakes of the past. Mankind then finishes its prayer, with the implication that it will do better this time. The sections of the Second Scene are as follows:
Table 3. Second Scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Forces</th>
<th>Tonal Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The survivors’ appearance</td>
<td>mm.1–25</td>
<td>Chorus and orchestra</td>
<td>G mixolidian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Praying of happiness and relief</td>
<td>mm.26–49</td>
<td>Choir and evangelist</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The birth of the sunflower</td>
<td>mm.50–70</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td>Atonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The miracle of the sunflower</td>
<td>mm.71–86</td>
<td>Tutti, except soloists.</td>
<td>G minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The survivors’ gratitude</td>
<td>mm.87–148</td>
<td>Soloists strings and woodwinds</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First alleluia</td>
<td>mm.149–155</td>
<td>Women’s chorus and organ</td>
<td>G mixolidian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Worship of the sunflower</td>
<td>mm.156–171</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>G mixolidian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Finale</td>
<td>mm.172–217</td>
<td>Tutti</td>
<td>G major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Use of Leitmotifs

When an architect designs a building, its parts have to fit together and support each other. If they don’t, it collapses. Likewise in composition, the foundation and structure must be strong and well designed to support the musical ideas. The three arches of From the Ashes are created using three elements: leitmotif, folk song and harmony. The oratorio is built around two leitmotifs, the Destruction leitmotif and the Hope leitmotif.

**The Destruction leitmotif**

The Destruction leitmotif is built from two dissonant intervals, a descending major seventh followed by a rising diminished fifth. This double *saltus duriusculus* (a wide-interval dissonant leap) creates harsh interruptions in the expected harmonic progression and is meant to represent discontinuity and destruction. This leitmotif provides unity and contributes to creating the arch structure of the oratorio, as well as serving an expressive function.
The Destruction leitmotif appears for the first time in the lower register instruments (ex. 1.1), its *fortissimo* entrance acting as a messenger of death to alert the audience to the horror to follow.

Example 1.1. Prologue mm. 1–3. Destruction Leitmotif.

In mm. 1–17, the Destruction leitmotif is presented three times, adding a measure with each presentation. In its first appearance it consists of three bars, then four, five, and at the end, six. This augmentation increases the dramatic effect.

The Destruction leitmotif appears again in the bass trombone (Prologue m. 28) and the tuba (Prologue m. 31). In this section the instruments speak as characters, their dark ominous sounds symbolizing death. The motif appears also in the chorus alto line (Prologue m. 42) and later, in the B section, in the timpani (Prologue m. 57).

When the motif reappears at the end (ex. 1.2), it is given to only the contrabassoon, bass trombone, tuba and organ.
Example 1.2. Prologue, mm. 169–172, Contrabassoon, Bass Trombone and Tuba.

In this position at the end of the first movement, the motif serves to complete the arch and acts as a farewell to planet earth.

In the first scene of the second movement, the Destruction leitmotif appears again, in diminution, played by the strings (ex. 1.3). At first the audience hears only the tritone of the motif followed by the ascending motion using different intervals. At m. 122, the entrance of the third monster, Disease, is heralded by the Destruction theme in inverted form: an ascending diminished fifth followed by a descending half-step. I wanted to use the Destruction motif to enhance the unity of the work, but inverted it because the ascending interval followed by the descending half step creates a sick and sighing effect useful for characterizing this particular monster. In m. 234 the first and last notes of the phrase are a part of the motif, in this case the tritone. The Destruction motif makes a surprise appearance at the end of the second scene (Scene 2, m. 204), exactly in the same form and orchestration as the beginning of the Prologue. Here the quiet chorale section, representing mankind’s second chance, is suddenly ripped apart by the unexpected return of dissonance, heightened by the contrast between brass and chorus, loud and soft. This appearance of the Destruction leitmotif comes as a warning to mankind, that it should not ruin its second chance with the same mistakes made in the past. This last appearance of the motif also connects the beginning of the piece to end of the work and completes the last arch of the piece.
The Hope leitmotif

The second leitmotif is the Hope leitmotif. This leitmotif is built on a chord which first appears as D-flat–A-flat–E-flat–F–B, and then is transposed and varied throughout the piece. The Destruction and Hope leitmotifs are placed together at the start (ex. 1.4) to present the major themes of the piece, and to in a micro-arch that good will prevail in the end.

