
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

REQUIEM

D minor/d-Moll/Rè mineur
for 4 Solo Voices, Chorus and Orchestra
für 4 Solostimmen, Chor und Orchester
K 626

Edited by/Herausgeber
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PREVIEW
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MOZART, REQUIEM

'Opus summum viri summi.' With this title J. A. Hiller inscribed his own copy of the Requiem, and in so doing, gave expression to an opinion which even at that early date (c. 1800) was hardly disputed. It was not left to the present generation to consider this last work of the master's, haunted by premonitions of his own death, his supreme achievement. His contemporaries realised its true worth, and no other of Mozart's great works so readily found acceptance all over the world, even in countries, such as Italy, which ignored his operas. It shows the thirty-five-year-old Mozart, treading new paths, engaged in the struggle for comparison with C. Monteverdi (1783), the Requiem is absolutely unique in his style, and every score should be practised by every musician, business or otherwise, unless he wishes to profess himself ignorant of the history and progress of music. The Requiem is a work of historical tradition, and seems to manifest a new view of the world to come—world surrounding creed and dogma where man is released from the narrowness of earthly existence. In point of style, the Requiem resembles 'The Magic Flute' which

immediately preceded it, but it makes far greater use of the resources of earlier music, and represents a type of art which is decisively antecedent to Bach and Handel.

From its own nature the Requiem has become a peculiarly popular work, and any other work of similar dimensions has scarcely acquired a legitimate vogue. Contemporaries early recognised the spiritual gloom which it has lent to Mozart's music, and the tone of its character has encouraged the familiar story of the great composer, clad in grey, and the work on behalf of an unknown patron, and who acted as an emissary from the world. As is well known, this mysterious commission was later quite simply explained: a certain Count Walsegg wished to have the work performed as a requiem for his late wife. Whether as has been stated, he intended to claim it as his own composition is uncertain, but it seems clear that Mozart, at that time in poor health and haunted by thoughts of death, was terrified by the appearance of the unknown envoy, whose image remained in his mind's eye and profoundly disturbed him.

The romantic exaggerations connected with this incident have at all times challenged criticism of every circumstance relating to the Requiem itself. They have even led to doubts as to the authenticity of the Italian letter dated September, 1791 which, if it could be proved to have been written by Mozart, would afford deep insight into his state of mind. It runs: 'My head is in a turmoil; the vision of that unknown stranger is ever before my eyes. I see him entreating me, urging me and impatiently demanding the work. I am working, for composition tires me less than repose. Moreover, I need no longer be afraid. I am daily aware of my approaching end, and I know that I shall have completed it before I can cross this archway.'

Nevertheless, it is not clear how Mozart could have written this letter. He is known to have been in the actual process of writing the Requiem at the time, and it would be strange if he had written it before. It is also known that Mozart's brother-in-law, Franz Süssmayer to whom the Requiem was entrusted, had entrusted the task of completing the Requiem, naming that the 'Sanctus,' 'Benedictus' and 'Agnus Dei' were entirely his own work. But this statement was doubted at the time, for

Süssmayer, though admittedly a talented musician, was not above the average level of the Viennese school. Consequently, the question of his participation in Mozart's composition was much discussed during the nineteenth century, and as a result supporting evidence has been gathered. The autograph score and the musical and critical evidence has gradually accumulated, and it is now known that Süssmayer's part in the Requiem was confined to the problem. At the same time, the results of research may be summarized as follows:—The last movements, 'Lacrimosa,' 'Miserere,' 'Agnus Dei' and figured bass, 'Kyrie eleison,' with its 'Kyrie eleison,' 'Requiem aeternam,' 'Confutatis' and 'Crucifixus,' as well as the 'Agnus Dei,' 'Domine Jesu Christe' and 'Hostias' are entirely Mozart's; the orchestration was finished by Süssmayer, ostensibly from Mozart's detailed sketches. Among these movements, the 'Lacrimosa,' alone, is incomplete in the autograph score. It goes only as far as bar 9. Joseph Eybler tried to add two more bars, but they were not included in Süssmayer's arrangement, Handke's excellent, though not entirely incontrovertible, research shows that at least half of it was scored by Mozart. This tallies with Coanstance Mozart's report that the movement

