

THE REQUIEMS OF BRAHMS AND VERDI

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to compare the Requiems of Brahms and Verdi, two composers who are both amongst the greatest in our Western musical history, but completely different in significant aspects, the one being by nature introspective, serious, and even inclined towards melancholy in his creative work, whether done in a religious context or not; and the other being first and foremost a composer of operas, thus specializing in music for the stage or theatre, presupposing extroversion and even a degree of flamboyancy. Brahms never wrote any operas but his oeuvre is enhanced by symphonies, sonatas and concertos of serious intent, and especially by a body of wonderful chamber music (which is perhaps the most intimate genre in Western instrumental music). Verdi, on the other hand, is known almost exclusively for his operas, and wrote little else. Then Brahms was one of the great composers of the German Lieder, again a markedly intimate genre, which suggests that he paid constant attention to fine detail. In contrast, Verdi's mentality was that of the Italian opera composer who is more concerned with flowing melodic beauty, which is a "translation into music" of the meanings and tendencies of the text.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Mass, celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church, is a celebration of the Eucharist, His Church, to hear His word and to take part in the perfect sacrifice, being the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood. During Mass the congregation share in Christ's death and resurrection through the Holy Eucharist, the transformation of the bread, which they partake in thanksgiving to the Father. Mass is celebrated on a daily basis according to the seasons of the ecclesiastical year. The other class of service, known as the office, is also celebrated every day. The office has no fixed time except in monasterial communities.

There are various types of Mass, the most common being the solemn high Mass and the low Mass. During high Mass, usually celebrated on Sundays, incense is used, a symbol of prayers rising to God. When one celebrant is taking the service, he may sing or chant certain parts of the service, the choir and the congregation responding as laid down.

This is also known as the sung Mass. In the low Mass the priest reads instead of singing.

The votive Mass, celebrated to fulfil the congregation's earnest concerns (vota), may be said as high or low Mass. One type of votive Mass is the Requiem Mass which may be said on special request during the week.

The Requiem, also known as the Funeral Mass, is held for the repose of the souls of the dead. It is generally celebrated on All Soul's Day and at funerals and memorial services.

The term "Mass" is taken from the Latin word 'missa', a derivation from 'missio' which stems from 'dismissio'. The basic meaning of the word therefore designates a dismissal, a separation or parting. In purer Latin it meant the breaking up or departure after a public gathering. Thus in the church, "Mass" or 'Missa' designates the closing of the divine service in the words 'Ite missa est', and the final blessings before the congregation departs.

Mass celebrations may differ from place to place according to the church's different liturgies or rites, but while many different rites exist, the most important parts of the Mass are the same throughout

the world. The majority of Catholic churches adhered to the Roman rite where Latin was the official language.

This centuries-old tradition was only changed in 1962-3 by Vatican Council II which permitted the use of the vernacular.

During the high Middle Ages, abusive practices of the Mass led to the Reformation by Martin Luther, a catholic monk. Luther proclaimed his ninety-five theses against Indulgences in the church on 31 October 1517. Among the complaints raised against the church, were the sacrificial character of the Mass, the abuse of votive Masses and the custom of saying private Masses while high Mass was in progress, as well as demands for the reform of the clergy.

The Counter Reformation reacted by taking up the matter at the Council of Trent in 1546-7, and in 1562 the Mass liturgy received attention but few changes were made.

With the turn of the twentieth century, the church under Pope Pius X, gradually restored the Mass to its early ideal form.

The Reformation attempted to rebuild forms of worship.

It prohibited ceremonies of the Mass, the stylised role of the priests, and the silent and non-scriptural participation of the congregation. The Canon, i.e the sacrificial action of the Mass, was excluded.

German became the language of the Mass and liturgical songs and in 1526 Luther published a German Mass to substitute the Roman Mass. Latin Masses and motets still continued to remain in some Lutheran churches partly because of its value for the education of children.

The cause of this divided Christendom was taken up in Vatican Council II four centuries later and it was resolved that the Protestants would henceforth be referred to as "separated brethren", implying that though they were separated, they still somehow belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.

Today, the Mass as a service consists of four parts: the Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites. In the Introductory Rites, the assembled people are spiritually prepared for the celebration of the eucharist. Mass starts with an introit. The Introductory Rite, when sung, is in a simple recitative form, little more than elevated speech.

After the Introductory Rite, the penitential rite follows during which the congregation makes a general confession, and is absolved by the priest.

The Mass continues with the prayer - Lord have mercy, otherwise known as the 'Kyrie', followed by the 'Gloria', a prayer of praise to the Father and the Son. All these prayers may be either sung or spoken.

The first part of the Mass is concluded with the opening prayer or collect.

The scripture readings, or Liturgy of the Word, are the first main part of the Mass. The readings are alternated with responsorial psalm singing. The Sermon or Homily that follows is intended to arouse faith in the assembled people, and extends the scripture readings. The Liturgy of the Word comes to an end with the general intercessions by the people and concludes with a prayer by the priest celebrant.

The second main part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, starts with the preparation of the gifts, the bread and wine. This may be accompanied by the singing of an antiphon, a psalm closely related to the current mystery being celebrated. A prayer of Thanksgiving, the Preface, is offered and concludes with the singing of the 'Sanctus'. The sacrificial

meal, Holy Communion, is preceded by the Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father". The people then give one another the handshake, or embrace of peace, signifying peace and unity.

The 'Agnus Dei', a prayer starting with the words 'Lamb of God', accompanies the breaking of bread. The Communion itself is a meal of love, unity and thanksgiving in which everybody shares in the sacrifice being celebrated. The communion rite is completed with a silent prayer by the people and the priest.

The Mass ends with the Concluding Rite of a few prayers of thanksgiving and the final blessings before the congregation is dismissed.

The Mass in a musical setting accompanies and illuminates the liturgy. The parts of the Mass which must be set to music are the 'Kyrie', the 'Gloria', the 'Credo', the 'Sanctus' (with the 'Benedictus') and the 'Agnus Dei', collectively known as the Ordinary of the Mass. The parts of the Proper - Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory and Communion - may also be set to music.

The parts used in the Requiem Mass comprise the introit, 'Requiem aeternam'; the 'Kyrie'; the gradual,

'Requiem aeternam', and tract, 'Absolve Domine'; the sequence, 'Dies Irae, Dies Illa'; the offertory, 'Domine Jesu Christ'; the 'Sanctus' and 'Benedictus'; the 'Agnus Dei' and the communion, 'Lux aeternam'. The responsorial, 'Libera me, Domine', may be sung or read during a Requiem Mass or a Mass connected to a burial.

Music in the church had flourished for centuries before notation was fully developed. The oldest form of Mass songbook dates back to 625-638, but it contained no melodies. In performance, songs of the church had presumably been handed down by word of mouth. It was only around the tenth century that it became possible to notate melodies in neumes, signs indicating a group of notes to be sung to one syllable. Notation quickly developed with the growth of polyphony in the church. Once polyphony became common, it extended to parts of the Ordinary, including the 'Sanctus' and 'Agnus Dei'. Such settings are preserved in two eleventh century manuscripts at Winchester Cathedral, collectively known as the Winchester Troper. The great bulk of music in the church, however, remained in the monophonic chant.

Until the thirteenth century, the chants of the Ordinary were reserved for the clerics in the sanctuary, who formed the choir. At the time, these chants were not collectively comprehended as the

Ordinary of the service. It was only at the end of the thirteenth century that the Ordinary of the Mass was conceived of as a unit. A choir separated from the clergy gradually came into existence.

Already in ancient times much significance was attached to the Mass.

Votive Masses evoked a strong desire in the people, since the celebration of these Masses guaranteed the assurance of unfailling results. The apocryphal Acts of St John evidently prove that as early as the year 170, a Mass for the dead was held on the third day after burial.

In the fourth century it was conducted on the seventh and thirteenth day after any death, and in some places on the ninth and fortieth days. By the sixth century it had become customary to conduct a Requiem on three consecutive days.

With the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the excessive celebration of these Masses featured as a point of dispute, among others. Together with all other votive Masses, the reform Council of Trent prescribed that the Requiem be properly limited. In 1800 the monasties of St Gall and Reichenau agreed to read three Requiems on three successive days after the

death of a monk and again on the thirteenth day. Each priest was again to conduct a Requiem at the beginning of every month and finally a general memorial was to be said on November 14 with three Masses by each priest.

The Mass and the Requiem developed side by side. The oldest extant Requiem score dates back to the late fifteenth century. The precise year it was written is uncertain but its composer was Ockeghem. Compositions of this period are small and not all the parts of the Mass are set to music. Once the model was set, it provided contemporary fifteenth-century and succeeding composers with scope for improvement and development. Prolific Mass composers of the fifteenth century were Johannes Ockeghem (1420-1497), Jacob Obrecht (1452-1505) and Josquin des Prez (1440-1521).

Among prominent composers contributing to the high or sung Mass of the sixteenth century are John Taverner (1495-1545) and William Byrd (1543-1623) from England, Giovanni Palestrina (1525-1594) from Italy and Luiz de Victoria (1549-1611), a Spanish composer. Among Requiem composers of importance in the sixteenth century were Antoine Brumel (1460-1520) and Pierre de La Rue (1450-1518). Mass compositions of the sixteenth century were generally modal in character and 'a capella' in style. They were largely dependant on a

cantus firmus, mainly employing counterpoint with some imitation. Mass settings ranged from two to six voice parts.

In the sixteenth century, Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) continued the polyphonic practice of the previous century in his Mass compositions.

He, however, soon became dissatisfied with the old polyphonic style and introduced the 'secunda prattica' (second practice). This new style aimed to give expression through a single melodic voice part accompanied by instruments. Monteverdi closely connected melody and rhythm to the words. For the first time in history he used instruments to create contrasts in colour. He gave each instrument a separate task associated with a characteristic voice. He increased expressiveness of stringed instruments by the invention of 'pizzicato' and 'tremolo'. Monteverdi also developed declamatory song (recitative) with a new sense of thought and feeling. One of his compositions which illustrates the new practice was his Vespers (1610) which introduced recitative and orchestra into what had been a strictly contrapuntal and vocal church form.

Other composers who continued with the 'prima prattica' were Andrea Gabrieli (1520-1586), Giovanni

Gabrieli (1557-1612), Orlando Lassus (1532-1594) and Jaches Wert (1535-1596).

Requiem settings increased considerably as composers were eager to experiment with the possibilities of musical expression.

The first Requiem to show independent instrumental sections was performed at the funeral of Cosimo II de' Medic on 21 May 1621, a joint effort by Monteverdi, Giovanni Grillo and Francesco Usper.

Musically, the Mass compositions of the seventeenth-century still use essentially sixteenth-century polyphony. A prominent feature, however, that distinguished them from the previous century, was the use of concertato principles. Imitation not only appeared between the voice parts but also between vocal choirs, and between instrumental ensembles.

The seventeenth century is marked by an emergence of new forms of music. Mass compositions faded into the background while the new forms enjoyed more interest. In the Roman Catholic Church the oratorio emerged and in Lutheran circles the church cantata and chorale. The liturgical function of church music was suppressed by the ever-growing art of music, so much so that festive times in the church could actually be

described as "church concerts with liturgy accompaniments"¹.

J.S Bach, though a staunch Lutheran, wrote his Mass in B minor to the movements proper of the Roman service. This work, too, is operatic in the sense that it uses arias, ensembles as well as instruments.

The eighteenth century continued with widespread developments of musical style which were reflected in all types of music. The introduction of secular forms filled the church with soli, duets and concertante choruses and is indicative of the rediscovery of monody. The major output of church music was in the field of choral music, while the remaining portion was devoted to oratorio and other forms of occasional music.

The Roman Catholic Church continued in the alla-breve style, which uses the minim as the basic beat. The 'Credo' of Mozart's Mass in C minor K. 427 illustrates the same style where the voice parts are doubled by instrumental parts.

