



Ernest 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.

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.

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

June 22, 2025



www.forwhomthebelltollsopera.com brian@brianwilbur.com **6000** 917.952.7957 1453 S St NW Washington DC 20009-3819

LEADS

Robert Jordan (Tenor), American, early 30's, Former Spanish instructor at a college in the mid-west, Robert came to Spain to support the Republicans and fight the Fascists. A skilled dynamiter, he has become disillusioned with the war, seeking meaning in performing his responsibilities to the best of his ability. To the world, he is handsome, virile, and in command, with a seemingly impenetrable stoical exterior. But they mask an untapped emotional depth consumed with self-doubt and a roiling loss of purpose, aware he is going through the motions without conviction. He realizes that he could die on this mission, but is unsure how he feels about that. Robert finds himself drawn to Maria both physically and emotionally. He feels protective of her but also aware that he cares for her in ways he has never cared for anyone before, and starts to imagine sharing a life with her, which gives him someone to live – and die – for. Tall, sinewy muscles, light complexion and hair.

Maria, 18 (Soprano) Traumatized first by witnessing her parents being executed, then gang-raped by the Fascists, she was saved by the guerrillas led by Pablo, when they blew up the train taking her south to a prison camp. Not part of the guerrilla band herself, she has found a place among them cooking under Pilar's watchful eye which has given her a sense of belonging and helped heal her shattered sense of self. She is trusting by nature but still feels displaced and lost due to the emotional upheavals she has experienced. She is in search of something or someone to believe in and live for, even if she is not aware of it herself. Senses that beneath his resolute exterior Robert is a kindred – and equally lost – spirit. This awakens her dormant heart and prompts her to want to be with him and to have a relationship that is both emotionally rewarding and lasting and opens her up to imagining a better life with him elsewhere. Dark hair, attractive features, melancholy air beneath a very natural warmth.

Pilar, late 40's (mezzo) A born leader and a true believer in the Republic, placing all of her energies and passion in its service, even though she recognizes the ruthless brutality that exists on both sides. Never beautiful and insisting she is ugly, she still sparks with the fire – the Gypsy blood in her, she would say – that incited the passion of matadors when she was younger. Although she still describes herself as "Pablo's woman", she is disgusted that he's become a drunk, shirking his responsibilities to the others. Protective of Maria, she sees Robert as a way to get Maria to safety and senses that Robert may need Maria as much as Maria needs Robert. Gritty, commanding, keeps her own counsel, but with a sense of humor.

Pablo, late 40's (bass) Once a ruthless leader that both attracted and repelled Pilar, he is now tired of the conflict and has sought safety in hiding out in the mountains, drinking his nights away. He has alienated the other guerrillas who have already turned to Pilar for direction, even if he pretends not to know. He is invested in his own self-preservation at all costs, even if it means undermining Robert's mission. He can be crafty, selfish, duplicitous, and cowardly. But he is also smart and a survivor. Not to be trusted but the others do, even when they know better. Barrel-chested with shifting eyes that are always on guard.

PABLO'S BAND

Anselmo, 60's (baritone) Dedicated, reliable, committed to the Republican cause, though his conscience is still troubled by the human cost and moral consequences, but can see clearly what he must do if their side is to defeat the Fascists. Wears his age on his face, a man of few words, but uses them wisely.

Rafael, early 40's (tenor) Easy-going, self-identified Gypsy, always happy to have another meal; wily, willing to take orders but not always perfect at execution, expects to survive the war regardless of who wins.

Agustín, 30's (baritone) A hot-headed, foul-mouthed man who seems younger than his years for all of his hard-bitten commitment to the Republican cause.

Fernando, early 30's (tenor) Engaged in the cause but on his own terms. Will stick it out but will be glad when it's over, so life can go back to what it was. Can miss the forest for the trees. Personable.

Amalia, 30's (alto) Sister of Fernando, plain and tom boyish.

Rosa, 30's (soprano)

Isabella, 30's (mezzo)

Lorenzo, 30's (bass)

Primitivo, 20's (bass) Youngest member of the band.

EL SORDO'S BAND

El Sordo, 40's (baritone) An intuitive and fearless leader, if somewhat impulsive. Still can listen, evaluate, and understand orders are orders. Cares about his men and they care about him. Personable, engaging, gracious even in difficult circumstances, knows what to take seriously and what not. (same singer as Agustín).

Joaquin, 20's (tenor) Member of El Sordo's band

Overture

Orchestral













Overture

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Orchestral















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Overture

Orchestral



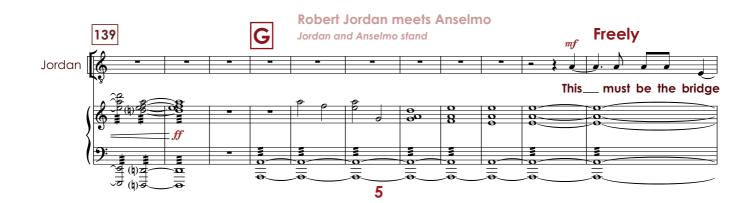




That is the Bridge Act 1 Scene 1A

Afternoon on clear day in mountainous country. Middle of May and cool. We see two men in work clothes with heavy backpacks. The younger one is Jordan, the olderis Anselmo. Both men are crouchingand staring at large single-span bridge in the distance. Jordan looks through old-fashioned binoculars.

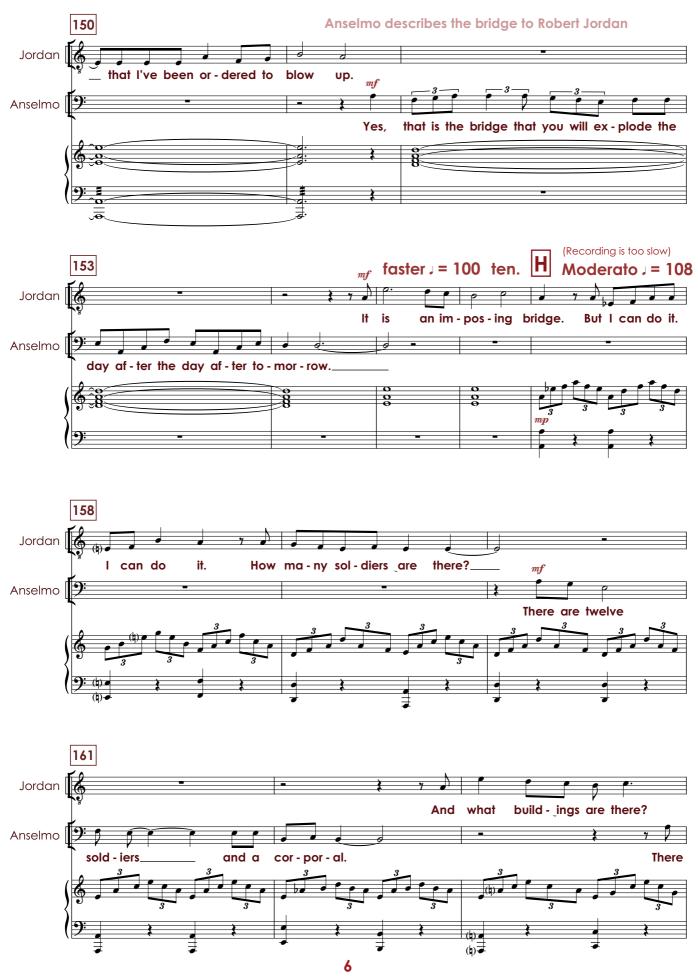




That is the Bridge

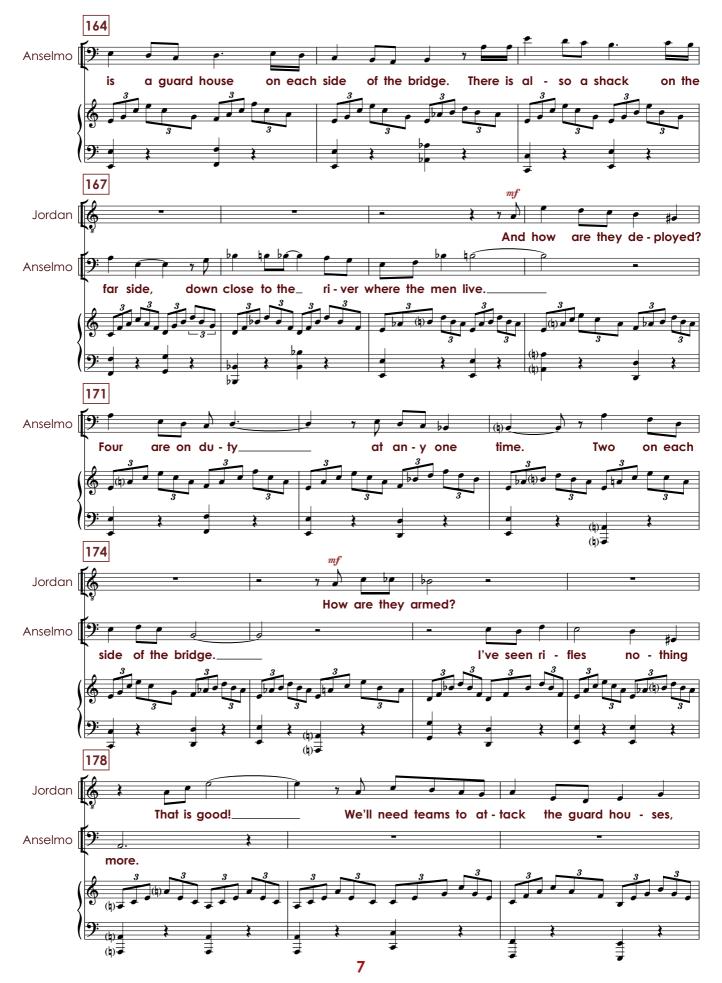
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1A



That is the Bridge

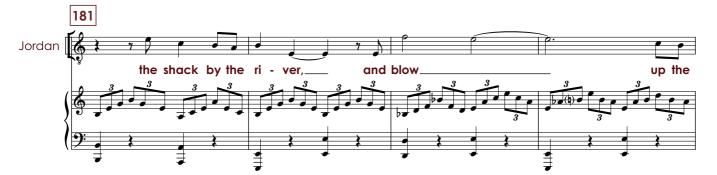
For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 1A



That is the Bridge

For Whom the Bell Tolls

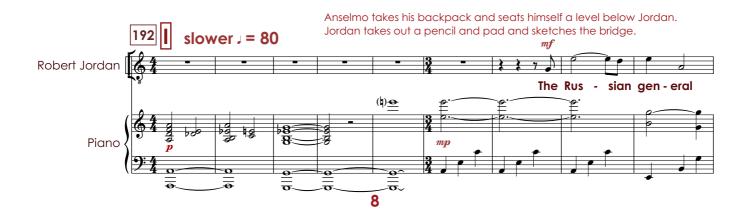
Act 1 Scene 1A







One Great Offensive Act 1 Scene 1B



One Great Offensive

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1B









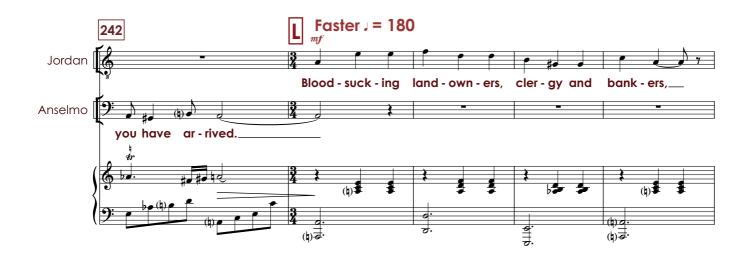
One Great Offensive

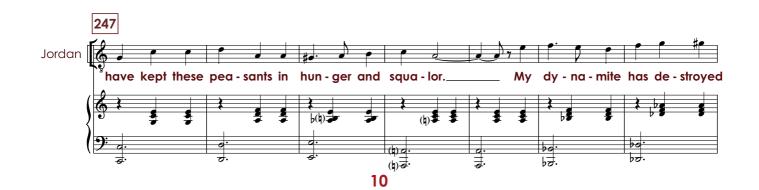
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1B











Give Us the Strength

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1C









Give Us the Strength

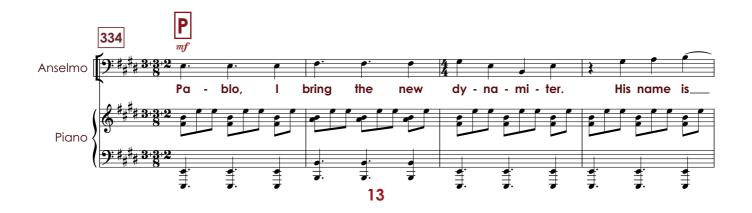
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1C





The New Dynamiter Act 1 Scene 1D

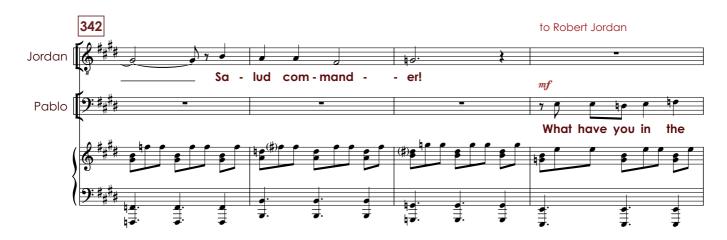


The New Dynamiter

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 1D

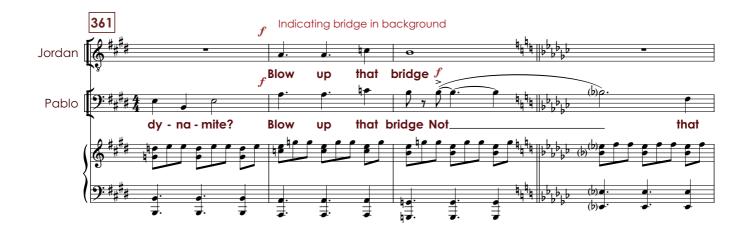


















A Bigger Plan Act 1 Scene 1E









A Bigger Plan

For Whom the Bell Tolls

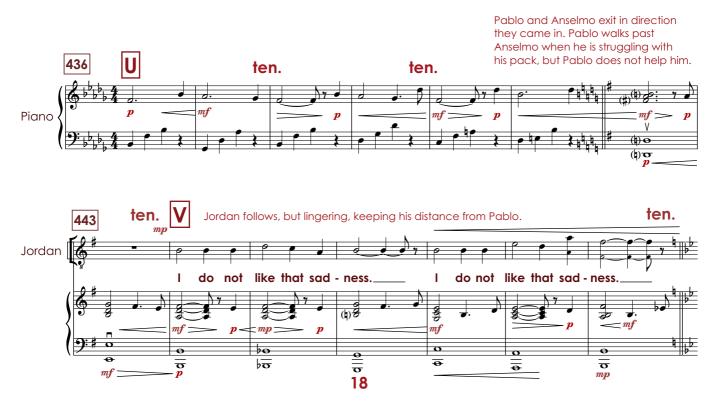
Act 1 Scene 1E



Pablo and Anselmo exit in direction they came in. Pablo walks past Anselmo when he is struggling with his pack, but Pablo does not help him.