was sung at the master's bedside. Süssmayer's alleged composition of the 'Sanctus,' 'Benedictus' and 'Agnus Dei' has, however, been disproved with a high degree of probability by Handke. According to his findings, the first part of the 'Sanctus' is entirely by Mozart, except for the orchestration. The 'Pleni sunt' is based on Mozart's sketches, but the execution betrays an inexperienced hand. The 'Osanna' may have been sketched as far as bar 15; but the remainder is free and is clumsily carried out. The 'Benedictus' which, as Handke says, 'in beauty of expression and well-ordered linear expansion reveals the influence of Bach in Mozart's soul,' clearly encloses the master's hand as far as bar 18 and between bars 28-30. The orchestration of the first 28 bars may also be ascribed to him, while bars 28-50, only the vocal parts and the figured bass are his. The ornamentation of these parts is done by Süssmayer, who in the middle section inserts the postulated 'Osanna' which was undoubtedly written by Mozart. The 'Agnus Dei' is the work of the erstwhile 'opus' and is of a doubtful quality, the doubt being suggested by the inharmonious and unskillful manner in which Süssmayer has appropriated the master's mystery in its original concentration and in the development of many of the sections of the whole work. In the 'Communio,' 'Lux aeterna,' the 'Te igitur' from the First Movement reappears, as does the Kyrie-fugue

in the concluding 'Requiem' of this section. This is obviously only a makeshift and is hardly in accordance with Mozart's intentions. Thus, although the Requiem as a whole lacks the crowning glory of completion by Mozart himself, it is to a very great extent the work of the master.

Two considerations, however, in opposition to the possibility of participation in the first part of the Requiem by Mozart of the 'Sanctus,' 'Benedictus' and 'Agnus Dei' are: the attribution of the 'Osanna' to the assistant of the master, which, in the opinion of Handke, implies the existence of complete sketches of the other movements, and the fact that Süssmayer's search for the original sketches would contradict all that is known concerning Mozart's habits of writing, as a general rule he continued to complete in his own hand. He set down a note on the paper as to the outer circumstances under which the Requiem was composed: illness, haste, and agitation, which could have caused an exception of this kind. Constance had no knowledge of any posthumous sketches beyond a few scraps of paper covered with notes. There is, however, no justification for alleging that Süssmayer appropriated movements elaborated by Mozart in order to claim their authorship for himself.

There seems to be no means of resolving the many doubts and obscurities which still remain after all the foregoing facts and arguments have been considered. With the material at our disposal we may

conclude, at any rate provisionally, that with exception of the reappearance of the initial movements at the conclusion of the work, and of a few occasional patchings, the composition is Mozart's own; and that the instrumentation, except in the first two movements, is fragmentary and doubtful.

The present revised edition of Mozart's Requiem is based on the following: the autograph score (Facsimile print, cf. note on p.IV); the complete edition of Mozart's works by Breitkopf & Härtel, Series XXVI, 1, together with the Revision Report written by Brahms; and the score by Breitkopf & Härtel (first edition c.1800). The deviations of the prints from the autograph are astonishingly numerous. In doubtful cases the reading of the autograph has been maintained. The elimination of all these deviations would constitute a complete revision of the score; a few of the more important additions and omissions are here mentioned. The change of the figured bass from C to G, and the change of the instrument from cello to viola, are the most important. The change of the figured bass from C to G is a change of the most fundamental kind, and it is always accompanied by a change of the instrument. In all other passages, a misunderstanding of the change of clef in the figured bass has caused a change in the instruments.

3. In the 'Kyrie,' Mozart's manuscript shows that he intended 'eleison' to be sung as a word of four syllables, and he leaves no doubt as to the distribution of the syllables among the notes.

4. In the 'Tuba Mirum,' mm. 56-57, 61-62, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent. There is an definite reading in the autograph.

5. In 'Donaus' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

6. In 'Miserere,' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

7. In 'Miserere,' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

8. In 'Miserere,' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

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19. In 'Miserere,' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

20. In 'Miserere,' mm. 10-11, the reading of the 2^d and 3^d are widely divergent.

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