Example 1.4. Prologue mm. 3–6, Violin I and II, Violas.

In terms of a structural arch it closes the first scene at m. 310, creating the sensation of hope and peace that the entire third section of the second scene will bring. It achieves connection
with the Prologue at the end of the first scene, when the promise of hope is finally accomplished.

Example 1.5. Second Scene, mm. 170–172.

The Hope leitmotif appears several additional times (Prologue, mm. 118 and 126; Scene 1, mm. 290 and 310), grounding the first arch (ex. 1.5).

7. Use of Folk Song

Portuguese folk music creates the second and largest arch in the score, appearing only in the Prologue and Scene 2 and so linking beginning and end. It appears in the form of three lullabies, set in a chorale style, representing sleep, death, farewell, and peace, as explained below.

The first lullaby, *Oh, Oh, Menino Oh (Hush, Hush, Baby, Hush)* appears at the end of the Prologue at m. 144. It closes the movement and portends the death of the earth, the farewell to all that it was, a going to sleep of the past.

The second lullaby, *Oh Meu Menino (Oh My Baby)* represents peace and the happiness of being alive. It appears in Scene 2 at m. 26 and creates a moment of reflection with its chorale style.

Finally the last lullaby, *Dorme, Dorme, Meu Menino (Sleep, Sleep, My Baby)* appears at the end of the piece at m. 182. This *a cappella* chorale closes the final arch to connect the death idea of the Prologue with the promise of life after death, and the image of all mankind united as one.

8. Use of Harmony
The overall harmonic pattern in *From the Ashes* is a simple i–v–IV–I. This progression represents the gradual transformation from warning through destruction to hope. Beginning with a minor tonality (G minor) and ending with a major (G major) represents the victory of mankind over its errors and the horrors of the past. At the end of the Prologue, the “Farewell to the Earth” in G minor (i) prepares the way for the destruction itself, which is then signaled by the change to D minor (v). The minor tonalities create tension, reflecting the events of the story. The retrogression from v in Scene 1 to IV in Scene 2 is a dramatic shift that relieves the harmonic tension and represents mankind’s triumph over destruction. The sense of release and joy evoked by the major key produces a sense of hope, which is built upon throughout the second scene, culminating in the final chorale. The G mixolidian tonality of the final chorale produces a sense of peace and resolution.

The big harmonic arch is: G (as tonal pole) – D minor – G mixolidian/major. The opening of the Prologue is in an ambiguous mode with G as a tonal pole, however when the music arrives at the folk song, we realize that it is in G minor (i). This tonal poll is created by the repetition of the pitch G in several times in the section. For example, bars 129 and 130 the tubular bells and vibraphone play the note G; the soloists, at bar 131, singing a line that resembles g minor; the orchestra punctuates unison G,(mm. 132–137) and the final G, at bar 142–143, played by tubular bells, vibraphone and harp, lead to bar 144 in g minor. Scene 1 begins in D minor, dominant minor of G minor (v). At the end of Scene 1 the piece cadences in D as a tonal pole, and Scene 2 begins shifting between G Mixolidian and G major, in a dominant/tonic motion (V-I motion). Scene 2 ends definitively in G Major (I).
Chapter 3: Detailed Description

1. Prologue

_Prologue Section A (mm.1–54)._ The projection screen shows an image of a seven-branched chandelier surrounded by black shadows. From mm. 18 to 26 the woodwinds present a trilled chord of stacked perfect fifths (F–C–G–D–A–E–B). This perfect fifth is an interval of seven half steps and thus represents the number 7, representing the seven-branched chandelier with its seven flickering flames (ex. 2.1).

Example 2.1. Prologue, mm.20–22, Woodwinds.

A similar presentation of the flames occurs in mm. 27–38, with the interval stack based this time on E-flat (E-flat–B-flat–F–C–G–D–A). The seven letters are then opened, with the ripping sound expressed by the chorus and percussion at mm. 43-44.

