# Requiem for Our Fathers



for Alto Saxophone, Treble Voices, Tenors and Basses

> Peter Dyson 1996

#### **Performance Suggestion**

Consideration could be given to reading Dylan Thomas's poem **Do not go gentle into that Good Night** prior to any performance

### The poem is not reproduced here.

Usage of copyright material from the Dylan Thomas Estate is controlled by

David Higham Associates 5–8 Lower John Street Golden Square London W1F 9HA E-mail: <u>permissions@davidhigham.co.uk</u>

## Requiem

#### for Our Fathers















Requiem for Our Fathers: composed July 27th, 1996 St Petersburg

I had been wanting to write something for my father for a long time. When he died I sang the Funeral Ikos, the Greek Orthodox Funeral Sentences for the burial of Priests, every night from his death until his funeral. It was all I felt able to do at the time to acknowledge the passing of this man, my father; my father who had turned his life upside down midway to become a priest; the first married man to be ordained in the Methodist Church in England in its history. The poem by Dylan Thomas very much caught my mood. It stayed with me in the intervening years.

The immediate trigger for this piece was the death of the father of a friend. In St Petersburg I joined a close knit circle of colleagues in the British Consulate who accepted me as their friend. When Maria Bogachyova's father died we were all caught up in the trauma of his death. It was a nightmare I was grateful not to have experienced, a very physical sorting out of arrangements that it is the last thing you want to have to do. There was such a strong unity in our emotions during those days. It was very real.

In the previous weeks Maria had joked to me about writing a Requiem for her. It was not a serious request but circumstances now made it a burning necessity and so I sat down on my parent's Wedding Anniversary and this piece poured out. I knew I only had this day and so I limited myself to the text of the first and last movements used in Faure's setting of the Requiem Mass. They contain the crux of the issue anyway. I chose an Alto saxophone because it can "cry" in a way no other instrument can. It has the ability to express the anguish experienced in such circumstances. I cried a lot as I wrote this piece for both of us, my newfound friend and I. But I had not realised how much I needed to write this piece until I had finished it.