That Sadness Act 1 Scene 1F





Act 1 Scene 1F



Rafael the Gypsy Act 1 Scene 2A Robert Jordan Meets the Band







Rafael the Gypsy

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2A





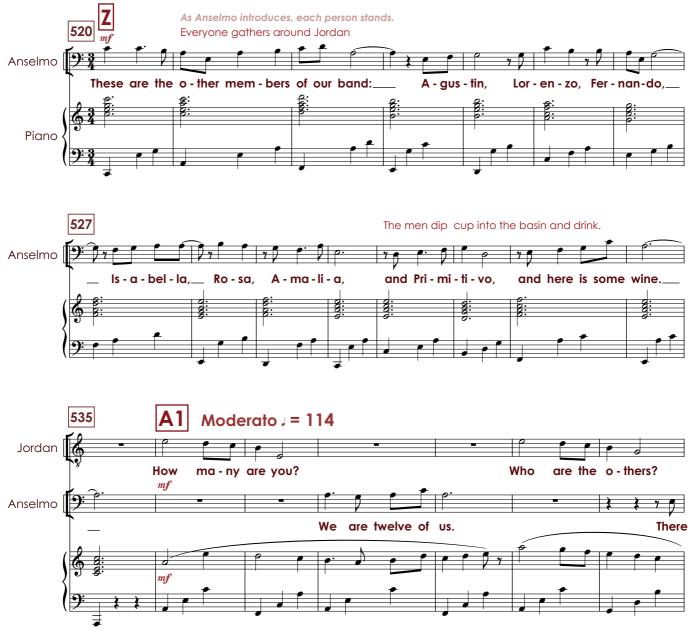
Orchestral - The Men Drink Act 1 Scene 2B







These are the Others Act 1 Scene 2C







These are the Others

Act 1 Scene 2C





Pablo Was Brave Act 1 Scene 2D

The Men Describe Pablo



Pablo Was Brave

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2D



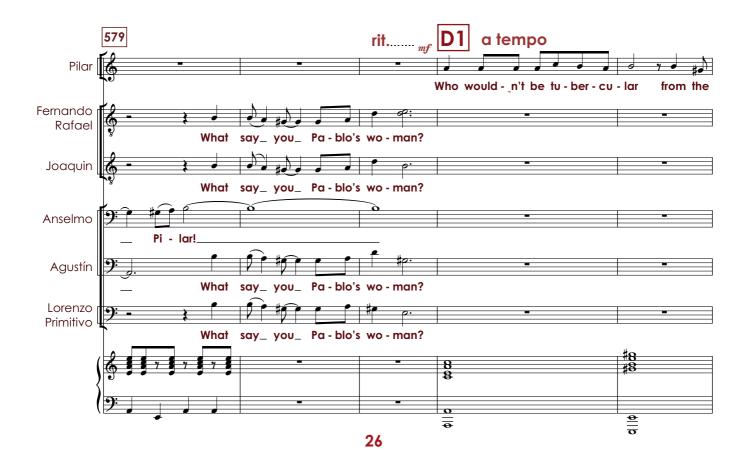


Pablo Was Brave

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2D





Pablo Was Brave

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2D



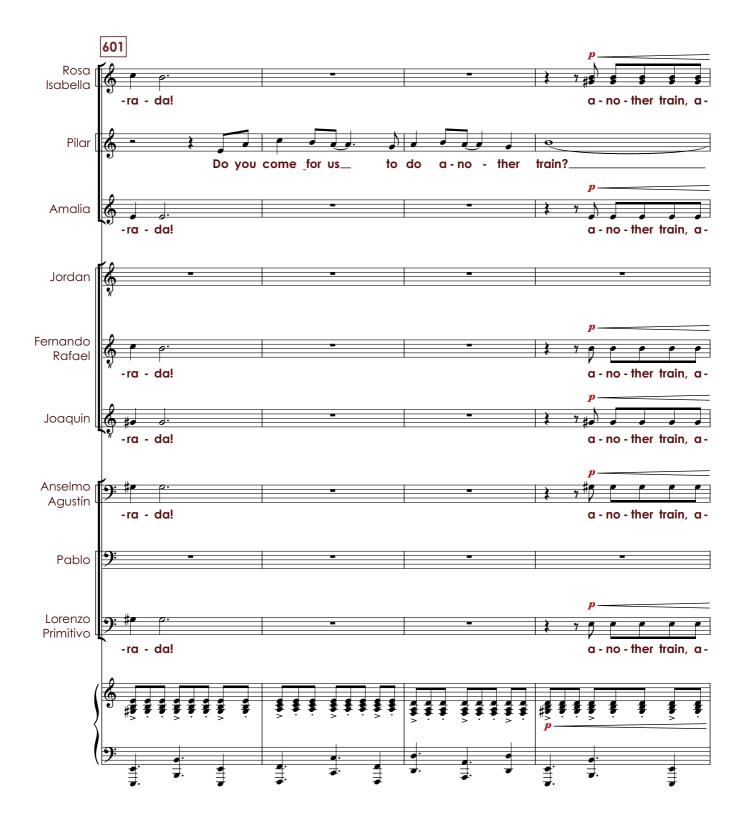


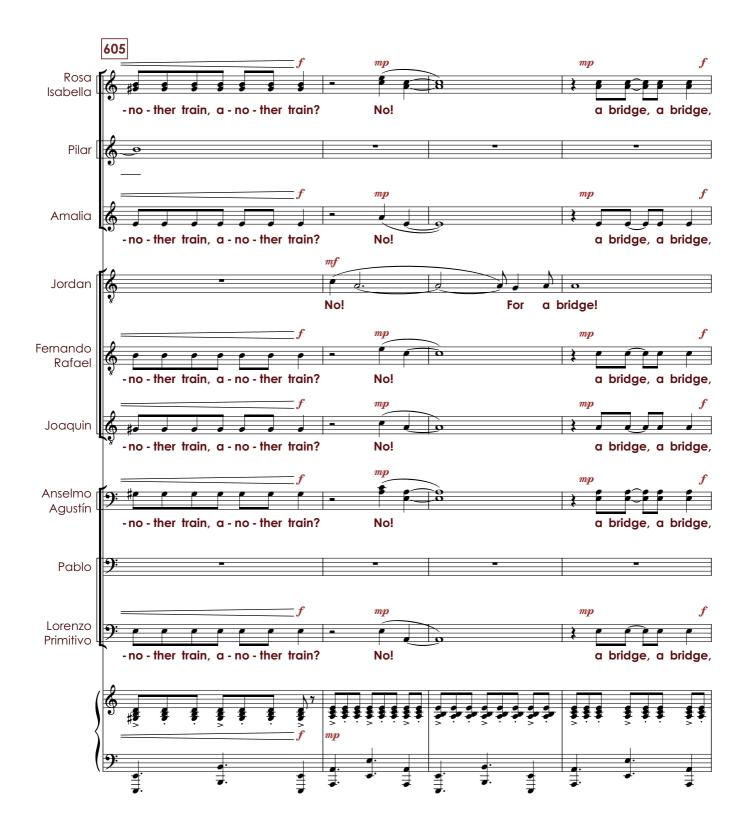
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No, A Bridge













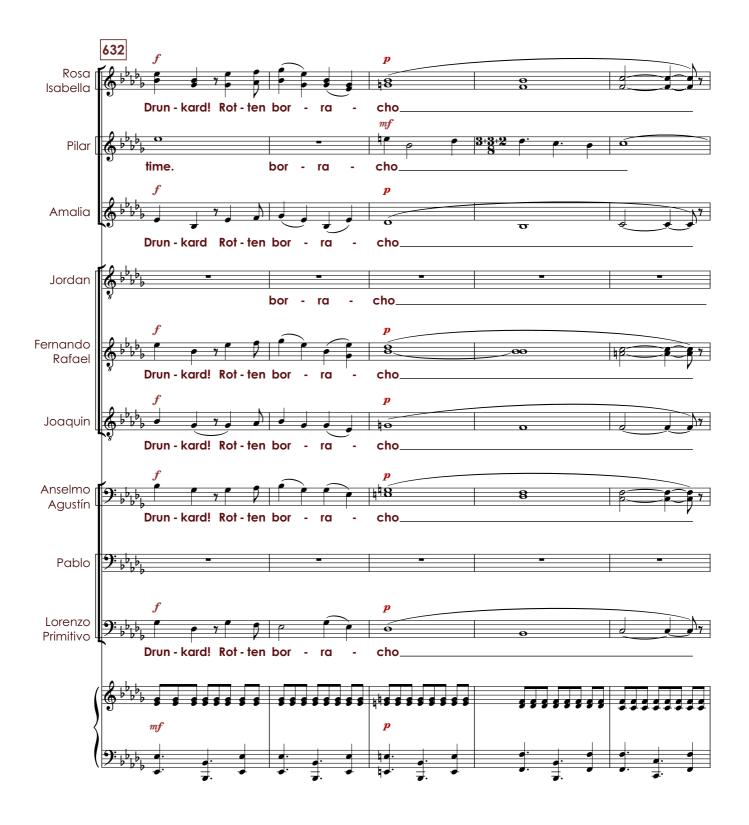


Act 1 Scene 2E



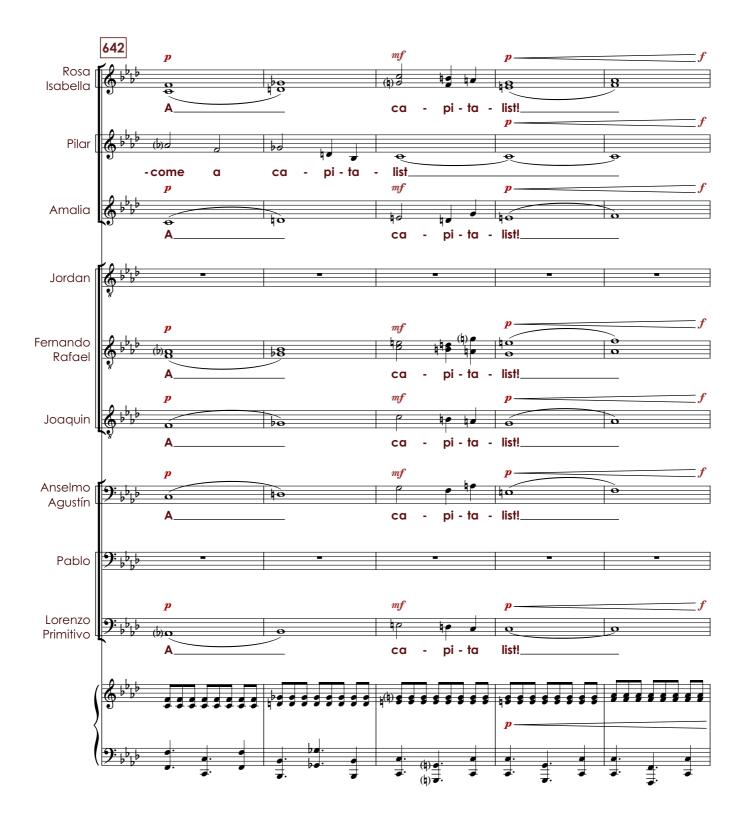






For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 2E







Act 1 Scene 2E



For Whom the Bell Tolls Without Horses

Act 1 Scene 2F





Without Horses

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2F



Without Horses

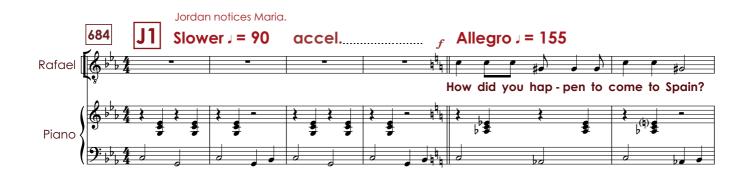
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2F





For Whom the Bell Tolls Robert Jordan Doesn't Teach English Act 1 Scene 2G



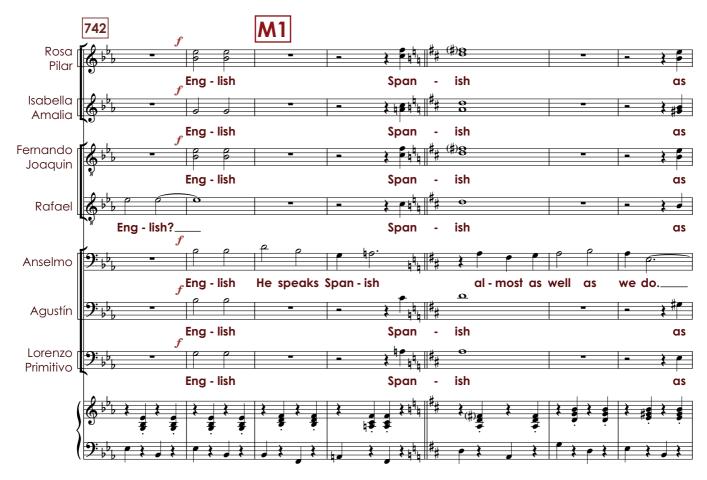


















Maria Act 1 Scene 2H Robert Jordan Meets Maria









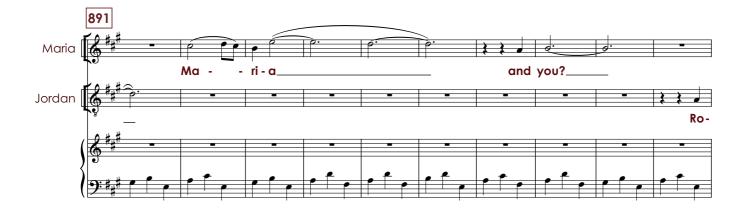
Maria

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2H







Maria shakes her head, and slaps Jordan on the knee.









