

Tara Mack

Dona Nobis Pacem

for TTBB unison, unaccompanied

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Programme note

When I thought about setting this short phrase, which has been set so many times before, I wanted to approach it in a way that resonates with our current moment. I believe people in many countries around the world, and across the political spectrum, share a sense of feeling unheard, feeling that the governments that are supposed to represent our interests simply aren't listening and aren't responsive. So rather than a calm meditation on peace, I wanted to write something that sounded like an urgent and frustrated cry. A unison piece sung by choirs from different countries seemed like the perfect context in which to explore this shared sentiment.

This Dona Nobis Pacem opens with a plea that echoes into an empty void. The phrase then cycles through various emotions—urgent demand, fractured disorientation, frenzied desperation, weary disappointment (including a dark spin on the well-known Dona Nobis Pacem round).

Yet underneath all this chaos remains a stubbornly persistent yearning for a life of safety, justice, joy and peace.

Performance note

For the first section of the piece (measures 1-55), I took the phrase Dona Nobis Pacem and split it into all its component vowel and consonant sounds, setting them all separately. All the vowels should be pronounced as they would in that phrase. The "ch" represents the "c" sound in "pacem." The "ə" is a schwa sound.

Dona Nobis Pacem

Commissioned by the 7th International Choral Competition Ave Verum, 2026

Tara Mack

With urgency ♩ = c. 82

(Like an echo)

The musical score is written for four voices: two Tenors (T.) and two Basses (B.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems, each containing staves for the two Tenors and two Basses. The lyrics are in Latin, and the dynamics are indicated by various markings such as *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *fp*. The tempo is marked 'With urgency' with a note value of approximately 82 beats per minute. The score includes various musical notations, including rests, notes, and slurs, as well as performance instructions like 'unvoiced' and 'con spirito'. The lyrics are: 'Də də də də də də də də də də Nə nə', 'o-a-o o-a-o o-a-o i o-a o-i o-a o-i a-e', 'nə nə nə nə nə nə nə nə o-a o-i', 'o-a o-i a-e o-a o-i i ss pə o-a', 'bə bə bə bə ss ss pə'.