¹ Joseph A. Jungmann, SJ, The Mass of the Roman Rite (new revised and abridged edition), Burns and Oates, London, 1959, p. 111.

Beethoven, in his Missa Solemnis Op. 123, also doubled the voice parts with the instruments and included the practice of concertato scoring.

In addition, composers of the eighteenth-century Requiem Mass lengthened the 'Dies Irae' with textual repetitions and long orchestral introductions, treating each verse as a separate movement. A landmark in the history of the genre is Mozart's Requiem, which treats each verse of the 'Dies Irae' as an individual movement.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the position of music remained unchanged whereas Lutheran church music diminished after 1750 when Rationalism caused the church to abandon traditional liturgical music.

Other than congregational hymns, music no longer formed an integral part of the service.

In the nineteenth-century the main interest was in orchestral music. Church music no longer interested composers since they had generally freed themselves from the societal powers that had ruled them for centuries, the church and aristocracy, and composed only for the sake of pure art. Generally composers felt that the church was too conservative for current developments and changes in music, and by the second half of the century choral music became independent of

the church. This can be seen by the size of works written for huge choirs that called for large halls. Beethoven was the first composer to allow the Mass to be performed outside the church by permitting three movements of his Missa Solemnis to be played in the Kärntnertortheater in Vienna.

Due to the lack of creative spirit in the church, composers returned to the past eras for inspiration. The Roman Catholic Church interested itself in the music of Palestrina and his time, while the Protestants returned to the time of J.S Bach. Whereas the Roman Catholics had the advantage of a fixed liturgical form, the Protestants lacked uniformity.

Both Protestants and Roman Catholics thought of sixteenth-century sacred music as a pure 'a cappella' art, and so rejected the concerted church music of the immediate past. Mendelssohn, a Protestant, took the lead in choral music in the first half of the nineteenth-century. He showed his appreciation of Palestrina's style in choral compositions of psalms and motets, but generally preferred J.S Bach in his many cantata-like psalm settings, though not completely surrendering his own independent style.

Schubert, a Roman Catholic, wrote the music for seven

Masses. His Masses in A-flat and E-flat follow the Viennese sacred style, but were rarely performed in church because of their large orchestras. A special work of interest is his Deutsche Messe, composed in the vernacular, a simple homophonic work for mixed voices and wind instruments. Schubert followed the trend to popularize the Mass by using a text in the vernacular in a tradition set by Michael Haydn.

The nineteenth-century Requiem Mass also increased considerably in size. Cherubini's Requiem in D minor, composed in 1811, is said to be the longest Requiem in existence, consisting of 2563 bars. His more familiar Requiem, also in D minor, written in 1836, a setting for three male voices, sets the model for later composers, like Liszt's Requiem for men's voices (1837-71).

Cherubini's more successful setting, his Requiem in C minor (1816), anticipates the large-scale works that followed later. Even Berlioz's Requiem (1887), with its spectacular orchestral and operatic elements, is an example of the large-scale settings impracticable for regular church use. Other well-known composers of the period who each contributed to the Requiem Mass include Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921), Anton Bruckner (1824-1896), Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) and Gabriel Faure (1845-1924).

The nineteenth-century Requiem Mass was among the large-scale compositions that departed from the exclusivity of the church and moved to the theatre. Mozart, Cherubini and Berlioz had each composed their Requiems to be part of a service, although they were performed outside the church. Verdi from the start had the concert hall in mind.

A characteristic feature of the nineteenth-century Requiem was the fusion of the dramatic and the holy, the theatre and the temple.

The Roman Catholic Church eventually took an official stand and in 1903 Pope Pius X spoke against the misuses of churchmusic and recommended works of the High Renaissance as well as the Gregorian Chant as models of ecclesiastical music in the church.

In the Lutheran church, liturgical and instrumental church music almost completely disappeared in favour of non-ecclesiastical religious music. Examples along these lines include Mendelssohn's Elijah and St Paul, and Brahms's German Requiem.

Brahms's German Requiem, however, is not a conventional Requiem Mass. The text is a message of comfort to the living rather than the dead.

Two representative Requiems of the late nineteenth-century are those of Brahms and Verdi. These Requiems are outstanding religious works and represent two contrasting styles of Romantic religious music.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REQUIEM OF BRAHMS I

The German text of Brahms's Requiem is taken from the Lutheran Bible and arranged into an anthology of suffering and consolation. Although Brahms was not an orthodox member of any particular church, the study of Luther's bible is shown in his wide selection of texts from various books of the Old Testament (Psalms, Isaiah), New Testament (Matthew, John, James, Peter, Corinthians, Hebrews and Revelation) and Apocrypha (Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus). Although the text does not make a liturgical unit, its sections complement each other, giving balance to the work as a whole. Brahms selected the text for the movements of his Requiem as follows:

Movement one: Matthew 5: 4, Psalm 126: 5-6.

Movement two: I Peter 1: 24-25, James 5: 7-8,
Isaiah 35: 10.

Movement three: Psalm 39: 4-7, Wisdom 3: 1.

Movement four: Psalm 84: 1-2, 4.

Movement five: John 16: 22, Ecclesiasticus
51: 27, Isaiah 66: 15.

Movement six: Hebrews 13: 14, I Corinthians
15: 51-55, Revelation 14: 13.

Movement seven: Revelation 14: 13.

The title of the seven movements can thus be written as:

- I 'Selig sind, die da Leid tragen' (Blessed are they that mourn)
- II 'Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras' (Behold all flesh is as grass)
- III 'Herr, lehre doch mich' (Lord make me to know)
- IV 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth' (How lovely is thy dwelling, O Lord of Hosts)
- V 'Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit' (Ye now are sorrowful)
- VI 'Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt' (Here on earth have we no continuing place)
- VII 'Selig sind die Toten' (Blessed are the dead).

According to the text the Requiem may be divided into two large sections. The first section encompasses the first, second and third movements and is characterized by grief and lamentation. The second section embraces the remaining four movements and leans towards thoughts of the Resurrection. Two concepts of blessedness are focussed on: the first relates to the mourners while the second relates to the dead. The text offers no prayers of repose for the deceased, nor a word on sin, punishment and the Day of Judgement. The German text does not mention the name of Christ once. Brahms devoted the text entirely to the comfort of the living, and hence expresses elevated views of human life and what lies beyond.

The character of the text which emphasizes life's sufferings, and which is intended to comfort those who mourn, draws the Requiem closer to the Lutheran tradition, and in particular the works of Heinrich Schütz and J.S. Bach. Musgrave mentions that Brahms obtained Winterfeld's three volumes of Johannes Gabriel und sein Zeitalter of 1834 in 1856. The second volume includes a detailed discussion of Schütz and his work. It was Brahms's most important collection of Schütz's music until the appearance of the complete edition.

His interest in Schütz is notable by the similarity in the choice of texts between Brahms's first movement and 'Die mit Tränen Saen' of Schütz's Psalms of David (1619) and Geistliche Chormusik (1648); Brahms's fourth movement and 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen' of Schütz's Psalms of David; and Brahms's seventh movement and 'Selig sind die Toten' of Schütz's Geistliche Chormusik¹.

On the other hand, Brahms was a subscriber to the Bach Gesellschaft Edition and studied works of Bach intensively. The text of Bach's Cantata 27 (Vol. 5) 'Wer weiss wie nahe mir mein Ende' is a paraphrase of the biblical text Brahms used in the third movement of

¹ Michael Musgrave, "Historical influences in the growth of Brahms's Requiem", Music and Letters, 1972, pp. 4-5.

the Requiem 'Herr, lehre doch mich'.

Brahms, who was more of a philosopher than a theologian, remarked in a letter (October 1867) to Dr Karl Reinhalter, organist and choirmaster of Bremen Cathedral, that when he selected the text of the Requiem he had humanity as a whole in mind. He therefore did not attach a specifically Christian ethos to the Requiem. Brahms would therefore gladly have substituted the title 'Human Requiem' for a 'German Requiem'. The adjective 'German', however, is a designation of Protestant usage of the vernacular rather than the orthodox Latin of the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass.

Brahms's Requiem is generally associated with the death of his close friend, Robert Schumann, in 1856, and his own mother in 1865. The second movement, 'Behold all flesh is as grass', originated from the slow movement of a rejected symphony Brahms started at the time of Schumann's suicide attempt (1854), and from which he reworked the preceding movement into the first movement of the Piano Concerto in D minor, Op. 15. Another association with Schumann was the discovery of his 'Book of Projects', which contained the draft for a 'German Requiem'. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the "unfinished Schumann Project" was inspired by Schumann, other than the fact

that they were close friends.

In 1861 Brahms had completed the text of four movements of the Requiem. He allowed the work to mature in his mind and, in 1866, during his stay in Zurich and Baden-Baden, he added two more movements.

The movement which is associated with his mother is a soprano solo on the text 'Now hath man sorrow but yet I shall again behold you and fill your heart with rejoicing', to which the chorus responds 'Yea, I will give you comfort as one whom his mother comforts'. Brahms finally wrote this movement in May 1868 while in Bonn, and incorporated it as the fifth movement in the Requiem. Although it was written three years after his mother's death, almost as an afterthought to commemorate her, the choice of text clearly reflects his feeling for his mother.

Each time Brahms presented his Requiem to the public, he made additions until it achieved its present seven-movement structure. While unfavourable receptions, such as the three movements conducted by Johan Herbeck in Vienna on 1 December 1860, did occur, they were the exception rather than the norm. The Requiem was generally widely acclaimed as a work of national and heroic stature when it was presented to the public during successive performances in 1871.

Brahms, generally regarded as a master of the German Lied, relied on word interpretation by means such as pictorial devices. These include suspension, speech rhythm, interval jumps, ascending and descending melodic lines, the use of low or high voice ranges, as well as the enhancement of appropriate tone colour. Both the voices and instruments are used to enhance the text.

a. Suspension

The use of suspension to highlight meaningful words in the text appear several times within the movements of the Requiem. These suspensions usually extend across to the next bar or bars, and like a melisma, they are sung on a single syllable and rounded off with a turn at the end into the next syllable. Though the work teems with many such examples, the following examples illustrate these suspensions:

Fig. 2.1

First movement (bb. 25-27)



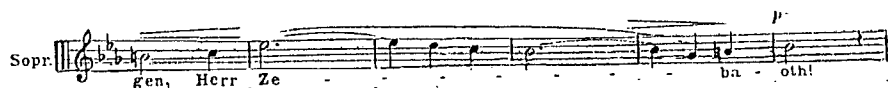
Second movement (bb. 71-73)



Third movement (bb. 165-166)



Fourth movement (bb. 19-23)



Fifth movement (bb. 53-55)



Sixth movement (bb. 12-15)



Seventh movement (bb. 6-7)

b. Speech rhythm

Brahms used speech rhythm to provide a natural effective way of giving meaning to the text. A beautiful example is in the second movement where Brahms depicts the words 'wird weg' (bb. 242-243) in a sudden contrasting setting:

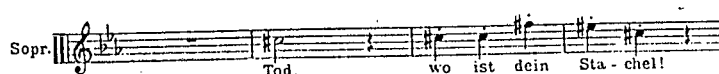
Fig. 2. 2



The rhythm, and ascending leaps and pitches, all portray the natural nuances of the spoken voice. Even the use of staccatos and rests contribute to bringing

out the appropriate effect of the words. The dramatic quality of the text 'Tod, wo ist dein Stachel?' (Death, where is thy sting?) in bb. 152-154 of the sixth movement is another example of speech rhythm:

Fig. 2.3

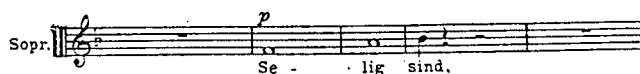


The setting follows the natural speech rhythm and nuances of the voice while the staccatos not only aptly depict the sharpness of a sting, but also the dramatic quality of the challenging voice. The key at this stage modulates from C minor to F sharp minor, to a much brighter and more suitable key for challenging death (a movement of three flats to three sharps).

c. Interval structure

The interval structure of certain phrases highlights its textual importance in the context of the movement or work as a whole. At the choral opening of the first movement (bb. 15-17) attention is drawn to the words 'Selig sind' (Blessed are they), written as an ascending third, followed by a second:

Fig 2.4



It initially appears with slow semibreves on the first two syllables, isolated by rests, making an intentional impact on the listener. The interval structure of this phrase later establishes its role with several appearances in different versions.

