

My composition of the music score for Tim Robbins's stage play of *Dead Man Walking* began when the Drama Director at Bishop Garcia Diego High School in Santa Barbara, CA (where I am the Band Director) approached me. She hoped to incorporate a unique element to the play that our school would be performing in December 2010. I jumped at the opportunity and my journey began.

After reading the script, something I would do many times before I was finished, my goal was to write a score that would support and enhance the drama and emotion of the story playing out on stage - not to write "Dead Man Walking: The Musical." This story and subject matter are emotionally charged and demanded my musical respect. With that in mind, knowing that I had a short amount of time in which to write and that my students would have an even shorter amount of time to learn it, I decided to keep it simple.

I began writing in September. Throughout the process *Dead Man Walking* became a part of me. When writing I tried to put myself in touch with the emotions of each of the characters. As a mother I could identify with the parents of the victims and as a Catholic woman I believe that killing is wrong on either side of the law. When I finished the music I felt I succeeded in capturing the mood of the play and the characters. Our performance in December was well received by both the audience and the cast, and I am happy and humble to say that from the feedback we received my goal was accomplished. My students in the Band really went through this process with me and worked many long hours in preparation; it was a wonderful and rewarding experience for all of us.

If you are planning to perform *Dead Man Walking* and if you are an institution that has a music department or a music ensemble, I highly recommend that you consider incorporating the music in your performance. This is an excellent opportunity for collaboration between drama and music departments in your school, and is a wonderful experience for both your music and drama students. I wrote it with my specific students in mind but have since rescored it for full concert band. It is easily accessible for players of all levels of ability and for large or small ensembles. If you should have any questions regarding the music I would enjoy the opportunity to speak with you about it.

I am honored that the *Dead Man Walking* School Theater Project has put their confidence in this score and I hope you find it as positive and moving an experience as we did.

To learn more about the score, please email me at music@vanwing.net

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