_Prologue Section B (mm. 55–107)._ The seven letters are projected, one by one, on the screen. The tonal center changes several times in this section. From m. 55 to m. 73 the tonal pole is to C. The music starts with a manic motion of the strings and finishing with a calm and serene contrast in the woodwinds and brass. In mm. 74-87 the pull is toward A. The string sound
transforms to a restless and nervous tremolo. This contrasts with a huge block of sound played by
the rest of instruments. The block also begins with A but includes the stacked seven-interval
series (A–E–B–F-sharp–C-sharp–G-sharp–D sharp) representing the seven letters and seven
flames. The chorus enters, foreshadowing the next pull toward B as a center. From mm.88-99 the
pull is to B, and the chorus finally settles in B Major. In mm.100-107 the pull toward A
reappears, closing the B section. When the cadence seems inevitable, the progression is
interrupted suddenly by the A’ section.

_Prologue A’ Section (mm. 108–143)._ At m. 121 a ripping motif is presented to
acknowledge the Evangelist’s opening of the letters. The four soloists appear (m.131)
representing the “mouth-less voice” commanding all creatures and audience to listen.
Harmonically, at measure 110, stacked fifths representing the Hope leitmotif appear, but in
another inversion of the chord (C–G–D–A–E–B–F-sharp–C-sharp–G-sharp–D sharp), followed
by the exact design of the Hope leitmotif and measure 118. The pull to G minor starts building
from measure 130, using the same techniques as in mm. 118, 121 and 131.

_Chorale (mm. 144–173)._ Finally there is a hint of tonality, and it comes in the form of a
Portuguese lullaby in G minor. This lullaby represents a farewell, implying that humanity has not
heeded the messages of the letters and will soon be destroyed. The ominous Destruction leitmotif
appears one last time at m. 169 with the knock of the bass drum (a nod to Beethoven’s “knock of
fate”) finishing the movement. Since the next movement is in D minor, we feel this transition as
an i-iv progression in the macro scale of the piece.

**2. First Scene: Destruction**

_**Introduction (mm. 1–30).**_ The Chameleon arrives and is portrayed in a _fortissimo_ D
minor. The choir is stamping and screaming; percussion and brass are banging, smashing and
rolling; woodwinds are shrill and strings keening. The result is a wash of sound, evoking horror
and fear.
The First Night, War (mm. 31–69). The first monster, War, is a red horse, which appears from the mouth of the Chameleon and incites men to kill each other. This monster is evoked by a battle march in A minor, prepared by the choir’s cadence to A minor at bar 31. The steady rhythmical pulse of the cellos, double basses and piano represents the marching of the armies.

The Second Night, Fear (mm. 70–111). The second monster, Fear, is a black horse. The soprano is the soloist for this E minor section (secondary dominant v/v). Strings, harp, piano and woodwinds repeat a pattern of four sixteenth notes to represent the people’s fleeing from fear.

The Third Night, Disease (mm. 112–137). Returning to D minor, the alto soloist describes this monster as a bronze green horse. The inversion of the Destruction leitmotif is portrayed in this section. This is the first mini-arch in terms of tonality, returning to the D minor of the introduction, after War in A minor (v) and Fear in E minor (v/v). This harmonic return creates a sense of unity.

The Fourth Night, Greed (mm. 138–175). Greed is a golden snake, sinuously moving back and forth from D minor to D major. The moving back and forth between major and minor tonality, besides creating the impression of the snake’s movement, also represents the essence of greed: the music wants to be all modes at the same time. The Evangelist has the solo in this section, but it is spoken rather than sung to provide color and contrast for this middle night of the seven.

The Fifth Night, Pollution (mm. 176–194). Pollution is another snake, this one ash-colored and foul-smelling. In this section there is no established key. The orchestra plays individual lines in different keys while the choir screams 4 stanzas of text ad libitum, creating a cacophony of sound and evoking the ideas of filth, disorder, and loss of control.

