GRAND MESSE DES MORTS: HECTOR BERLIOZ'S ROMANTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC REQUIEM TRADITION

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Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) was commissioned by the French government in 1836 to compose a requiem mass for a state ceremony and to restore sacred music to a respected position in France. Berlioz envisioned a requiem that both continued the Roman Catholic requiem tradition and expanded it in context of the Romantic era and \textit{Kunstreligion}. Berlioz conceived his \textit{Grande messe des morts (Requiem)} as a “music drama,” in which the thirteenth-century Latin prose was used as secular poetry rather than an immutable sacred text. Berlioz’s \textit{Requiem} is not religious in strict theological terms but relates more closely to what Frank Heidlberger calls an artistic statement of “secular moral philosophy.” Berlioz devised a first-person physiological narrative which presented the listener with a private emotional experience, achieving this psychological journey, in part, through a Romantic interpretation: textual alterations, programmatic orchestration, and the innovative use of antiphonal brass orchestras. The text was freely edited and rearranged to produce a libretto-type program, which Edward Cone deems a “dramatic portrayal of an imaginary progress through this world and the next.” Berlioz enhanced his interpretation by shifting from the traditional third-person perspective to the first-person. This adjustment required minimal changes to the text but maximum changes for the listener, who experienced a personal journey focused on the individual, rather than the divine. I present a detailed textual analysis to shed light upon how Berlioz’s complex relationship with the Roman Catholic Church is reflected in the \textit{Requiem} using the
orchestration, scoring, structure, and literary connections to support my evidence. In what ways does Berlioz’s *Requiem* reveal connections to his religious and political views? How is his artistic and psychological interpretation presented in the changes to the text? To understand Berlioz’s conception of the text, I detail his experiences with the Church, childhood and adult life, and the political, social, and cultural influences of nineteenth-century France. This thesis will address the scholarship of Jacques Barzun, Peter Bloom, David Cairns, Edward Cone, Pierre Citron, Frank Heidlberger, and D. Kern Holoman in combination with my textual analysis and agnostic reading of the narrative to present a secular interpretation of the *Requiem*. 
To My Parents
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER I. BERLIOZ: THE MAN AND ARTIST</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The French Revolution</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Sacred Music: 1789 to 1830</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Revolution Childhood and Adolescence</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlioz’s Aesthetic, Philosophical, and Political Views</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlioz and Religion</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**CHAPTER II. <strong>GRANDE MESSE DES MORTS, OP. 5</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brief History of Requiem Masses</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlioz’s <em>Requiem</em>: Commission and Conception</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premiere and Reception</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alterations to the Text</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestration</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonic Structure and Key Relationships</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER III. CONCLUSIONS</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX A. TEXT AND TRANSLATION</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX B. COMPARISON OF TEXTS</strong></td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES AND TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Dies Irae</em>, mm. 68-75</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Tuba mirum</em>, mm. 240-251</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Quid sum miser</em>, mm. 1-16</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Quid sum miser</em>, mm. 34-49</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Rex tremendae</em>, mm. 57-68</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Rex tremendae</em>, mm. 97-110</td>
<td>80-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Offertorium</em>, mm. 137-154</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Hector Berlioz, <em>Grande messe des morts</em>, <em>Hostias</em>, mm. 38-47</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tables</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Comparison of the “Monumental” Orchestra and the <em>Requiem</em> Orchestra</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Implied Large-Scale Harmonic Progression</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

“It is the real Berlioz I would like to portray.”

Hector Berlioz’s (1803-1869) complex relationship with the Roman Catholic Church and its music has always intrigued scholars. Berlioz composed numerous sacred works but did not identify himself as a religious person. In his memoirs and intimate letters, Berlioz denounced organized religion and in its stead, cited Ludwig van Beethoven, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Gaspare Spontini, Carl Maria von Weber, and William Shakespeare as his gods, declaring that their genius was worthy of his worship. Leading Berlioz scholars Jacques Barzun, Peter Bloom, David Cairns, Pierre Citron, Frank Heidlberger, and D. Kern Holoman each note Berlioz’s atheistic philosophy, understood within the latitude of the Romantic era and Kunstreligion.

Pierre Citron wrote that although Berlioz had long since renounced the Catholicism of his youth, and had become a confirmed non-believer, it would be a mistake, in the context of the Romantic era, to suggest that this sort of atheism was radically opposed to religious faith, for the religion of the progress and achievement of humanity was,

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1 D. Kern Holoman, *Berlioz* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 1. Holoman opens his book with this quotation by Ernest Legouvé (1807-1903), Berlioz’s early biographer and lifelong friend. This statement is considered to express the spirit of nineteenth-century Berlioz research.


for many figures of the period, nothing if not a new form of belief . . . Herein lies one of the explanations of the ‘atheist’s Mass’ that is Berlioz’s Requiem.4

