

Requiem, K.626

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (completed by Robert D. Levin)

In the summer of 1791, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who was short on cash but far from destitute, was offered a commission to compose a Requiem. The offer was tendered by an emissary from Count Franz von Walsegg-Stuppach, a wealthy music lover who may have known Mozart personally through musical or Masonic connections. The messenger apparently did not disclose who was making the offer; whether Mozart guessed, we do not know. The Count's wife, Anna, had died on February 14, at the age of only 20, and he had decided to memorialize her through a cemetery statue (by the sculptor Johann Martin Fischer) and a Requiem. He intended to have the musical piece performed every year on the anniversary of her death.

Mozart accepted the commission and named a reasonable fee: 225 florins, which was about half what he would expect to be paid for a full opera. (To put the economics in contrast, Count Walsegg paid the sculptor more than 3,000 florins for the gravesite monument, though of course there was the expense of marble and granite to consider in the bargain.) Mozart accepted half of his fee as a down payment, which again was delivered by an anonymous agent, and then put the project on hold so he could tend to the more immediate demands of two operas that were headed to their premiere productions: *La clemenza di Tito* (which entailed a residency in Prague from late August through mid-September 1791) and *Die Zauberflöte* (unveiled on September 30 in Vienna). Only in the autumn could he focus on the Requiem, which would be a large undertaking, its structure being dictated by the traditional Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead, as stan-

dardized by the church as far back as 1570. Other works also vied for his time, principally the Clarinet Concerto (K.622) and the Masonic Cantata (K.623), which Mozart conducted at its premiere on November 17.

However, around November 20 he fell ill, and he died at about one o'clock in the early morning of December 5. He had made considerable headway with the Requiem, but plenty remained to be finished. It is likely that

IN SHORT

Born: January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria

Died: December 5, 1791, in Vienna, Austria

Work composed: Autumn 1791, in Vienna, but left incomplete at Mozart's death

World premiere: The Introit and Kyrie were probably premiered at a memorial service for Mozart held at the Hofpfarrkirche of St. Michael in Vienna on December 10, 1791. The first complete performance was given January 2, 1793, in the Jahn-Saal in Vienna, in a performance organized by Baron Gottfried van Swieten.

New York Philharmonic premiere: November 6, 1941, Bruno Walter, conductor; Eleanor Steber, soprano; Enid Szanthe, contralto; William Hain, tenor; Nicola Moscona, bass. These performances mark the first by the Orchestra of the completion by Robert D. Levin.

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: April 6, 2002, Kurt Masur, conductor; Edith Wiens, soprano; Nancy Maultsby, mezzo-soprano; Stanford Olsen, tenor; Nathan Berg, bass-baritone

Estimated duration: ca. 55 minutes

as he grew increasingly debilitated he may have mused about the irony of writing a Requiem in such a state. On the other hand, Mozart did not spend a great deal of time dying. His final illness swept him away without much warning; not until a week or so before his death would he have had any serious reason to suppose that the end was near.

When his health did grow precarious, he took pains to provide for the fate of his work-in-progress. Franz Xaver Süssmayr had met Mozart about a year earlier, and during 1791 he studied composition with the master and became something of an amanuensis. Several independent contemporaneous accounts describe Mozart on his deathbed dictating to Süssmayr his ideas about how the score should be completed.

The Requiem was more or less finished through the beginning of the *Lacrimosa*, enough to justify its completion. There was a compelling practical reason that it should be brought to a finished state: Count Walsegg had paid a fair amount of money into the project already, and Mozart's widow, Constanze, needed the funds that the remainder of the commission would provide. She first turned to another Mozart pupil, Joseph Leopold von Eybler, to complete the work, but he soon abandoned the project. Süssmayr then took it on: he composed the *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei* (perhaps drawing on ideas Mozart had shared with him), and made a few emendations to Mozart's text. For the Communion he simply repeated music Mozart had completed for the *Introit* and *Kyrie*.

Süssmayr's completion entered the canon as the standard edition, but quite a few scholars have proposed competing versions based on their divergent opinions about

A Nod to Handel?

The dominance of mid-ranged and low-pitched instruments lends moody intensity to the score of Mozart's Requiem. We hear basset horns and bassoons entering in a pseudo-canon at the beginning of the *Introit*, above the staccato pacing of the strings. Their phrase builds through poignant harmonic intensification, finally abetted by the brass (playing *forte*), and then the choir enters in imitative counterpoint, from bass on up through soprano, intoning the stern motif (D—C-sharp—D—E—F) that will be heard often in this piece.

The musicologist Christoph Wolff, in his monograph *Mozart's Requiem* (1994), points out a coincidence that was noted early on by the composer's colleague Maximilian Stadler: that this motif corresponds to the melody of the Lutheran funeral hymn alternately sung to the words "Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist" ("If the hour of my death is at hand") and "Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut" ("Lord Jesus Christ, Thou highest good"). This observation is of special interest in that Handel had similarly quoted that chorale in his *Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline, The Ways of Zion Do Mourn* (1737), which may have served as inspiration when Mozart set about composing this movement.

what ultimately constitutes Mozartean style. Robert D. Levin's version takes into consideration a plethora of early sources and aims to strike a balance among the best material suggested by those documents, the accretions of performance tradition, and a generous measure of original creativity.

Instrumentation: two clarinets, two basset horns, two bassoons, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and organ continuo, in addition to four solo singers (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, bass) and a mixed chorus.

Edition: by Robert D. Levin, who revised and completed Mozart's score in 1993.