The Sixth Night, Anguish (mm. 195–225). Returning to E minor, this section creates a second small arch with the third night. This tonality is introduced by the percussion, harp, and piano at mm. 195 with the Destruction leitmotif in E minor. This monster is a white eagle.
represented by higher-pitched women’s choir, vibraphone, tubular bells, string quartet, harp and organ to give a sense of distance and coldness.

*The Seventh Night, Oppression (mm. 226–287).* This monster is another eagle, but dark and thin. In sharp contrast with the last section, only low voices are used: low piano registration, viola, cello, double bass, timpani, bass clarinet, clarinet, and male choir. They are performing a canon, with its inversion, in G minor. This section ends with the Chameleon’s roar of victory in mm. 288.

*Finale (mm. 288–314).* The finale begins with a multiphonic by the bass clarinet. The simultaneous production of several deep notes at once creates the sensation of a roar, to represent the victory of the Chameleon and the final destruction of the planet. The four soloists sing *a cappella* four phrases in D minor, more or less, describing the destruction and the three days and nights of suffering which follow. The soprano solo, harp and glockenspiel end the section with a sensation of the dominant, D major, that connects to next and final scene. This completes the third and final mini-arch between the fourth night and the *Finale* as well as the major arch for the entire first scene, from D minor to D major. The D major comes as a surprise because it represents the beginning of hope and the belief that something good may follow the destruction.

3. Second Scene: Hope

*The survivors’ appearance (mm. 1–25).* After almost 30 minutes of music in minor keys, the last scene opens in a brilliant G major/mixolidian flavor. This represents the victory of hope and happiness against horror and death, the dawn of a new day. The orchestra and chorus portray the sunrise.

*Praying of happiness and relief (mm. 26–49).* The second lullaby, *Oh Meu Menino (Oh My Baby)* represents peace and joy at humanity’s survival. We return to G major in a sense of peace and fulfillment.
The birth of the sunflower (mm. 50–70). This section is atonal as an attempt to represent the mystery of birth. Small dissonant clusters (mm. 50–52: C–C-sharp–D–E-flat–E) accompanied by crescendos and followed by a subito piano represent labor contractions. These occur three times, finally bursting in a Tutti entrance at the note D, at bar 70, creating the idea of V-I toward the next section, which is in G minor.

The miracle of the sunflower (mm. 71–86). The emergence of the Sunflower from the tree is heralded by a lavish Tutti in G minor. Half chorale, half folk song, this section is one of the first major releases of tension of the entire oratorio. The G minor is triumphant and painful at the same time, because it represents the relief and joy of birth. It also provides contrast to all of the major tonalities in this section (D major, G major).

The survivors’ gratitude (mm. 87–148). Returning to G major, the four soloists express the survivors’ gratitude and their adoration of the Sunflower as a beacon of hope and happiness.

First Alleluia (mm. 149–155). The women’s choir sings a hymn based on the folk song Dorme, Dorme, Meu Menino (Sleep, Sleep, My Baby). Its mixolidian mode anticipates the key of the big finale.

Worship of the sunflower (mm. 156–171). The first part of the Finale begins in the key established for the Sunflower in m.71. Orchestra, choir and soloists are united to express their adoration of the Sunflower and hope for their new lives to come.

Finale (mm. 172–217). For the first time in the entire work, the choir sings a cappella, resonating an Alleluia expressed by the Portuguese folk song Dorme, Dorme, Meu Menino (Sleep, Sleep, My Baby). This G major chorale closes the final arch to connect death, represented in G minor, with the promise of life after death, with mankind united as one. This chorale is violently interrupted by the Destruction leitmotif at m. 204, as a warning to the survivors not to repeat the mistakes of the past. They acknowledge the warning and the oratorio ends in a joyful, massive G major Tutti.
PROLOGUE: THE WARNING

Evangelist

In a bleak and bare land a dim lamp gleamed in the gloaming: a seven-branched chandelier carved from rare wood, with seven mismatched flames.

Its rainbow flicker gave a glimpse of seven sealed letters and an Aramaic parchment.

Through the stifling night a clear and ghostly voice spoke in syllables of fire.

Voice (Choir)

Tear the seals! And awaken in silence and embers! The seven stifled tidings!