Barracho

Act 1 Scene 2J Pilar Tells of Pablo's Bravery

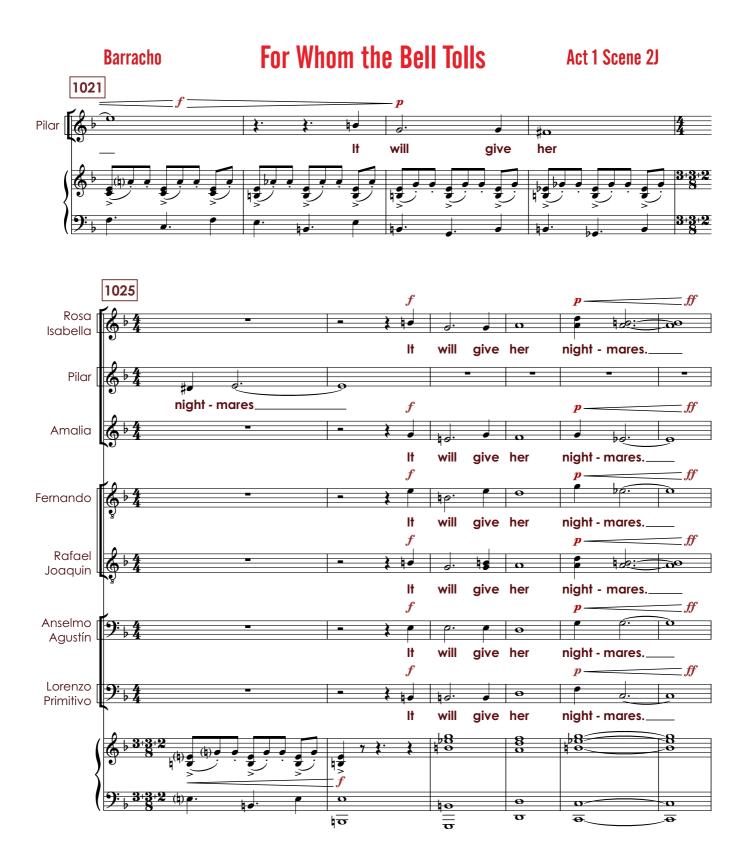














Barracho

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2J





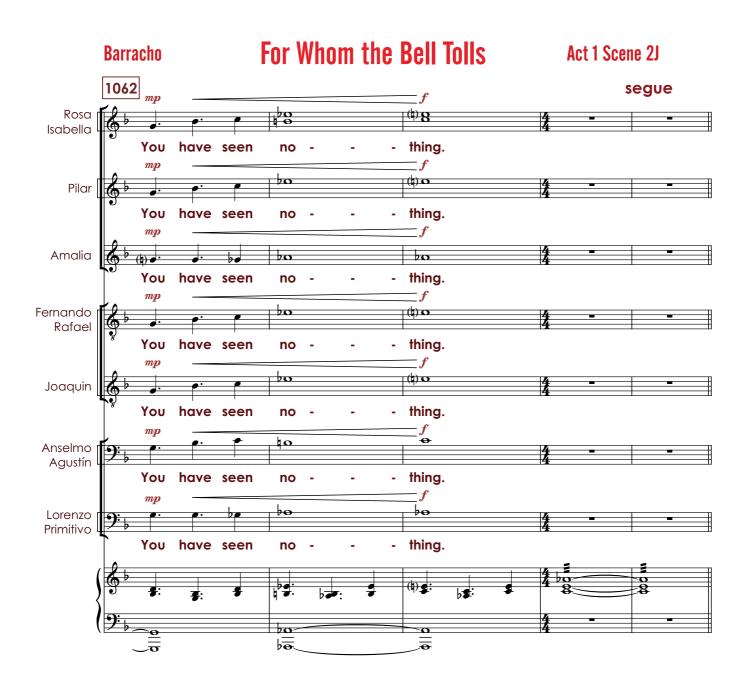


For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 2J







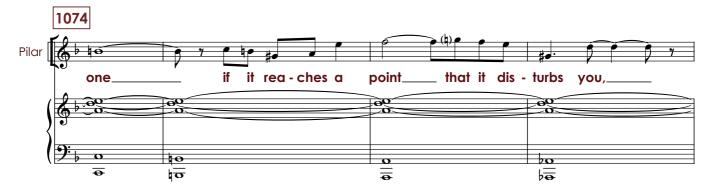


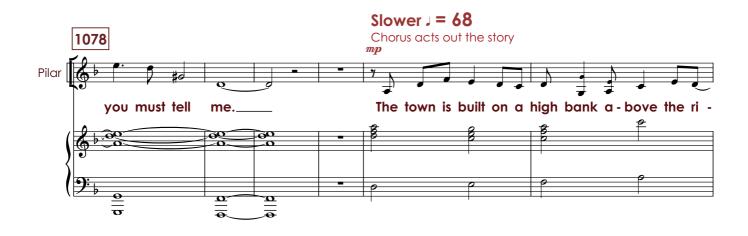
Pilar Tells Her Story of the Massacre Act 1 Scene 2K















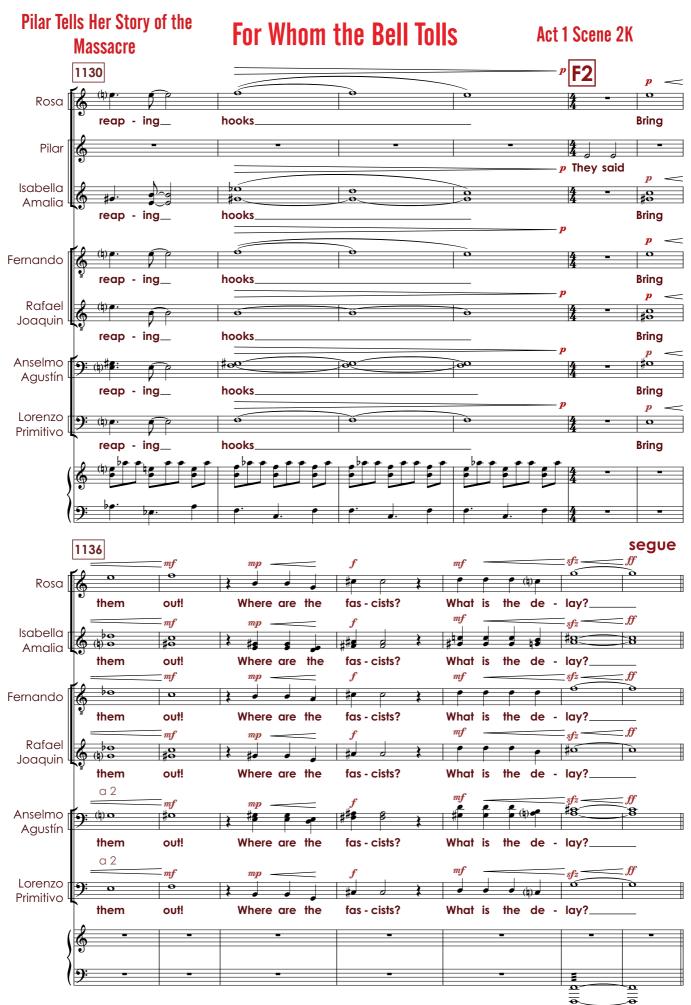












Don Benito Garcia

Act 1 Scene 2L

Massacre Story Continues



Don Benito Garcia



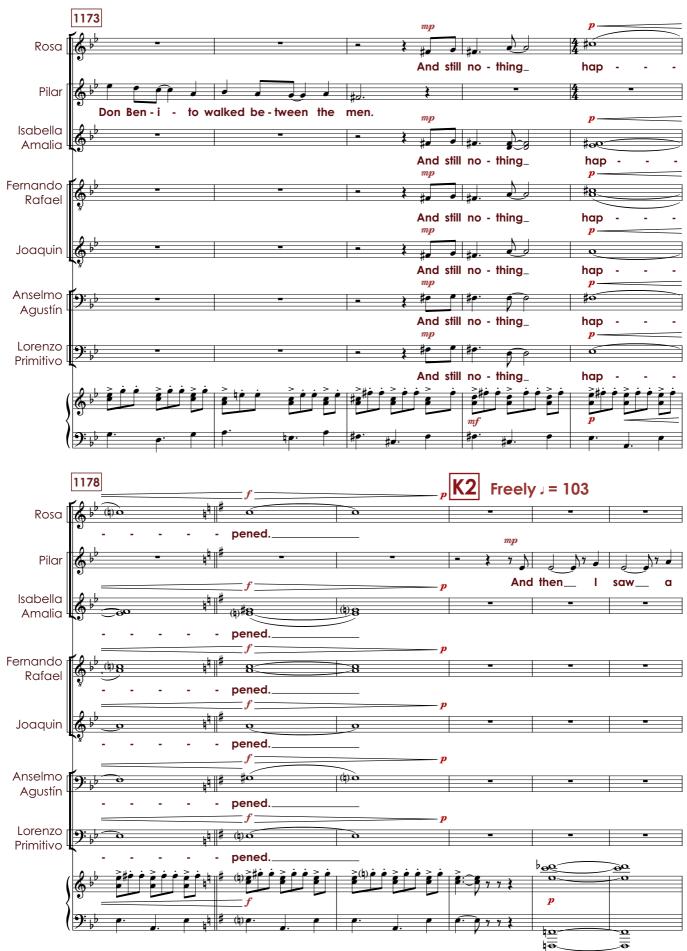






Don Benito Garcia

For Whom the Bell Tolls



Don Benito Garcia

For Whom the Bell Tolls









Don Benito Garcia

For Whom the Bell Tolls

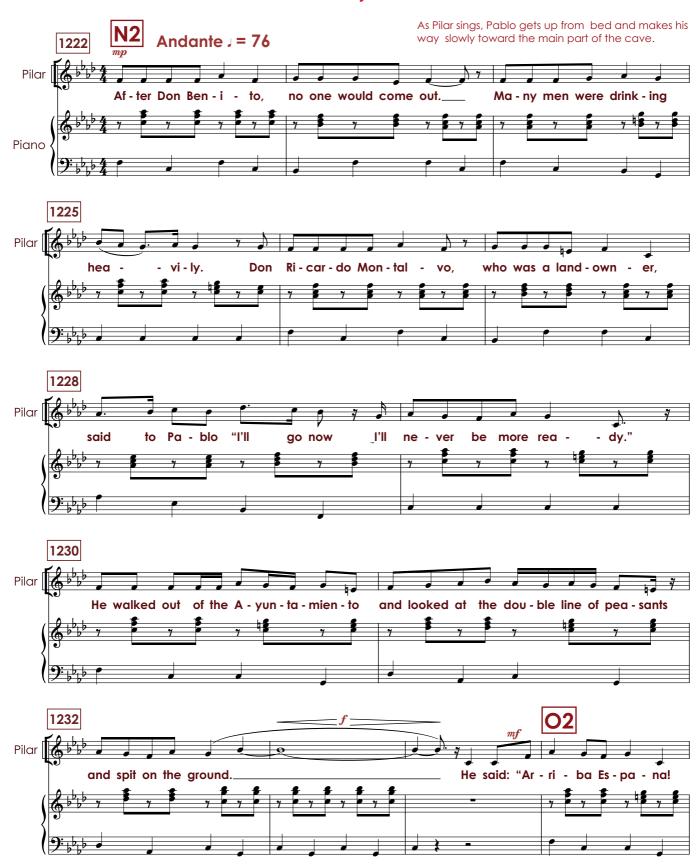






Don Ricardo Montalvo Act 1 Scene 2M

Massacre Story Continues



For Whom the Bell Tolls



Maria forces herself to watch and listen as the chorus acts out Pilar's words.











For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 2M





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For Whom the Bell Tolls



For Whom the Bell Tolls



For Whom the Bell Tolls





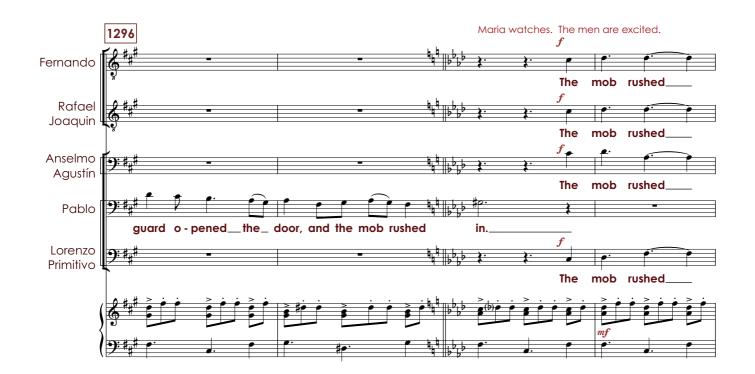
Pablo Continues the Story Act 1 Scene 2N