The leading Berlioz scholars each describe Berlioz’s religious views in differing terms, such as agnostic, atheist, atheistic, spiritual, and deist. I believe Berlioz presents an agnostic life view, which will be pursued in this thesis. D. Kern Holoman wrote that “no artist’s work is more autobiographical: his music confirms, for example, a deep patriotism and an equally profound (though, on the whole, agnostic) spiritualism.”5 Berlioz’s music is deeply indicative of his thoughts and emotions. The acuteness of his works translates life experiences, literary fascination, and wildly-careening emotions into a musical dialogue. Holoman dedicated his lengthy biography to the reexamination of Berlioz’s life and works, to discover “the real Berlioz,” if such a venture is possible.6 The concept of music as autobiography is common in Berlioz scholarship and Hugh Macdonald notes that “few composers have woven their own personality so tightly into their music, so that all his works reflect something in himself.”7 In this thesis, I investigate how Berlioz’s ambiguous relationship with the Catholic Church, as well as the artistic, aesthetic, philosophical, and religious currents in early nineteenth-century France are reflected in his sacred music. To answer these questions, I examine the problematic relationship between traditional Roman Catholic requiem masses (utilizing the requiems of François-Joseph Gossec [1760], Luigi Cherubini [1816 and 1836], and Charles Gounod [1842] as representative works) and Berlioz’s requiem mass, the Grande messe des morts, Op. 5 (1837), through a detailed textual analysis, which is presented in greater depth and nuance than is present in past scholarship. This side-by-side comparison of Berlioz’s text setting and the Latin mass text will

5 Holoman, Berlioz, 2.
6 Ibid., 1-5.
contribute to the body of research centered on Berlioz’s religious and philosophical beliefs. The numerous alterations, additions, and omissions of text will be analyzed, as well as the shift from the traditional third-person perspective to the first-person. The orchestra’s role in crafting programmatic imagery and the structural conception of Berlioz’s *Requiem* are also considered in support of the textual analysis. To understand Berlioz’s conception of the text, in partnership with its setting, I also discuss his experiences with the Church, childhood and adult life, and the political, social, and cultural influences of nineteenth-century France.

Chapter One, “Berlioz the Romantic Artist,” is divided into six subsections to describe Berlioz’s France, including a short history and lingering effects of the French Revolution, the decline of sacred music in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century France, and Berlioz’s role in the 1830 Revolution. Chapter One also details Berlioz’s childhood religious experiences and parental influence, young adulthood, love for literature, and his written statements about religion. These factors will be used to understand how Berlioz may have been influenced by his family and his country as a political backdrop, and how these events may have affected his music.

The French Revolution enacted many radical reforms, including France’s declaration as an atheist state from 1789 to 1799, which replaced Catholicism as the state religion. The National Assembly dictated strict reforms upon the Church; bishops could only be appointed through state elections, and Church assets became state property, which were parceled off to pay the national debts. The Constitution of the Clergy required the clergy to swear an oath of loyalty to the state and forsake their vows to Rome, as they were now employees of the nation and paid through state funds. The traditional Gregorian calendar was discarded for the French Republican calendar, in which saints’ days were replaced with festivals celebrating classical

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heroes. Many French citizens began to worship privately in their homes and church attendance fell out of favor. Parochial music schools and choirs disbanded, and composers abstained from writing in sacred genres, as they could not guarantee that these works would be performed. As a result, few sacred works were composed in France between 1789 and 1799.

Berlioz’s birth followed the period of political and religious uncertainty characterizing the end of French Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte signed the Concordat of 1801, which reinstated Catholicism as the majority religion in France. However, Catholicism was not deemed the official religion of the state and religious freedom was granted to other religious denominations, particularly Protestantism. Ideological conflict was present in Berlioz’s childhood home, La Côte Saint-André, as his father, Dr. Louis Berlioz, was a self-proclaimed atheist, and his mother, Marie-Antoinette-Joséphine Berlioz (née Marmion), was a staunch Catholic. Their differing ideologies would have more impact on his adult life than his childhood, as Louis Berlioz had agreed to raise his children in the Catholic faith. As a young boy, Berlioz was an ardent Catholic and attended mass daily, associating an aesthetic experience initiated by the choir at his First Communion as a religious experience rather than a musical awakening. Later, he would recognize this aesthetic experience as musical and denounce Catholicism and organized religion. In his memoirs, Berlioz casually remarked upon the Church that “since she has ceased to inculcate the burning of heretics, her creeds are charming . . . and, though we quarreled long ago, I still retain the tenderest recollections of that form of religious belief.” His childhood piety was replaced by secular adult years dedicated to the veneration of great authors and composers. In particular, Berlioz lauded William Shakespeare and his stage plays, and was

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Berlioz’s memoirs suggest that composers and authors became God-like figures in his adulthood. While the practice of elevating artists to God status was common among Romantic artists, it is imperative to understand Berlioz’s worship of Shakespeare and specific composers to understand and contextualize his music. These topics will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter One.

A brief description of the tradition and history of Roman Catholic requiem masses begins Chapter Two, Grande messe des morts. This section discusses traditional form, harmony, orchestration and instrumentation, and textual and musical settings to provide a platform of understanding and comparison for Berlioz’s setting. I also detail the commission and conception of the Grande messe des morts (Requiem), the premiere and reception, and allocate most of the chapter to analyzing Berlioz’s treatment of the text, followed by a discussion of the orchestration, form, key areas, harmonic structure, and literary connections. Much of this chapter is based upon information Berlioz provided in his memoirs and orchestration treatise. These documents are primary resources for analyzing his beliefs and music.

