

MOZART'S REQUIEM: NEW HORIZONS

One of the few things Peter Shaffer and Miloš Forman got right in their dramatization of Mozart's frantic attempt to complete his *Requiem* is the sense of utter confusion that surrounded his final hours. Everyone was caught off guard by the composer's death, and Mozart was certainly the most surprised of all.

Just a few years earlier, in 1787, Joseph II had reorganized his musical establishment in an effort to retain and encourage the talents of Vienna's two brightest musical stars. As *kapellmeister*, Antonio Salieri (1750–1825) took on the lion's share of programming, supervising, rehearsing and performing most of the imperial court's productions. Though handsomely remunerated, this post brought a crush of administrative responsibilities in addition to its substantial musical demands. Mozart gained the title of "court composer," with the freedom to concentrate almost entirely on creating new work, albeit at a fraction of what Salieri was earning. Mozart's earning potential—and horizons as a composer—brightened when in April of 1790 he was created assistant *kapellmeister* of the city's other major musical establishment, St. Stephen's Cathedral, with the promise of succeeding to the office (and salary) of the incumbent *kapellmeister* in short order.

In 1791, the year of his death, Mozart went from success to success, with a major role in Leopold II's August–September coronation festivities in Prague (his new opera *La clemenza di Tito* and his earlier *Coronation Mass*—the latter conducted by Salieri), a Viennese box

office hit in *Die Zauberflöte* (September), and deepening social connections through his Masonic lodge in Vienna, for which he composed some beautifully affecting ceremonial works. He and his wife, the soprano Constanze Weber—a true intellectual partner—welcomed their second surviving son in July. Financially liquid, if not always solvent, he was doing what he loved believing that the money would follow. He wrote confidently to a friend in 1790 that "I now stand at the gateway to my fortune."

In this context, the *Requiem* commission Mozart received in early 1791 opened a new vista—a chance to return to the genre that was closest to his heart, to write sacred music with all the inventiveness, freshness and diversity of his mature style. Drawing on numerous antecedents and influences (notably Handel and Michael Haydn), Mozart conceived of the *Requiem* as a "higher pathetic style of church music," a style characterized by grandeur and depth of sentiment, pathos, and above all a direct approach to human emotion. This was to be music not for God, but for us.

It has become fashionable to dismiss, as clumsy and uninspired, the interventions of Mozart's friend and assistant, Franz Xaver Süssmayr (1766–1803), who did the world the immense service of completing the *Requiem* and claiming it for Mozart. With due respect to modern music scholarship, I would much rather hear a completion by one of Mozart's trusted and talented contemporaries—the version conducted by Salieri at Mozart's memorial, performed at the

funerals of Haydn and Chopin, published in 1799 under his widow's supervision and sung by choruses continuously for more than 200 years.

What if we could go back in time and interview Mozart on his deathbed, ask him to hum a few bars of the *Benedictus* as he wanted it to go? Even better, administer a good dose of broad-spectrum antibiotics and keep the young man alive for another 20 to 30 years? Would the reanimated Mozart have become a competitor to Haydn instead of a deferential colleague, eclipsing or preempting

his great symphonies and late masses? Or might he have retreated into the church, a crabby retrograde, enemy of Beethoven, scandalized by Schubert? We begin to remember why the "Temporal Prime Directive" is not to be violated lightly. For now, and for all time, we should recognize the magnificent achievement of Mozart's *Requiem* as a new beginning rather than a tragic end.

—John Maclay

REQUIEM, KV 626 (1791)
Completed by Franz Xaver Süssmayr (1766–1803)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

The story of Süssmayr’s completion of Mozart’s *Requiem* is almost as interesting as the composition itself. Christoph Wolff argues compellingly that Mozart’s fragment, famously unfinished, nevertheless “completely defines the musical substance” of the *Requiem* and is the “decisive historical, textual, and musical documentation of the work…the only surviving and incorruptible witness” to the composer’s vision.

