

Vasken Ohanian

The Dies Irae Variations

for Solo Violin

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VAOMusic 

Inspired by:

Wallace Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

Duration:

10:00

About the Composer:

As a composer and conductor, Vasken Ohanian is known for the expressivity in his music making. He strives to compose music that is relevant to the human experience, often incorporating elements of his Armenian heritage in his compositions. He is a former winner of the *Annual Kris Getz Composition Competition* and a recipient of the *Dean Emeritus Luis Costa Award for Music*. As a conductor, he formerly served as Co-director and Resident Conductor for the 4th Annual *Hot Air Music Festival*.



Vasken Ohanian received his Bachelor of Music in Composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying under Elinor Armer. He holds a double Master of Music in Composition and Choral-Conducting from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, studying with Dr. Martin Herman (Composition) and Dr. Jonathan Talberg (Choral-Conducting).

Learn more at: www.vaskenohanian.com

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Violin

The Dies Irae Variations

Poetry by Wallace Stevens

Vasken Ohanian

Freely ♩ = 96

Intro.

Measures 1-10 of the Intro section. Measure 1 starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The music begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The piece changes to 4/4 time at measure 2, 6/8 at measure 5, and 5/4 at measure 10. Dynamics include *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *mf*. A large watermark 'Do Not Copy' is overlaid on the score.

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird...

o Eerie ♩ = 104

1.

Measures 1-20 of the 'o Eerie' section. Measure 1 starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The music begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piece changes to 3/4 at measure 5, 5/4 at measure 10, and 3/4 at measure 16. Dynamics include *p* and *rit.* (ritardando). There are triplets marked with a '3' at measures 10, 16, and 17. The section ends with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a key signature change to three flats (B-flat, E-flat, and A-flat) at measure 20. A large watermark 'Do Not Copy' is overlaid on the score.

*I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds...*

1 **Ruggedly** ♩ = 96

II.

5

10

*The blackbird whirled in the Autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime...*

1 **Vivo** ♩ = 160

III.

4

7

10

12

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*Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause...*

VI. **Cold** ♩ = 96

p

mp

*O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?*

VII. **Presto** ♩ = 168

mf

sfz

p

sfz

f

sfz

sfz

*I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know...*

VIII. **Briskly** ♩ = 104

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

*When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles...*

IX. **Broadly** ♩ = 60

p *f* *p*

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Musical notation for measures 9, 13, and 16. Measure 9 features a melodic line with a *ff* dynamic marking. Measures 13 and 16 continue the melodic development with various articulations and dynamics.

*It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar limbs...*

Lightly ♩ = 80
1 pizz.
XIII. *mp*

Musical notation for measure XIII, marked *mp* and *pizz.* The measure is in 3/4 time and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Musical notation for measures 5, 9, and 14. Measure 5 includes an *arco* marking. Measure 9 features a *pizz.* marking. Measure 14 includes a *rit.* marking and an *arco non vib.* marking.

Maestoso ♩ = 86
Theme

Musical notation for measures 1, 5, and 10 of the *Theme*. Measure 1 is marked *Maestoso* with a tempo of ♩ = 86. Measure 10 includes a *molto rall.* marking and a *sf* dynamic marking.