Berlioz’s large-scale sacred works embody the main intellectual and metaphysical inquiry of his life: religion and spirituality as “secular artistic philosophy,” as can be evidenced in the Requiem (1837), Te Deum (1849), and L’enfance du Christ (1850-1854). Frank Heidlberger states that “it is not devout religiosity that motivates his notion of subjective musical expression, but rather the ritualistic and spiritual power of religious ideas.” Berlioz’s Requiem is an amalgamation of his manifold religious views, literary fervor and enthusiasm for the written

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12 Ibid., 486.
13 Heidlberger, “Artistic Religiosity,” 28. While the genres, scoring, and style of these three works are strikingly different, each utilizes narratives on sacred subjects. Te Deum and L’enfance du Christ “both put forth religion as a source not of spirituality, but of ritual—ritual that includes epic grandeur, nightmarish delusion, melancholic contemplation, and pastoral imagery.”
14 Ibid.
word, musical aesthetic of grandiose instrumentation, and imaginative exploration of timbral possibilities. Berlioz used the authority of the liturgy in combination with his liberal interpretation of the text and innovative orchestration to create a first-person experience of the Day of Judgment. This recalibration from the traditional third-person narrative may affirm Berlioz’s feelings on the importance of man and the individual, over the normative fear of God and eternal damnation. David Cairns believes the leading force behind the *Requiem* is the absence of God, in which the work achieves poignancy through Berlioz’s “unsatisfied yearning” for God, his “regret for loss of faith” and “desperate need to believe and to worship.”¹⁵ Does the *Requiem* support these statements?

The *Requiem* is characterized by numerous alterations to the thirteenth-century text. What do the alterations and omissions suggest about Berlioz’s beliefs and what role does the orchestration play? To better understand the musical and historical contexts, I briefly compare Berlioz’s *Requiem* to the requiem masses of his predecessors and contemporaries for context, notably François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829), Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842), and Charles Gounod (1818-1894). Finally, I incorporate Edward T. Cone’s discussion of the similarities between Berlioz’s *Requiem* and Dante Alighieri’s fourteenth-century influential text, the *Divine Comedy*, as presented in his article “*Grande messe des morts*: Berlioz’s Divine Comedy.” Cone notes that the epic poem is divided into three distinct books: the *Inferno, Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, which allegorically represent the soul’s journey toward God. Berlioz’s work is divided into movements that focus on the Day of Judgment and Hell, those that suggest Purgatory, and the eternal rest of Heaven. I present a summary of how the *Requiem* imitates Dante’s work and how this contributes to his interpretation of the Mass for the Dead.

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To examine the questions posed above, I refer to several primary sources: Berlioz’s memoirs (Mémoires de Hector Berlioz: comprenant ses voyages en Italie, en Allemagne, en Russie et en Angleterre, 1803-1865), his private letters, his treatise on orchestration (Grand traité d’instrumentation et d’orchestration modernes), and the Grande messe des morts score as published in the 1978 edition of Berlioz’s Complete Works, edited by Jürgen Kindermann. I also utilize secondary literature by leading Berlioz scholars, most notably Peter Bloom, Jacques Barzun, David Cairns, Edward T. Cone, and Frank Heidlerger. The goal of my thesis is to revisit the available scholarship in combination with my textual analysis and agnostic reading of the narrative to present a secular interpretation of the Requiem.

CHAPTER I: BERLIOZ THE MAN AND ARTIST

“There is a religion of beauty, and I am a believer.”1

Introduction

While scholars may never determine the “real” Berlioz, understanding the culture of his time is paramount to understanding him as a man and as a composer. Music biography creates an important framework in which composer’s lives provide a context for their works, and this interest in their “life and times” (or of any other individual) is bolstered by the concept of “authenticity” that has appeared in recent music scholarship.2 Berlioz’s works were shaped by his musical aesthetic and influenced by society and institutions such as the Church and the State. These forces determined his education and guided his life experiences, and are thus invaluable to understanding his musical oeuvre. Peter Bloom states that Berlioz was not simply a composer but a French citizen in both revolution and republic, and a French subject, in terms of monarchy and empire.3 Despite Berlioz’s accomplishments as an orchestrator and conductor, Bloom notes that the common belief in nineteenth-century France was that the state made the man and not the reverse.4 However, Jolanta T. Pekacz notes that it seems perverse to attribute a work to a composer but then claim that the composer was simply a conduit for their experiences and cultural climate and that their life had nothing to do with their work.5 Despite many differing views on musical biography, leading Berlioz scholars have consistently noted the

4 Bloom appears to reference Karl Marx’s sixth Thesis on Feuerbach (1845), in which Marx debates that human nature is not built upon individuals but formed through social connections and relationships.
5 Pekacz, Musical Biography, 3.
autobiographical nature of Berlioz’s music, and the examination of his key life experiences will be discussed in this chapter and used to support the evidence presented in Chapter Two.