Massacre Story Continues





Pablo Continues the Story For Whom the Bell Tolls



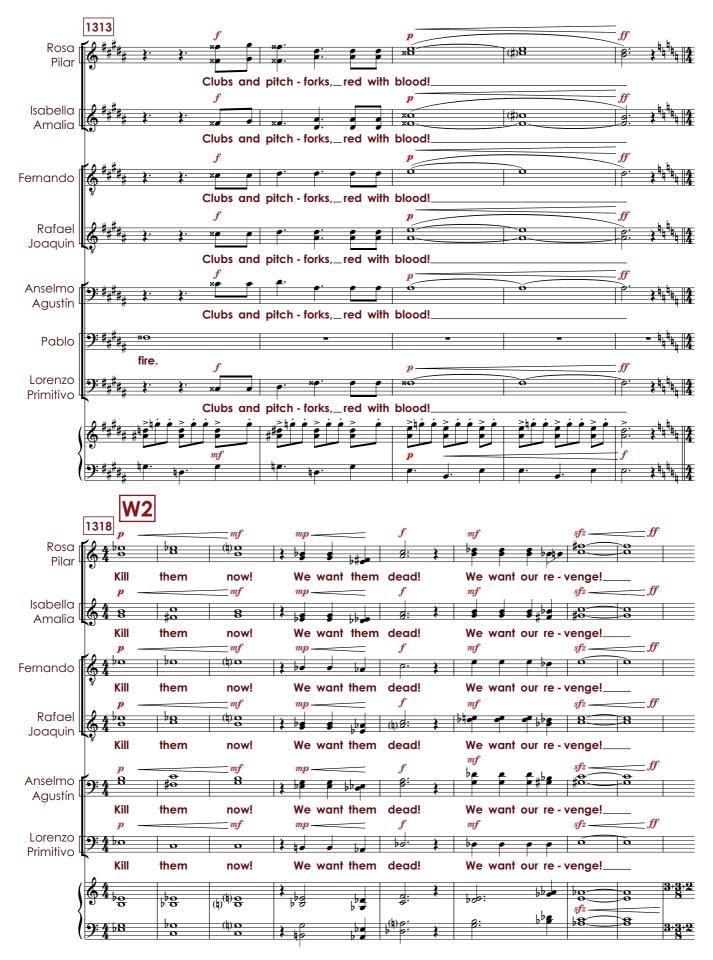


Pablo Continues the Story

For Whom the Bell Tolls



Pablo Continues the Story For Whom the Bell Tolls





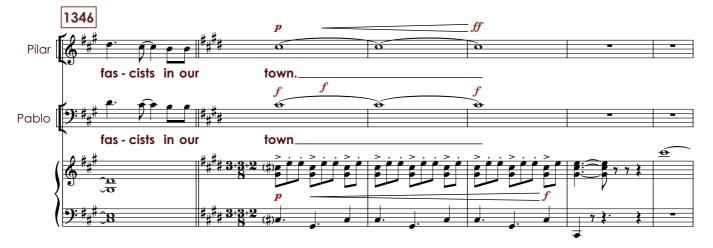


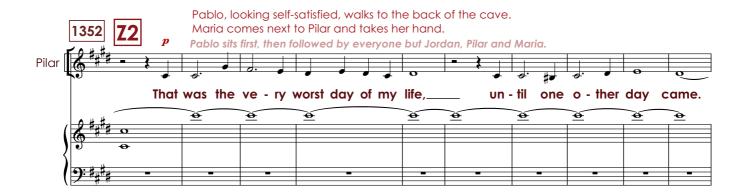
Pablo Continues the Story



Pablo Continues the Story

For Whom the Bell Tolls









Pablo Continues the Story

For Whom the Bell Tolls



And This Misery

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 20



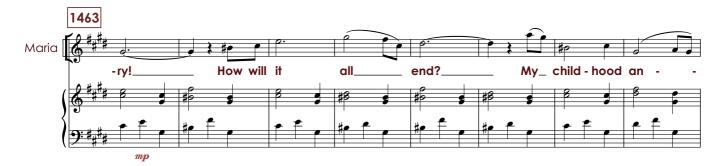














Orchestral Act 1 Scene 2P





The Bridge Act 1 Scene 3A





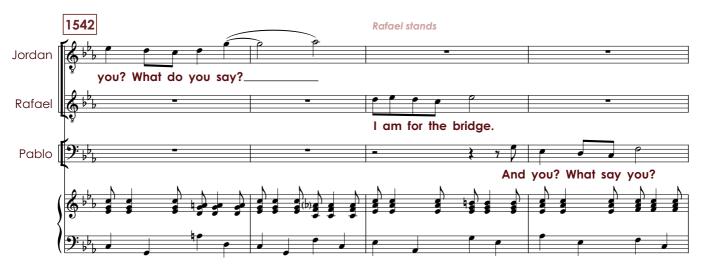


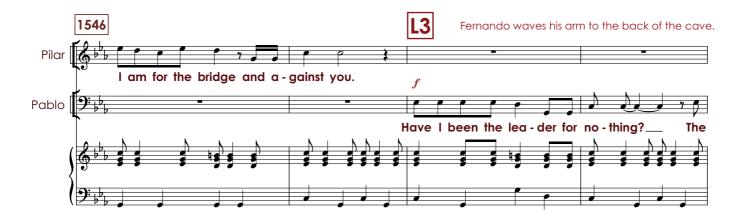


The Bridge

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 3A





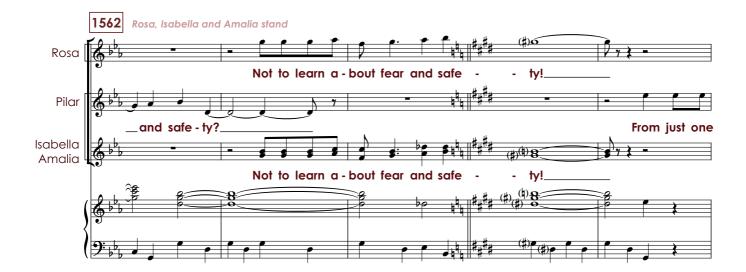




The Bridge

Act 1 Scene 3A





















The Bridge

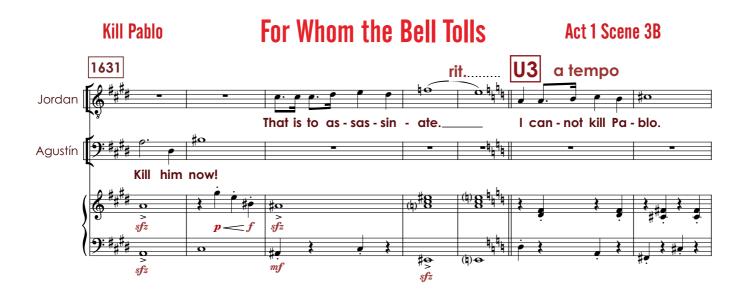
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 3A

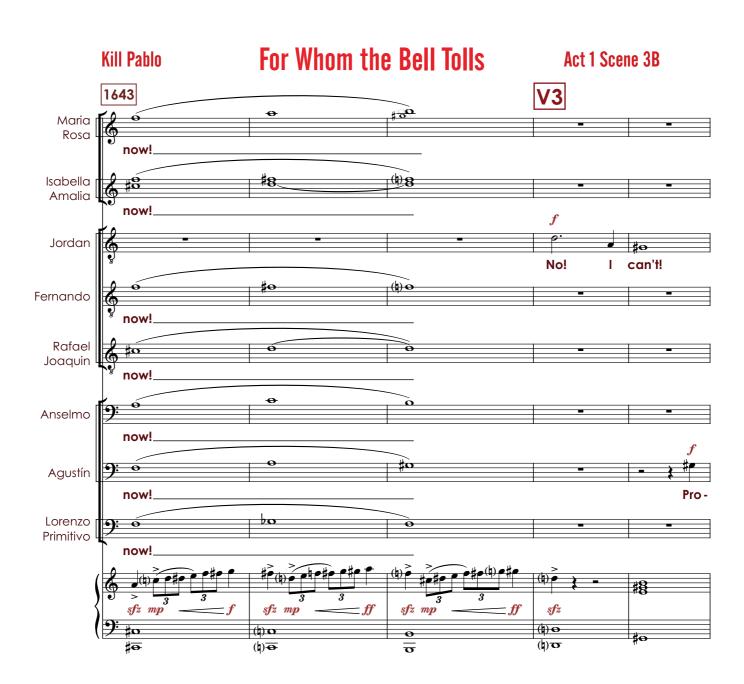


Kill Pablo Act 1 Scene 3B













Kill Pablo

Act 1 Scene 3B





What is Wrong Act 1 Scene 3C



What is Wrong

For Whom the Bell Tolls



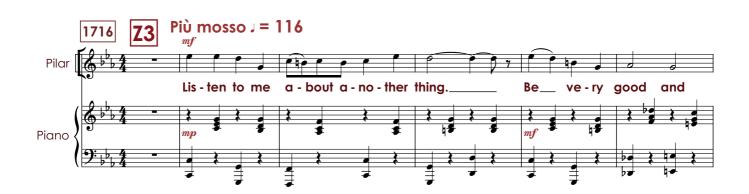
Jordan touches her face, shakes head then looks away. Maria touches his face to make him look at her, then leaves. Pilar keeps eye on Jordan.



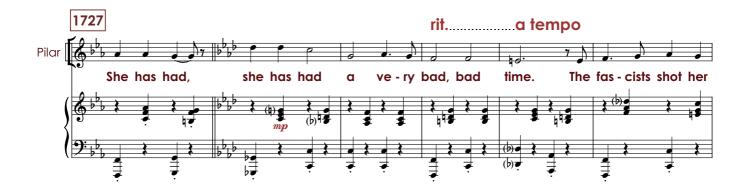




Listen to Me Act 1 Scene 3D





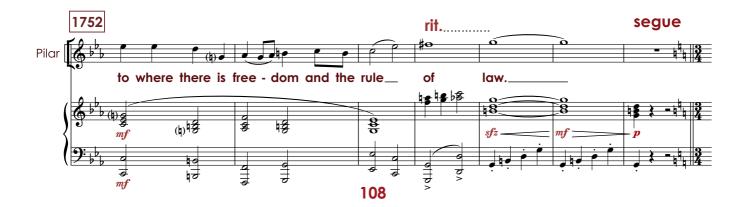




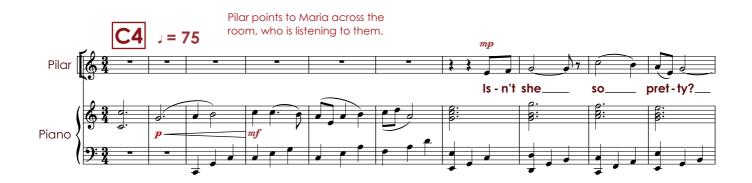








For Whom the Bell Tolls Isn't She Pretty Act 1 Scene 3E



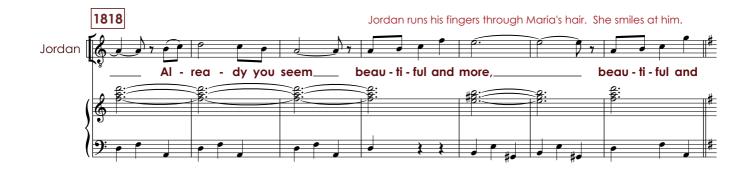






For Whom the Bell Tolls Isn't She Pretty Act 1 Scene 3E Maria gives them both filled cups. 1799 Pilar sits laughing nervously Maria ł ł 330 -0 - da! May I of - fer some wine? You must drink B ġ: ğ: p 4 m mp

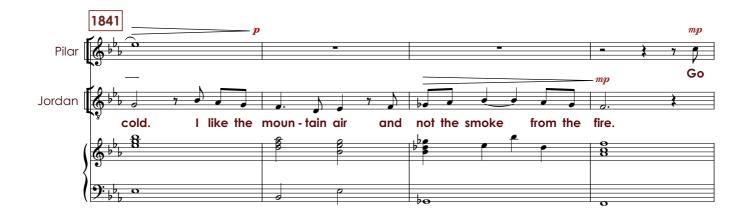








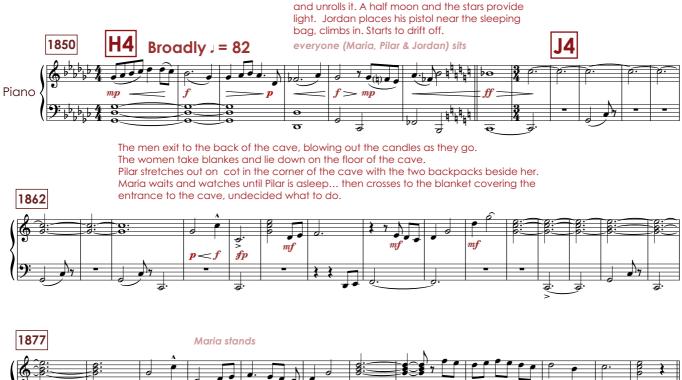






Orchestral - Bedtime Act 1 Scene 3F

Jordan leaves the cave with his sleeping bag



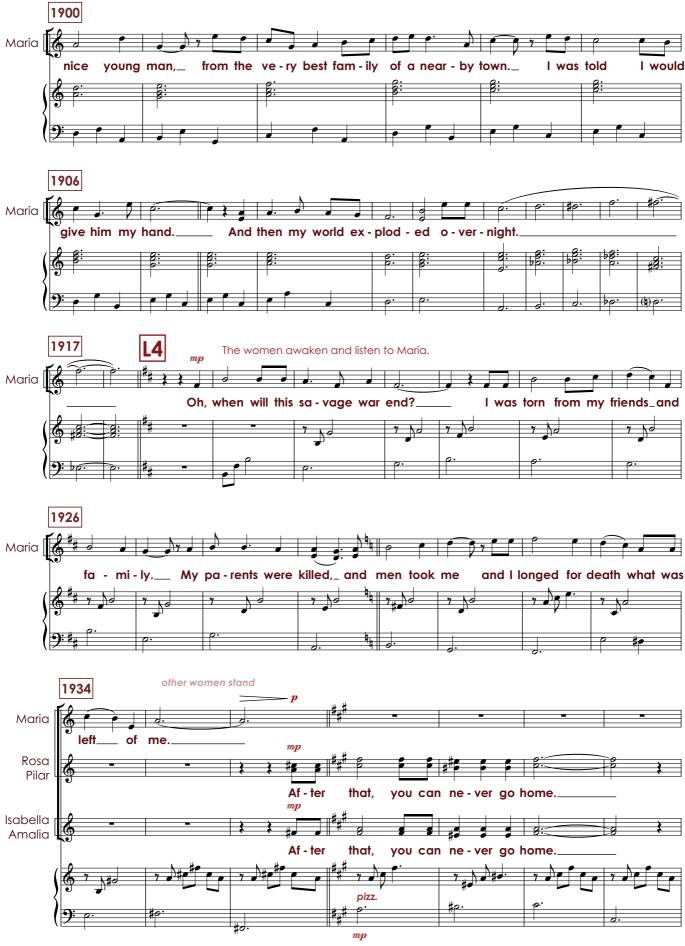


Will He Love Me? Act 1 Scene 3G



Will He Love Me?

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 3G



Will He Love Me?

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 3G









Will He Love Me?

Act 1 Scene 3G





Will He Love Me?

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 3G





Will He Love Me?

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 3G



I Cannot Kiss Act 1 Scene 3H



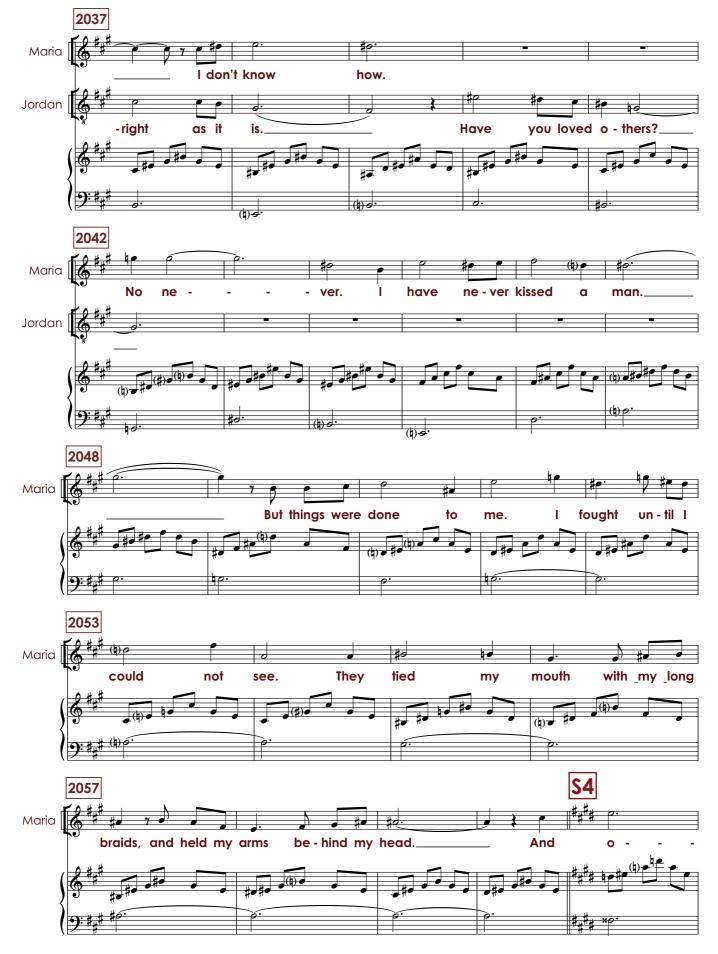


Act 1 Scene 3H



I Cannot Kiss

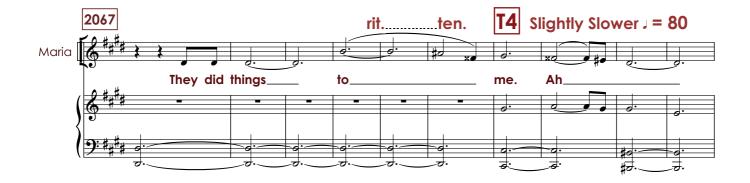
For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 3H

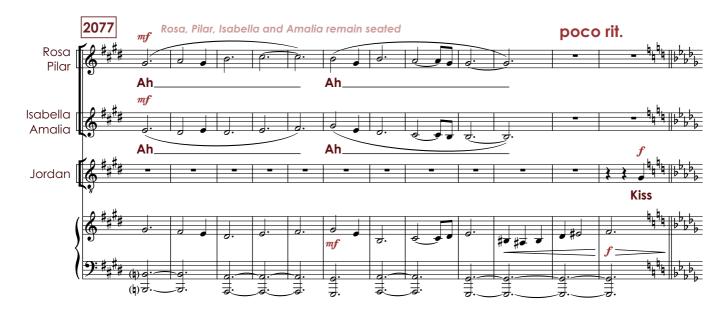


I Cannot Kiss

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 1 Scene 3H









I Cannot Kiss

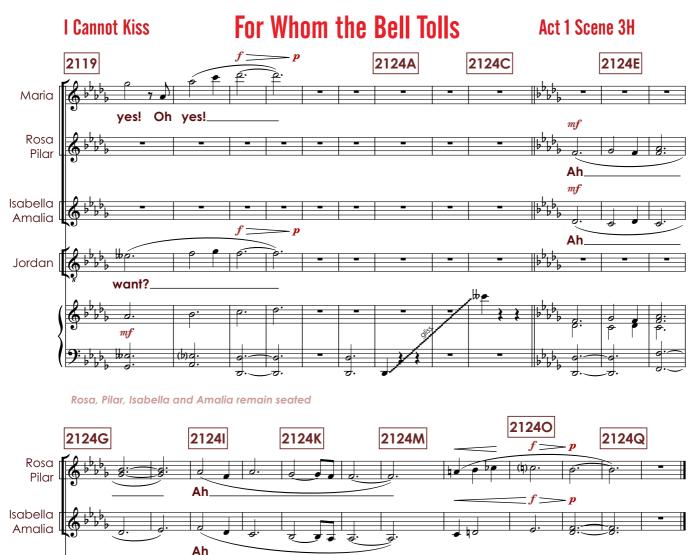
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 1 Scene 3H





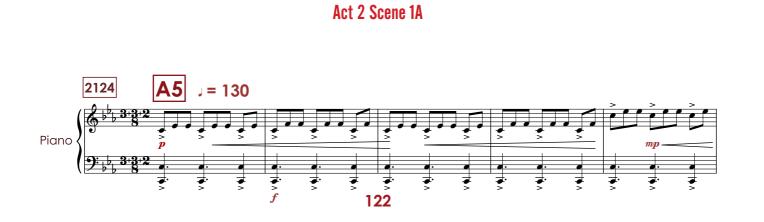






It is the following afternoon. After few seconds there is the noise of several propeller planes approaching. Jordan, Pablo, and Rafael look to the sky. Then there is the noise of several more planes, followed few seconds later by similar sounds. Anselmo, Augustín, and Pilar come out of the cave. Everyone is looking sober.