The First letter (On Screen)

To the Slums of the North:

I suffer your pains, wounds, cries and tears: dark faces of the descendants of slavery; copper faces of timid, despoiled survivors of Indian strife; pallid faces of pampered young; the nausea of a people rotting in violence and gold.

You, foreigners in your own land, I swear you will be filled with the fruit of the Tree of Life.
The Second Letter (On Screen)

To the Barrios of the South:
You countless back-broken poor, with so many multicolored hands - Indian, black, and white together:
Distribute and share your burdens.
Seek silent, untapped pathways to the future.
Seize this moment, using your small resources of leaven, salt and sun, and I swear your humble, foreheads will bear the only Crown of Life.

The Third Letter (On Screen)

To the Peoples of Asia:
You ascetics, whose words are bread and whose days are like the water lilies on lakes and quiet rivers:
Overnight, your ageless wisdom will reveal tomorrow’s world, which celebrates the Birth.
I promise you a new name in the Book of Life, reflecting your essence as the crystal diffracts the Sun.

The Fourth Letter (On Screen)

To the Nation of Islam:
The desert bronzed your body and gave the strength of steel to your wasted flesh. It graced the path between the water and the thirst, the treeless dunes with shimmering images of spray, a solace for your eyes.
The voice of silence is the voice Allah, imposed on the vacuum of words.
Preserve the Flame of Water, which flooded the deaf, dry sands, and I promise you will be clothed in white robes.

*The Fifth Letter (On Screen)*

*To the Bomas of Africa:*

You are the haven of music in a world shattered by noise devoid of rhythm.

Ambitious men, whose blood-dyed eyes wrap you in chains and profit from your land, poison your paths.

Resist the virus of death and I promise that the Morning Star will guide you through the night.

*The Sixth Letter (On Screen)*

*To the Communes of Europe:*

Heirs to centuries of rite, rationale and custom, you have tied yourselves, unthinking, to idols of weapons, consumption and power.

Wake from the nausea that sickens your days. Share your plentiful bread with the poor of the world.

Do this, and you will be named a marble pillar in the Temple of Life.

*The Seventh Letter (On Screen)*

*To the Ghettos of the Jews:*

I planted you in land and time to provide seeds of prophecy from century to century. From you will flow the future, a tree with many strong roots.

Take up your chosen task! Take the salt and the staff of life, and tread the upward path to Light!
Evangelist (Video)

The seven tidings untied, I rested my spellbound eyes on the strange Aramaic scroll. Once again, the same mouthless voice filled the afternoon.

Voice (Choir)

Sit you down, but no matter what you see, or whatever you might hear, do not break the silence!

FIRST SCENE: THE DESTRUCTION

Choir:

A giant twisted chameleon roamed the landscape spreading distress and horror. Huge and ancient, slick and flaccid; monster swiveled his lidless eyes, shriveling the grass as he passed. His fetid breath destroyed the monkeys and the birds in the misshapen, brooding trees.

Evangelist:

Seven times in seven nights the monster yawned, shattering my ears with screams.

First Monster – War.

With his first yawn the monster’s tongue sprouted a horse, all red fire.

The horse galloped unbridled through the night, filling men with a bloodthirsty hunger so they tore at each other with any object or weapon they grasped.

When the horse neighed, in the morning, the waters flowed copper with the blood of those in cities, villages and the stubbled fields.

Second Monster – Fear.

At the second yawn a coal black horse, the color of night.
His neigh sent chill and hunger through the grave, and men sweated cold fear in their beds.

Kidneys chilled by the nightmare.

At daybreak the black horse vanished in smoke. The rustling of wheat had died, and the ashen vines rotten.

*Third Monster – Disease.*

From the third yawn a bronze-green horse emerged, racing through the night

His mane flashed like steel, his hooves treading noiselessly over the world. With the rising of the sun, a strange mole began to gnaw the bones and veins of men. Warrens of agony and slow death.

*Forth Monster – Greed.*

From the chameleon’s fourth yawn whispered a golden scaled snake, unfolding in slow spirals from its mouth.

Its scales glittered and became a baleful beacon shining within the night, lighting the insatiable hunger of men for power, ambition and money.