The French Revolution

Historians regard the French Revolution (1789-1799) as one of the most important events in history and the end of the early modern period.6 The French Revolution caused a massive exchange of power from the Roman Catholic Church to the State and is often viewed as the "dawn of the modern era."7 This faction would color Hector Berlioz’s childhood and upbringing, as Louis Berlioz, Hector’s father, supported the goals of the revolution and taught them to his young son. The French Revolution is best understood as a series of events and developments stretched over a period of many years, beginning between 1787 and 1789. This period of uncertainty, disorder, and conflict was felt across France and into the surrounding countries.8 The discontent began with King Louis XVI’s overspending and eventual bankruptcy. New political ideas inspired by the Enlightenment and the American Revolution served as models for revolt against governing powers. Other emerging world leaders, such as Great Britain and Russia, challenged the French for their trading posts, colonies, and naval territory, fighting constantly through the 1740s and 1750s. The expense involved in protecting their resources, properties, and citizens rendered the French government drastically overreached and ultimately defeated, and the debts incurred to finance these defensive ventures were extreme. Instead of raising taxes, Louis XVI paid the new debts through loans which he had no hope of paying off. The Estates-General, or Third Estate, were called to meet on May 5, 1789 at Versailles to discuss the nation’s bankruptcy and to plan a radical reform. By June 17, 1789, the Estates-

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7 Ibid.
General severed themselves from the First and Second Estates and reconvened as the National Assembly. Their fissure was to be the founding act of the French Revolution, which “seized sovereign power in the name of the French nation.”

Their first act of the National Assembly was to cancel and reauthorize all taxes. The Assembly knew they could not pay off the country’s massive debts through taxation alone and sought a new source of income through in the Church. Under the ancien régime, the Church was the largest landowner in France, claiming about ten percent of the nation’s land. The new government declared France an atheist state and the Church’s profitable tracts of lands and endowments were sold to alleviate the national debts. All religious orders were dissolved, and monks and nuns were encouraged to return to private life. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, passed on July 12, 1790, retained the remaining clergy as state employees. Clergy salaries were paid out of public funds and the Assembly felt they had the right to impose the same organization and laws over the Church that they had imposed on the country. The civil constitution required bishops and priests to be elected by the Assembly and ecclesiastical boundaries became part of the national geography. Anticipating dissent among the clergy, the Assembly required an oath of fealty from all members who wished to continue their service, and those who refused were not allowed to remain with the Church. The Gallicanism movement had already authorized the restriction of papal control and granted greater autonomy to the French church, but under the new constitution Pope Pius VI was diminished to a mere figurehead and was allowed even less influence and veto power in France. Approximately half of the clergy refused the oath and Pope Pius VI publically denounced the civil constitution. To counter his proclamation, those loyal to the Assembly elevated the importance of the “constitutional” priests

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10 Ibid., 44.
11 Ibid., 47.
and receiving the sacraments from a constitutional priest was viewed as a “touchstone of loyalty”
to the Revolution.\textsuperscript{12} The Assembly was asked to reinstate Catholicism as the national religion,
but instead declared civic equality to other religious denominations and forbade new monastic
vows. Clergy members who refused the oath were forced into exile, deported, or executed as
traitors of the people. This culminated in a period of violence known as the Reign of Terror.\textsuperscript{13}
This violent period of de-Christianization included the incarceration and execution of priests, and
destruction of churches and religious iconography throughout France.

The traditional Gregorian calendar was replaced with the French Republican calendar in
an effort to replace Catholicism. Saints’ days were removed for festivals celebrating classical
heroes. The twelve months of the year were divided into three ten-day weeks called \textit{décades},
with every tenth day set aside for rest.\textsuperscript{14} The months were renamed to describe nature and the
weather in Paris. The Republican calendar year began at the September equinox, and
Vendémiaire marked the first month of the year, meaning “grape harvest.”\textsuperscript{15} The traditional B.C.
and A.D. system was also abandoned, and the French Republican calendar began at Year I, the
beginning of the “Republican Era.”\textsuperscript{16}

The final act of aggressive de-Christianization was the Cult of Reason, an atheistic belief
system which was intended to replace and remove Christianity from France.\textsuperscript{17} This
anthropocentric movement gained political prominence in 1792 and aimed for the perfection of
humanity through truth, liberty, and reason, with atheism at its center, to prevent the false

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, \textit{Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution} (University Park:
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} The “Republican Era” refers to the day the French First Republic was proclaimed, one day after the Convention
(formerly the National Assembly) abolished the monarchy.
\textsuperscript{17} Gregory Fremont-Barnes, \textit{Encyclopedia of the Age of Political Revolutions and New Ideologies, 1760–1815}
(Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 119.
\end{flushright}
worship of idols.  