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INTROIT

Requiem

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

*Tu decet hymnus Deus, in Sion, et tibi reddetur
votum in Jerusalem.*

*Exaudi orationem meam, ad te omnis caro
veniet.*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: et lux
perpetua luceat eis.*

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison.

Christe eleison.

Kyrie eleison.

SEQUENCE

Dies irae

*Dies irae, dies illa
solvat saeculum in favilla:
teste David cum Sibylla.*

*Quantus tremor est futurus,
quando iudex est venturus,
cuncta stricte discussurus!*

Tuba mirum

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum
per sepulchra regionum,
coget omnes ante thronum.*

*Mors stupebit et natura,
cum resurget creatura,
judicanti responsura.*

*Liber scriptus proferetur,
in quo totum continetur,
unde mundus iudicetur.*

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord: and
let perpetual light shine upon them.

A hymn becometh Thee, O God, in Sion
and vows shall be paid to Thee in
Jerusalem.

O hear my prayer; all flesh shall come
to Thee.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord: and
let perpetual light shine upon them.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Days of wrath and doom impending,
David's word with Sibyl's blending!
Heaven and earth in ashes ending!

O, what fear man's bosom rendeth,
when from heaven the Judge descendeth,
on whose sentence all dependeth!

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth
through earth's sepulchres it ringeth,
all before the throne it bringeth.

Death is struck and nature quaking,
all creation is awaking,
to its Judge an answer making.

Lo! the book exactly worded,
wherein all hath been recorded;
thence shall judgment be awarded.

*Judex ergo cum sedebit,
quidquid latet apparebit:
nil inultum remanebit.*

When the Judge his seat attaineth,
and each hidden deed arraigneth,
nothing unavenged remaineth.

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.*

What shall I, frail man, be pleading?
Who for me be interceding?
When the just are mercy needing.

Rex tremendae

*Rex tremendae majestatis,
qui salvandos salvas gratis,
salva me, fons pietatis.*

King of majesty tremendous,
who dost free salvation send us,
fount of pity, then befriend us.

Recordare

*Recordare Jesu pie,
quod sum causa tuae viae:
ne me perdas illa die.*

Think, kind Jesu, my salvation
caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;
leave me not to reprobation.

*Quaerens me, sedisti lassus:
redemisti crucem passus:
tantus labor non sit cassus.*

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,
on the Cross of suffering bought me,
shall such grace be vainly brought me?

*Juste judex ultionis,
donum fac remissionis,
ante diem rationis.*

Righteous Judge, for sin's pollution,
grant Thy gift of absolution,
ere that day of retribution.

*Ingemisco, tamquam reus:
culpa rubet vultus meus:
supplicanti parce Deus.*

Guilty now I pour my moaning,
all my shame with anguish owning;
spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning.

*Qui Mariam absolvisti,
et latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.*

Through the sinful woman shriven,
through the dying thief forgiven,
thou to me a hope has given.

*Preces meae non sunt dignae:
Sed tu bonus fac benigne,
ne perenni cremer igne.*

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
rescue me from fires undying.

*Inter oves locum praesta,
et ab haedis me sequestra,
statuens in parte dextra.*

With Thy sheep a place provide me,
from the goats afar divide me,
to Thy right hand do Thou guide me.

(Please turn the pages quietly.)

Confutatis

*Confutatis maledictis,
flammis acribus addictis,
voca me cum benedictis.*

*Oro supplex et acclinis,
cor contritum quasi cinis:
gere curam mei finis.*

Lacrimosa

*Lacrimosa dies illa,
qua resurget ex favilla
judicandus homo reus:*

*Huic ergo parce Deus.
Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem.*

Amen.

Amen.

OFFERTORY

Domine Jesu

*Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, libera animas
omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni
et de profundo lacu: libera eas de ore leonis, ne
absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum:*

*sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in
lucem sanctam:
quam olim Abrahae promisisti, et semini ejus.*

Hostias

*Hostias et preces tibi Domine laudis offerimus:
tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie
memoriam facimus: fac eas, Domine, de morte
transire ad vitam.*

Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus.

When the wicked are confounded,
doomed to flames of woe unbounded,
call me, with Thy Saints surrounded.

Low I kneel with heart submission!
See, like ashes my contrition!
Help me in my last condition!

Ah! that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of earth returning,
Man for judgment must prepare him.

Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!
Lord, all pitying, Jesu blest,
Grant them Thine eternal rest.

Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory; deliver the
souls of all the faithful departed from the
pains of hell, and from the deep pit: de-
liver them from the lion's mouth, lest hell
swallow them, lest they fall into darkness:

and let the standard-bearer, St. Michael,
bring them into the holy light:
which Thou didst promise of old to
Abraham and his seed.

We offer Thee, O Lord, sacrifice of praise
and prayer: accept them on behalf of the
souls we commemorate this day: and let
them, O Lord, pass from death to life.

That life which Thou didst promise of old
to Abraham and his seed.

SANCTUS

*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

BENEDICTUS

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Osanna in excelsis.*

Blessed are they who come in the name of
the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

AGNUS DEI

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis
requiem.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi: dona eis
requiem sempiternam.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world: grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world: grant them eternal rest.

COMMUNION

Lux aeterna

*Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: cum sanctis tuis
in aeternum, quia pius es.*

Let eternal light shine upon them, O Lord
with Thy saints forever, because Thou art
merciful.

*Requiem aeternum dona eis, Domine: et lux
perpetua luceat eis.*

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord: and
let perpetual light shine upon them.

Cum sanctis tuis

Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum: quia pius es.

With Thy saints forever, because Thou art
merciful.