

Cantus In Memory Of Benjamin Britten

Arvo Pärt: Cantus In Memory Of Benjamin Britten

for string orchestra and bell | 6'

world première: 07.04.1977, Estonia Concert Hall, Tallinn; Estonian National
Symphony Orchestra, cond. Eri Klas

In the past years we have had many losses in the world of music to mourn. Why did the date of Benjamin Britten's death – 4 December 1976 – touch such a chord in me? During this time I was obviously at the point where I could recognize the magnitude of such a loss. Inexplicable feelings of guilt, more than that even, arose in me. I had just discovered Britten for myself. Just before his death I began to appreciate the unusual purity of his music – I had had the impression of the same kind of purity in the ballads of Guillaume de Machaut. And besides, for a long time I had wanted to meet Britten personally – and now it would not come to that.

Arvo Pärt

The autograph:

Amfai,



Cantus Benjamin Britteni mälestuseks

1977

Cantus Benjamin Britteni mälestuseks

6
4

Campana *p*

VL-ni I
div.

VL-ni II
div.

V-le

V-celli
div.

c-bassi
div.

1

un sol.

ppp un sol.

pp

pp

soli

p

mp

[] ~~colla parte~~ colla parte

2

Musical score for system 2, featuring a piano (p) dynamic marking and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with multiple staves.

≡

3

Musical score for system 3, featuring a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic marking. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment with multiple staves.

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Campana *p*

VL-ni I
div.

VL-ni II
div.

V-le

V-celli
div.

c-bassi
div.

1

un sol.

ppp un sol.

pp

pp

soli

p

mp

[] ~~colla parte~~ colla parte

2

Musical score for section 2, consisting of a piano and a string quartet. The piano part features a complex texture with many sixteenth notes and chords, marked with a *p* dynamic. The string quartet provides a harmonic and rhythmic foundation with sustained notes and some melodic lines. A *mf* dynamic marking is present in the lower strings.

≡

3

Musical score for section 3, continuing the piano and string quartet. The piano part has a more active melodic line with some *mp* markings. The string quartet continues with sustained accompaniment and some melodic fragments.