When morning broke, the golden scales cracked like a rotten egg, and those who had inhaled the snake’s corrupt breath like faded before the day, with its feasting, love and giving.

*Fifth Monster – Pollution.*

At the monster’s fifth gape it vomited a slender, ashen snake stinking of poison. It plunged into the waters, leaving a wake of slime and loathing.

Every creature in its path fell in agony and the leaves became dust.

*Sixth Monster – Anguish.*

On the sixth night, the monster produced an eagle, white as ice.

With his wings he scratched snow from the sky. With his beak he cut icicles of anguish.
Those touched by the wind of his wings rose from their beds with iron in their blood and met the morning with handcuffs of ash.

**Seventh Monster – Oppression.**

At the seventh night, with its final gape, the monster choked up a second eagle, stringy desiccated and dark.

The beating of its wings raised a blinding dust. Men gagged on the words stuck in their parched throats.

The morning’s fire transformed the weak and useless into executioners without warmth or souls.

**Aftermath.**

Three days the still universe lay black and silent as the grave. The sun hid. The stars were dark: silence on silence; darkness, cold and fear.

Sleepless eyes, weary with trying to pierce the dark, saw only feeble and dying Man.

**SECOND SCENE – THE HOPE**

**Choir:**

And suddenly, after the dark and mourning, breaks a surprising, radiant, bright blue dawn.

**Evangelist:**

There in the clear day, a black and twisted tree mars the morning, an oppressive carrion crow.

Before that awful sight dims the gift of dawn, a sunflower of light arises, a golden trumpet from the earth. Its clarion sound bursts the black tree like an egg, yellow petals bringing unfurled fire.

A striking bloom springs up from death and night.

A haze of bloody dew proclaims its pain.

Bright petals of fire, white light reborn,
While we, laying our once-numb hands, sense an unknown, mystic force.

**Choir:**
All glory and praise to the crucified sunflower, Girassol, trumpeting for life, overcoming pain, death and the night.
Hallelujah!

**Solo:**
In the beginning is the chorus, humming to be heard and praising the reborn, Girassol blooming.

**Solo:**
Then comes a many colored crowd, people of all nations: men, women, children young and old.
Rending the earth with sounds of many instruments, sounds of the creation of music.

**Choir:**
Girassol, Sun-Flower-Fire, invisible force in the world.

**Evangelist:**
And the multitude, marked by the shining Girassol, carried in its arms, with no power or gold, the joy of the earth and the harvest of the future.

**Choir:**
Hallelujah!
Appendix II: Projections
*Evangelist: In a bleak and bare land a dim lamp gleams in the gloaming: a seven-branched chandelier carved from rare wood, with seven mismatched flames

Its rainbow flicker gave a glimpse of seven sealed letters and an Aramaic parchment.

Through the stifling night a clear and ghostly voice spoke in syllables of fire
2. CUE SCREEN.

The First letter
To the Slums of the North

I suffer your pains, wounds, cries and tears: dark faces of the descendants of slavery; copper faces of timid, despoiled survivors of Indian strife; pallid faces of pampered young; the nausea of a people rotting in violence and gold.

You, foreigners in your own land, I swear you will be filled with the fruit of the Tree of Life.
The Second letter
To the Barrier of the South
You countless back-broken poor,
with so many multicolored hands - Indian, black, and white together:
Distribute and share your burdens
Seek silent, untapped pathways to the future
Seize this moment, using your small resources of leaves, salt and sun,
and I swear your humble foreheads will bear the only Crown of Life.
4. CUE SCREEN:

The Third letter
To the Peoples of Asia

You ascetics, whose words are bread and whose days are like the water lilies on lakes and quiet rivers:

Overnight, your ageless wisdom will reveal tomorrow's world, which celebrates the Birth.

I promise you a new name in the Book of Life, reflecting your essence as the crystal diffracts the Sun.
5. CUE SCREEN:

*The Earth, Later*

To the Nation of Islam

The desert burned your body and gave the strength of mud to your wasted flesh. It grazed the path between the water and the thirst, the treeless dunes, with shimmering images of spray, a solace for your eyes.