German Planes

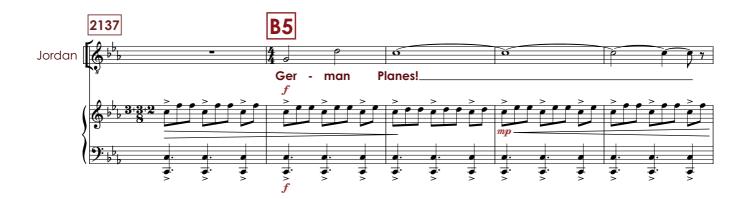


German Planes

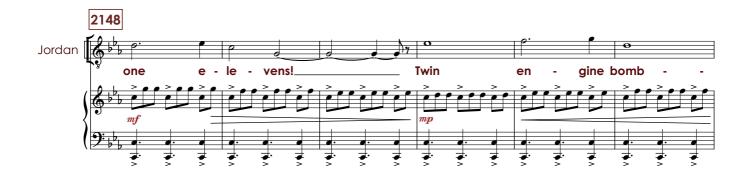
For Whom the Bell Tolls

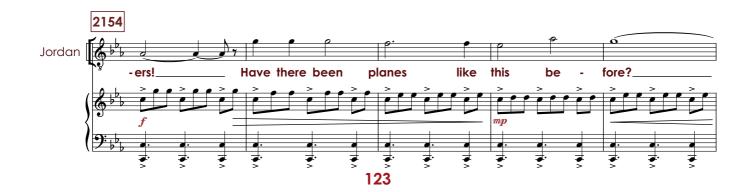
Act 2 Scene 1A

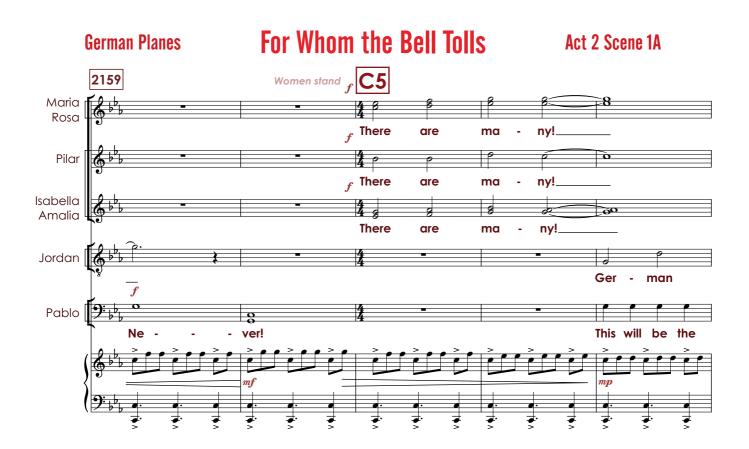










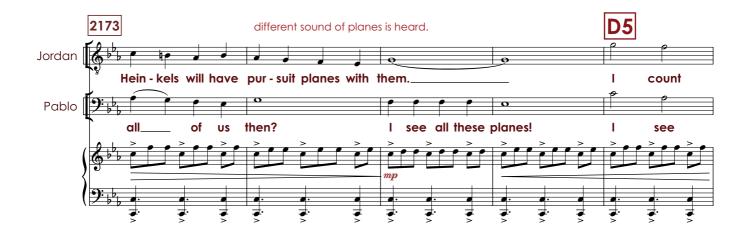




German Planes

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 1A



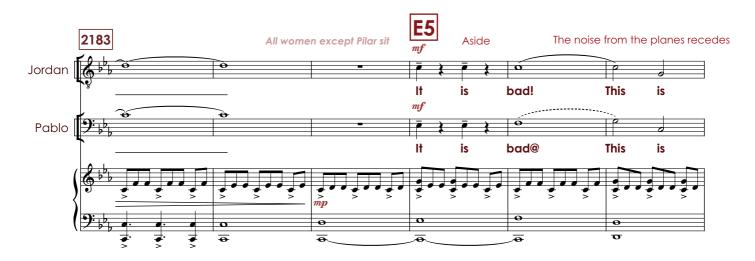


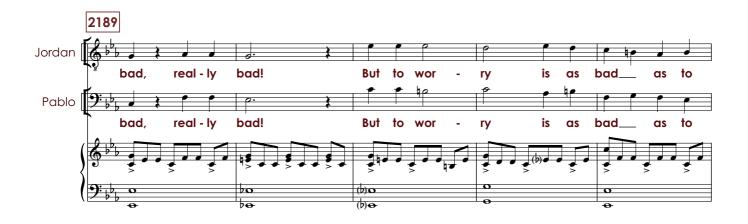


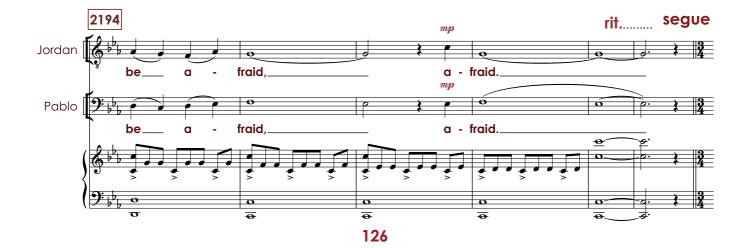
German Planes

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1A

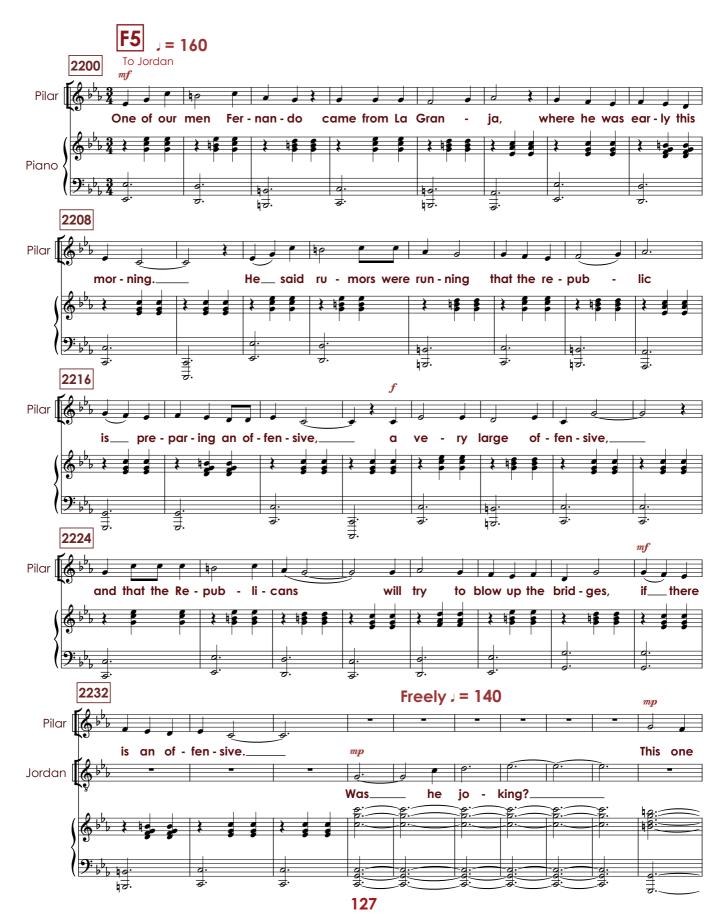






Rumors

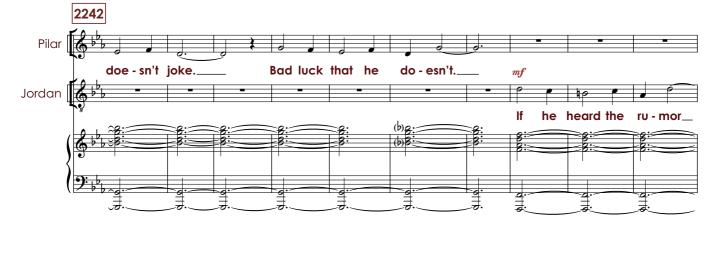
Act 2 Scene 1B

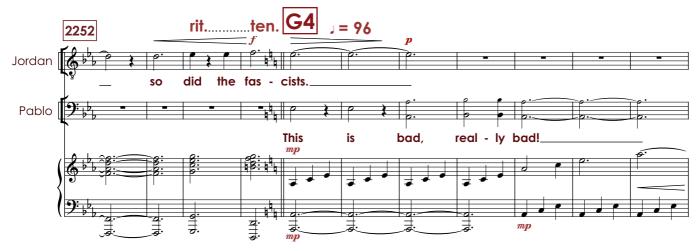


Rumors

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1B



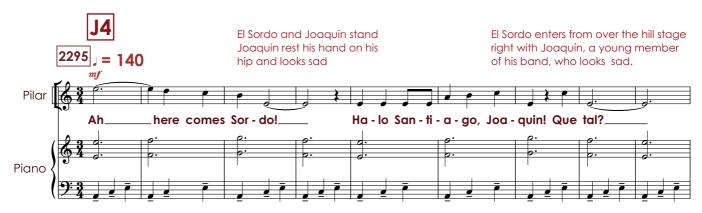








Sordo and Joachin Act 2 Scene 1C







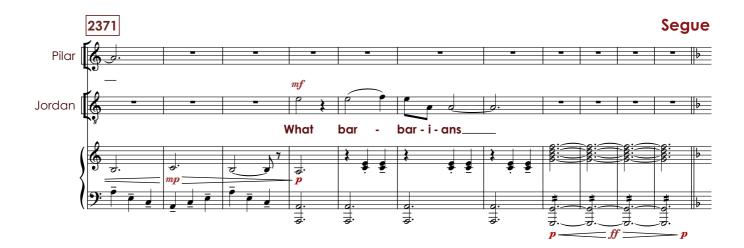


Sordo and Joachin

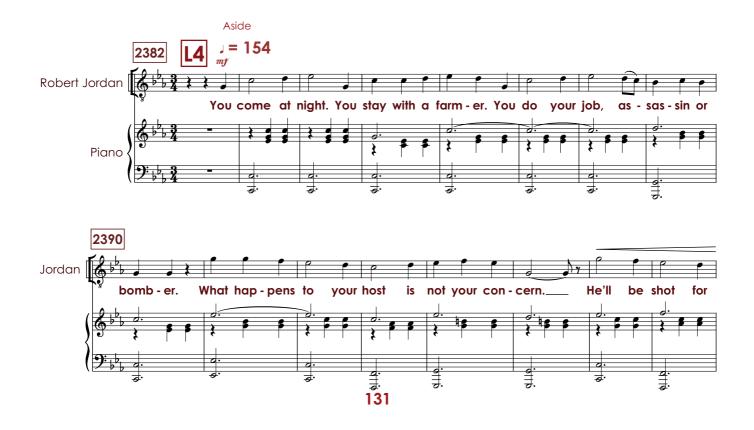
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1C





You Come at Night Act 2 Scene 1D



You Come at Night

Act 2 Scene 1D















You Come at Night

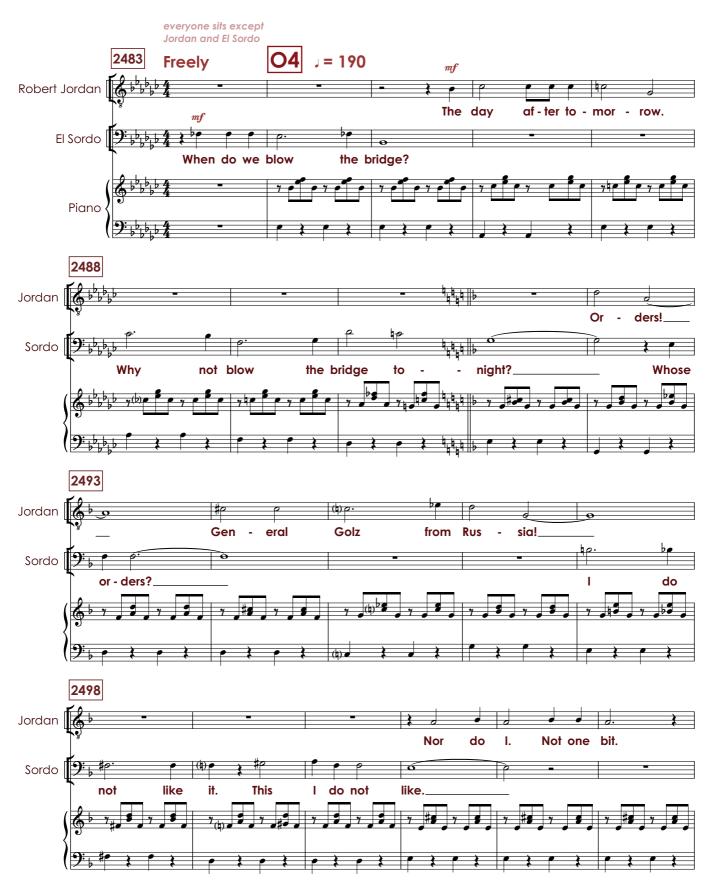
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1D

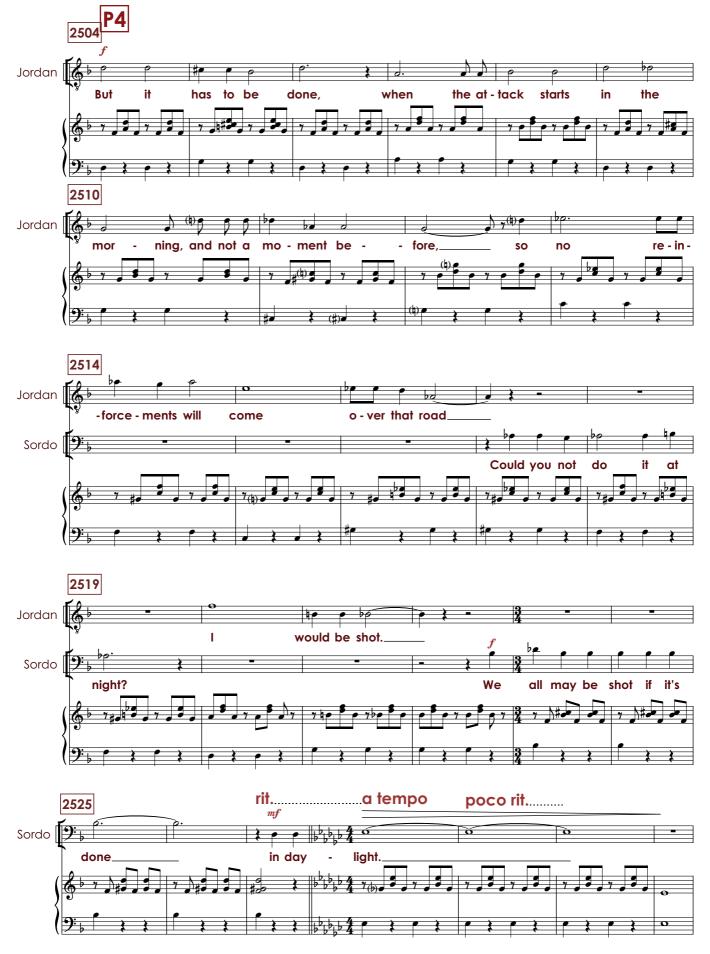


When Do We Blow the Bridge

Act 2 Scene 1E



When Do We Blow the Bridge For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 1E



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When Do We Blow the Bridge For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1E











When Do We Blow the Bridge

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1E



Orchestral Act 2 Scene 1F

El Sordo and Joaquín embrace the others, and leave. It is still snowing. Jordan, Pablo, Pilar, and Maria go into the cave joining the other others, Rafael, Agustín, Fernando and Amalia.





