

Ernst Toller — Requiem for an Idea

Text by Per Brask

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The silence of the room is eventually broken by a faint rustle, as a curtain moving in the wind perhaps, but there is no wind, the rustle grows stronger, turns into something like the flutter of swallows' wings. Then cello.

Distantly, as if emerging from a dream, tempered with sadness.

♩ = ca. 84, with freedom

Musical score for cello, measures 1-18. The score is written in bass clef and consists of six staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 5/4, then 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, and finally 5/4. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *dim.*, and *pp*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and accents.

♩ = ca. 56

A punta d'arco

Musical score for cello, measures 19-24. The score is written in bass clef and consists of six staves. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *ppp*. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with slurs and accents. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in measure 23.

(At first he whispers, his voice slightly distorted. Cello continues)

(He pauses for a beat, the cello continues. Then Toller becomes more insistent.)

(The cello ceases. The volume of Toller's voice increases)

I am forty-six and a half
I have grey hair
I am tired

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I know I'm dead. I know that.
I sense you there. I can almost
make out your contours as if
through a bright light. Skulls.

ad lib. III -----

pp poco pp rall. -----

Or - those who died in the revolution of 1919 - Or - the faces of the future - ?
 If my mother were right you're here to judge me - you have been placed there to judge me
 If my mother were right my death was sealed into God's book last fall
 If my mother were right you already know everything
 If my mother were right this is my moment - facing the angels
 I've had to defend myself before.
 If my mother were right you've already judged me - a commie playwright who committed
 suicide - a commie dreamer who played by ear
 Was my mother right?

♩ = ca. 56

B mf > mp < mf

II -----
III -----
mp p mf

Who I ask you could deny such a dream?
 Who would be fool enough to say no?
 Listen to her - the vibrations of a lost destiny.
 How could I not die along with her?
 Die to make way for a later and better re-birth.
 Let us begin.

with sadness

♩ = ca. 68

p mp pp

A Jewish mother gave me life
 Germany was my nurse
 Europe my teacher
 the earth was my home
 the world my country
 And you - all of you - my religion.

C mp