The second sentence of the first movement begins with 'selig sind' (b. 29), written this time in minims and with a descending sixth, a diminution and inversion of the first statement (Fig. 2.4). The interval structure of this musical idea is a more emphatic statement of the opening 'Selig sind'.

d. Ascending and descending lines

The idea of mourning implied in the word 'Tränen' (Tears) in bb. 47-48 of the first movement, is expressed with descending lines:

Fig 2.5

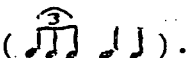
The musical score for three voices (Alt., Ten., Baß) shows a descending line for the word 'Tränen'. The lyrics are: 'Die mit Tränen, die mit Tränen, die mit Tränen, die mit'. The notes are: Alt. (A4, G4, F4, E4, D4), Ten. (G4, F4, E4, D4, C4), Baß (F3, E3, D3, C3, B2). The word 'Tränen' is written with a long note for 'Trä-' and a shorter note for '-nen'.

Another example is the descending line of the orchestral theme introduced at b. 2 of the second movement (Fig. 2.6), depicting a scene of mourning, and used as a countermelody to the choral theme 'Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras' (Behold all flesh is as

grass):

Fig. 2.6



The sense of loss is further enhanced by the accompaniment of this theme with the so-called 'knocking' motif on the timpani (.

In contrast, the ascending line of the orchestral theme that follows at b. 13 becomes a countermelody to the text 'Das Gras ist verdorret und die Blume abgefallen' (The grass is withered and the flower decayeth). Even earlier in the first movement, Brahms also followed a descending line with an ascending one, where the sopranos, after a descending bass line, enter at b. 51 with the text 'Die mit Tranen' (Those with tears). In both cases the ascending line does not imply a more light-hearted mood, but intensifies the emotional state of the textual theme.

e. Voice ranges

Pictorialism of words by means of contrasting low and high voice ranges appear to intensify the underlying mood in the accompanying text. In the second movement at bb. 238-241 the text 'und Schmerz und Seufzen' (and

tears and sighing) is set in a low soprano range in the midst of ascending lines, thus providing the appropriate effect to the words:

Fig. 2.7



In the final movement, which returns to the hope and tranquillity of the first movement, a low range, together with the use of lower voices at b. 40, simulates the voice of the spirit:

Fig. 2.8



The recitative-like tones and low range create a soothing effect and stillness that is appropriate for 'dass sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit' (that they rest from their labours).

f. Orchestral tone colours

Orchestral tone colours play an equally important role in the Requiem and enhance the accompanying text. Scored for full orchestra, Brahms expands the brass

section with three trombones and a tuba, the percussion section with a third drum and adds a harp. The German Requiem is Brahms's first choral work to combine mixed chorus, solo voices and full orchestra. Other choral works with orchestral accompaniment are Rinaldo and Gesang der Parzen.

A conventional feature in the Requiem is that both voices and instruments are completely subservient to the text. At the opening of the first movement, Brahms omits clarinets, trumpets and violins, all bright tone colours, for the line 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted'. The opening orchestral theme (Fig. 2.9), introduced successively in the strings, is only taken up much later by the choir (bb. 66-67) in anticipation of 'und kommen mit Freuden' (and shall return with rejoicing) that follows after the 'Tranen' (Tears) of this scene.

Fig. 2.9

Viola

Violoncello I. II.

Violoncello III.

Kontrabaß.

p legato

p legato

p

The brass tone colour of the trombones and trumpets in the second movement (bb. 198-205) are prominent at the point 'Aber des Herrn Wort bleibet in Ewigkeit' (But the word of the Lord endureth for ever) which leads

straight into the continuing fugue-like section 'Die erloseten des Herrn werden wieder kommen' (The redeemed of the Lord shall return again). The vitality of this choral theme is later recalled in the Coda (b. 291 ff.) by successive entries of the horns, clarinet, bassoon, oboe and flute, to the accompaniment of the text 'ewige Freude' (everlasting joy).

The Funeral March is made heavier with a stress on every beat of the bar. The winds, horns, trumpets, harp and muted strings stress the second beat while the third beat is stressed with a triplet figure on the timpani in a similar fashion to the famous theme of Beethoven's fifth symphony. Perhaps Brahms was using it for its extra-musical association, suggesting that "fate knocks at his door".

The baritone solo at the opening of the third movement is accompanied by horns, drums and bass strings to a declamatory setting of the text 'Herr, lehre doch mich, dass ein Ende mit mir haben muss' (Lord, make me to know mine end, and the number of my days). Later in the movement (bb. 156-163) agitated wind chords accompany choral entries of 'Nun Herr, wass soll ich mich trosten' (Lord, what have I to hope for), which finds its answer in the fugue at the end of the movement 'Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand'

(The righteous souls are in the hands of God). Steadfast faith and confidence is conveyed in the tonic pedal point in the trombone, tuba and double bass that is maintained throughout the fugue.

The entry of the tenors in the fourth movement (b. 24), is highlighted with the accompaniment of a solo clarinet which plays broken chords on the off beat.

Fig. 2.10

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Kl. in B. (Clarinet in B-flat) and Ten. (Tenor). The Kl. part is marked 'I.' and '25' at the beginning, and '30' at the end. The Ten. part is marked 'p' and 'espress.' and has the lyrics 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth' written below it. The score is in 4/4 time and features broken chords on the off-beat.

The soothing tone quality of the clarinet enhances the text 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth' (How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts), which has a spirit of consolation.

In the fifth movement the woodwinds alternate with strings at the point 'aber ich will euch wieder sehen' (but yet I shall again behold you) (bb. 14-27), contrasting their different tone colours. This movement illustrates Brahms's typical scoring for woodwind in thirds and sixths.

When the text of the sixth movement shifts from grief

and consolation to that of victory over death at the point 'der letzten Posaune' (the cheerful trombone), the full orchestra including the piccolo, is introduced in preparation for the section 'Denn es wird die Posaune schallen' (for the trombone shall sound). The triumphant sound of the full orchestra in 'fortissimo' adds to the text the implication of victory over death. The altos, which introduce the fugue, 'Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft' (Worthy art thou, Lord, of honour and glory and might) at the end of the movement, is accompanied by a corresponding instrument, the clarinet. Together, their dark tone qualities enhance the accompanying text.

In the final movement 'Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herrn Sterben' (Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord), is a reference to the text of the first movement, this time alluding to the dead. Brahms scores the final movement for the same orchestra, with the addition of the violins and clarinets. At the end the harp brings the work to a quiet close with ascending F major broken chords.

g. Traditional practices

Brahms was fully conversant with vocal traditions and the osmotic relationship between words and music. He

only writes solo parts for the soprano and baritone voices, using the text in the first person singular. His preoccupation with the relationship between words and music is further seen in the use of past practices. He uses the device of sounding a theme in augmentation with itself to emphasize the text and give it breadth, first in the second movement at the text, 'Freude und Wonne' (Joy and gladness), at b. 233, then in the fifth movement at b. 62 at the text, 'Ich will euch wieder sehen' (I will see you again), in the solo and 'Ich will euch trösten' (I will comfort you) in the chorus.

Another traditional practice is the polyphonic treatment of text which directly refers to the Deity. Brahms selected the text, 'Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand, und keine Qual rühret sie an' (But the righteous souls are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them) for the setting of a fugue at the end of the third movement. Similarly the text, 'Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft' (Worthy art thou to be praised, Lord, of honour and glory and might), at the end of the sixth movement, is also treated to the musical complexity of a fugue.

Although the Requiem drew on a wide range of texts, it is an important work of synthesis in that it looks

forward to twentieth-century tendencies of individual religious expression; expressing the idea of comfort to the living rather than the traditional judgement of the departed soul.

CHAPTER 3

THE REQUIEM OF BRAHMS II

The compilation of the German Requiem has been criticised for its lack of unity. Ernest Newman mentions that "dramatic or fictive unity - which is the kind the critics have in view - is not easily attained in composite works of this kind"¹. Musically, however, the unity of the Requiem is beyond dispute. It is achieved by means of tonal links, formal relationships, thematic motives and the recall of thematic material in the final movement.

Siegfried Ochs had remarked upon Brahms's use of Bach's melody, 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lasst walten'², and Michael Musgrave mentioned its use in the opening bars of the Requiem³.

¹ Ernest Newman, 'Preface', Johannes Brahms's Requiem, Score, Novello Company, Ltd, London, 1947, p. iv.

² Siegfried Ochs, 'Vorwort', Brahms's Ein Deutsches Requiem, Score, Ernst Eulenburg, Ltd, London, p. ii.

³ Michael Musgrave, "Historical influences in the growth of Brahms's 'Requiem'", Music and Letters 53, 1972.

The Requiem opens in the manner of a fugal exposition, with horns and strings sustained on the tonic, providing a solid foundation for the entry of the chorale melody at b. 3.

Fig. 3.1

Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck.

Viola

Violoncello I. II.

Violoncello III.

Kontrabaß.

Org. c. B. tenuto sempre

At b. 2 the second violoncellos enter above the tonic pedal with an unprepared seventh, an E flat, which resolves into a chromatic descending line of semibreves, causing a moment of tension. The first violoncellos enter at b. 3 on the subdominant (Fig. 3.1) instead of the tonic. The Requiem starts with a tonic pedal, which becomes more persistent during the course of the work: it suggests steadfastness in faith, 'Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand' (The righteous souls are in the hands of God). In addition, the chorale entry on the subdominant and a lowering of harmonic tension create a scene of tranquillity in death.

This chorale melody (Fig. 3.1) underlies the opening choral theme of the second movement (b. 22), 'Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras' (Behold all flesh is as

grass).

Fig 3.2



Though the melody contains an extra upbeat and has a more marked rhythm, its interval structure is similar. The alternate C flat suggests the darker character of the phrygian mode.

Musgrave demonstrates that the chorale melody in the first movement of Bach's Cantata 27 was set in a remarkably similar way to the setting Brahms created in the second movement⁴.

Fig 3.3

Bach, Cantata 27
 Wind and Strings (simplified)
 Chorus
 Wer weiss wie nah - e mit mein

He mentions that Brahms uses similar orchestration to accompany the chorale melody, using a similar bass

⁴ Michael Musgrave, "Historical influences in the growth of Brahms's 'Requiem'", Music and Letters 53, 1972, p. 5.

pattern and descending figures in the upper strings and winds.

The chorale melody is also found in the 'Vivace' section of the sixth movement. It appears with the words 'Denn es wird die Posaune schallen' (For the trombone shall sound) at b. 82, with a triplet embellishment on the second syllable of the word 'Posaune' (trombone) at Fig 3.4. It appears later (b. 127) with an upbeat as it did in the second movement.

Fig 3.4



Though the chorale melody changes during the course of the Requiem, it is still clearly identifiable to the listener. Other than its use in the first, second and sixth movements, the chorale melody does not appear anywhere else.

The opening choral motif,

Fig 3.5



appears more extensively than the chorale melody (Fig. 3.1). William Newman describes this motif, by its interval structure, as an ascending phrase 1, 3, 4 either minor or major, which also appears in inversion, retrograde and retrograde inversion⁵.

