

... in honorem matris meae ...

# **Septem Verba Christi in Cruce**

A cappella, SATB chorus

Thomas Oboe Lee  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
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Premiere performance by the Boston Collegium  
Music Director, Daniel Gostin  
Gasson Hall at Boston College  
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts  
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## **Program note:**

A former student of mine at Boston College contacted me this summer and asked if I would be interested in writing a choral work for her group in the Berkshires. I was at the time completing the orchestration of my *Symphony No. 7 ... Roman Holidays*, and so was ready to do something new and different from a purely instrumental work.

Having been raised a Catholic and educated at parochial schools when I was a child in Hong Kong, and also bearing in mind the fact that I now teach at a Jesuit institution, Boston College, the idea of the passion of Christ is always in the back of my mind. As a matter of fact, I have always found religious choral music to be the ideal and most transcendent way to communicate God's words.

The *Seven Last Words of Christ* has been done in a musical setting most famously by Franz Joseph Haydn in a wordless string quartet. Other settings include those by Heinrich Schütz, César Franck, Sofia Gubaidulina, and James McMillan. Portion of the text could also be found in the sublime *St. John Passion* by Johann Sebastian Bach and *Passio* by the contemporary Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt.

The complete text in Latin of *Septem Verba Christi in Cruce* follows.

1. *Pater, dimitte illis, quia nesciunt, quid faciunt.*  
(Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.)
2. *Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso.*  
(This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.)
3. *Mulier, ecce filius tuus.*  
(Woman, behold thy son.)
4. *Deus meus, Deus meus, utquid dereliquisti me?*  
(My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)
5. *Sitio.*  
(I thirst.)
6. *Consummatum est.*  
(It is finished.)
7. *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.*  
(Into thine hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.)

This work is dedicated to my mother.