Süssmayr worked in haste to finish the *Requiem* in the chaos surrounding Mozart’s death, both to earn for the composer’s estate the balance of the commission from Count Walsegg, and to help secure a financial legacy, through benefit performances and eventual publication, for Constanze and her young children. In order to maximize the work’s earning potential, it was essential that it be presented as fully as possible as Mozart’s own. For this reason, the composer’s friends and family (Süssmayer included) were intentionally vague—even many years later—about Süssmayr’s contributions to the finished product. Dispersing this fog became one of the great forensic exercises in modern musicology, with efforts as early as the 1820s to understand and explain where Süssmayr began and Mozart left off.

The unfinished state of the *Requiem* gives us remarkable insight to Mozart’s process as a composer: the order in which (and efficiency with which) he worked, the primacy of vocal writing in what was to have been his new, mature style of sacred music, his pre-occupation with structural unity, his expressive and multilayered approach to rhythm, the creativity of his orchestration. In general, Mozart completed the lion’s share of musical work—voice parts, figured bass and major instrumental motives—in the Introit, Kyrie, Sequence, and Offertorium. Süssmayr recomposed the Introit and Kyrie to end the Requiem, perhaps consistent with Mozart’s instructions. The Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei came entirely from Süssmayr’s pen, building on musical ideas found elsewhere in the *Requiem* and perhaps on sketches—“scraps of paper” in Constanze’s words—and discussions with the composer that followed him to an early grave.

The table opposite delineates Mozart’s and Süssmayr’s respective contributions to the score delivered to Count Walsegg in February 1792—barely three months after Mozart’s death.

SECTION	MOZART	SÜSSMAYR
Introitus	The only movement composed and orchestrated entirely by Mozart	
Kyrie	Vocal lines and figured bass	Orchestration
Dies irae	Vocal lines and figured bass, nearly all of the violin I part	Remaining orchestration
Tuba mirum	Vocal lines and figured bass, first 18 bars of trombone solo, some violin I interludes	Remaining orchestration
Rex tremendae	Vocal lines and figured bass, nearly all of the violin I part	Remaining orchestration
Recordare	Vocal lines and figured bass, orchestral introduction and postlude, isolated violin I figures	Remaining orchestration
Confutatis	Vocal lines and figured bass, violin I lines accompanying “voca me,” violin I line and initial woodwind lines accompanying “oro supplex” section	Remaining orchestration
Lacrimosa	Vocal lines and figured bass through “judicandus homo reus” (bar 8) only, two bars of orchestral introduction	Remaining orchestration (bars 1–8), all material from bar 8 to end; soprano line at measure 26 recapitulates “Requiem aeternam” theme from Introit
	Mozart left a sketch for an Amen fugue to finish the Lacrimosa, completed most satisfyingly by the Harvard musicologist Robert Levin	Süssmayr’s self-effacing ending does not attempt to outshine Mozart, standing as an eloquent testament to the master’s truncated genius
Domine Jesu	Vocal lines and figured bass, violin I motive at beginning of “quam olim Abrahae” section	Remaining orchestration
Hostias	Vocal lines and figured bass, orchestral introduction and postlude	Remaining orchestration
Sanctus		All Süssmayr; soprano line at opening recapitulates (in a major key) opening theme from “Dies irae”
Benedictus		All Süssmayr
Agnus Dei		All Süssmayr; bass line at opening recapitulates “Requiem aeternam” theme from Introit
Communio	See Introit and Kyrie above	Süssmayr’s recycling job was not just an efficient solution, but may have reflected Mozart’s own concept for finishing the work

INTROITUS

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion, et
tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam;
ad te omnis caro veniet.
Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may light
perpetual shine upon them.
Thou shalt have praise in Sion, O Lord; and
homage shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer, O Lord,
All flesh shall come before Thee.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may light
perpetual shine upon them.*

KYRIE

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.

*Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.*

SEQUENZ

Dies Irae

Dies irae, dies illa
solvat saeculum in favilla,
teste David cum Sybilla.