Cobarde Act 2 Scene 1G





Cobarde

Act 2 Scene 1G







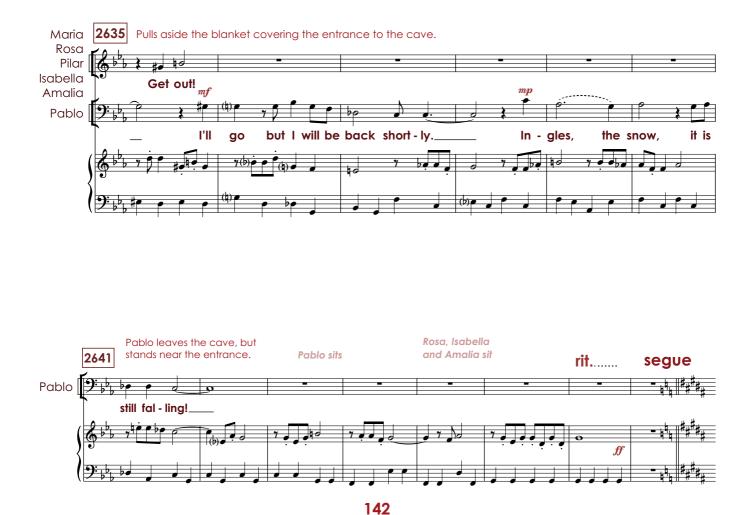


Cobarde

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1G





Kill Him Now Act 2 Scene 1H





I Have Changed My Mind Act 2 Scene 1J



I Have Changed My Mind For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 1J



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I Have Changed My Mind

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1J

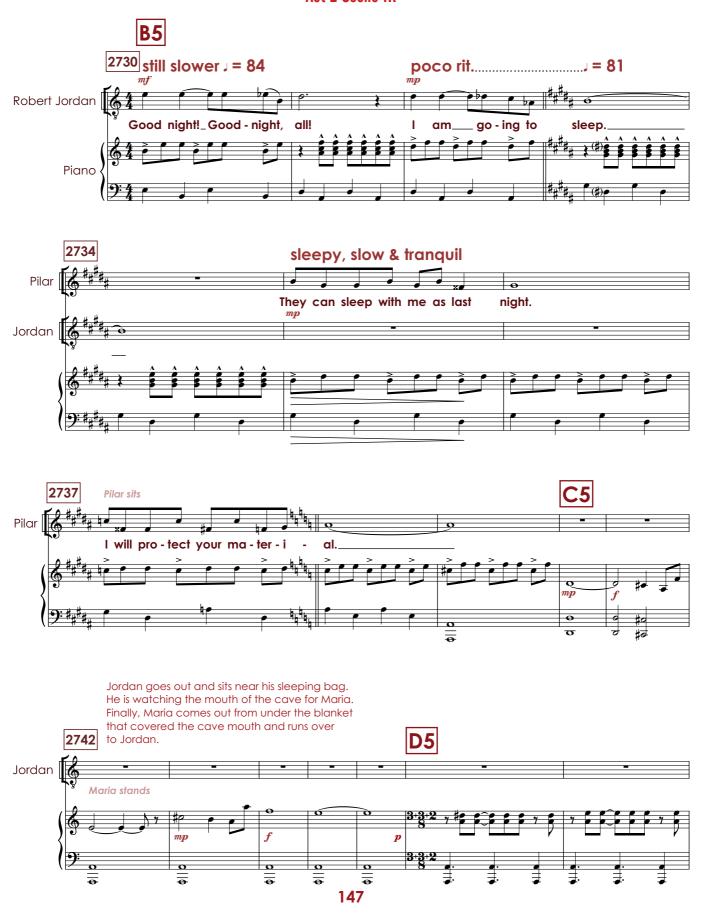








Goodnight Act 2 Scene 1K



Goodnight

Act 2 Scene 1K



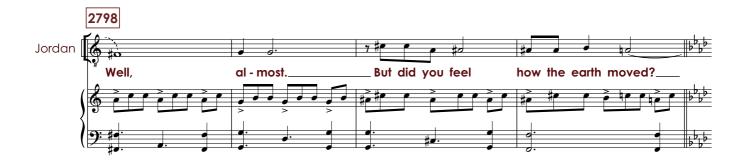
















Goodnight

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 1K









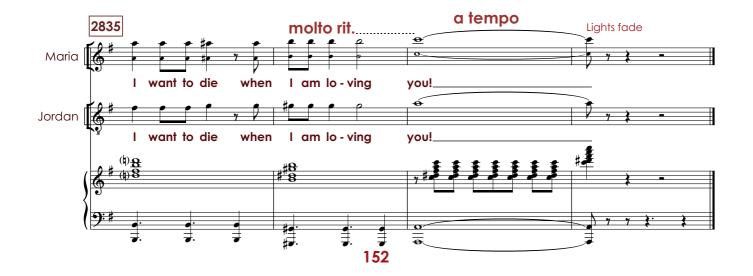
Goodnight

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 1K







For Whom the Bell Tolls When Will This Calamity Cease Act 2 Scene 2A **J5** The following day. It is bright sunlight. Jordan, Fernando, Agustin, and Rafael are gathered in front of the cave, eating bread, cheese and onion. Slowly with expression J = 742839 Fernando stands poco rit. 6 Piano 9:3 Jodan if reviewing his sketch of the bridge and notes while Fernando sings accompanying himself on the guitar (not actually playing) this part could be sung by any of the non-leads a tempo 2849 Κ5 mf Fernando Oh, when will this sa - vage war end? to my chil-dren and dear, dear To re - turn -2857 Broadly poco rit. ff Fernando ~ milk, wife. Our cow to our plot to tend. And peace - ful - ly live out the rest of my 100 2865 a tempo Women stand mn Maria Rosa Af - ter this you home ver go Ne - ver. ne ver can ne mn Pilar (b) d' Ì Af - ter this you can ne-ver go home Ne - ver. ne ver mn Isabella ł Ì .)7 -<u>.</u> Af - ter this you can ne-ver go home Ne - ver, ne - ver, mp Amalia 17 0 ł (4 Af - ter this you can ne-ver go home Ne - ver, ne - ver, Fernando 6 Ì 1 life. 60 (1)0. 7



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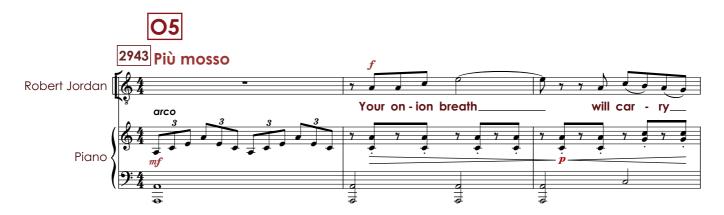




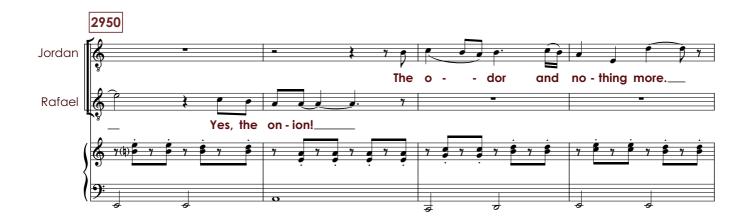




Onion Breath









For Whom the Bell Tolls Help Sordo Act 2 Scene 2C



Help Sordo



Help Sordo



Help Sordo

For Whom the Bell Tolls





Help Sordo



Help Sordo



Help Sordo

Act 2 Scene 2C



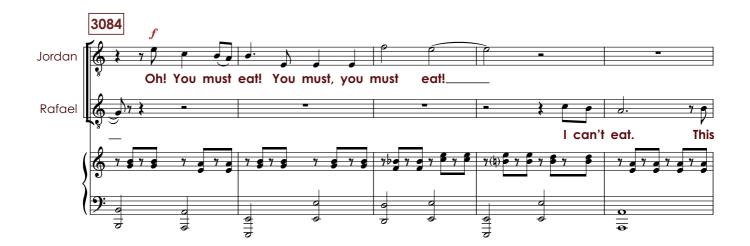
What Will Happen to Us All Act 2 Scene 2D



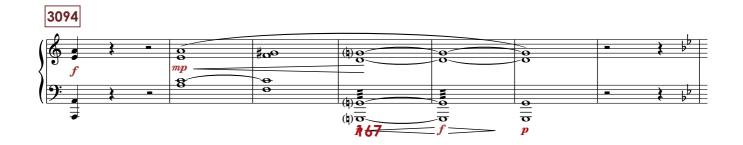


I Cannot Eat









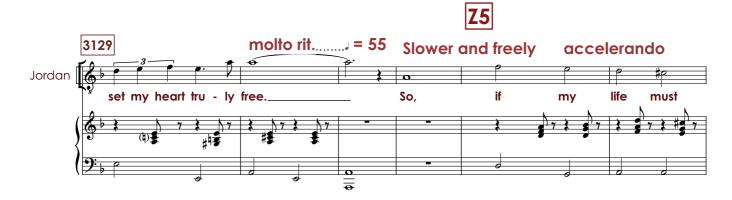
For Whom the Bell Tolls Seventy Years



Seventy Years

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 2F











Seventy Years

For Whom the Bell Tolls











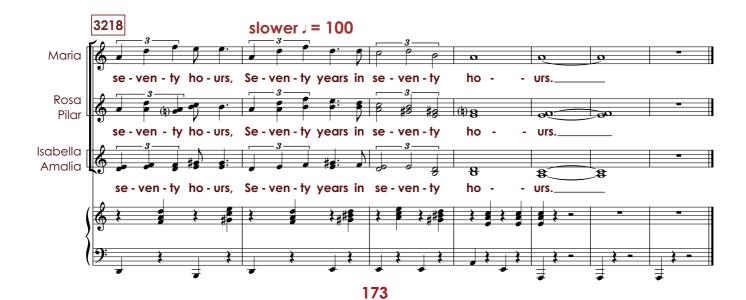




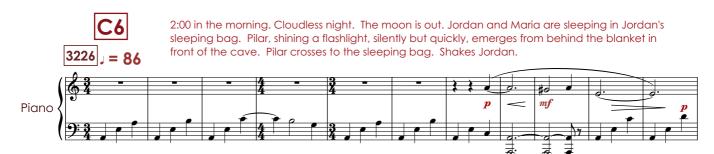






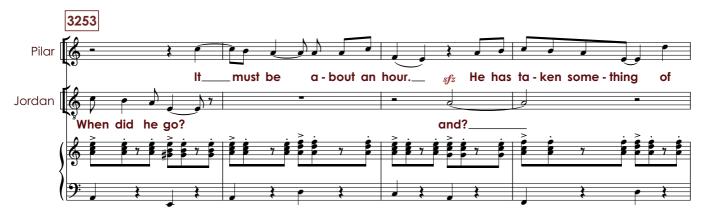


For Whom the Bell Tolls We'll Use Grenades Act 2 Scene 3A







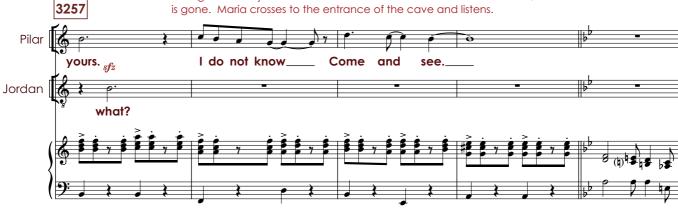


We'll Use Grenades

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3A

Pilar and Jordan go back into the cave. Jordan shines his flashlight on the two backpacks. There is a long slit from top to bottom of each one. Jordan reaches into both to see what is missing. Anselmo joins them from the rear of the cave. Maria awakens, aware that Jordan is gone. Maria crosses to the entrance of the cave and listens.







