

BENJAMIN
BRITTEN
RUSSIAN
FUNERAL

for brass & percussion
(1936)

FULL SCORE

Faber Music Limited

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Benjamin Britten wrote his only work for brass band, *Russian Funeral*, in February 1936, the year in which the Spanish Civil War was to begin (in the summer). In his 1936 diary, the composer referred to the work as 'War & Death,' a title which reflects not only his pacifist ideals but also his admiration for those among the international community who sacrificed their lives in the struggle against the rise of Fascism in Europe. The March is in effect a short but substantial symphonic poem for brass and percussion—a novel conception.

Apart from the obvious examples of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, perhaps the most striking influence on Britten's writing during the middle Thirties was that of Mahler. The broad Mahlerian funeral march ('Death') that opens *Russian Funeral* frames—and in its reprise is infiltrated by—a central scherzo-like military dance ('War') with pre-echoes of the combative bugle fanfares of the *War Requiem* and *Owen Wingrave*. The main theme of the funeral march is a Russian proletarian funeral song, the words of which glorify those who gave their lives for the Revolutionary cause. It was played at the funeral which followed the massacre of the demonstrators who assembled outside the Winter Palace in January 1905, and was later used by Shostakovich as the main theme of the third movement of his Eleventh Symphony (1957).

Russian Funeral was first performed in a London Labour Choral Union concert at the Westminster Theatre on March 8, 1936, in a program conducted by Alan Bush. The work then remained unpublished and unperformed for over forty years, until its revival in 1980 by the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

J.E./D.M.

Instrumentation

- 3 Trumpets in B♭
- 4 Horns in F (ad lib.)
- 2 Tenor Trombones
- Bass Trombone
- Bass Tuba
- Percussion (1 player)
 - Cymbals, Side drum,
 - Tenor drum, Bass drum.

Duration c. 6 minutes

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Andante alla marcia

The first system of the musical score for 'The Swan' from 'The Nutcracker'. It features staves for Trumpets (Tpt.), Horns (Hn.), Trombones (Trb.), Tuba, and Percussion (Perc.). The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The first staff (Trumpets) has a circled '1' above it. The second staff (Horn 1) has a circled '1' above it. The third staff (Horn 2) has a circled '1' above it. The fourth staff (Trombone 1) has a circled '1' above it. The fifth staff (Trombone 2) has a circled '1' above it. The sixth staff (Tuba) has a circled '1' above it. The seventh staff (Percussion) has a circled '1' above it. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *marcato*, *Solo*, *meno p*, *dim.*, *sempre pp*, and *sempre ppe marcato*. The percussion part features a repeating rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.