*This day, this day of wrath
Shall consume the world in ashes,
As foretold by David and the Sibyl.*

Quantus tremor est futurus,
quando iudex est venturus,
cuncta stricte discussurus.

*What trembling there shall be
When the judge shall come
To weigh everything strictly.*

Tuba mirum

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

*The trumpet, scattering its sound
Across the graves of all lands,
Summons all before the throne.*

Mors stupebit et natura,
cum resurget creatura,
Judicanti responsura.

*Death and nature shall be stunned
When Creation arises
To render account before the judge.*

Liber scriptus proferetur,
in quo totum continentur,
unde mundus iudicetur.

*The written book shall be brought forth
In which all is contained
Whereby the world shall be judged.*

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

*When the judge takes his seat,
All that is hidden shall appear:
Nothing shall remain unavenged.*

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
cum vix justus sit securus?

*What shall I, poor wretch, say then?
To which protector shall I appeal
When even the just man is barely safe?*

Rex tremendae

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

*King of awesome majesty,
Who freely saves those worthy of salvation,
Save me, fount of pity.*

Recordare

Recordare, Jesu pie,
quod sum causa tuae viae,
ne me perdas ille die.

*Remember, gentle Jesus,
That I am the reason for your journey;
Do not cast me out on that day.*

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

*Seeking me, you have sat down wearily,
You have redeemed me by enduring the cross;
Such travail must not be in vain.*

Iuste iudex ultionis,
donum fac remissionis
ante diem rationis.

*Righteous judge of vengeance,
Grant your gift of absolution
Before the day of reckoning.*

Ingemisco tamquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus,
supplicant parce, Deus.

*I groan like the sinner I am,
Guilt reddens my face,
Spare this suppliant, O God.*

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

*You, who pardoned Mary
And heeded the thief,
Have given me hope as well.*

Preces meae non sunt dignae,
sed tu, bonus, fac benigne,
ne perenni cremer igne.

*Though my prayers are not worthy of you,
Grant that through your good grace
I may not be consumed in eternal fire.*

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

*Give me a place among the sheep
And separate me from the goats,
Let me stand at your right hand.*

Confutatis

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

*When the damned are cast away
And consigned to the bitter flames,
Call me to be with the blessed.*

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

*Bowed down in supplication I beg you,
My heart as though ground to ashes:
Help me in my last hour.*

Lacrimosa

Lacrimosa dies illa
qua resurget ex favilla
judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce, Deus.
Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.

*This day full of tears,
When from the embers arises
Guilty man, to be judged:
O Lord, have mercy upon him.
Gentle Lord Jesus, grant them rest.*

OFFERTORIUM

Domine Jesu

Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex gloriæ,
libera animas omnium fidelium
defunctorum de pœnis inferni et de
profundo lacu.

Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas Tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum;

Sed signifer sanctus Michæl repræsentet
eas in lucem sanctam, quam olim
Abrahæ promisisti, et semini ejus.

*Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from
the pains of hell and from the
bottomless pit.*

*Deliver them from the mouth of the lion, neither
let them be swallowed up by the abyss, nor fall
into darkness.*

*But let the holy standard-bearer Michael lead
them into the holy light, as you promised to
Abraham and his seed.*

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 Abrahæ promisisti
et semini ejus.

*We offer prayers and sacrifices to you,
O Lord; receive them on behalf of those
souls we commemorate this day.*

*Grant them, O Lord, to pass over from death to
life, as you promised Abraham and his seed.*

SANCTUS

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus
Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra
gloria tua. Osanna in excelsis.

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

BENEDICTUS

Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini. Osanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes 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.*

COMMUNIO: LUX AETERNA

Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine, cum
sanctis tuis in æternum, quia pius es.

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine;
et lux perpetua luceat eis, cum sanctis
tuis in æternum, quia pius es.

*May eternal light shine on them, O Lord, with
Thy saints forever, for Thou art merciful.*

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord, and may
perpetual light shine on them, with Thy saints
forever, for Thou art merciful.*