

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

November 4, 2013 at 11:54am

Britten's War Requiem

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Distinctly Catholic

This article in Sunday's Washington Post looked at the enduring impact of Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem," which was commissioned for the dedication of the new Coventry Cathedral. I found it interesting that the NYTimes reviewer of the work's U.S. premiere predicted it would not have staying power because of "a certain obviousness." That is just the kind of observation that gives elites a bad name. Yes, Britten's War Requiem has a certain obviousness. So does the Grand Canyon and the Matterhorn and the Pieta. All are beautiful and all will be enjoyed as long as human hearts beat. And, besides, is there anything subtle about the "Dies Irae" in Verdi's Requiem? Anything opaque in the "Pie Jesu" in the Faure?

If you have never heard the work, and have an hour and one half to spare, here it is:

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