

Some notes on  
IN MEMORIAM DYLAN THOMAS

*by Igor Strawinsky*

Since I began to get more and more acquainted with his work and later on, after I met him in person—in May 1953—I cherished the project to compose an opera on a libretto to be done by Dylan Thomas.

He was as enthusiastic about it as I was and he wanted to arrange for his coming to visit me in California and put up the structure of this opera. In fact, he was on his way to me in Hollywood when he passed away suddenly after arriving in New York from England.

This was a terrible blow to me as well as to all those who knew Dylan Thomas's genius.

During the following months I thought of composing something to Dylan Thomas's memory. No poem of his could fit my purpose better than the one he had composed to the memory of his father.

I used these beautiful verses without changing them, of course.

Here my music is entirely canonic. It requires tenor voice and string quartet.

Having thus composed the Song I decided to add a purely instrumental prelude and postlude (called Dirge-Canons) which are antiphonal canons between a quartet of trombones and the string quartet.

The complete name of the whole composition is:

IN MEMORIAM DYLAN THOMAS

Dirge-Canons and Song

It was completed in the spring of 1954.

The world *première* was given by the Monday Evening Concerts at Los Angeles on September 20, 1954, Robert Craft conducting. Aldous Huxley pronounced a dedicatory address.

*Duration: 6 minutes*

# DIRGE - CANONS (Prelude)

IGOR STRAWINSKY  
1954

M. M. ♩ = 100 - 102

I Tromboni tenori  
II Tromboni tenori  
III Trombone basso  
IV Trombone basso

Theme Inversion  
*mp* etc. sim. R. Inversion R. Inv.

Th. *mp* Inv. etc. sim.

M. M. ♩ = 100 - 102

Violino I  
Violino II  
Viola  
Violoncello

**A**  $d=d$  **B**

I  
II  
III  
Trb. IV

etc. sim. R. come sopra R. Inv. Inv. come sopra

**A** **B**

Vln. I  
Vln. II  
Vla.  
Vo.

marc. cant.

I *Inv.*  
 II *come sopra*  
 III *R. Inv.*  
 Trb. IV *Th.*  
 Vln. I *p*  
 Vln. II *marc. ma p*  
 Vla. *marc. ma p*  
 Vc.

I *D*  
 II *come sopra*  
 Trb. IV *R. Inv.*  
 Vln. I *D*  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vc.

*attacca subito*

# SONG

Do not go gentle...

poem by  
Dylan Thomas\*

M.M. ♩ = 60

Tenore *dolce*  
Do not go gen-tle in-to that good night,

Violino I *dolce*

Violino II

Viola *dolce*

Violoncello *pizz.*

*sul G*

Ten. *meno f*  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage a - gainst the dy -

Vln. I [1]

Vln. II

Vla. *pizz.* *arco* *f* *meno f*

Vc. *arco* *f* *meno f*

\* From "Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas" Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.

Ten. *ing of the light...* *Though wise men*

Vln. I *2* *dolce*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *dolce*

Ten. *at their end know dark is... right,* *Be-cause their words had forked no light-ning*

Vln. I *3*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ten. *they Do not go gen-tle in-to that good night.* *Good men,*

Vln. I *4* *dolce*

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. *dolce*

Ten. *TR*  
 the last..... wave by, cry - ing how bright Their frail deeds might have

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ten. *meno f*  
 danced in a green bay, Rage, rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light...

Vln. I **5**

Vln. II

Vla. *pizz. arco*

Vc. *meno f*

Ten. *(h) (h)*  
 Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, And

Vln. I *dolce*

Vln. II

Vla. *pizz.*

Vc. *dolce* *sempre poco marc.*

**6**

Ten. learn, too late, they grieved... it on its way, Do not go gen-tle in-to

Vln. I 7

Vln. II

Vla. arco

Vc.

Ten. that good night. Grave men, near death, who see with blind-ing sight Blind

Vln. I 8

Vln. II dolce

Vla. dolce

Vc.

Ten. eyes could blaze like me-te-ors and... be gay, Rage, rage a - gainst the dy -

Vln. I 9

Vln. II

Vla. pizz. arco

Vc. *f* *meno f*

Ten. *un po'*  
 - ing of the light - And you, my fa-ther, there on the sad height, Curse, bless, me now with

Vln. I  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vc.

10

*dolce*  
*dolce*  
*marc.*

Ten.  
 your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gen-tle in-to that good night. Rage,

Vln. I  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vc.

11

*pizz.*

Ten. *meno f*  
 rage a - gainst the dy - ing of the light.

Vln. I  
 Vln. II  
 Vla.  
 Vc.

4' 30"

*arco*  
*meno f*  
*meno f*  
*p cant.*  
*p cant.*  
*pizz.*  
*arco*



# DIRGE - CANONS

(Postlude)

M.M. ♩ = 100-102

I Tromboni tenori

II Tromboni tenori

III Trombone basso

IV

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*poco*

*con sord. mf*

*marc.-cant.*

A

I

II

III

Trb. IV

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

*con sord. mf*

*marc.-cant.*

*con sord. mf*

*marc.-cant.*

*mf*

*marc.-cant.*

B

I *mp*

II *mp*

III *mp*

Trb. IV *mp*

B

Vln. I

Vln. II (sord.) *marc. - cant.*

Vla. *mf poco marc. - cant.*

Vc. *mf poco marc. - cant.*

C

I *mp*

II *mp*

III *mp*

Trb. IV *mp*

*pp sub.*

C

Vln. I (sord.) *mf marc. - cant.*

Vln. II *senza sord.*

Vla. *senza sord.*

Vc. *senza sord.*

*p*

