

Program 3 Notes

by Jon Kochavi

Requiem, K.626 (1791)

Introitus: Requiem

Kyrie

Sequenz

Dies Irae

Tuba mirum

Rex tremendae

Recordare

Confutatis

Lacrimosa

Offertory

Domine Jesu

Hostias

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei

Communio: Lux aeterna

Although Mozart wrote 17 masses during his prolific career, he wrote only a single *Requiem* (Mass for the Dead). It is one of the great historical ironies of Western classical music that of the hundreds of works large and small that he composed, the *Requiem* was his very last. Indeed, Mozart was working on the piece on the very last day of his life, and left the score incomplete when he died of rheumatic fever on December 5, 1791. As if this set of circumstances were not dramatic enough, the mysterious details surrounding the work's commission and subsequent completion compounded the story fueling rumors and myths worthy of—and indeed inspiring—a Hollywood film. (To dispel just one: Salieri certainly did not poison Mozart).

Even now, the true facts surrounding the composition of the *Requiem* remain elusive. Mozart was approached during the summer of 1791 by a representative of an anonymous commissioner asking for a requiem. A gen-

erous advance on part of the fee made the offer particularly enticing. We know now that the mysterious patron was Count Walsegg, and it is quite possible that Mozart himself became aware of his identity before his death. Walsegg commissioned the work in honor of his recently deceased wife, and intended to pass off the work as his own (likely with a nudge and a wink since few would believe it was his, as he well knew).

Mozart's wife Constanze needed the lucrative balance of the commission fee, so there was special incentive to have the *Requiem* completed for the Count after Mozart's death. She entrusted this work to three of Mozart's students, who quickly pieced together the work from sketches and conversations they had with Mozart. So Constanze passed off the work to Walsegg as completely by Mozart and Walsegg passed off the work

as his own. (Part of the *Requiem* was also played at a memorial to Mozart within a week of his death, a poignant detail leading to speculation over whether Mozart was conscious that he was writing his own requiem.) By the time the dust had settled, it was up to historians to attempt to piece together which parts of the work were truly Mozart's—a job that could only be done with partial success. In the end, we are left with the music, without question one of the crowning achievements in choral writing in classical canon.

Mozart's music in the *Requiem* is marvelously dramatic and compelling. His settings reflect the text in a way that seems almost inevitable. The opening **Introitus** masterfully interweaves the dark (“*Requiem aeternam*”) with the light (“*lux perpetua luceat eis*”), leading directly into the increasing desperate pleas for mercy in the **Kyrie**. The drama only intensifies from here with the violent portrayal—listen for the musical trembling of the basses as they sing “*tremor*”—of the **Dies Irae** (Day of Wrath). Mozart proceeds to elicit a wide range of musical emotions from the balance of the



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

famous **Sequenz**, as the soloists and chorus appeals for mercy in turn with humility, utter fear and desperation, and finally resignation.

The two movements of the **Offertory** present a more reserved, prayerful character, but are not without their moments of drama, as in the musical portrayal of the wide open lion's mouth (“*de ore leonis*”) that lies ready to swallow the souls into eternal darkness. The **Sanctus** and **Benedictus** offer a break from the angst that pervades the work. Poignant dissonances return in the **Agnus Dei**, but there are also glimmers of peace as the promise of eternal rest is realized. The final movement rounds off the work by borrowing the music from the end of the **Introitus** and the **Kyrie**, said to be Mozart's own idea. ♪

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77 (1878)

Allegro non troppo

Adagio

Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace

When he was 15 years old, Brahms attended a performance of Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* in Hamburg. Though difficult for us to imagine now, the piece had been virtually forgotten at that time; nonetheless the young Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim decided to tour with the concerto and virtually single-handedly brought it back into the repertoire. Joachim's performance left a deep impression on the young Brahms, and he finally got to meet the violinist in 1853. Joachim and Brahms became fast friends, living together for a time in Göttingen, taking counterpoint courses together, and even touring together with Brahms at the piano. They remained close for most of their lives, maintaining an active correspondence while they were apart. (Mr. Gluzman plays on a violin once owned by Joachim's most influential pupil, Leopold Auer).



Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Brahms began composing his *Violin Concerto* specifically for Joachim during the summer of 1878. On August 22, Brahms sent Joachim a copy of the solo violin part, asking for his opinion and advice, hoping he could “correct the solo part.” Joachim's quickly responded:

It gives me great pleasure to know that you are composing a Violin Concerto.... I have had a good look at what you sent me and have made a few notes and alterations, but without the full score one can't say much. I can however make out most of it and there is a lot of really good violin music in it, but whether it can be played with comfort in a hot concert hall remains to be seen... Can we spend a couple of days together?

The two continued their exchange for four months, with Joachim sending Brahms suggestions for alterations, and Brahms usually adjusting those alterations further. The work was premiered by Joachim in Leipzig on January 1, 1879, and the great violinist continued to champion the concerto, playing it in concerts throughout Europe. The extraordinary cadenza he wrote for the performances is still the one most used by violinists today.

The concerto is a tour-de-force, demanding virtuosic control of both tone and bow from the soloist, but the depth of its expressive voice transcends a mere show-piece. Truly masterful is the very natural and frequent shifts from luxurious lyricism to fiery passion. A good example occurs at the outset with the orchestral introduction beginning an understated arpeggiated theme that moves through an unusual modulation to a powerfully stated extension of the theme. Instead of presenting the lyrical arpeggiated theme as expected, the soloist enters in D minor with perhaps the most dramatic introduction in the concerto repertoire.

The Adagio is built around the broad opening melody in the oboe, accompanied at the start by winds and horns only. When the soloist repeats the theme, its accompaniment is now the string section, but the winds interject period echoes, reminding us of the theme's original incarnation. After a more agitated minor-key middle section, the initial melody returns, now shared by the oboe and violin.

Biographer Malcolm MacDonald sees the rondo finale of the Concerto as an homage to Joachim's own Violin Concerto in the Hungarian Style, which was dedicated to Brahms. A rollicking Hungarian dance theme features numerous double-stops in the solo part, creating a high-energy *marcato* that characterizes much of the movement until the music slows to its final, punctuated close. ♪

Israeli violinist **Vadim Gluzman**, in technique and sensibility, harkens back to the Golden Age of violinists of the 19th and 20th centuries, while possessing the passion and energy of the 21st century. Lauded by both critics and audiences as a performer of great depth, virtuosity and technical brilliance, he has appeared throughout the world as a soloist and in a duo setting with his wife, pianist Angela Yoffe.

Early in his career Gluzman enjoyed the encouragement and support of Isaac Stern, and in 1994 he received the prestigious Henryk Szeryng Foundation Career Award. Gluzman plays the extraordinary 1690 ex-Leopold Auer Stradivarius, on extended loan to him through the generosity of the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

Vadim Gluzman has appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras, collaborated with the world's most prominent conductors and performed at important festivals.

Born in 1973 in the Ukraine, Vadim Gluzman began studying the violin at the age of seven. Before moving to Israel in 1990, he studied under Zakhar Bron and later under Yair Kless in Tel Aviv. He also studied in the United States under Arkady Fomin and at The Juilliard School under the late Dorothy DeLay and Masao Kawasaki.

In His Words . . .



Vadim Gluzman,
violin

We chose Brahms. I have a copy of the violin concerto manuscript from the Library of Congress. As with practically every piece he wrote for violin, Brahms wrote it for, and in collaboration with, Joseph Joachim, one of the greatest violinists of our time. They lived in different cities and would send the score to one another. Joachim would write corrections in a different color. It's amazing to see the mistakes and how Brahms responded.

When I go onstage, I just let it happen. The preparation gives you the emotional readiness to walk on stage and simply spill out the soul of the piece to your audience.

The complete biography of Vadim Gluzman is on our website: www.marinsymphony.org
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