Tenor 1: *mp* *p* *mp* *p*
o-a-o o-a-o o-a-o i

Tenor 2: *mf* *mp* *p* *mf*
o-a-o o-a-o i o-a-

Bass 1: *mf* *p*
Də də də də də də də də də də Nə nə

Bass 2: *mf* *p*
Də də də də də də də də də də Nə nə

T. 1: *mp* *p* *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*
o-a-o o-a-o o-a-o i o-a o-i o-a o-i a-e

T. 2: *mp* *p* *pp* *mf*
o o-a-o i o-a o-i o-a o-i a-e

B. 1: *pp*
nə nə nə nə nə nə nə nə o-a o-i

B. 2: *pp*
nə nə nə nə nə nə nə nə o-a o-i

T. 1: *fp* *unvoiced* *mp* *con spirito*
o-a o-i a-e o-a o-i i ss pə o-a

T. 2: *fp* *unvoiced* *mp* *con spirito*
o-a o-i a-e o-a o-i i ss pə o-a

B. 1: *mf* *fp* *unvoiced*
bə bə bə bə ss ss pə

B. 2: *mf* *fp* *unvoiced*
bə bə bə bə ss ss pə

12

T. *p* o - i a - e o-a o - i a - e ch ch ch ch ch ch

T. *p* o - i a - e o-a o - i a - e ch ch ch ch ch ch

B. *p* ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch o-a o - i

B. *p* ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch o-a o - i

mp con spirito

17

T. *mp* ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch o-a o - i a - e o-a

T. *mp* ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch o-a o - i a - e o-a

B. a - e o-a o - i a - e

B. a - e o-a o - i a - e

22

T. o-i a - e o-a o-i

T. *mf* o-i a - e o-a o-i o-a o-i a - e

B. *mp* o - a o - i a - e, a - e

B. *mp* o - a o - i a - e, a - e *mf* o - a o - i

28 *mf*

T. *a - e* *a - e* *o-a o-i a - e*

T. *o-a o-i a - e* *o-a o-i a - e*

B. *mf* *a - e* *a - e*

B. *a - e, a - e o-a o-i*

34 *f*

T. *o-a o-i a - e o-a o-i*

T. *o-a o-i a - e o-a o-i*

B. *o-a o-i* *o-a o-i a - e*

B. *o-a o-i* *o-a o-i a - e*

40

T. *o-a o-i a - e a - e, a - e a - e, a - e*

T. *o-a o-i a - e a - e, a - e a - e, a - e*

B. *o-a o-i, o-a o-i a - e hm hm, hm*

B. *o-a o-i, o-a o-i a - e hm hm, hm*

45 *rit.*

T. *o - a o - i, o - a o - i, o - a o - i, o - a o - i*

T. *o - a o - i, o - a o - i, o - a o - i*

B. *o - a o - i o - a o - i, o - a o - i o - a* ***p***

B. *o - a o - i o - a o - i, o - a o - i a - e* ***p***

51 ***p*** $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 96$

T. *o - a o o - a o, o - a o - i a - e - mm*

T. *o - a o o - a o, o - a o - i a - e - mm*

B. *o, o - a o o - a o, o - a o, o - a o - i a - e - mm*

B. *a - e a - e - mm*

56 (Like an echo) ***mp*** ***p*** ***mp*** ***p***

T. *Do-na no, do-na no do-na no - bis*

T. *Do-na no, do-na no - bis Do-na*

B. ***mf*** ***p*** *Do do do do do do do do do do No no*

B. ***mf*** ***p*** *Do do do do do do do do do do No no*

59

mp *p* *mp* *p* *mf*

T. *8* Do-na no, do-na no, do-na no - bis, Do-na no-bis, do-na no-bis,

T. *8* no, do-na no - bis, Do-na no-bis, do-na no-bis,

B. *mf* *mp*
no no no no no no no no, Do-na no-bis, do-na no-bis, do-na

B. *mf* *mp*
no no no no no no no no, Do-na no-bis, do-na no-bis, do-na

62 Stamp feet:

Perc. $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$

T. *mf* *f*
8 Do-na no-bis pa-cem Do-na no - bi - s pa-cem

T. *mf* *f*
8 Do-na no-bis pa-cem Do-na no - bi - s pa-cem

B. *mf* *f*
no-bis pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa-cem Do-na no - bi - s pa-cem

B. *mf* *f*
no-bis pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa-cem Do-na no - bi - s pa-cem

73

Perc. H $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

T. $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

T. $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

B. $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

B. $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

no-bis pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa-cem pa-cem Do-na pa-cem, pa-cem Do-na

p *mp* *p* *mp* *p con spirito* *mp*

79

Perc. H $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

T. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$
 do - na no - bis *mf* pa - cem

T. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$
mp do - na no - bis *mf* pa - cem

B. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$
mf Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem

B. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$
mf no - bis, Do - na no - bis pa - cem, pa - cem

83

Perc. H $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

T. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$
f pa - - - cem *ff* Do - na

T. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$
f Do - na no - bis *ff* Do - na

B. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$
f Do - na no - bis *ff* Do - na no - bis, Do - na

B. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$
f pa - - - cem *ff* Do - na no - bis, Do - na

87 *Clap:* *Stamp:*

Perc.

T.

T.

B.

B.

92 *molto rit.*

Perc.

T.

T.

B.

B.

96 - - - - - ♩ = c. 76

rit. - - ♩ = c. 96

Perc. Stamp: ♩ 7

T. *p* *p* *pp* *f*
do - na_ no - bis_ pa - cem do-na no-bis pa - cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem

T. *p* *p* *pp* *f*
do - na_ no - bis_ pa - cem do-na no-bis pa - cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem

B. *p* *pp* *f*
do - na_ no - bis_ Do-na no, do-na no-bis pa - cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem

B. *p* *pp* *f*
do - na_ no - bis_ Do-na no, do-na no-bis pa - cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem