Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart:
Requiem in D minor
Born in Salzburg, Austria, January 27, 1756, died in Vienna, Austria, December 5, 1791

Unfinished Mozart

Contrary to myth, Mozart was a happy man during the late summer and fall of 1791, albeit a very busy one — racing to fulfill a stack of commissions, two of them due within weeks of each other in two different cities. *La Clemenza di Tito*, his first opera seria in ten years, premiered in Prague on September 6 to mixed reviews. Three weeks later, *The Magic Flute* had a stunningly successful debut in Vienna and settled in for a long and lucrative run. But with his desk still piled high with work, he had no time to savor this victory. Plunging ahead, he finished the Clarinet Concerto for his good friend Anton Stadler in October, and on November 18 conducted a new cantata for his Masonic lodge. This was probably his last appearance in public. He died at 12:55 a.m. on December 5.

One major work still lay on his desk unfinished. In July, Count Franz von Walsegg, through an anonymous emissary, had agreed to pay him quite generously to write a Requiem, half of the fee in advance, the other half upon completion. Mystery and confusion continue to swirl around this commission and its possible relationship to the composer's death. Scholarship has long since cleared up most of it, though a few questions remain. One is quite basic: why did the count approach Mozart for such a work in the first place?

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For the fact is that Mozart was not known in Vienna as a composer of sacred music. No one had commissioned him to write a major work for the church during the ten years he had lived there. The unfinished Mass in C Minor, K.427, composed in 1782/83, was written for Salzburg and probably never performed in Vienna. Why, then, did Count Walsegg seek out Mozart, rather than someone more closely associated with sacred music, to compose a Requiem? Whatever the reasons, Walsegg apparently approached no one else.

What we do know is that the count intended to have the Requiem performed annually in memory of his wife, who had died suddenly in February, 1791. Mozart undoubtedly knew the count and probably the countess as well. Walsegg often invited musicians to perform at his country home; he also owned the house where Mozart's friend and sometime creditor Michael Puchberg lived. The countess, a child actress before her marriage, had appeared on stage alongside Mozart's sister-in-law, Aloysia Weber. Walsegg liked to hire composers to write music that he would then pass off as his own, paying them well and probably realizing that his little subterfuge was not quite a secret. Walsegg's emissary was described in old biographies as a "mysterious, gaunt-looking stranger, tall, dark, and dressed all in gray." But there was no mystery, really; it was Franz Anton Leitgeb, an employee of the count who was tall, thin, and, because of his Turkish descent, dark-skinned.

Setting to work on the Requiem in October, the composer sorely missed his wife, Constanze, who was in Baden recuperating from a painful and potentially serious leg infection. His letters to her are affectionate, teasing, and full of high spirits. How could he be depressed? *The Magic Flute* was a hit. Trips to England and Russia were being talked about. Sizable commissions were in the offing from Hungary and Amsterdam. Within a few months or possibly a year or two, he expected to be named Music Director of St. Stephen's Cathedral, which would bring him a considerable salary and the title of Kapellmeister. All this

was reason enough for high spirits.

According to legend, however, throughout most of September Mozart was ill, melancholy, preoccupied with thoughts of his impending death. His letters plainly refute this; nor is there is any evidence of serious illness before the middle of November. What did he die of? The most likely cause was a viral epidemic that swept through Vienna in November 1791. On November 20 he took to his bed, and from then on his body gradually became so swollen that he could neither sit up in bed nor turn himself from one side to the other. It would have been impossible to compose or, at the end, even to hold a pen.

Before he died, Mozart was able to complete only the Requiem's opening movement, the Requiem aeternam, along with much of the Kyrie and portions of the Sequence, the long poem beginning with the Dies Irae and ending with the Lacrimosa. For some of the remaining sections he left sketches or drafts in varying states of completion; for the concluding movements, nothing. Yet despite the fact that only a fraction of the Requiem was written by Mozart himself, it is numbered today among his most beloved and most frequently performed works.

At his death, the Requiem looked like this:

Requiem aeternam:	complete
Kyrie eleison:	vocal parts complete; bass line with figures (to indicate how the harmony should be filled out); orchestral parts sketched in here and there
Sequence:	same as the Kyrie eleison, through measure 8 of the Lacrimosa
Offertory:	same as the Kyrie and Sequence
Sanctus:	not composed
Benedictus:	not composed
Osanna:	not composed
Agnus Dei:	apparently not composed
Communio:	apparently not composed

The Kyrie and nearly all of the Sequence were in good enough shape to be finished by someone else. The Lacrimosa, however, ended abruptly after eight measures and for this reason was long thought to have been the last music he composed. But Alan Tyson and Christoph Wolff argue that he was probably so sure how the rest of the Lacrimosa would go that he simply didn't bother to write it down, hurrying on instead to draft two more complex movements, the Domine Jesu and Hostias. It was then, they believe, that he had to stop. The autograph manuscript shows no signs of haste or fatigue. Right to the end, it seems, Mozart had no idea that he was dying.

After his death, Constanze, faced with the task of supporting herself and their two young children, needed the other half of that fee from Count Walsegg. She asked three composers to bring the Requiem to completion, but each of them had trouble following in Mozart's footsteps. Ultimately, the responsibility fell to Mozart's assistant, Franz Xaver Süssmayr. Laboring under what must have been indescribable emotional pressure, he completed the work in February 1792, thereby rescuing Constanze, an act of generosity rarely if ever acknowledged by Mozart scholars. Thanks to him, the count received the manuscript in due course and paid Constanze the promised sum.

There is harsh criticism of Süssmayr's work, however: errors of harmony abound, and his musical ideas proved no match for Mozart's. Nevertheless, many conductors, among them Donald Teeters, have come to prefer Süssmayr's version to any that have followed it. Süssmayr worked closely with Mozart for a period of years, was with him at the end, and surely had a good sense of the composer's overall plan for the work. Süssmayr's music for the Sanctus and Benedictus is disappointing, though his Agnus Dei is quite fine. Did Mozart perhaps leave him sketches for this movement? For the Communio (Lux aeterna and Cum sanctis tuis), Süssmayr repeated music from the Te decet hymnus and the Kyrie. Either Mozart told him to do this, or Süssmayr, pressed for time, did so out of desperation.

The style of the Requiem is without parallel elsewhere in Mozart's works. Its closest analogues are found, surprisingly, not in his other church music (most of which was written before he moved to Vienna), but in *The Magic Flute* and the Masonic choral music. The Requiem's sonority strikingly resembles that of the priestly second act of *The Magic Flute*: two basset horns (a lower-pitched relative of the clarinet), two bassoons, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, and strings. But the Requiem is darker still, because there are no upper woodwinds — no flutes, oboes, or clarinets — and no French horns. The result is amber-hued; solemn, yet warm.

In stunning contrast to his earlier sacred music, notably including the Mass in C minor, K.427, this work avoids vocal display. Much of the writing — solo as well as choral — is either richly contrapuntal or direct, simple, even hymnlike. The influence of Bach is everywhere apparent — for example, in the masterful double fugue juxtaposing an ominous Kyrie eleison with a light-winged Christe eleison. Mozart borrowed the melody for the Kyrie from the chorus "And with his stripes we are healed" in Handel's *Messiah*, a work he had revised on a commission from Baron van Swieten in 1789.

Arias are conspicuously absent. The four soloists are treated as a group, not as individuals, with one brief, unmelismatic exception: the beginning of the Tuba mirum, which Mozart sets as a dialogue between baritone and solo trombone. The German bible translates the Latin *tuba* as "trombone," rather than "trumpet" as in English bibles. Neither word is an accurate rendering of *tuba*, St. Jerome's fifth-century guess at the meaning of the Greek word for *Shofar* or ram's horn, the instrument played today, as it was then, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Trombones are heard throughout much of the Requiem. They were associated then with church music— not with the symphony, as they would be from Beethoven on. For Mozart, they always pointed to the presence of the divine.