Cult of Reason leader Joseph Fouché declared in a manifesto that all crosses and statues would be removed from graveyards and the words “Death is an eternal sleep” would be inscribed on the gates in their stead. A national Festival of Reason was held on 20 Brumaire, Year II (November 10, 1793) to celebrate the republican triumph over religion. For the festival, churches across France were ceremonially transformed into Temples of Reason. At Notre Dame Cathedral, the Christian altar was dismantled and an altar to Liberty was erected, and the inscription “To Philosophy” was carved in stone over the cathedral’s doors.

After Napoleon Bonaparte established himself as Emperor, the Cult of Reason was officially banned though his Law on Cults of 18 Germinal, Year X. Bonaparte’s proclamation as Emperor brought the republican phase of the French Revolution to a close. The Concordat of 1801 ended the de-Christianization period and established the rules for a relationship between the French Roman Catholic Church and the State. The Concordat was largely in Bonaparte’s favor, but it did recognize Catholicism as the majority religion in France, and the Church was desperate to restore some semblance of balance. Catholicism was not named the national religion, and religious freedom was still granted to other denominations, particularly to French Protestants. Although France retained the right to elect bishops, the Papacy (now held by Pope Pius VII) regained the right to depose bishops. The state continued to pay the clergy’s salaries, but the Sabbath day was reinstated as a holy day. The French Republican calendar was removed and the Gregorian calendar was renewed on January 1, 1806.

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20 Kennedy, *Cultural History*, 342-343.
21 Ibid.
French Sacred Music: 1789 to 1830

The attacks on religion and the Church contributed to one of the most drastic splits between sacred music and the expression of religious faith. The atheist state of 1789-1799 had effectively silenced sacred music and the tumultuous Revolutionary atmosphere showcased the changing political and spiritual ideologies in France. While many continued to worship privately, composers were unable to write new sacred music, as the churches had been destroyed or repurposed for the Assembly. Choral schools were forced to disassemble, negatively impacting music education in France. These actions would significantly contribute to the changing atmosphere of sacred music in France. The twilight of the Enlightenment into the rising Romantic era would prove to be a pivotal time for sacred music.

The Concordat of 1801 reinstated the legalization of worship and the creation of sacred music. Composers began writing new sacred works, church choirs reconvened, and free-worship was reestablished. Napoleon Bonaparte returned to monarchical traditions and commissioned a chapel to be built at his residence at Tuileries, in which sacred music was to be composed and performed to honor him as the French monarch and head of the French church. Sacred music became state music to serve the ‘cult’ of the King, as had been the tradition with previous French kings, such as the “Sun King,” Louis XIV. The choral master position at the Tuileries was held in turn by prolific opera composer Giovanni Paisiello, Jean-François Le Sueur (who later became Berlioz’s teacher at the Paris Conservatory), and Luigi Cherubini. Bonaparte lost power with the Bourbon Restoration in 1814, but Le Sueur continued in his post, which was eventually split into two positions to include Cherubini. During this time, the directors and musicians continued religious services as they had after the Revolution, including Sunday services and some secular

concerts. Duties shifted again with the 1830 Revolution, in which both Le Sueur and Cherubini were discharged, since the new monarch, Louis-Philippe, did not want the pomp and ceremony associated with the monarchy and sacred music. Many spoke out against the oppression of music in the Royal Chapel by the new ruler but, ultimately, all the musicians were released from their duties.

The French Revolution, the new Romantic ideologies, and the popularity of the opera all contributed to the new face of French sacred music. The character of the music was suited to a society that wished to return to religion, but Jean Mongrédien posits that for ten years “religious service had been outlawed, so people had forgotten how to go to church.”24 The theatre and the opera had flourished in its absence, and appropriating the characteristics of these genres resonated more with the aesthetic currents of the time than the older style sévère.

A movement to return the French people to Christianity began in December 1804. The ephemeral nature of this era shows that some considered the opera-influenced style of sacred music to be in poor taste, citing that this popular style “destroyed nearly all profound feelings, making people insensitive to anything religious.”25 The French were split between adoration and revulsion while composers were merely writing the music their audiences wanted to hear and to have their music performed. One vehicle was for liturgical texts to be interpreted by actors, often giving masses a similar character to oratorios or cantatas. Many masses shared remarkable similarity to operas, including painted backdrops and stage props. Part of Le Sueur’s success was the visual element of the mass and he often wrote specific stage directions for the singers. The audience no longer sat in quiet piety, but clapped and commented on the actors portraying their favorite roles, such as King David. But the composers of these masses were not without faith. Le

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25 Ibid., 178.
Sueur, for example, spoke to the congregation in the language they desired, one that was an understandable poetic interpretation of the Bible. Le Sueur was the first French composer to write Latin oratorios in the nineteenth-century and his are among the most original and influential works. His influence spanned into the later generations, including Cesar Franck’s *Ruth*, Berlioz’s *L’enfance du Christ*, and Charles Gounod’s Latin oratorios.\(^{26}\)

Musical records and registries show very little musical activity in Parisian churches between 1799 and 1814. After the Bourbon Restoration of 1815, the Notre Dame Cathedral made an attempt to restore sacred music. Even large churches such as Saint-Roch had to employ the clergy to sing the responses typically sung by the choir and their famous organ had yet to be repaired from damage sustained during the Revolution. New sacred music was extremely difficult to obtain, as there were no print editions of sacred music for many years.\(^ {27}\) This led some churches to use plainchant in their services. Paris was one of the few French cities to have new printed editions of sacred music and almost none reached the provinces.