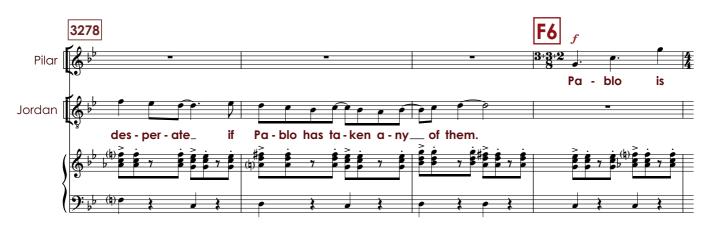


We'll Use Grenades

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3A









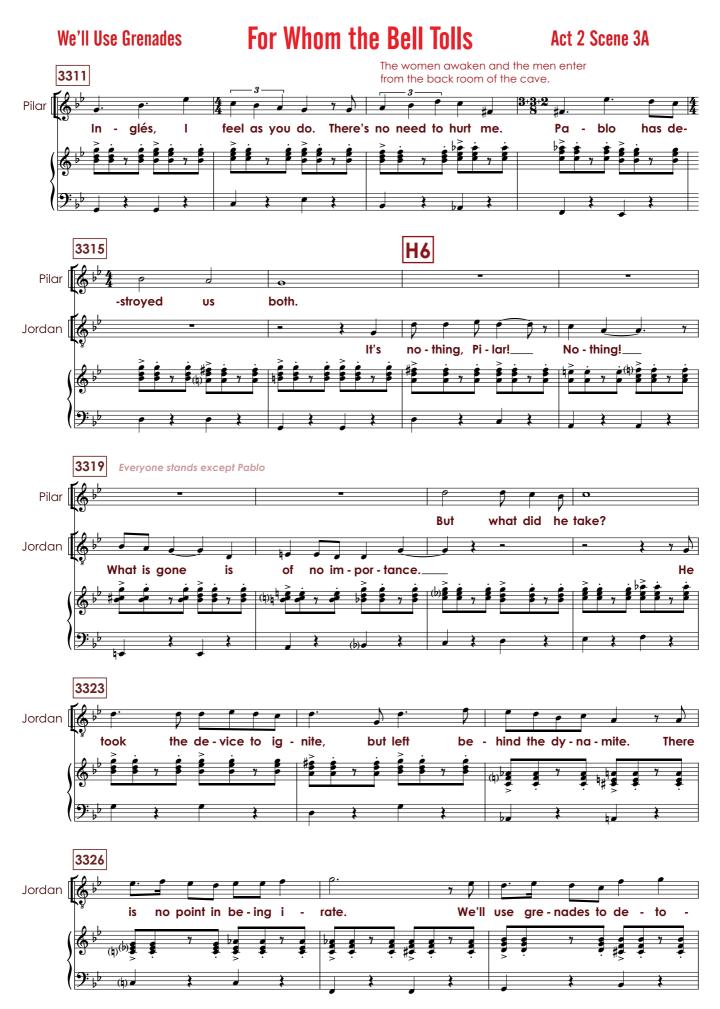












We'll Use Grenades

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3A





We'll Use Grenades

Act 2 Scene 3A



Get Some Sleep Act 2 Scene 3B



Get Some Sleep

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3B





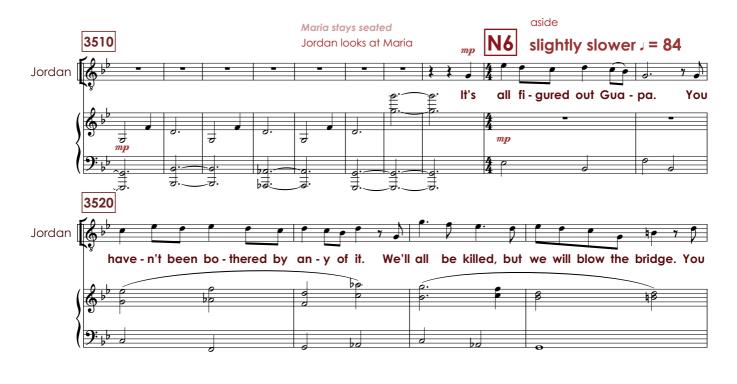




Get Some Sleep

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3B







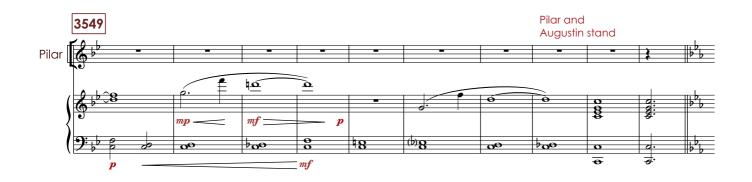


Get Some Sleep

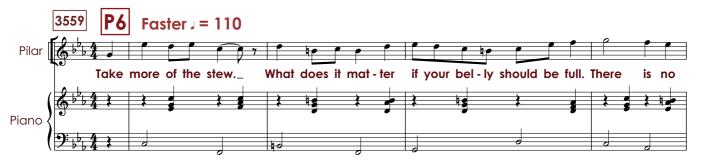
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 3B





Take More of the Stew Act 2 Scene 4A



Take More of the Stew

For Whom the Bell Tolls

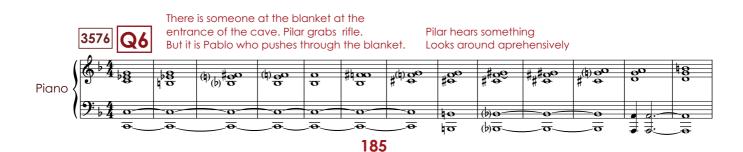
Act 2 Scene 4A

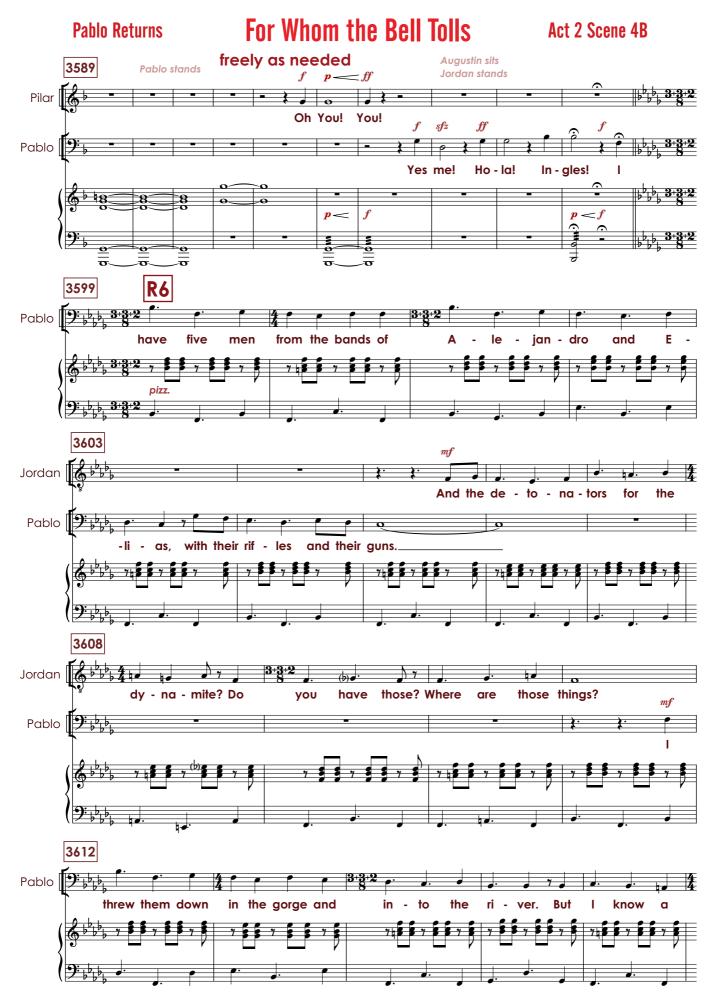






Pablo Returns Act 2 Scene 4B





Pablo Returns

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 4B



Pablo Returns

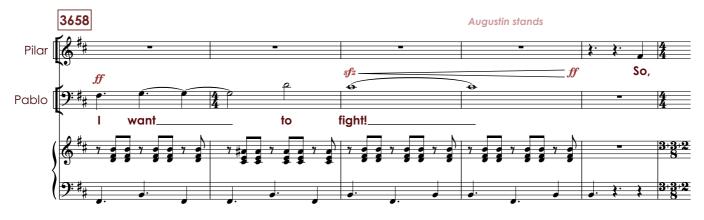
For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 4B















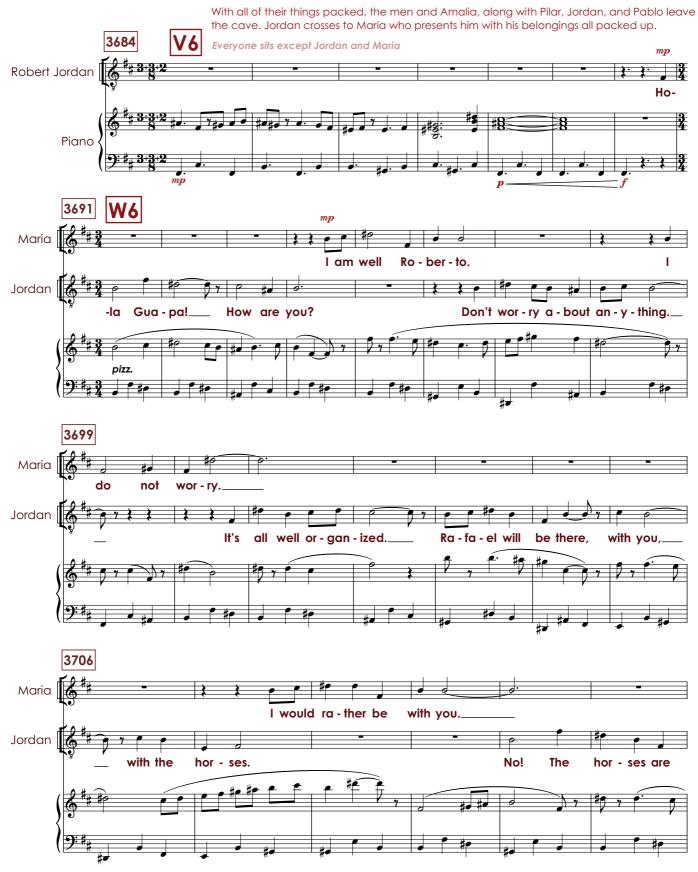
Pablo Returns

Act 2 Scene 4B





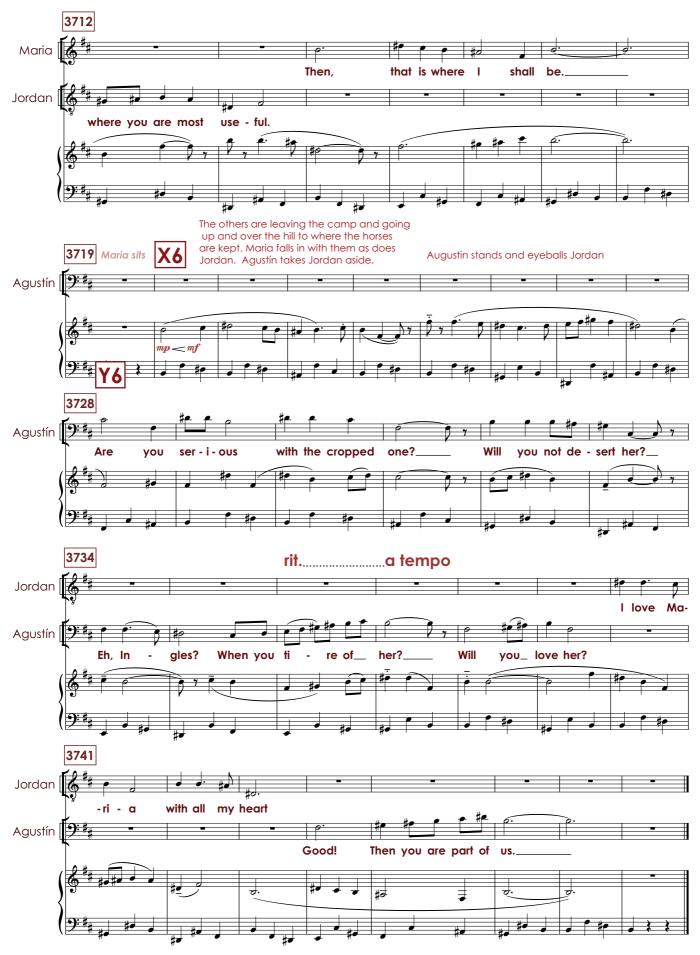
For Whom the Bell Tolls Would Rather Be With You Act 2 Scene 4C



Would Rather Be With You

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 4C



Orchestral - End Scene Act 2 Scene 4D







Instructions Act 2 Scene 5A



Instructions

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 5A







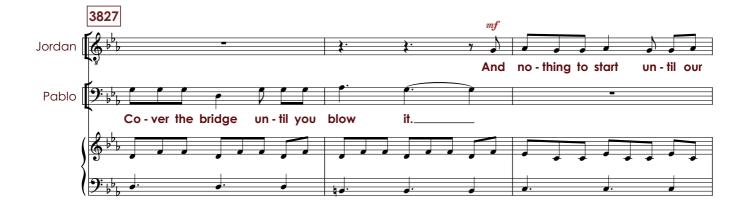




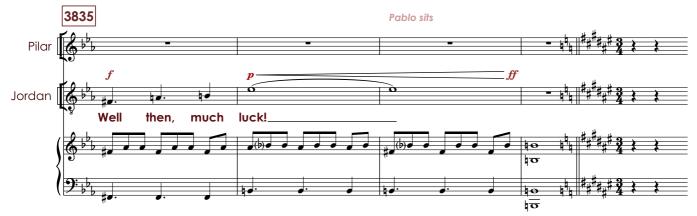
Instructions

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 5A









For Whom the Bell Tolls Goodbye Act 2 Scene 5B



Goodbye

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5B



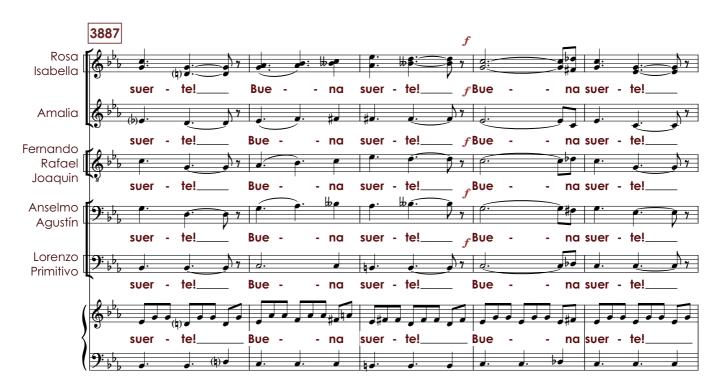


Buena Suerte Act 2 Scene 5C

They kiss good-by. Maria exits. The others cross to Jordan and shake hands, and exchange "Buena suerte" knowing that they may not ever see each other again. Pablo exits in one direction. Pilar leading Fernando, Primativo and Amalia exit in the opposite direction.

