

## 3. Dies irae (page 1 of 2)

*Dies iræ, dies illa,* The day of wrath, that day,  
*Solvat sæclum in favilla:* will dissolve the world in ashes:  
*Teste David cum Sibylla.* as testified by David and Sibyl.

*Quantus tremor est futurus,* How great will be the quaking,  
*Quando judex est venturus,* when the Judge is about to come,  
*Cuncta stricte discussurus!* strictly investigating all things!

The *Dies irae* is a medieval Latin poem characterized by its regular accentual stress and rhymed lines. The poem describes the Last Judgment, when the trumpet summons souls before the throne of God, where the saved will be delivered and the unsaved cast into eternal flames.




This traditional and Old- World text literally “put the fear of God” into the minds of the faithful. It was replaced by more hopeful texts in the *Requiems* of Brahms (*Denn alles Fleisch/So sind nun geduldig*), and Rutter (*Out of the Deep*). The *Dies irae* was omitted completely by Fauré and Duruflé. On the other hand, Verdi leaned into it quite enthusiastically!



The alternating chromatic eighth-note pattern (shown above), introduced by the basses on measure 41, over the text, “*Quantos tremor est futurus,*” represents the earth quaking, or possibly our own trembling in the face of God’s judgment. The figure is sung again by the entire chorus on measure 51.

Section				Location	Notes/Markings
S	A	T	B	m. 2	Give the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter-notes full value: cut off exactly on beat 3. Mark the notes with a <i>tenuto mark</i> *. <i>*a dash directly over or under the note.</i>
S	A	T	B	mm. 4, 5, 8, 23, 25, 29	Same as above.
S				m. 6	Lift* after 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter-note. <i>*A lift is a short space between notes. It might entail a short breath or no breath. Mark it with a comma, above your staff.</i>
	A	T	B	m. 6	Give the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter-note full value: cut off exactly on beat 3. Mark it with a tenuto mark and add a vertical slash through the rest.
S	A	T	B	m. 7	<i>Crescendo</i> over this measure.
S	A	T	B	m. 8	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the 2 quarter notes in this measure.
S	A		B	m. 12	Turn 2 <sup>nd</sup> half-note into a quarter-note. Add a quarter rest on beat 4.
		T		m. 13	Turn 2 <sup>nd</sup> half-note into a quarter-note. Add a quarter rest on beat 4.
S			B	m. 17	<i>Crescendo</i> over beat 3 and 4
S			B	mm. 17-18	No breath between “ <i>stricte</i> ” and “ <i>discussurus</i> ” Mark it with a tie or slur or write the letters “N.B.” over your staff.
S	A	T	B	m. 19	Give the quarter-note full value: cut off exactly on beat 2.
S				m. 26	Don’t let the high note (F) pop out—Mark parentheses around the notehead.

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S				m. 27	Lift after 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter note.
S	A	T	B	m. 28	<i>Crescendo</i> over this measure. 
S	A	T	B	m. 29	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the two quarter-notes in this measure. 
S	A	T	B	mm. 28-29	Sing these measures <i>legato</i> . Mark with a slur over these measures. 
S	A	T	B	m. 31	Dynamic change to <i>mf</i>
S	A	T	B	mm. 31-33	<i>Legato</i> . Mark one slur over these 3 measures.
S	A	T	B	m. 33	Change the half note to a quarter note, followed by a quarter-rest. (Cut off on beat 4)
S	A	T	B	mm. 34-36	<i>Legato</i> . Mark one slur over these 3 measures.
S	A	T	B	m. 36	Change the half note to a quarter note, followed by a quarter-rest. (Cut off on beat 4)
	T			m. 37	Put an accent above the eighth note.
S	A	T	B	m. 38	<i>Crescendo</i> over 2 <sup>nd</sup> half note
S	A	T	B	m. 38	No breath between “ <i>stricte</i> ” and “ <i>discus...</i> ”. Mark it with a tie or slur or write the letters “N.B.” over your staff.
S	A	T	B	m. 40	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the 1 <sup>st</sup> two quarter notes
			B	m. 40	On beat 3, “ <i>Quan-tus</i> ”, change the dynamic to <i>mp</i>
			B	m. 41	<i>Crescendo</i> over this whole measure
			B	m. 42	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the 2 quarter-notes
S	A	T		m. 42	<i>Crescendo</i> over beats 3 and 4
S	A	T		m. 43	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the beats 1 and 2 Lift after beat 2 <i>Crescendo</i> over beats 3 and 4
S	A	T		m. 44	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the beats 1 and 2
			B	m. 44	Dynamic change to <i>mf</i>
			B	m. 45	<i>Crescendo</i> over this whole measure
			B	m. 46	<i>Diminuendo</i> over beats 1 and 2
S	A	T		m. 46	<i>mp</i> , <i>Crescendo</i> over beats 3 and 4
S	A	T		m. 47	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the beats 1 and 2 Lift after beat 2 <i>Crescendo</i> over beats 3 and 4
S	A	T		m. 48	<i>Diminuendo</i> over the beats 1 and 2
			B	m. 48	Dynamic change to <i>f</i>
			B	m. 49	<i>Crescendo</i> over this whole measure
			B	m. 50	<i>Diminuendo</i> over 1 <sup>st</sup> two notes. Back to <i>f</i> on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> beat ( <i>Quan -</i> ).
S	A	T		mm. 50	Dynamic change to <i>f</i>
S	A			m. 61	Lift after first quarter-note, “ <i>...rus</i> ”
S	A	T	B	m. 65	Hold note for full quarter-note value. Cut off at exactly beat 2.