**Post-Revolution Childhood and Adolescence**

Berlioz’s day and place of birth are known as December 11, 1803 at La Côte Saint-Andre, but in Revolutionary nomenclature he was born on Frimaire 19 An XII. The focus of the French Republican calendar on classical heroes, rather than saints, led to the unofficial shortening of Berlioz’s birth name from Louis-Hector to Hector.\(^ {28}\) While the Republican calendar was annulled in 1806 and religion slowly returned to France, Berlioz’s father, Louis Berlioz, had embraced the revolutionary ideas and taught them to his young son. Louis Berlioz was a well-respected physician, and an enthusiastic practitioner of medicine and new medical

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\(^{26}\) Ibid., 184.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 192.
research, including acupuncture. He was well-read and frequently contributed to the medical field, intending to pass his profession on to his son. Jacques Barzun writes that as a medical doctor, the science of the profession implies a rejection of the spiritual and a stoic skepticism. Barzun also notes that Louis Berlioz was a mild skeptic rather than a militant one, and seemed to have a deist understanding of the world, although agnostic may be a more accurate term. When writing of his father in his Mémoires, Berlioz said,

He is a free-thinker—that is to say, he has no prejudices, social, political or religious; but he promised my mother so solemnly to do nothing to unsettle the faith which she regarded as indispensible to my salvation, that he sometimes even heard me my catechism.

His mother, Marie-Antoinette-Joséphine Berlioz (née Marmion), was a strict Roman Catholic who insisted that her children were raised in the church. Each of their children was baptized in the French Catholic Church and made their First Communion around the age of nine. Louis instructed Hector privately at home, educating him in languages, literature, history, geography, travel, and music. Louis preached the works of great authors, especially Latin, Greek, and French classics. Berlioz’s early favorites were the works of Horace, Virgil, and La Fontaine. He became fluent in Latin in his early adolescence due to his father’s diligence and engaging methods of

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30 Ibid.
31 It must be noted that the Mémoires are an invaluable source, but must be read with a critical eye. Berlioz occasionally added fanciful or false details to his entries. For example, Berlioz included a story about the premiere of the Requiem, in which the conductor, François-Antoine Habeneck, put down his baton at a crucial transition to take a pinch of snuff. Berlioz wrote that he had to leap from the wings unto the stage to give the correct tempo and bring in the four antiphonal orchestras. However, this incident was not reported in any newspaper accounts of the performance, nor in any of the letters Berlioz wrote about the Requiem. This seems to be a false story based on Berlioz’s dislike for Habeneck. This story is recounted in Berlioz, Mémoirs, 210.
33 Ibid., fn.5. Their children were, in birth order:
1. Hector Berlioz (b. December 11, 1803, d. March 8, 1869)
2. Marguerite Ann Louise [“Nanci”] (b. February 17, 1806, d. 1856)
3. Louise Virginie (b. November 29, 1807, d. April 16, 1815)
4. Adèle (b. May 9, 1814, d. March 1860)
5. Louis Joseph Félix (b. December 12, 1816, d. May 29, 1819)
instruction, as well as his mother’s lessons on Catholicism and religious texts. This language skill would be immensely important in his musical compositions, as several are based on Latin texts, and Berlioz restructured the texts to suit his artistic, programmatic, and structural goals (discussed in Chapter Two).

Religion was the catalyst for Berlioz’s first musical experience. He made his First Communion at the Convent of the Ursulines with the spring sun and breezes entering the church. As the nine-year-old Berlioz accepted the host, the choir sang a joyous hymn, which he described in his Mémoires:

> At the sound of those virginal voices I was overwhelmed with a sudden rush of mystic passionate emotion. A new world of love and feeling was revealed to me, more glorious by far than the heaven of which I had heard so much; and, strange proof of the power of true expression and the magical influence of real feeling, I found out ten years afterwards that the melody which had been so naively adapted to sacred words and introduced into a religious ceremony was Nina’s song, *Quand le bien-amé reviendra!* What joy filled my young soul, dear Dalayrac!

Berlioz wrote about this experience in 1848, an influential year in terms of personal grief and national crisis with the 1848 Revolution. As Frank Heidlberger points out, Berlioz would associate Nicholas Dalayrac’s melody with religion for his entire adult life, referencing it several times in the Mémoires. The aesthetic experience led the young Berlioz to attend mass every day for seven years, identifying his feelings as religious fervor: “This was my first musical experience, and in this manner I suddenly became religious; so religious that I attended mass every day.” Berlioz realized later in his life that this aesthetic experience was caused by music, and not the Communion. He wrote in the Mémoires of his fond memories of the Catholic religion, reminiscing upon his early fervent Catholicism: “since she has ceased to inculcate the burning of heretics, her creeds are charming. I held them happily for seven years; and, though we

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34 Ibid., 15.
35 Ibid., 4. This is part of the chapter entry dated March 21, 1848.
36 Ibid.
quarreled long ago, I still retain the tenderest recollections of that form of religious belief."37 His sizable output of sacred works may suggest that Berlioz retained a relationship to the Church through the aesthetics of its texts, rituals, and genres.