The basic choral motif (Fig 3.5) is used as a unifying element with successive appearances in the movements of the Requiem. In the first movement it appears in its original form (bb. 79 and 111), then in inversion (b. 115). In the third movement it appears both in its original and inverted forms in the second phrase of the baritone solo (bb. 5-6). Its original form is again used as the beginning of the fugue subject at b. 173.

In the fourth movement it appears in inversion in the flute part, at the beginning of the orchestral introduction, and again in its original form, twice in the soprano part when the choir enters (bb. 4-5 and 5-6). In the fifth movement it occurs in its original form at b. 4, at the beginning of the oboe solo. In the sixth movement it is used at the beginning of the fugue (b. 208); in this bar the counterpoint in the violins provides the original form, while the fugue subject in the alto voice provides the retrograde

⁵ William Newman, "A 'basic motive' in Brahms's 'German Requiem'", Musical Review XXIV, 1963, pp. 190-194.

version. In the last movement Brahms uses the motif three times in the opening theme; first in inversion (b. 3), then twice in its original form (bb. 4 and 5-6).

The fact that Brahms returns in the end to thematic material of the first movement, serves to reinforce its unifying function in the work. This cyclic procedure of finally returning to ideas expressed in the first movement is also found in the Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny), and in Nanie, Op. 82.

Brahms's key structures in each movement of the Requiem also serves as a unifying force in the work as a whole. The following table illustrates the relationship between the various sections of movements.

TABLE 3.6

MOVEMENT	FORM	BAR NUMBER	KEY CENTRE	RELATION
1	A	1-45	F major	Home key
	B	45-95	D flat maj.	Flattened submediant of F major
	A	96-158	F major	Return of F major

MOVEMENT FORM BAR NUMBER KEY CENTRE RELATION

2	A	1-74	B flat min.	Relative minor of D flat major
	B	75-124	G flat maj.	Subdominant of D flat major
	A	125-197	B flat min.	Return of B flat minor
	C	198-237	B flat maj.	Parallel major of B flat minor

3	A	1-104	D minor	Relative minor of F major
	B	105-141	D major	Parallel major of D minor
	A	142-172	D minor	Return of D minor
	C	173-208	D major	Return of D major

4	A	1-43	E flat maj.	Subdominant of B flat major
	B	44-88	B flat maj.	Dominant of E flat major
	A	89-179	E flat maj.	Return of E flat major

MOVEMENT	FORM	BAR NUMBER	KEY CENTRE	RELATION
5	A	1-27	G major	Subdominant of D major
	B	28-48	B major	Mediant of G major
	A	49-82	G major	Return of G major
6	A	1-31	C minor	Relative minor of E flat major
	B	32-81	F sharp min	Parallel minor of G flat major
	C	82-207	C minor	Return of C minor
	D	208-349	C major	Subdominant of C major
7	A	1-47	F major	Return of home key
	B	48-101	A major	Relative major of F sharp minor
	A	101-166	F major	Return of F major

Table 3.6 shows that each movement is related to a key in a previous movement, thereby interlocking the movements of the Requiem into one unified whole.

In the first movement, the text 'Selig sind, die da Leid tragen' (Blessed are they that mourn), is complemented and realized by Christ's words in the fifth movement, 'Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit, aber ich will euch wieder sehen, und euer Herz soll sich freuen, und eure Freude soll niemand von euch nehmen' (Ye now are sorrowful, but ye shall again behold me, and your heart shall be joyful, and your joy no man taketh from you - John 16:22), and in the final movement, 'Selig sind die Toten, die in dem Herrn Sterben, von nun an' (Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth - Revelation 14:13).

In the external relations between movements, the subdominant connection is reflected while internal relations reflect mediant connections. Subdominant relations occur between the first and second movement (F major - B flat major), the fifth and sixth movement (G major - C major/minor), while mediant relations occur in the first movement (F major - D flat major), the second movement (B flat minor - G flat major), the fifth movement (G major - B major), and the seventh movement (F major - A major). The subdominant relations link again with overall serenity and

restfulness in death while mediant relations can perhaps be associated with inner conflict.

Table 3.6 also indicates the basic form of each movement. Four of the seven movements (one, four, five, seven) are in ternary form. It is worth noting that these movements tend to be in major keys with a darker middle section. The final movement returns to F major, but instead of the dark D flat major of the first movement, it modulates to the bright key of A major in the middle section. This links the first and final movements. Both keys of these middle sections are related to the key of the movement: D flat is a third lower than F, while A is a third higher. In this way the spirits are raised at the end and the purpose of the work is realized in the concluding text, namely not to overcome death but to find peace and quiet in death.

The remaining movements (two, three and six) are all comprised of four sections. Typical of Brahms's style is the dualism in the key structure: the first sections are in a minor key while the final sections are in the parallel major. The second and third movements are in an abbreviated Rondo form, but the structure of the sixth has a free type of form with four distinct sections. The A section does not appear again as in the conventional Rondo form. Instead,

section C is composed in C minor, the same key centre as section A, thereby suggesting a return to A, but with a different thematic content. This would then in turn suggest the Rondo form as is the case with both the second and third movements. In spite of the E flat major key-signature, the key centre at the opening reflects neither this key nor its relative minor, and this unestablished key centre, together with the free form, indicates instability, reflecting the text, 'Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt', reminding us that here on earth we have no fixed place.

Brahms also achieves unity with internal miniature structures that mirror the external structure of the movement. The middle B section of the first movement is in miniature ABA form (A: bb. 45-63, B: bb. 63-78, A: bb. 78-96), a mirror of the external ternary structure of the movement.

Fig 3.7

Section A

Alt. *p*
Mit Trä - nen sä - - - en,

Section B

Ten. *p*
Sie ge - hen hin und wei - nen,
Baß. *p*
Sie ge - hen hin und wei - - -

The A section is in D flat major and starts with a descending phrase in the low voices, after which the sopranos enter in contrary motion with a contrasting ascending line. The same procedure is followed at the repeat of A (bb. 78-96), though slightly altered to accommodate the new text. The contrasting B section (bb. 63-78) is in F major, employing successive fugal entries of the chorale melody (Fig 3.1).

Brahms also does this in the third movement, but this time he bases the A section of the external Rondo structure on a miniature ternary form (A: bb. 1-32, B: bb. 33-66, A: bb. 67-104).

Fig 3.8

Section A

Bariton Solo. 

Herr, leh-re doch mich, daß ein En - de mit mir ha - ben

Section B

Bar. Solo. 

Sie-he, meine Ta - ge sind ei-ner Hand breit vor dir, _____

Particularly notable about the B section in Fig 3.8 is that it is set a tone higher to an almost identical pattern with section A. In section A the central tone is A, while in section B it is B. The main difference between the two settings is the dotted rhythm with the semiquaver figure in section B, which is also the retrograde inversion of the intervals enclosed between

brackets in section A. Section B in Fig. 3.8 may therefore be regarded as a development of section A since it modulates and contains developmental characteristics. After various modulations the key returns to D minor at the return of section A (b. 67).

Another unifying element in the third movement is the semiquaver figure in the second example of Fig 3.8, which is interwoven into the instrumental texture throughout the external ABA sections of the ABAC form. Brahms therefore focuses abstractly on the ternary idea.

Brahms unifies the movements of the Requiem also by means of common horn pedals at the opening of three movements (one, three, seven). In this capacity the horns provide a smoother beginning and a solid foundation for the harmony. The horns also appear as pedal points in various parts of the Requiem, essentially to bind material and to thicken the texture (third movement: bb. 93-102, sixth movement: bb. 291-298). The tonic pedal not only serves as a link between various movements, but textually is indicative of steadfastness in faith. The whole fugue is built on the foundations of a continuous tonic pedal in the trombone, tuba, timpani and double bass parts, reinforced by the addition of an organ.

The Requiem contains two fugues, at the end of the third and sixth movements, which Brahms composed to texts which directly refer to the Deity, and though these fugues have no musical link, they have some spiritual affinity. Both are set to a basic minim beat. The fugue at the end of the third movement (b. 173) has a faster rhythm, the energetic quaver movement deriving from the opening fugue subject.

Fig. 3.9



In contrast, the fugue at the end of the sixth movement (b. 208) is more grand and expansive. Compared to the energetic triplet beat of the first fugue, it has a more dignified quadruple beat as introduced by the opening subject.

Fig. 3.10



The difference in setting comes from the difference in

text, the second fugue, 'Herr, du bist würdig zu nehmen Preis und Ehre und Kraft' (Lord, thou art worthy of praise and honour and might) (Fig. 3.10), being a direct praise of God, having a more respectful tone.

Both fugue subjects, Fig. 3.9 and Fig. 3.10, are built on or around the notes of a triad, a trademark of Brahms since it frequently occurs in his other works as well⁶.

Unusual about the subject of the first fugue, Fig. 3.9, is that it moves through different keys. It starts in G major, the subdominant key and centres around D major in the second bar, but it ends on A minor in the third bar. The subject of the second fugue (Fig. 3.10) remains in the tonic key (third movement: b. 175) on the text, 'keine Qual ruhret sie an' (No grief shall nigh them come).

The countersubject of the second fugue is characterized by its initial crotchet movement, which is also introduced on the off beat (sixth movement: b. 213), on the text 'denn du hast alle Dinge erschaffen' (For Thou hast created all things). However, it enters

⁶ See for instance the opening of his song Der Schmied and at the opening of his second Symphony in D major Op. 73, where the opening theme in the bassoons is built on the tonic triad.

only in the second bar after the subject entry. The counterpoint that immediately follows after the countersubject (bb. 216-220) starts like the countersubject and makes another complete appearance in the sopranos (bb. 220-224), giving the character of a second countersubject.

Fig. 3.11

Alt. 215.
denn du hast al - le Din - ge er - schaf - en, und durch dei - nen

Alt. 220.
Willen ha - ben sie das We - sen und sind ge - schaf - fen,

Both fugues start off in the traditional manner with a clear exposition of subject entries in all the voice parts. The exposition of the fugue in the third movement may be illustrated as follows⁷.

⁷ S - Subject, CS - Countersubject, A - Answer, FM - Free Material.

Table 3.12

		S	CS
<u>Soprano</u>		(178-180)	(180-182)
	A	CS	FM
<u>Alto</u>	(175-178)	(178-180)	(180-183)
	S	CS	FM
<u>Tenor</u>	(173-175)	(175-177)	(177-180)
			S
<u>Bass</u>			(180-183)

On the other hand, the exposition of the fugue in the sixth movement may be illustrated as follows:

Table 3.13

		A	CS1	CS2
<u>Soprano</u>		(212-216)	(217-220)	(220-224)
	S	CS1	CS2	FM
<u>Alto</u>	(208-212)	(213-216)	(216-220)	(221-222)
				A
<u>Tenor</u>				(221-224)
			S	CS1
<u>Bass</u>			(216-220)	(221-224)

The middle entries of the first fugue follow the normal procedures employing stretto entries and passing through various keys, leading to the final portion of the fugue in the tonic key, D major, at b. 196, with a dominant entry of the subject in the basses. The tonic entry in the tenors follows after a two-beat interval, and after the final stretto entries a short coda ensues (b. 201), making use of material from both the subject and countersubject.

The second fugue, by contrast, is more complex. After the initial entries a section (Fig. 3.14) almost like a counter-exposition, follows (bb. 224-234).

Fig 3.14

(bb. 224-227)

The musical score for Fig. 3.14 consists of four staves, each with a vocal part and its corresponding lyrics. The Soprano part begins with 'fen,' and 'Herr, du bist wür - dig'. The Alto part begins with 'Herr, du bist wür - dig zu neh - men Preis und Eh - re'. The Tenor part begins with 'Kraft,' and 'unddurchdei - nen Wil - len ha'. The Bass part begins with 'fen, unddurchdei - nen Wil - len ha - ben sie, das We - sen,'.