The voice of silence is the voice Allah, imposed on the vacuum of words.

Preserve the Flame of Water, which flooded the dead, dry sands, and I promise you will be clothed in white robes.
Resist the virus of death and profit from your land, poison your paths.

Ambitious men, whose blood-dyed eyes wrap you in chains in a world shattered by noise devoid of rhythm.

You are the haven of music To the Bomas of Africa

The Fifth Letter

6. CUE SCREEN:
The Fifth Letter
To the Bomas of Africa

You are the haven of music in a world shattered by noise devoid of rhythm.

Ambitious men, whose blood-dyed eyes wrap you in chains and profit from your land, poison your paths.

Resist the virus of death and I promise that the Morning Star will guide you through the night.
7. CUE SCREEN:

The Sixth Letter
To the Communes of Europe

Heirs to centuries of rite, rationale and custom, you have tied yourselves, unthinking, to idols of weapons, consumption and power.

Wake from the nausea that sickens your days. Share your plentiful bread with the poor of the world. Do this, and you will be named a marble pillar in the Temple of Life.
From you will flow the future, a tree with many strong roots.

I planted you in land and time to provide seeds of prophecy from century to century.

Take up your chosen task. Take the staff and the staff of life, and tread the upward path to Light.
Tenebrae ma Cantabile \( \frac{4}{4} \) 80
Evangelist: The seven tidings untied,
I rested my spellbound eyes
on the strange Aramaic scroll.
Once again, the same mouthless voice filled the afternoon.
Choral Lullaby  \(\frac{\text{d}}{\text{s}}\ = 50\)
*Evangelist: Seven times in seven nights the monster vomited forth a different creature, and seven times my ears burst with the screams and cries of Man.
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- Blood thirst y hun ger so they tore at each o ther with a ny ob ject, or wea pon that they...
Molto Agitato. Second Monster - Fear! \( \text{Molto Agitato. Second Monster - Fear!} \)

\( \text{Molto Agitato. Second Monster - Fear!} \)
night mare. Kid neys chilled.
Tenebrae - Third Monster - Disease! \( \frac{\text{Vln. I}}{\text{Vln. II}} \) \( \frac{\text{C. Bn.}}{\text{Timp.}} \) \( \frac{\text{Perc I}}{\text{B. Cl.}} \) \( \frac{\text{Vla.}}{\text{Bsn.}} \) \( \text{Tuba} \) \( \text{D.B.} \) \( \text{Fl. 2} \) \( \text{Hp.} \) \( \text{Tenebrae} \) - Third Monster - Disease!

With the rising of the Sun hooves treading noiselessly

A strange mole began to...
Agitato. Fourth Monster - Greed! \( \mathcal{O} = 72 \)

Evangelist Cue: From the chameleon's fourth yawn whispered a golden scaled snake, unfolding in slow spirals from its mouth.
Evangelist Cue: its scales glittered and became a baleful beacon shining within the night, lighting the insatiable hunger of men for power, ambition and money.
When morning broke, the golden scales cracked like a rotten egg, and those who had inhaled the snake's corrupt breath like faded before the day, with its feasting, love and giving.
At the MONSTER’S fifth gape it vomited a slender, ashen snake stinking of POISON. It plunged into the WATERS, leaving a wake of slime and loathing.
Every CREATURE in its path fell in AGONY and the leaves became DUST.
Molto Agitato. Seventh Monster - Oppression  \( \frac{1}{2} = 120 \)
Evangelist: There in the clear day, a black and twisted tree mars the morning, an oppressive carrion crow.

Before that awful sight dims the gift of dawn, a sunflower of light arises, a golden trumpet from the earth.
Its clarion sound bursts the black tree like an egg, yellow petals bringing unfurled fire.

A striking bloom springs up from death and night.

A haze of bloody dew proclaims its pain.
Evangelist: Bright petals of fire, white light
reborn,
while we, laving our once-numb hands, sense
an unknown, mystic force.
The Birth of the Sunflower
Evangelist: And the multitude, marked by the shining Girassol, carried in its arms, with no power or gold, the joy of the earth and the harvest of the future.
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