In June 1826, Berlioz learned that he had failed the preliminary examination to enter the annual composition competition at the Paris Conservatory of Music. Louis and Marie Berlioz had already positioned themselves against their son’s early pursuit of a career in music. This failure prompted Louis to write to his son to leave Paris, or suffer the withdrawal of his allowance, on which the young composer depended for food and lodging. Berlioz’s primary instructor, Jean-François Le Sueur, wrote to Louis to request that he reconsider, as Hector Berlioz “exhaled music at every pore” and without a doubt would have a future as a composer.38 Le Sueur passionately cited many religiously-based arguments to support Berlioz’s gift and persuade Louis to capitulate. Louis immediately responded with a harsh letter, beginning with “Sir,—I am an unbeliever!”39 In spite of Le Sueur’s failed attempt, Berlioz returned home to plead with his father in person. As Berlioz reported in his Mémoires, Louis eventually agreed that Berlioz could continue his studies for a time, saying

> If after further trials you fail, you will, I am sure, acknowledge that I have done what was right, and you will choose some other career. You know what I think of second-rate poets; second-rate artists are no better, and it would be a deep sorrow and profound humiliation to me to see you numbered among these useless members of society.40

Berlioz agreed to his father’s terms, which included the stipulation to keep their agreement a secret and return to Paris without informing his mother. Like many French persons in the early nineteenth century, Marie Berlioz felt that “all actors, actresses, singers, musicians, poets, and

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37 Ibid., 3. This is part of the chapter entry dated March 21, 1848.
38 Ibid., 35. Italics in original. Le Sueur’s emphasis.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 36.
composers are abominable creatures excommunicated by the Church, and therefore predestined to eternal damnation.” ⁴¹ Even with her husband’s consent, she refused to consider her eldest son’s return to Paris, because to allow him to make his living as a musician would result in “discredit in this world and eternal damnation in the next.” ⁴² Eventually, a furious Marie discovered Hector’s plans and fell to her knees, entreating him to stay:

Your father has been weak enough to allow you to return to Paris, and to encourage your wild, wicked plans; but I will not have this guilt on my soul, and, once for all, I forbid your departure. . . see, I, your mother, kneel to you, and beg you humbly to renounce it. ⁴³

She was so enraged at his insistence to return that she disowned him outside his childhood home, shouting “Wretched boy! [. . .] Go and wallow in the filth of Paris, sully your name, and kill your father and me with sorrow and shame! [. . .] You are my son no longer. I curse you!” ⁴⁴ Rather than see her son depart, Marie took refuge at the family cottage, set a small distance away from the main house. When Berlioz attempted to say goodbye, she would not speak to him and locked herself in the cottage until he departed. These traumatic events irreparably damaged Berlioz’s relationship with his mother. They corresponded very little after this juncture and Berlioz did not mention her death in the Mémoires. It is possible that Berlioz subconsciously associated this emotional scene as Catholicism and God rejecting him, since Marie’s arguments were religiously based, with the implication of eternal damnation if he continued to follow his heart’s desire and live as a musician. Conversely, his atheist father eventually supported Berlioz’s wishes to return to Paris and compose. The differing spiritual doctrines of his parents shaped him in ways they were unable to anticipate. As an adult, Berlioz abandoned Catholicism (taught by his mother), replacing it with a deep love for nature, literature, and music (instilled by his father). The latter

⁴¹ Ibid.
⁴² Ibid., 37.
⁴³ Ibid.
⁴⁴ Ibid.
would, in many ways, be shaped by Berlioz’s need for paternal approval and support, a common (and possibly subconscious) theme in the Mémoires. Much of Berlioz’s exhaustive composing and quest for commissions and performances was a futile effort to win his father’s approval. Berlioz expended incredible amounts of energy into conducting, composing, and writing music critiques. This effort often left him seriously ill, as he neglected to take proper care of himself, including adequate nutrition and sleep.

Berlioz’s Aesthetic, Philosophical, and Political Views

The French Revolution of 1830, also called the July Revolution, was an important time for both the nation and Berlioz. The “Three Glorious Days” took place between July 27 and July 29, 1830, in which the people of France protested and overthrew the conservative government of Charles X and the Bourbons to crown Louis-Philippe, a cousin of Charles X and a member of the House of Orléans. Louis-Philippe’s family was acknowledged for their support of the French Revolution and his reign was known as the July Monarchy, a liberal constitutional monarchy. Louis-Philippe cultivated a “monarchy of people,” rather than a monarchy of the territory, and was embraced by revolutionists for his liberal policies. He was an unpretentious ruler who avoided the pomp and ceremony, as well as the lavish spending of his predecessors, declaring that “we will attempt to remain in a juste milieu in an equal distance from the excesses of popular power and the abuses of royal power.” He would be a popular and beloved king, called the “Citizen King” and the “Bourgeois Monarch,” in the early part of his reign.

