

**Presenter Name:**

Brian Wilbur Grundstrom

**Work title:**

For Whom the Bell Tolls

**Composer:**

Brian Wilbur Grundstrom

**Librettist:**

David M. Dorsen

**Work Description:**

Hemingway was a larger-than-life personality. In his popular novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, there is a bit of the author in the character of Robert Jordan, an idealistic young American in 1930's fascist Spain, who accepts a doomed mission to blow up a bridge.

Through his lyrical melody-driven music, Brian Wilbur Grundstrom brings out the emotional depths of the characters and new insight to this Hemingway classic. Using the full versatility of opera, David Dorsen's libretto and Grundstrom's music explore Hemingway's themes of trust, loyalty, honor, love, betrayal, fear, pain, loss, and sacrifice, while adding modern insight, as his notions of honor clash with the reality of the situation.

The opera takes place in the mountains of northern Spain during the Spanish Civil War in 1937.

**Duration:**

2:37 not including intermission

**Vocal Forces:**

Leads (4): Lyric Soprano, Mezzo, Tenor, Bass - Comprimario (10): 1 Lyric Soprano, 1 Mezzo 1 Alto, 3 Tenor, 3 Baritone, 1 Bass

**Instrumental Forces:**

Small: clarinet, piano, strings(11111);

Medium: 1111, 4101, harp, perc strings (33232)

Large: 2222,4331,harp,perc,strings

**Approximate budget to produce:**

\$250,000 to \$350,000

**Production intention - what are you looking for? (i.e. co-producers):**

Premiere production is scheduled for Brasilia in Summer/Fall of 2025. We are looking for partners and additional productions.

**Work page/website (if available):**

<https://forwhomthebelltollsopera.com>

**Link to work samples:**

<https://brianwilbur.com/fwtbt>

# For Whom the Bell Tolls

A New Opera in Two Acts  
Fighting Fascism and Sacrificing for Love

Music by  
**Brian Wilbur Grundstrom**  
Libretto by  
**David M. Dorsen**  
Based on the novel by  
**Ernest Hemingway**



Hemingway was a larger-than-life personality. In his popular novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, we can see some of the author in the character of Robert Jordan, an idealistic young American in 1930's Spain, who accepts a doomed mission to blow up a bridge.



Ernest Hemingway  
Milan, 1918



#### Soprano Indra Thomas

Premiered "Will He Love Me" with Maestro Jeffrey Dokken and the Rome Symphony Orchestra  
(from left: Dokken, Grundstrom, Thomas, Barbara Beninato)

Through his lyrical melody-driven music, Brian Wilbur Grundstrom brings out the emotional depths of the characters and new insight to this Hemingway classic. Using the full versatility of opera, David Dorsen's libretto and Grundstrom's music explore Hemingway's themes of trust, loyalty, honor, love, betrayal, fear, pain, loss, and sacrifice, while adding modern insight, as Robert Jordan's notions of honor clash with the reality of civil war.



## Development Workshop Concert Performance

Church of the Epiphany, Washington DC - November 20, 2022

Funded in part by a grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

#### Music Director

Jeffrey Sean Dokken

#### Leads

Alan Naylor (Robert Jordan)  
Eliza Bonet (Pilar)

Kelly Curtin (Maria)  
Sean Pflueger (Pablo)

#### Comprimario

Danielle Bendy  
Suzanne S. Chadwick  
Cosmo Clemens  
Aurelio Dominguez  
Santiago Alfonzo Meza

Derrick Miller  
Jose Sacin  
Lori Shen  
Daniel Sherwood  
Antony Zwerdling

#### Highlights Video at

[www.forwhomthebelltollsopera.com](http://www.forwhomthebelltollsopera.com)



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