It starts with a false entry of the subject in the altos (b. 224), answered by the sopranos (b. 226). A stretto follows at b. 228 at the time interval of one bar, with successive partial entries of the basses,

altos, tenors and sopranos. Each entry pursues its own continuation of free modulatory counterpoint.

An episode starts at b. 234 with the tenors and basses. The middle entries alternate with episodes and partial subject entries, passing through various keys⁸.

The episodes, which are quite extensive, are treated either harmonically or imitatively. They are built on material of the subject.

The tonic entry of the subject in the basses (b. 330) is only partial, but is indicative of the final portion of the fugue. Stretto entries follow, some of which are modulatory. At b. 338, a passage built on the ascending interval pattern of the second and third taken from the second half of the subject (Fig. 3.10) leads to the close of the fugue.

These two fugues show Brahms's mastery of counterpoint. Though he was well acquainted with the practices of the past, his fugues are contemporary and imaginative.

⁸ Episode (bb. 234-244), subject entries (bb. 244-250), episode (bb. 250-256), subject entries (bb. 257-260), episode (bb. 260-270), subject entries (bb. 271-277), episode (bb. 277-290), new subject entry (bb. 290-304), subject entries (bb. 304-316), new subject entries (bb. 316-330).

Brahms's originality of invention, melodic richness and bold harmonies make him, contrary to popular belief, one of the most original and progressive composers of the late nineteenth century.

Brahms's Requiem was the most powerful religious work since Beethoven's Missa Solemnis. It foreshadows twentieth-century tendencies of individual expression with eclectic references to religious texts, of the kind found in Benjamin Britten's War Requiem. Today, Brahms's Requiem, next to Handel's Messiah, is one of the most frequently performed choral-orchestral works.

CHAPTER 4

THE REQUIEM OF VERDI I

In the character of its Catholicism, the language of Verdi's Requiem is extremely passionate and individual, infusing the congregation with aesthetic rather than religious devotion. The text of his Requiem makes use of the Latin text from the Roman Catholic liturgy. The following sections of the Roman Catholic Mass can generally be sung in a Requiem Mass:

1. 'Requiem aeternam dona eis' (Give them eternal peace)
2. 'Kyrie eleison' (Lord have mercy upon us)
3. 'Dies Irae' (Day of Wrath)
 - (i) 'Dies Irae' (Day of Wrath)
 - (ii) 'Tuba mirum' (Hark, the trumpet)
 - (iii) 'Liber scriptus' (How the record)
 - (iv) 'Quid sum miser' (What affliction)
 - (v) 'Rex tremendae' (King of Dread)
 - (vi) 'Recordare' (Ah, remember)
 - (vii) 'Ingemisco' (Sadly groaning)
 - (viii) 'Confutatis' (From the accursed)
 - (ix) 'Lacrimosa' (Ah, what weeping)
4. 'Domine Jesu Christe' (Lord Jesus Christ), or 'Offertorium'
5. 'Sanctus' (Holy, Holy, Holy)

6. 'Agnus Dei' (The Lamb of God)

7. 'Libera me' (Deliver me)

These sections form a combination of "Proper" and "Ordinary". The 'Kyrie', 'Sanctus' and 'Agnus Dei' are part of the "Ordinary" while the rest is "Proper". Though the text of the Requiem retains one and the same "Proper", compositions of the text automatically include either the entire or part of the "Proper". Composers commonly adhere to the general purpose of the Latin tradition, namely to win peace for the departed soul.

Verdi's Requiem follows the general pattern and has seven independent movements, combining the 'Requiem aeternam' and 'Kyrie' into the first movement. This connection is not unusual and also appeared in Mozart's Requiem.

The 'Libera me' Verdi added at the end, in part or in whole, survived from the attempt of a collaborated Requiem intended for Rossini's death (13 November 1868). Thirteen other Italian composers were each supposed to compose a movement, and Verdi's contribution was the 'Libera me'. The project, however, never materialized but Verdi retained his movement and used it four years later in a Requiem to commemorate his friend, the most celebrated

nineteenth-century Italian poet, Alessandro Manzoni, who died on 22 May 1873. Many musicologists, however, believe that Verdi largely rewrote the 'Libera me', while retaining many of its original ideas.

Verdi, during the preparation for the first performance of his Requiem, went to the trouble of recruiting only the best players and vocalists, personally selecting and rehearsing a chorus of 120 singers and an orchestra of 100 players. It is therefore clear he was a man of punctilious precision, and as such expected musicians to interpret the text and music with great care to musical detail.

Only the premiere of the Requiem took place in the church on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death (22 May 1874). It was conducted by Verdi himself at the Church of San Marco in Milan. Three days later, it was introduced to the stage where it has since remained. Stage performances were so successful that Verdi took his Requiem on "tour". Everywhere he went, he was widely acclaimed. At the first La Scala performance, he was presented with a silver crown. In Paris he was made a Commander of the Legion of Honour, and in Vienna he received the medal of Franz Joseph Order.

The Requiem, however, also provoked adverse criticism. It was rumoured that Hans von Bulow, a celebrated

critic and musician of the time, disliked Verdi's Requiem. Brahms who examined the score commented that only a genius could write such music. Eduard Hanslick remarked that one has to go back to Palestrina or even the Gregorian Chant to get to pure Catholic Church music. He commented that, "Compared with the festive country-fair atmosphere of many a 'Gloria' of Mozart and Haydn, the operatic flourishes of many a 'Benedictus' and 'Agnus Dei', Verdi's Requiem sounds holy"¹.

In the 'Dies Irae' Verdi emphasizes the importance of the "Judgement", which is conditioned by the main idea of the whole text, by constantly repeating the text, 'Dies Irae' (Day of Wrath) and 'Salve me' (Save me).

According to Catholic doctrine, this "Day of Judgement" arrives for each person at the moment of his/her death. Thus the 'Dies Irae' plays a most central part in the Requiem Mass, particularly before Vatican Council II.

In a like manner, the poetical content of the sequence expresses a mentality typical of the Middle Ages. Only since Vatican II was death no longer primarily seen as the "Day of Judgement", but rather the joyful day of

¹ Eduard Hanslick, 'Verdi's Requiem', Music Criticism 1884-99 (revised edition), Cox and Wyman Ltd, London, 1963, p. 160.

entering eternal life. Verdi still lived in Pre-Vatican times and, moreover, on Italian soil, where conservative outlook dominated the official attitude of the church authorities and in turn, also the belief of the people.

In Verdi's settings, the 'Dies Irae' (no. 3(i) from the section on p. 55) covers the first two terzinas (groups of three metrical lines) of the sequence. The first terzina (below) is later twice repeated: after the third number, 'Liber scriptus' (The book of Record), and after the eighth number, 'Confutatis' (The wicked). Its text evokes terror and its constant repetition reminds listeners of their position on Judgement Day.

First Terzina of sequence

'Dies irae, Dies illa'	(Day of Wrath, that day)
'Solvat saeculum in favilla'	(Shall melt the world in fire)
'Teste David cum Sybilla'	(as witnesseth David and Sybilla).

In addition to this repetition, Verdi inserts the words 'Dies irae' (Day of wrath) into the second terzina of the 'Liber scriptus' (The book of Record).

Second terzina of 'Liber scriptus'

Dies irae'	(Day of wrath)
'Judex ergo cum sedebit'	(When the judge takes his seat)
'quidquid latet apparebit'	(all that's hidden will appear)
'Dies Irae'	(Day of Wrath)
'Nil inultum remanebit'	(Nothing will go unpunished)
'Dies Irae'	(Day of Wrath)

Other than the stress on 'Dies Irae' (Day of Wrath), Verdi provides a musical climax at 'Tuba mirum' (Hark, the trumpet), and 'Rex Tremendae' (King of dread). The second number of the sequence culminates in the first line, 'Tuba mirum spargens sonum' (The trumpet scattering its awful sound). Verdi highlights the word 'Mors' (Death) at the beginning of the second group of three metrical lines of the 'Tuba mirum'. The culmination of the fifth number is also reached in the first line 'Rex Tremendas Majestatis', intensifying the built-up on the words 'Salva me' (Save me). Finally, Verdi emphasizes the word 'Requiem' (Peace) at the end of the 'Lacrimosa', the final number of the sequence. The repetition of 'Requiem' restores the original purpose of the Requiem.

The continuing 'Offertorium', 'Sanctus' and 'Agnus

Dei' are comparatively more serene. Verdi, however, closes the Requiem with another musical climax in the final 'Libera me' (Free me), recapitulating both the introductory 'Requiem aeternam' and 'Dies Irae' numbers.

The 'Libera me' stresses the words 'Dies irae, Dies illa' (Day of Wrath, that day), and 'Libera me' (Free me). Repeated cries of 'Free me' from the soprano solo and choir are like a desperate prayer to be freed from death's remorseless grip, but the interjection of the 'Dies Irae' *terzina* is a reminder to the living of their fate. The final prayer is dedicated to the repose of the souls of the departed.

The 'Libera me', which is followed by a series of prayers, only forms part of the funeral rite. It is therefore a serious movement and Verdi treated it as such. In addition, the Requiem also follows the Tridentine rite (instituted by the Council of Trent) which was a serious service connected to death and burial.

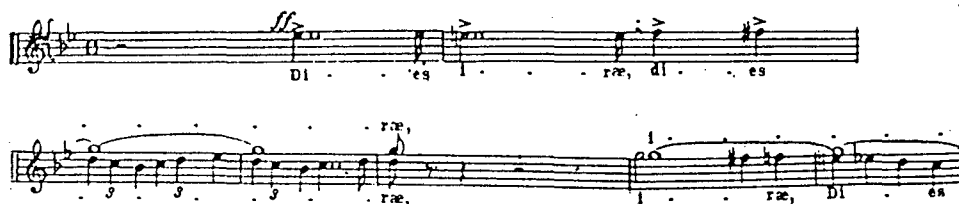
The success of Verdi's Requiem may be largely attributed to the precision of pictorial detail achieved by its vast range of dynamics and Italian instructions, the structure of melodic lines, and the use of orchestral tone colour to enhance the text.

a. Pictorialism

The text of the first movement is unaltered, starting the work in a humble, penitent manner. Its character of mourning and peace, 'Requiem aeternam' (Rest eternal), is achieved by the overall quiet nature of the movement. When the key changes from A minor to the parallel major (b. 67), with pianissimo (ppp) on 'et lux' (and light), it produces an effect of a soft ray of sunlight.

Verdi, who composed operas almost exclusively, could not deny the Requiem his dramatic ability. The idea of terror and doom is vividly portrayed at the opening of the 'Dies Irae' (bb. 3-8).

Fig. 4.1



It starts with the tenors and basses in a range best suited for the powerful expression of their voices. When the upper two voices join, they first start off on the normal beat of the bar, but the triplet rhythm that follows gives pictorial detail to the 'Day of Wrath'. The chromatic lines (ascending and descending)

are associated with pain.

In contrast, he uses a more conventional rhythm to bring out the pleading tone of the text, 'Salva me, pietatis' (Save me, O fount of mercy) at b. 330.

Fig 4.2



But when this prayer is worked to an emotional climax, and the tone becomes more desperate, he reverts to the dramatic use of the dotted rhythm (b. 356).

Fig. 4.3

A choral setting for Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The Soprano and Alto parts have the lyrics 'Sal - va me'. The Tenor and Bass parts have the lyrics 'Rex tremen - dae ma - je - sta - tis,'. The notation includes dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'f'.

At b. 370 the mood is gentle once more.

Fig. 4.4



The leap of the sixth used in an appoggiatura, creates

the effect of a sigh, suggesting complete prostration. The simplicity of the melodic line implies childlike devotion and underlies the religious message of the Requiem. This devotion is also illustrated by the unaccompanied setting of 'Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem' (Merciful Lord Jesus, give them peace) at b. 666.

