

Verba ultima is a choral mini-drama portraying the intense, chaotic emotions of the crucifixion. Thus the text includes not only the last words of Christ, but elements that move the action along: the words of the crowd as it turns into a bloodthirsty, taunting mob; the statements of the two thieves, one despairing, one hopeful; and the austere narrative passage "erat autem fere hora sexta". The crowd sections often build to climaxes which are interrupted by the soprano saxophone and the tenor section, who for the most part share the rôle of Christ. The saxophone also intensifies the emotion of the crowd, occasionally supporting and doubling the voice parts.

VERBA ULTIMA

Filiae...

*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.
Filii nostri, fili nostri.*

*Crucifige, crucifige illum! Sanguis eius super nos et super filios nostros!
[Crucify, crucify him! His blood be on us and on our children!]*

Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

*Si tu es Christus, salvum fac te ipsum et nos.
[If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!]*

*Domine, memento mei cum veneris in regnum tuum.
[Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.]*

Truly, today you shall be with me in Paradise.

Hail, King of the Jews!

*Qui destruit templum et in triduo illud reaedificat, salva te ipsum. Si Filius Dei es, descende de cruce.
Alios salvos fecit, se ipsum non potest salvum facere. Confidet in Deo, liberet nunc eum.
[You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God,
come down from the cross. He saved others, himself he cannot save. He trusted in God; let God deliver
him now.]*

*Eili, eili, lama sabachthani?
[My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?]*

This man calls for Elijah. Now leave him alone. Let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

*Erat autem fere hora sexta, et tenebrae factae sunt in universa terra usque in nonam horam, et
obscurantus est sol, et velum templi scissum est medium.
[It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the
sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain.]*

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.

*Consummatum est
[It is finished.]*

Surely this was a righteous man.

Matthew 27: 25, 29, 40, 42-43, 46-47, 49

Luke 23: 21, 28, 34, 39, 42-47

John 19: 30

duration: c. 11:00