Everyone stands except Pilar, Pablo, Jordan and Maria





Buena Suerte

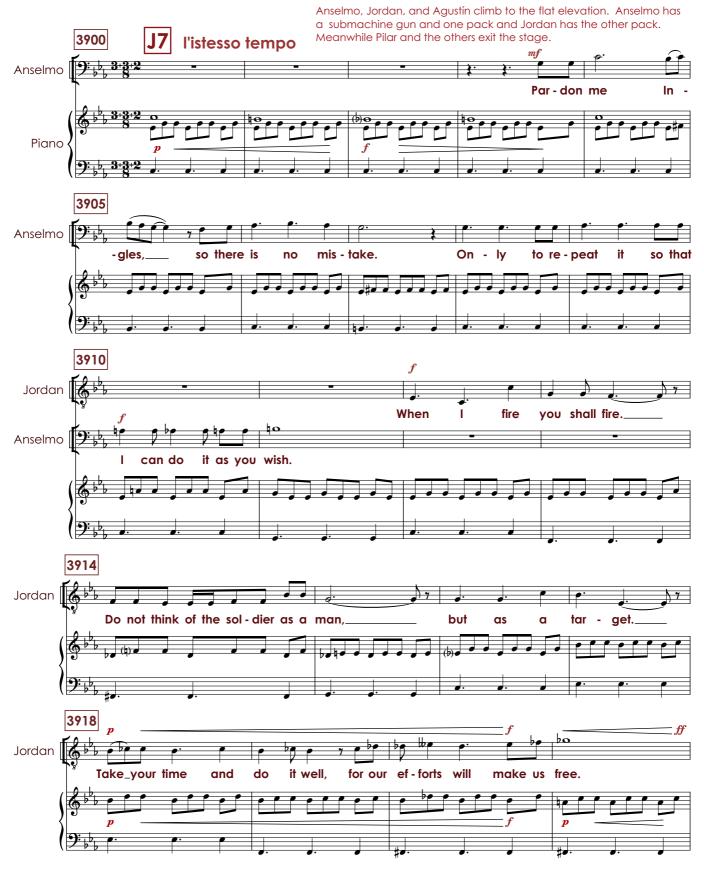
Act 2 Scene 5C



segue



For Whom the Bell Tolls Now is Our Time Act 2 Scene 5D



Now is Our Time

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5D



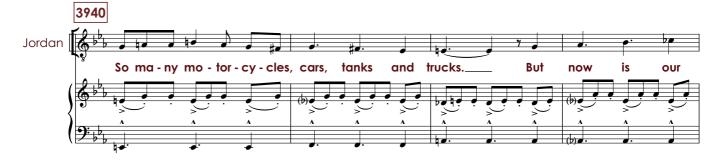




Now is Our Time

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5D





Buena Caza Act 2 Scene 5E

He periodically trains his binoculars on the bridge. There is the sound of bombs and planes. This is what Jordan has been waiting for. Jordan aims his rifle and fires as does Agustín. Then other rifles fire and hand grenades explode in the distance near the bridge. Pilar and the others enter from the other side of the stage shooting their rifles. They face out into the audience as if they were facing the bridge.

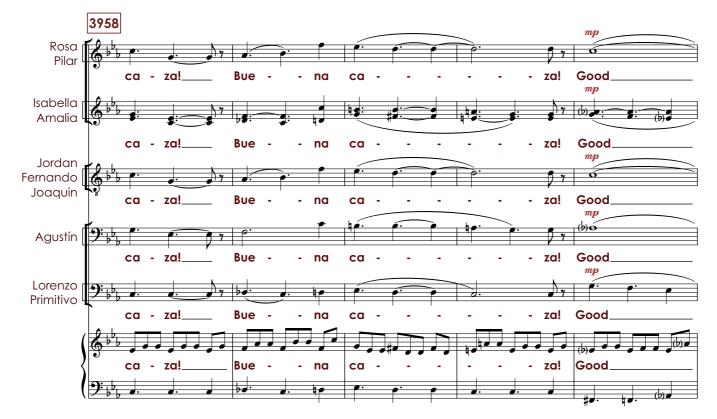


Buena Caza

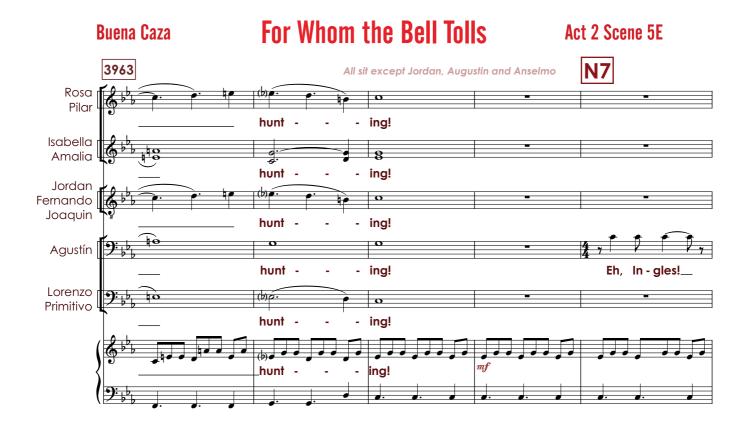
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5E





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Shouting up at Agustín Jordan and, Anselmo climb down the rear of the elevation while Agustín stands guard. Primitivo is shot in the shoulder. Anselmo climbs up to the elevation. Pilar and Fernando stand 07 He is crying. 3973 p Pilar Pri -- mi-ti-vo has been Jordan I killed one too. Don't be up-set. Agustín done! • 10 mf 6 h 10



For Whom the Bell Tolls I Cannot Bear It

Act 2 Scene 5F



Blow the Bridge

Act 2 Scene 5G





Act 2 Scene 5G





Blow the Bridge

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5G

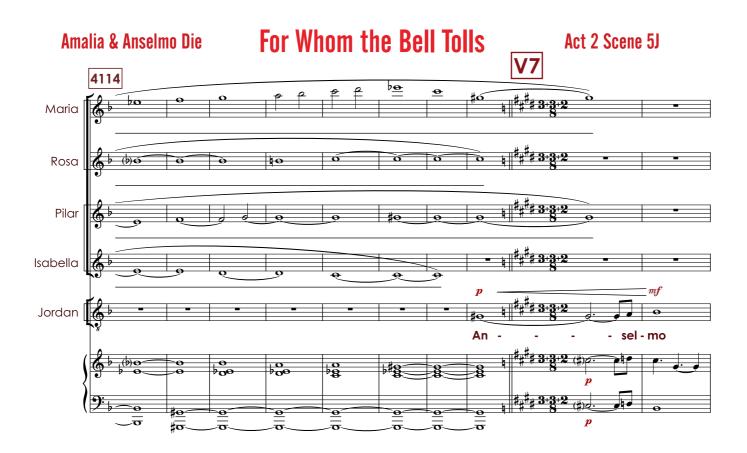
The section of the bridge with Jordan and Anselmo slides offstage, just as Maria runs onstage. Pilar, Maria and the others turn to watch the bridge in the distance.













Amalia & Anselmo Die

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5J





Amalia & Anselmo Die

Act 2 Scene 5J



Plenty of Horses Act 2 Scene 5K



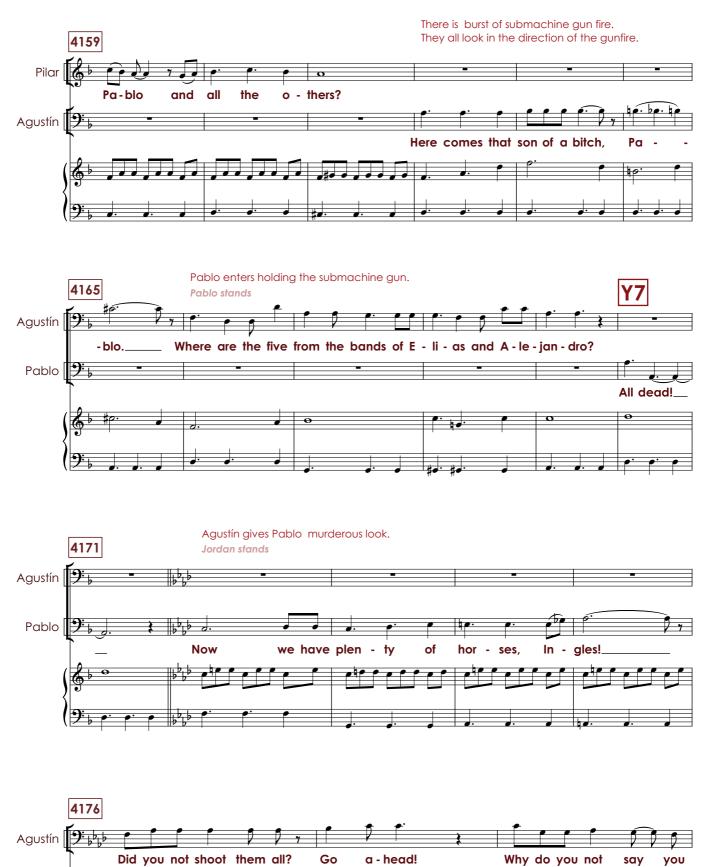
Plenty of Horses

(b)

9: _b⊳_b

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5K





(**b**) e

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Plenty of Horses

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 5K







Gallop Guapa Go Act 2 Scene 5L



Gallop Guapa Go

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 5L



























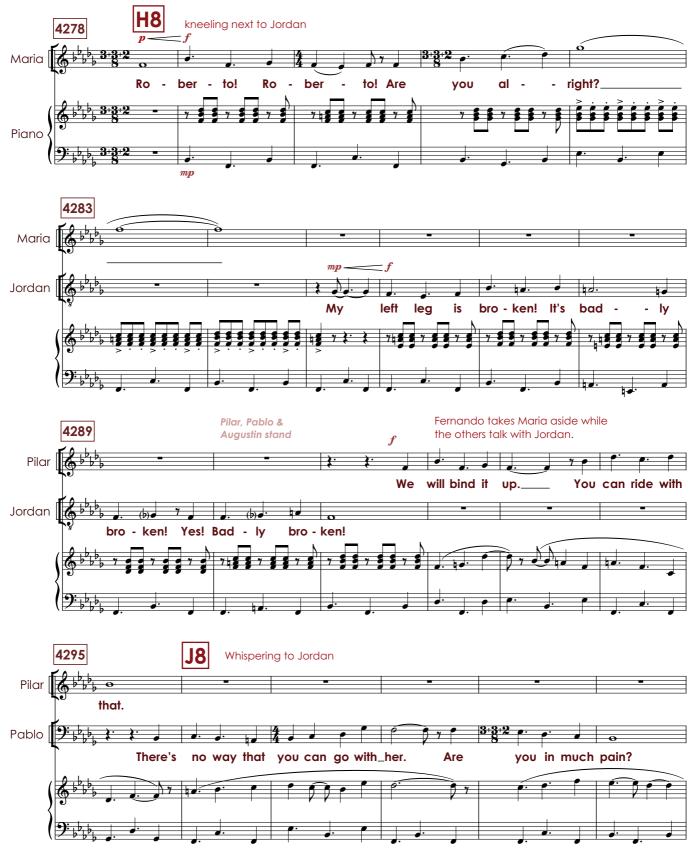
Orchestral - Scene Change Act 2 Scene 6A

Narrow gorge on the other side of the road. Agustín and Rafael carry in wounded Jordan, followed by Pablo, Pilar, Fernando, Isabella, Rosa, Joaquin, Lorenzo, Primitivo and Maria. They lay him on the ground.





For Whom the Bell Tolls Broken Leg



Broken Leg

For Whom the Bell Tolls



Broken Leg

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Act 2 Scene 6B







Maria Decides to Go Act 2 Scene 6C



Maria Decides to Go

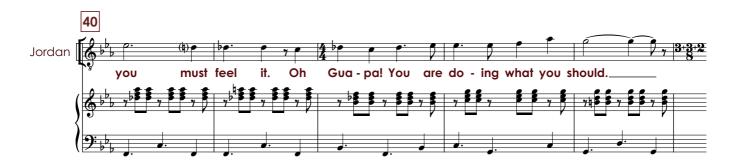
For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 6C



Maria Decides to Go

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 6C











Maria Decides to Go

For Whom the Bell Tolls

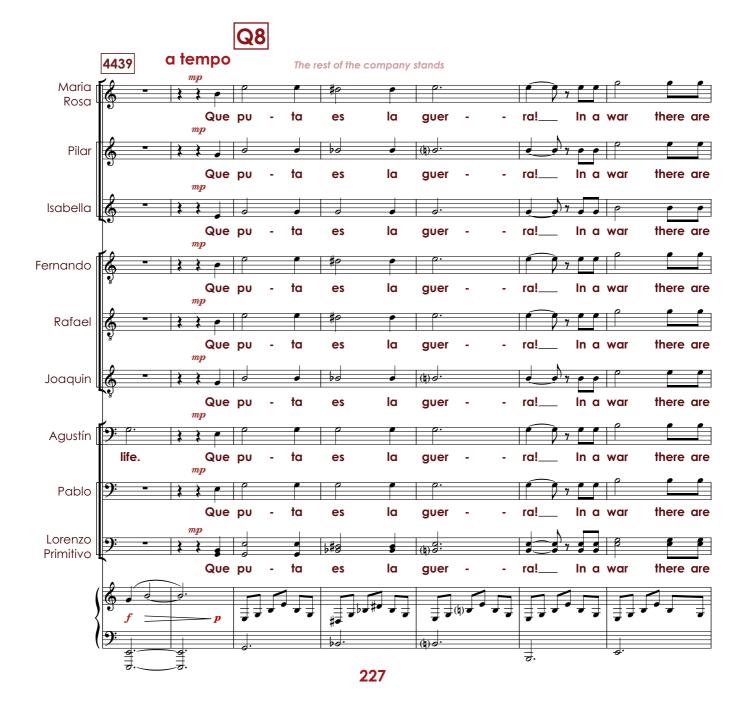




Que Puta es la Guerra

For Whom the Bell Tolls





Que Puta es la Guerra

For Whom the Bell Tolls





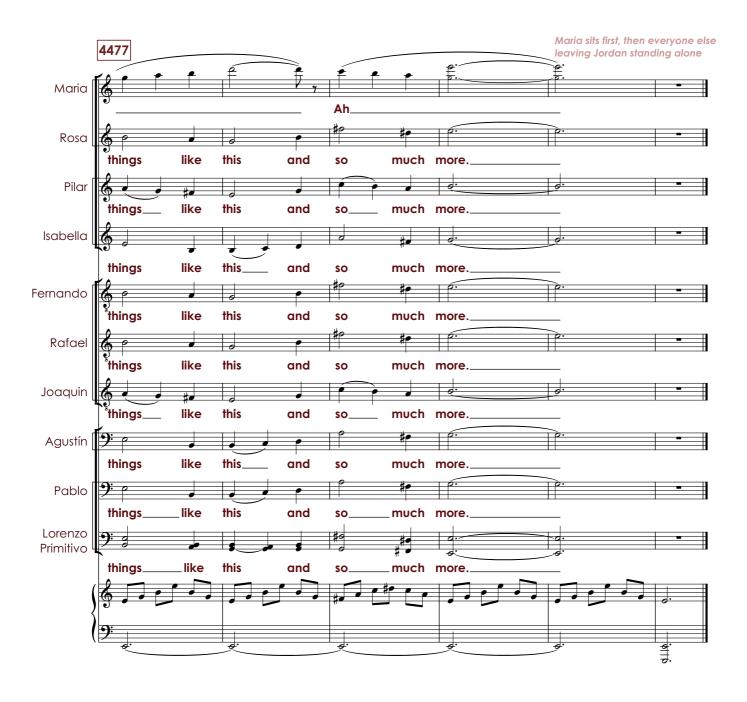
Que Puta es la Guerra

For Whom the Bell Tolls



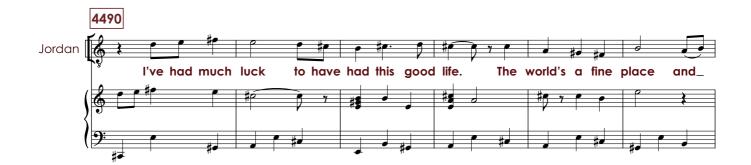


Que Puta es la Guerra For Whom the Bell Tolls



For Whom the Bell Tolls Worth Fighting For









Worth Fighting For

For Whom the Bell Tolls





Worth Fighting For

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 6E







Hold Them Up Act 2 Scene 6F



Hold Them Up

For Whom the Bell Tolls Act 2 Scene 6F











Hold Them Up

For Whom the Bell Tolls



Orchestral - Final Act 2 Scene 6G