Declamation in monotone settings appears several times and adds drama and feeling to the text. This appears at the beginning of the introductory 'Requiem aeternam' (bb. 7-27), in the 'Dies Irae' at the words, 'Quantus tremor est futurus' (What trembling shall there be) at bb. 78-90, 'Mors stupebit et natura' (Death and nature stand aghast) at bb. 143-160, 'Nil inultum remanebit' (Naught shall remain unavenged) at bb. 219-224, and 'Requiem Dona eis' (Peace be with you) at bb. 690-695.

More examples appear in the third movement at the text, 'Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam' (Make them, O Lord, pass from death to life) at bb. 154-157, and in the last movement, 'Libera me' (Free me) at bb. 404-422.

More recitative-like passages where the text is intoned by one solo voice, in a similar manner to the traditional chant of the church, are used throughout

the work. This appears in the sequence at the text, 'Tuba mirum spargens sonum' (The trumpet scattering its awful sound) at bb. 117-118, 'Ingemisco tanquam reus' (I groan as one guilty) at bb. 447-456, 'Confutatis maledictis' (When the damned are confronted) at bb. 503-509. In the sixth movement recitative-like passages appear at bb. 2-15 on the text, 'Lux aeterna luceat eis' (Let everlasting light shine on them), and at the beginning of the last movement at the text, 'Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna' (Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death).

b. Dynamics

Verdi gives attention to detail. As was customary at the time, he includes in his score precise Italian instructions of the manner of performance and leaves nothing to the performer's discretion.

The extreme use of dynamics to enhance textual significance occurs in the 'Dies Irae'. Its dynamics range from pppp to ff, fluctuating between terror and soft trembling cries: ff at b. 3 and b. 336 on the words 'Dies Irae' (Day of Wrath), and pppp at b. 352 on the words 'Salva me' (Save me).

c. Instrumental tone colour

Instrumental tone colour is another successful vehicle used to its maximum effect, to enhance the text.

Verdi, most comfortable with the human voice, is equally sensitive to the possibilities of instrumental sounds. In his Requiem, the orchestra is used with imagination and refinement of aim and technique. He opens the Requiem in A minor with a descending arpeggio and scale phrase on the muted violoncello, setting the mood of penitence and humility, with a touch of mystery. The string accompaniment at the opening provides the harmony to the monotone declamation in the voice and sets the mood of the Requiem.

Dark tone colours to enhance the tone of mystery and death appear throughout the work. At the beginning of the 'Kyrie' the solo bassoon and violoncello provide a countermelody to the voice, which contrasts in rhythm and contrary motion (b. 78).

Fig. 4.5

The image shows a musical score for two parts: a solo bassoon (Pg.) and a solo voice (T. Solo). The bassoon part is marked 'Solo' and features a descending arpeggio and scale phrase. The voice part is marked 'T. Solo' and includes the lyrics 'Ky - ri - e e - le ...'. A 'cresc. a n. n. n.' marking is present at the end of the voice part.

In the second movement at the text, 'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?' (What shall I say in my misery?) at bb. 271-302, a solo bassoon provides an expressive flowing bass to the combination of voices and upper strings.

Fig. 4.6

270
Adagio ♩=100

Cl. (B)
pp

Fg.
1. Solo.
pp

M.S.
Solo espress.
Quid sum mi.

The third movement in A flat major opens with a violoncello on an ascending arpeggio which leads to the main theme at b. 13, which is later repeated by the voices at b. 31.

Fig. 4.7

vc.

un poco marc.

The serene beauty of faith is well expressed at b. 63 when Fig. 4.7, which was introduced on the text, 'Libera animas' (Deliver the souls), is transferred to the first violins, which accompany the soprano solo. The soprano and violin exchange parts when the text continues with 'Sed signifer sanctus Michael...' (Let the holy Michael take them into the light) at b. 69.

Brighter tone colours are used in the fifth movement at bb. 27-39, 'Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi' (Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world).

Here a flute and a clarinet enhance the text by providing a flow of counterpoint to the melodic line.

Fig. 4.8

1. Solo
pp

Fl.

Cl.

1. Solo
pp

B.

M.S.

A - gnus De - i, A - gnus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta

A - gnus De - i, A - gnus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta

Verdi effectively portrays the effect of trembling with tremolos in the strings and drums. In the 'Dies Irae', he adds a bass drum to the timpani to reinforce the sense of impending doom, while the vocal melody which is duplicated in the strings an octave higher, adds to the quivering and panic the text suggests (bb. 46-53). In the 'Mors stupebit et natura' (Death and nature shall be astounded) at b. 142, he uses the drum for a different effect, this time to softly punctuate the text. In the sixth movement 'Lux aeterna', a roll on the timpani in fifths, on the dark chord of B flat minor (bb. 15-24), accompanies the text 'Requiem aeternam dona eis' (Grant then eternal rest), in contrast to the shimmer of tremolo strings at the opening of the movement. Verdi ends the Requiem with

soft drumrolls, which together with two C major chords in the full orchestra, emphasize the 'me' of the text 'Libera me'. (Free me).

Verdi's use of the off-stage trumpets at the 'Tuba mirum' of the sequence (b. 91 ff.) gives the effect of distance and effectively portrays the supernatural event of 'Tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulcra regionum' (The trumpet scattering a shrill sound through the tombs of all lands).

Though Verdi's Requiem did not find a place in the church, the success of its stage performances brought his musical career to a climax. He had proved himself a successful composer in a field other than opera, and with Rossini and Manzoni both dead, he was the darling of Italy.

CHAPTER 5

THE REQUIEM OF VERDI II

Despite its "unchurchliness", Verdi's Requiem is a milestone in his development as a composer. The most striking parts are those in which he freely expresses his emotions and talent while the less striking parts are those which observe certain churchly traditions.

The quiet devotional opening centres around the dominant or interval of the fifth. It opens in A minor with a theme in the muted violoncellos (bb. 1-5).

Fig. 5.1



The descending arpeggio and scale phrase stretch down an octave from one dominant to the next. The choir pairs, tenors and basses, echoed by sopranos and altos, also initially enter in fifths with the text 'Requiem' (Peace). When the choir enters (bb. 10-11) it appears on a dominant chord, and the sopranos in short declamatory phrases descend from the tonic to the dominant. The use of bare fifths at the opening

may be associated with emptiness and loneliness. On the other hand, the scale steps in the second phrase of Fig. 5.1, and the short declamatory phrases in the sopranos (bb. 12-16), represent humbleness. The opening therefore sets the mood and summarizes the overall theme of the Requiem, namely torture or restlessness.

This idea continues in the 'Kyrie' where the theme is built around the fifth and a countertheme in the flute and strings on stepwise intervals.

Fig. 5.2

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Flute (Fl.) and Bassoon (B.). The Flute part is in the upper staff, marked '1. Solo' and 'legg.' (leggiero). The Bassoon part is in the lower staff, marked 'pp' (pianissimo). The lyrics 'Ky - ri - e e - le - ison,' are written below the Bassoon staff.

Verdi also uses the opening theme (Fig. 5.1) to thematically bind the Requiem, especially the more liturgical parts. The opening of the 'Offertorio' is based on the same arpeggio pattern followed by scale steps, this time ascending. At b. 10 an almost identical structure to Fig. 5.1 closes off the introduction (Fig. 5.3) before the main theme is

Fig. 5.3



Though it may not begin in the dominant, and appear in this movement either ascending, descending or in both forms, the similarity in structure serves as a unifying element. This structure, or 'theme', is further recognizable in the 'Sanctus', in the theme of the first chorus. It, too, begins with a rising arpeggio, followed by scale steps in the opposite direction.

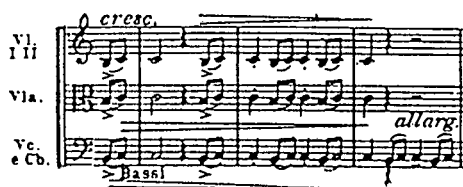
Fig. 5.4

The theme of the fugue, 'Libera me', at the end of the last movement also makes use of this structure at its opening.

Fig. 5.5

Furthermore unity is achieved within separate numbers of the 'Dies Irae'. The fifth number, 'Rex Tremendae', is further linked to the 'Recordare' by a quarter-note figure, heard in the strings at the end of the 'Rex Tremendae' (bb. 379-382).

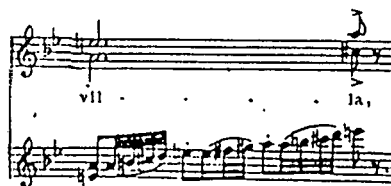
Fig. 5.6



This figure reappears in the 'Recordare' at the end of the first terzina (bb. 408-409).

The use of chromatic passages serves some form of link in the sequence. In the 'Dies Irae' (b. 24), the orchestra, in an ascending run, abruptly brings off the sustained A major chord in the melody.

Fig. 5.7



A similar type of passage appears at the end of the first terzina of the 'Tuba mirum' (bb. 138-139), and the 'Liber scriptus' (bb. 212-213).

Another unifying device is the use of the music of the introductory 'Requiem aeternam', and the 'Dies Irae' at the same words in the final movement. Instead of just recapitulating themes, Verdi repeats whole sections. The 'Dies Irae', entering at b. 45, is the same, though the text is slightly changed. The 'Requiem aeternam' that follows (b. 132), however, is one of the greatest architectonic features of the work. The key changes from A minor-major to B minor-major, and the chorus, led by the soprano solo, is now unaccompanied. This section is short and only recapitulates the first part of the 'Requiem aeternam'.

Harmonically, the Requiem contains impressive passages. A striking example is at the end of the first movement where three chords in F major, B flat major and A major conclude the movement. An impressive resolution of chords appears at the close of 'Ora supplex', the second *terzina* of the 'Confutatis', where Verdi resolves the final chord into the first chord of the succeeding 'Dies Irae'. The movement is in E major and seems as if it will close in the parallel minor key, but instead the final chord resolves into G minor at the first chord of that succeeding 'Dies Irae' (bb. 572-573). More ingenious, however, is the juxtaposition of G major and B flat

major at the end of the final 'Lacrymosa' (bb. 697-701). The movement is in B flat minor and ends on the tonic major. In the midst of B flat major, the final 'Amen' enters unexpectedly on G major, and the orchestra continues to conclude the movement with B flat major chords.

In addition to these masterly strokes, the intentional use of the fifth as a unifying interval appears in the passages of the sequence. A more daring use of fifths appears in the 'Confutatis' at 'Ora supplex' (bb. 511-519), where a series of parallel fifths is in direct opposition to classical part writing. Another use of fifths appears at the tenor solo 'Ingemisco' (b. 447 ff.), where the accompaniment vacillates between perfect and diminished fifths. The use of the interval of the fifth may again be associated with nakedness.

A more common nineteenth-century practice is the use of chromatic sequences in modulatory passages. The Requiem contains many such passages that rise or descend, as many steps as are needed to reach the new key. In the 'Dies Irae' chromatic sequences appear at bb. 31-37. The movement is in G minor and passes through different keys at the chromatic sequences: C minor (b. 32), B flat minor (b. 34), and A flat minor (b. 36), reaching E major at b. 37 with the enharmonic tonic and finally the tonic parallel, G major (b. 45),

by means of short descending configurations.

In the 'Tuba mirum', a descending chromatic passage in the string and bassoon parts appears at bb. 117-123, passing from A flat major to the dominant E flat major. In the succeeding movement a chromatic climb in the strings takes the key from D minor to B minor (bb. 186-187). Another chromatic sequence appears at 'Confutatis' (bb. 529-531) in the lower string and bassoon parts, taking the key from E major to G flat major (bb. 532-543). At the end of the 'Sanctus', rising and descending chromatic passages appear at bb. 119-131, modulating from D minor (b. 119) to E major (bb. 123-131), the relative major key.