Early writers on Mozart were unanimous in believing that the Requiem marked a new direction in his work, away from opera and the symphony towards a thoroughgoing reform of church music. The new style, as they envisioned it, would banish operatic display and blend ancient (i.e., Renaissance and Baroque) polyphony with modern, symphonic ideas of form. Were these writers on to something? Had Mozart truly embarked on a fundamental rethinking of his style? There is, in fact, evidence that he had, one example being the Requiem itself, with its sharp departures from his earlier music. At all events, we are mistaken to think of this as a late work. To him, it was simply the next work, the next commission. He could not have known that it would be his last, and that he would not live to finish it.

Robert Schumann:
Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major, Op.97, "Rhenish"
Born in Zwickau, Saxony, June 8, 1810, died in Endenich, Germany July 29, 1856

For many years Schumann's symphonies were only grudgingly admired. Critics often said that they were awkwardly assembled and clumsily scored works whose place in the repertoire was rescued only by their lovely melodies and occasional glorious moments. When Mahler conducted them, he completely "retouched" the orchestration. Schumann himself had recognized the faults of construction of his *Symphony No. 4,* and he spent ten years trying to rid it of them. In 1892, George Bernard Shaw proposed a cynic's solutions: "Extract all the noble passages from Schumann's symphonies and combine them into a single fantasia -- *Reminiscences of Schumann.*" Such opinions have been rendered obsolete by a number of factors. The general acceptance of Brahms's four symphonies as "classics" has reflected credit on the symphonies of Schumann, Brahms' mentor. Furthermore, conductors now think of Schumann's idiosyncratic orchestral style as an important element in his total character as a composer, and they would not dream of re-orchestrating his scores to make them sound like someone else's.

The *Third Symphony* is in many ways Schumann's best, and he wrote it quickly, at a speed that would have been remarkable even for a composer who had not suffered his periodic attacks of "rheumatism" and "hypochondria" that doctors in our time think may have been syphilis, stroke and schizophrenia. This symphony was composed in the Rhine Valley town of Dusseldorf, to which the Schumann family moved from Dresden in September 1850, for Robert's first appointment as a conductor. He was happy and at ease in his new position. In October he wrote a cello concerto and conducted his first concert. During five weeks of November and December, he sketched and scored this symphony, and he conducted its first performance on February 6, 1851. He played it in Cologne on the 25th, and in March repeated it in Dusseldorf "by popular request."

Schumann had never before attained such richness of romantic expression in an orchestral work. No one knows exactly when or how this work came to be called the *Rhenish Symphony,* but Schumann did say that he wanted it to reflect the pleasure he found in his new life in the Rhineland. The rhythms and textures of this symphony must have been models for young Johannes Brahms.

The principal subjects of the first movement, Lebhaft ("Lively") are long, far-ranging melodies that derive a large part of their vitality from the complex, syncopated ambiguity of their rhythmic structure. Next is the Scherzo, Sehr mässig ("Very moderate"), whose main theme suggests the majestically flowing waters of a great river. Third is a movement headed simply Nicht schnell ("Not fast"), in which those same waters could be said to ripple gently.

The unusual extra movement of this five-movement work is very closely and directly related to the Rhineland. On November 12, ten days after Schumann had begun the new symphony, he and his wife went to Cologne to attend the ceremonies at the Cathedral in which the Archbishop was elevated to Cardinal. A few days later he noted in his score that this fourth movement was "in the character of an accompaniment to a solemn ceremony." After the first performances, he reduced the description to the single word, Feirlich, which can be rendered in English as either "solemn" or "ceremonial." The texture of the writing is in the contrapuntal style thought suitable for performance in church, and the choir of trombones provides the orchestra with choral voices. To close, there is a bright and sunny finale, Lebhaft again, in which the music makes reference to the first and third movements.

This symphony is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani and strings.