

Reflecting on *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*

Music can powerfully reflect the times we live in, holding a mirror up to society and potentially serving as a catalyst for change. Such is the case with contemporary composer Joel Thompson's *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, a seven-movement work for choir and orchestra that sets the final words of seven Black men who were killed by police or authority figures.

Listening to *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* may make you feel uncomfortable, emotional or empathetic. The work—which is 15 minutes in duration—prompts a range of reactions and encourages conversations about race and social injustices. Thompson calls on listeners to think deeply about the humanity of these seven individuals, the many Black men and women they represent, and the systems of racial injustice in American society.

We encourage you to do whatever is helpful in processing the thoughts and feelings that arise while listening to *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*. You are welcome to move around, step out into the lobby if you need a break at any time during the piece, or visit with a mental health professional in the Kathy and Charlie Cunningham Green Room. We also invite you to write or draw your responses to the following questions as you listen. During intermission, which will last 20 minutes, you can share your thoughts on these questions via a reflection wall in the Orchestra Hall lobby.

1. How are you feeling as you listen to each of the pieces on the program?
2. Which movement of *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* touched you most? Why were you especially moved by this part of the piece?
3. How does *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed* seek to reclaim the humanity of the seven men represented in the piece?
4. How can we connect the stories of these seven men to the larger historical narrative of race, racism, and violence in America? In the Twin Cities community?
5. What is one thing that we can do to address systemic racism in the Twin Cities?
6. How do we make our community safer for everyone?

7. What is the role of music in helping us learn about and address social injustices?

8. What is your personal investment in social justice?

9. Where do we go from here?

10. How do we heal?

George Floyd Global Memorial Exhibit

Everything is Somebody's Offering: A Rememory Experience

In conjunction with this week's performances, the Minnesota Orchestra is hosting a George Floyd Global Memorial Exhibit at Orchestra Hall. Titled "Everything is Somebody's Offering," the installation is a collection of items given by people from all over Minneapolis and the world in response to the atrocity of George Floyd's killing. Curated by the George Floyd Global Memorial, the exhibit will be available for viewing free of charge and open to the public May 19–21 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and during performances in the Orchestra Hall lobby.

The George Floyd Global Memorial has provided the following introduction to the exhibit:

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was lynched by the Minneapolis Police Department at the corner of 38th & Chicago. In response to this atrocity, people from all over Minneapolis and the world came together to offer creative expressions of pain and hope as protest and public grief. Offerings were given to this space at 38th & Chicago, now known as George Floyd Square, to remember the names of many who died unjustly before and after George Floyd took his last breath. In an effort to care for each person's offering, community members, known as Caretakers, tend to the memorial and continue to work to preserve our collective story of protest. Every offering is treated with dignity. No offering is thrown away. The offerings in this rememory experience are spaced out so we can remember that each offering was brought to the memorial as a single form of protest. Each offering carries its own energy, protest story, and power. This exhibit is a small selection from and an extension of the memorial you witness outdoors at George Floyd Square. Allow yourself to feel. Allow yourself to remember. Allow yourself to be moved to continue the work of racial justice. Welcome to "Everything is Somebody's Offering."