Despite the two fugues and a few contrapuntal passages in the Requiem, most movements have an essentially harmonic setting. The opening 'Requiem aeternam' and 'Kyrie' contain some contrapuntal passages at bb. 28-55 and bb. 78-130. The 'Dies Irae' is predominantly harmonic with a few isolated bars of counterpoint here and there. Similarly, the 'Offertorio' for solo quartet is harmonic, though the 'Quam olim Abrahae' section, starting at b. 89, suggests a fugue, but continues harmonically.

The 'Sanctus' is a fugue for double chorus, while the 'Agnus Dei' is a unique harmonic setting of one melody

alternating between soli (mezzo soprano and soprano) and chorus, with variations occurring in the accompaniment. The 'Lux aeterna', set for solo trio (mezzo soprano, tenor, bass), begins in a recitative-like manner, but later becomes lyrical (b. 54 ff.). The final statements of 'Libera me' are set to a monotone, first in soprano solo then in the chorus, in a similar fashion to the traditional chant of the church, but become more dramatic as the solo continues with the text. After the harmonic return of the 'Dies Irae', and the introductory 'Requiem aeternam', the 'Libera me' returns as a fugue.

A formal layout of the seven movements of Verdi's Requiem in terms of key structure and form may be represented as follows:

TABLE 5.8

MOVEMENT	SECTION	BARS	KEY
Requiem aeternam	A	1-27	A minor A major
	B	28-55	F major
	A	56-66	A minor A major
	C	78-140	A major

(i) Dies Irae	Scene I	1-91	G minor
(ii) Tuba mirum	Scene II	91-161	A flat major
(iii) Liber scriptus	Scene III	161-238	D minor
(i) Dies Irae	Return of Sc.I	238-269	G minor
(iv) Quid sum miser	Scene IV	270-321	G minor
(v) Rex Tremendae	Scene V	321-382	C minor C major
(vi) Recordare	Scene VI	383-446	F major
(vii) Ingemisco	Scene VII	447-502	E flat major
(viii) Confitatis	Scene VIII	503-572	E major
(i) Dies Irae	Return of Sc.I	573-623	G minor
(ix) Lacrymosa	Scene IX	624-701	B flat minor

MOVEMENT	SECTION	BARS	KEY
Offertorio	A	1-89	A flat major
	B	89-118	A flat major
	C	118-157	C major
	B	157-192	A flat major
	A	193-217	A flat major

Sanctus	Introduction	1-8	F major
	Exposition	9-33	F major
	Development	33-79	Various keys
	Closing section	79-139	F major

Agnus Dei	A: soli	1-13	C major
	A: chorus	14-26	C major
	A: soli	27-39	C minor
	A: chorus	40-45	C major
	A: soli	46-58	C major
	A: chorus	59-64	C major
	A: coda	64-74	C major

Lux aeterna	A	1-15	B flat major
	B	16-24	B flat minor
	C	25-42	G flat major
	B	43-53	B flat minor
	D	54-94	B flat major
	A	95-105	B flat major

MOVEMENT	SECTION	BARS	KEY
Libera me	Introduction	1-44	C minor
	Dies Irae	45-131	G minor
	Requiem aeternam	132-170	B flat maj-min
	Libera me	171-422	C minor-major

According to the key structure as seen in Table 5.8, the sections of the Requiem are related by a third, or the tonic major/minor. Sections in minor keys which also employ the tonic major, or vice versa, appear in the first movement at section A, the sequence at 'Rex Tremendae', the 'Agnus Dei', the 'Lux aeternam' and the 'Libera me' at the return of 'Requiem aeternam'.

Third related keys appear in the first movement (A major - F major), the 'Offertorio' (A flat major - C major), and the 'Lux aeterna' (B flat minor - G flat major). In these movements the middle sections are in a brighter key, making the mood lighter.

The 'Dies Irae', with its nine different sections, contains mostly subdominant relations (D minor - G minor, G minor - C minor, C major - F major). These subdominant relations have the effect of increasing the emotional tension which gradually diminishes as the keys become more distance-related (Dies Irae: E

flat major - E major - G minor - B flat minor). It does not appear Verdi devised the key centres with any form of central principle of tonal structural unity.

What is particularly notable, however, is the predominant use of key signatures with flat keys. Keys with sharps only appear twice, in the first movement (A major), and in the sequence (E major). Other than these, both minor and major keys are those with flats in their key signatures. Flat keys are generally darker in character and their frequent use underlies the pessimistic tone of the Requiem.

The form in nearly all the movements of the Requiem is irregular and sometimes unique, bordering on operatic aria form. Each movement has its own individual structure. In the first movement, the 'Requiem aeternam' is in ternary form (ABA). The addition of the 'Kyrie' at the end suggests a D section; thus Rondo form. In contrast, the 'Dies Irae' has nine different subdivisions that are musically linked.

The third movement is not a conventional ternary structure. The A and B sections being in the same key suggest one section, and their return after the contrasting middle section is inverted, the B returning before A. Even the 'Sanctus', in the form of a conventional fugue, introduces a change in the final

section, so that the theme does not return in its original form but in augmentation. The structure of the succeeding 'Agnus Dei', on the other hand, is completely unique in that it has only one theme, which is repeated again and again. This may perhaps be compared to a theme and variations, though it is not the theme that undergoes changes, but the accompaniment.

The form of the 'Lux aeterna' may in turn suggest a Rondo. The Rondo structure may be derived in the following way: A and B represent one section (B flat major-minor), followed by a contrasting section (G flat major), the return of the first section (incomplete, only B returns - B flat minor), another contrasting section (B flat major), and again the return of the first section (incomplete, only A this time - B flat major). As a result of the abandonment of regular versification, the form of the movements of the Requiem reflects originality.

The final movement also has four contrasting sections: 'Libera me', 'Requiem aeternam', 'Dies Irae', and the final 'Libera me' set to a fugue.

The first double fugue, is written with the 'Sanctus', 'Benedictus' and 'Hosanna' as one continuous movement. The two fugues are musically

linked by their introductory subjects. The first four notes of the 'Libera me' fugue (Fig. 5.9b) is a retrograde inversion of the arpeggio at the beginning of the first subject of the double fugue (Fig. 5.9a), but in minor form.

Fig. 5.9

(a)

Allegro $\text{♩} = 112$ 10

1. Solo

ob.

Cl. (B)

Coro I
S.
A.

Coro II
S.

VI. I.

leggero e stacc.

(b)

Li-be-rame, Domine, de mor-te æ-ter-na, — In di-e il-la tre-men-da:

Both fugues have a clear exposition, making almost no use of free material. In the double fugue, the second subject is introduced one bar after the first subject (Fig. 5.9a). After each subject is introduced to all the voice parts of each choir, the soprano and alto voices of each choir exchange subjects. Thus the exposition of the 'Sanctus' may be represented as

follows¹.

TABLE 5.10

	S1	CS	S2
<u>Chorus I</u>	<u>S: (9-13)</u>	<u>(14-21)</u>	<u>(26-33)</u>
		A	CS
	<u>A:</u>	<u>(13-17)</u>	<u>(18-25) (30-33)</u>
		S1	CS
	<u>T:</u>	<u>(17-21)</u>	<u>(22-29)</u>
		A	CS
	<u>B:</u>	<u>(21-25)</u>	<u>(26-33)</u>

	S2	CS	S1 CS
<u>Chorus II</u>	<u>S: (10-17)</u>	<u>(19-21)</u>	<u>(25-29) (30-33)</u>
		A	CS
	<u>A:</u>	<u>(14-21)</u>	<u>(23-24) (29-33)</u>
		S2	CS
	<u>T:</u>	<u>(18-25)</u>	<u>(27-29)</u>
		A	
	<u>B:</u>	<u>(22-29)</u>	

¹ S1 - Subject one, S2 - Subject two, CS - Countersubject, A - Answer.

The exposition of the 'Libera me' fugue, on the other hand, may be represented as follows².

TABLE 5.11

	A	CS
S:	(186-193)	(193-209)
	S	CS
A:	(179-186)	(186-200)
		FM
		(201-207)
		A
T:		(200-207)
	S	CS
B:	(193-200)	(200-206)

The middle section continues with more fluency than the double fugue, with an inverted form of the subject in the basses, at b. 207. It also uses augmentation of the arpeggio figure of the subject at the entry of the soprano solo (b. 262), and the diminished form of the subject in the bass (b. 227), b. 233 in the soprano, b. 250 in the soprano, b. 256 in the tenor, b. 257 in the bass, b. 258 in the altos, and bb, 266 and 274 in the soprano solo. After the middle section, an episode based on material from the second half of the subject continues from bb. 276-311. The entry of the subject

² S - Subject, A - Answer, CS - Countersubject, FM - Free Material.

in the tonic (b. 312) starts the closing or final section. The subject follows successively in stretto texture. A coda based on material from the first half of the subject begins at b. 350, with the soprano entering first. It ends quietly on communal monotones of the tonic note.

In contrast to the inversion, augmentation, stretto and use of the diminished fifth of the subject in the 'Libera me' fugue, the double fugue has a relatively uninteresting middle section, based essentially on false stretto entries of the subject. After passing through various keys, it reaches the closing section at b. 77 with a tonic entry of the first subject in the second chorus which is continued in augmentation by the first chorus (b. 79). A coda based on the text 'Hosanna in excelsis' (Hosanna in the highest) starts at b. 109, making use of material of the first subject.

Both fugues, like the other movements of the Requiem, possess an individuality typical of Verdi. The sensual melodies and dramatic character of the Requiem seem to burst out of the liturgical framework.

The success of the Requiem during its first stage performances continues today. People now listen to and appraise religious music as an art, its usefulness to

the church being subordinate to its own artistic greatness and beauty.

CHAPTER 6

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE REQUIEMS OF BRAHMS AND VERDI

In June 1875, seven years after Brahms presented Vienna with a premiere of his German Requiem, Verdi offered the same public performances of his Requiem. The response was overwhelming and even Brahms, who did not particularly favour certain aspects of contemporary music, was impressed with Verdi's Requiem. Eduard Hanslick, a well-known music critic and friend of Brahms, gives a perceptive account of what the nineteenth-century public particularly appreciated of Verdi's Requiem. He, however, also weighed it against Brahms's Requiem and found wanting: "Verdi's Requiem is not the most significant sacred composition, not even of the decade! For certainly no one will be so childish as to place it on an equal level with Brahms's German Requiem"¹.

In the recent past, however, Brahms's Requiem received the same cavalier treatment. In a trenchant written critique of Dvorak's Requiem (dated 1892-11-9), George Bernard Shaw, who was as bigoted as Hanslick,

¹ Eduard Hanslick, 'Verdi's Requiem', Music and Letters 1846-99 (revised edition), Cox and Wyman Ltd, London, p. 164.

demolished Brahms's Requiem.² Needless to say such idiosyncratic criticism did not, and indeed does not alter the fact that both works were, and continue to be masterpieces. When one listens appreciatively to both works, one cannot help but develop a preference for one or the other, however "close the race". From that point of view, it is necessary to delineate the qualities that make each work an enduring masterpiece.

Both Brahms and Verdi wrote their respective Requiems at a mature age when both had developed their specific style in vocal music. While Brahms, owing to his practical experience with choral societies, developed an affinity for choral texture, Verdi by virtue of his operatic background, developed a similar affinity in the field of the dramatic solo voice.

The full original title of Brahms's Requiem is 'Ein Deutsches Requiem, nach Worten der heiligen Schrift' (A German Requiem with scriptural text). Unlike Verdi's Requiem, which makes use of the Latin liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, the source of Brahms's text and its associations has neither Roman nor Protestant liturgical connections; the scrupulously crafted text is the result of an intensity of personal

² Shaw felt the work was "so execrably and ponderously dull that the very flattest of funerals would seem like a ballet, or at least a danse macabre, after it." George Bernard Shaw, GBS on Music, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1962, p. 107.

faith and poetic insight.

While the purpose of Brahms's Requiem is directed at the living, the liturgy of Verdi's Requiem offers prayers for the dead. Although Brahms took his text from the Lutheran Bible, it does not cohere in a liturgical unit. Nevertheless, it has universal appeal in religious sentiment expressed in a masterly combination of cantata, oratorio and symphony writing.

Verdi's Requiem, on the other hand, unifies opera and oratorio. What makes it so passionate and sensuous is that it realizes the fears and needs of man. A liturgical effect is achieved by the unification of the people through the service and as a musical setting this is reflected in the choral writing. Verdi, however, devotes a great many musical numbers to solo singing as was the practice in Catholic church circles at the time. His Requiem followed the "dramatic" character of the Tridentine rite which was officially instituted on Italian soil at a time when drama dominated the entire artistic scene in Italy. Nevertheless, the Mass liturgy still re-enacts the "Last Supper". Under these circumstances, Verdi's Requiem corresponds to the spirit and tradition of Italian Catholicism.

Brahms's style adapts itself naturally to the

tradition of which Bach represents the high point, whereas Verdi's style does not allow of a connection with the music of either Bach or Palestrina. Verdi has to find his own solutions in this respect, to a greater extent than Brahms. Moreover, his solutions demand a larger measure of concentration and empathy from the listener than Brahms's contrapuntal structures. Verdi's fugues, for instance, are less easily appreciated than Brahms's.

While Verdi's text was fixed, the poetic scheme of Brahms's Requiem gains strength from his music. He deals adroitly with the nothingness of man 'Behold all flesh is as grass', 'Verily, how vain is all mankind' and 'Lord, teach me that there must be an end of me'.

Verdi, well-known for his sensuous Italian melodies, wrote gentle music at the charming duet 'Recordare Jesu pie' for two sopranos, and the chorus 'Pie Jesu Domine'. Brahms, well-known for his German lieder and unaccompanied choral pieces, has an equally natural command of melodic writing. He uses recitative-like passages to such monotonous as are required to express the text, 'Ja, der Geist spricht' (Yes, the spirit sayeth).

Brahms's religious feeling is felt to be serious and intimate, like the feelings in much of his profane

music, and this mentality corresponds to the one we most often associate with churchgoers who are attending commemorative services. Verdi's religious feeling, on the other hand, is that of a person who is by nature extrovert, and who is used to thinking in terms of the flamboyant musical colours and freely flowing melody of stage works. His religious feelings are expressed differently, and are not usually associated with the mood of a congregation at a commemorative service. Though his Requiem is more suited to the concert stage than to the nave, it does not mean it is less heart-felt or less serious, or indeed less religious.

Verdi's music has the characteristic Italian trademark of strong dynamic contrast. Both singers and orchestra have explicit instructions to guide them. In this way he ensures that he obtains the desired effect, to bring out the Italian emotional quality of the work. Brahms's music has a yielding quality. He does, however, add some dynamic markings to guide the musicians but not to the same extent.

Generally, the tempo of movements of Verdi's Requiem range from 72 to 88 beats to the minute, using common time with the quarter note as the basic beat. He only uses duple compound time twice at 'Quid sum miser', and in the third movement at 'Libera animas' (b. 193).

Brahms does not give tempo indications in his Requiem, but his movements are generally slow. Brahms seems to prefer common triple time. Most of the movements of his Requiem use this time, even at the Funeral March, where the triple time-signature conflicts with the duple nature of a march.

Harmonically, both composers tend to modulate to the parallel major or minor within one movement. Verdi, who preferred minor keys, nearly always modulates to the parallel major key, as does Brahms. The effect is an increased emotional intensity. While Verdi's preference for minor keys underlies the serious mood of a Requiem Mass, Brahms balances his Requiem with both major and minor keys to underline the contrasts of grief and comfort.

Both composers use key relationships to achieve unity and special emotional effects. While Brahms places significance on mediant and subdominant relations, Verdi passes through almost all the minor and major key centres to obtain precision of pictorial detail.

Verdi's orchestration generally tends to be more Classical than Romantic. His Requiem shows great sensitivity to orchestral tone colour. It uses bright colours such as the piccolo, flute, trumpet and the high registers of the violin. Darker tone colours are

used for special effects, such as the bassoon at 'Quid sum miser' and the violoncello at the opening of the 'Offertorio'. Generally, instruments double up a corresponding voice part. Brahms's orchestration is sonorous, but like Verdi he tends to be Classical in his orchestration, isolating himself from contemporary orchestral practice. He reveals a liking for darker tone colours and even employs the lower registers of bright colours such as the flute and violin.

A notable feature of Verdi's Requiem is that he distributes the woodwind parts in octaves and sometimes thirds. The woodwind is treated as a group and their parts written to complement the string parts. He gives solo parts to woodwind with a dark colour. Most of the time, however, the woodwinds play together in harmony as a group. Brahms's Requiem treats both the woodwind and strings equally. Woodwind parts tend to be written in consecutive thirds and sometimes sixths. The woodwind sections carry a great deal of important thematic material, and their function is similar in character and range to that of the strings.

Brahms employs horns in his Requiem mostly as binding material. Verdi's horns are given the same parts as woodwinds, as was often the practice in the Classical period. The only time Verdi employs horns as pedal

point is at 'Recordare Jesu Pie', and for a few bars only. Brahms, in contrast, not only uses horns as tonic and dominant pedals, but also in short melodic or chromatic passages. He uses them at the opening of the first, third and seventh movements as pedal points to provide cohesion to the individual melodic parts.

Verdi knows what he requires from the trumpet. In the 'Tuba mirum' scene he convincingly obtains a distant effect from the off-stage trumpets. Together with the trombone and tuba, he employs them further at passages which require greater amplitude. Brahms does not employ the expectant trumpet at the passage 'Denn es wird die Posaune schallen' (The trumpet shall sound) in the sixth movement. The German word 'Posaune' in English actually means "trombone" and not "trumpet" as the English version of the text translates. Instead, the voices, with their triplet flourish and impressive modulation from C minor to E minor, give the desired eerie effect. Brahms uses the trumpet together with the trombone and tuba to thicken the harmony, and when they are employed at other passages, they actively share in the melodic material. The trombone and tuba are sometimes given chords, but the scoring is never too thick.

Verdi gives the cellos a more active role, employing them in solo material and for most of the Requiem,

they have a part independent of the double bass.

In Brahms's Requiem, he duplicates their parts most of the time with that of the double basses. At times, though, they are engaged in parts with the upper strings. While Brahms seems to prefer the lower registers of the upper strings, Verdi makes use of the extreme high ranges especially to produce tremolo effects.

To summarize, Verdi's orchestration has bold colouring and telling effects while Brahms's orchestration is more subtle and diffuse.

In providing applicability and effectiveness to ecclesiastical music, Brahms and Verdi have given the Requiem genre an impetus it had hitherto lacked. Though the deepest, most daring aspects of these two Requiems could be misconstrued as undevotional sophistication, their innate style was both original and modern in the nineteenth century, expressing the vibrant and soulful mood of their respective texts. Thus these works, both iconoclastic in their own way, became the greatest step forward in the evolution of the Requiem during the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Since their first successful performances, the Requiems of Brahms and Verdi have been universally acclaimed, and today remain standard works in the repertoires of many choral societies. What makes their music so widely acceptable is the basic music processes that make them both alive and allusive. We admire in both their assiduous craftsmanship and the extraordinary individuality of their styles: the subtle style of Brahms and the dramatic style of Verdi; the naturalness of Brahms and the exuberance of Verdi.

Though Verdi was a Roman Catholic and Brahms was associated with the Protestant faith, the subjective religiousness of both composers gives their Requiems a kind of sublime dignity that is evidence of each man's religious conviction. Unlike many composers who restrict themselves to the traditions laid down by the church, the honesty and sincerity of both Requiems continue to give religious music a freshness devoid of selfrighteousness.

These two great nineteenth-century works have endured through all the changes of musical thought and technique because of their flair and vitality. The works express definite emotions and states of mind, so that the tone painting becomes entirely credible.

Orchestral tone colour and harmonic effects are unparalleled in other requiems of the time. By means of one or the other basic process, Brahms and Verdi create expressive music using pictorial devices amongst other techniques. Melancholy, despair, nostalgia, unhappiness and other such moods are at once evoked. If the text of either Requiem is known in advance, or the music and the text can be perceived simultaneously, the tone painting becomes completely credible. Their language of interpretation, though, is more individual and passionate than we normally hear in the church, particularly in the case of Verdi.

Much of the music we associate with death, misfortune or general unhappiness is in the minor mode. Verdi reflects despair or anguish through minor chromatic lines, some of which contain a series of dissonant suspensions. This occurs in the 'Dies Irae', which may evoke the sound of wailing. His constant use of chromatic melodies, supported by chromatic harmonies, and sometimes consisting of suspensions and

appoggiature that require resolution, yet succeed one another with little or no feeling of rest, may be associated with passionate longing or unrequited desire.

Brahms in his Requiem depicts a melancholy frame of mind through the medium of an oboe in a minor key against a soft background of strings (first movement: bb. 37-39). Even his constant use of the French horns, playing softly in pedal points, creates a mellow mood.

While march music in the major mode may be associated with military music, slow marches in the minor mode have a melancholy quality. Such is the case with the Funeral March of Brahms's Requiem, though contrary to the march rhythm it has a triple time-signature associated with a solemn dance.

Since the early seventeenth century, "tremolo" in the strings has helped dramatic composers maintain a feeling of anxious expectancy, a feeling that is reinforced when the "tremolo" is combined with an ostinato pattern in the bass. Verdi uses this device effectively in the 'Rex Tremendae' and 'Salve me'. The constant repetition of the short melodic pattern in the bass, related to the steady beat of a drum, has a numbing and yet paradoxically intoxicating effect on the ear.

That music can strike terror in the heart of the listener is evident in the 'Dies Irae' of Verdi's Requiem since any sudden, loud sound will shock. In the final movement, after a quiet passage and a pause, the 'Dies Irae' suddenly reappears 'fortissimo'. The result is a moment of fright because it is unanticipated, and the marked changes in dynamics and registers intensify this feeling.

Both Brahms and Verdi use the 'crescendo' to create an atmosphere of growing excitement. Both use it with a harmonic background in minor, thus increasing our agitation.

In Brahms's Requiem visual movement is reflected in the rise and fall of melodic lines. This device can be traced back to medieval composers who wrote rising and falling melodic lines for the words 'ascendit' and 'descendit' of the Mass. Thus ascending and descending lines can be visually evocative. The high melodic lines of the fifth movement, 'Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit' (Ye now have sorrow), of Brahms's Requiem give the impression of height, or ethereality - an angel from above brings consolation.

Another basic device Brahms and Verdi use to create pictorial music, is deviation from the norm of instrumental sound in order to depict the supernatural

or mysterious. While normal sounds are created from the normal timbres of traditional instruments, the departure from them may conjure up the eerie or mystical. Verdi creates such an atmosphere with the use of muted tremolo strings at the opening of the 'Lux aeterna' and in the 'Dies Irae', while Brahms does so at the opening of his fifth and sixth movements. Even the sound of the distant off-stage trumpets in Verdi's Requiem achieves the desired supernatural efficacy. These peculiar orchestral effects sound weird because they muffle and distort the pure tones of the instruments.

Even though the study of old church music is evident in these Requiems, they are Romantic works in the sense that they are conceived entirely from a subjective and arbitrary point of view. The mixture of stylistic elements in each work is so personal that they sustain interest. Though, like many nineteenth-century works, they seek the outside world for acknowledgement; they point to the people "as our *raison d'être*".

Although both works retain the traditional concept of 'rest', they break free from its strict ecclesiastical connotations. If they are idiosyncratic in some respects, music is the ultimate benefactor.

So Brahms and Verdi, two great masters of the late nineteenth century, broke out of the straightjacket of religious music into the heady domain of subjectivism and personal expression.

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