The 1830 Revolution demonstrated Berlioz’s patriotism, which would later win him the commission to compose the Requiem (discussed further in Chapter Two). In his Mémoires,

45 Guy Antonetti, Louis-Philippe (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2002), 713.
46 Ibid. Louis-Philippe made this statement in January 1831.
Berlioz recalled the dull thud of bullets and women shrieking outside his apartment as he composed. He rushed to finish his cantata and joyously ran into the streets with his pistol to join the “sacred rabble” (sainte canaille) of Paris, or the righteous protestors.\textsuperscript{47} Music characterized this revolution, and Berlioz wrote that “no words can give any idea of the music, the songs, and the hoarse voices which rang through the streets!”\textsuperscript{48} Several days after the main part of the rioting, Berlioz heard a group of young men singing his composition the \textit{Chant Guerrier} (War Song), based on a poem from Thomas Moore’s \textit{Irish Melodies}, titled “Forget not our wounded companions, who stood.”\textsuperscript{49} Berlioz joined the group and a crowd soon gathered for an impromptu concert. Three National Guardsmen kept the people at a respectable distance and passed around a collection for those who had been wounded in the riots. The crowd grew so large that Berlioz and his group sought refuge on a first-floor balcony, lest they be crushed. From their elevated position, they began to sing \textit{La Marseillaise}. Berlioz had recently completed a setting of the anthem for full orchestra and double chorus, and had added a dedication line: “For all who have voices, hearts, and blood in their veins.”\textsuperscript{50} At the fourth verse, Berlioz shouted to the reverently silent crowd, “Why on earth don’t you sing?” and the Parisians responded with a great cheer into the chorus, “to arms, citizens!” (aux armes, citoyens).\textsuperscript{51} Berlioz wrote that five thousand people singing \textit{La Marseillaise} as one voice shook the ground beneath their feet and reverberated off the surrounding buildings, and he was deeply moved by their patriotism.

Like many nineteenth-century artists, Berlioz was an avid bibliophile and enjoyed discussing plays, poetry, and philosophy with his friends and colleagues. In particular, we know

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{47} Berlioz, \textit{Memoirs}, 106. The cantata was \textit{Sardanapalus}, scored for tenor, chorus and orchestra, which Berlioz submitted in the Prix de Rome competition at the Paris Conservatory.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 107.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 107-108.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 108.
\end{itemize}
from the *Mémoires* that he read Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and Johann Gottfried Herder’s philosophy. Berlioz also mentioned the works of St. Augustine, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Baron d’Holbach (discussed later in this section). Berlioz was also acquainted with Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, one of the leading philosophers of early Romanticism in Germany. The pair met in Stuttgart, Germany before a concert of Berlioz’s works.\(^5^2\) Their only common language was Latin, which made intellectual conversation quite difficult. Berlioz regretfully noted that they were unable to converse about Kant and Herder, yet Schelling was able to advise him on a venue for his upcoming concert.\(^5^3\) Berlioz was also very pleased that Schelling appeared to enjoy his music.

Berlioz wrote about Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his *Mémoires*, and criticized his operas. Rousseau composed his own operas and valued them “as highly as the masterpieces of eloquence which have made him immortal.”\(^5^4\) Berlioz and his companions spent as many evenings at the opera as their finances would allow, seeking out Christoph Willibald Gluck’s operas in particular. However, the Paris Opera management occasionally substituted operas without informing their audience. Berlioz and his companions would sit anxiously until the programs were distributed, fearing that the masterpiece they had set out to hear had been replaced by a work they despised, such as “Rosignol, or Prétendus, or Caravane du Caire, or Panerge, or Devin du village, or Lasthénie, or other thin, sickly piece, more or less dreary and poor—for we regarded them all with the same sovereign contempt.”\(^5^5\) Rousseau, in addition to his many philosophical works, wrote a libretto and composed a one-act opera, *Le devin du village* (“The Village Soothsayer”), which was well-received by most of the

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\(^{5^3}\) Ibid., 257.
\(^{5^4}\) Ibid., 52.
\(^{5^5}\) Ibid. *Rosignol* was composed by Stepan Mitussov, *Prétendus* by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, *Caravane du Caire* and *Panerge* by André Grétry, and *Lasthénie* by Ferdinand Hérold.
French musical community. Berlioz and his friends detested the work and would flee the theatre, cursing and complaining, if it was programmed. Berlioz said that many opera patrons had requested his approval of the work, but he would coyly pretend that he had yet to hear it, later writing, “I recollect feeling quite as much indignation as amusement at so grotesque a piece of irreverence, and cannot make up my mind whether I could have perpetrated it.”\footnote{Ibid., 52-53.} He also noted that the Holbachians “grudged” Rousseau for his musical achievement.\footnote{Ibid., 52.} Baron d’Holbach was a French-German author, philosopher, and a prominent figure of the French Enlightenment. He was known for his atheism and extensive writings against religion, the most famous of which is \textit{The System of Nature} (1770). In this work, d’Holbach argued that the universe was nothing more than matter, ruled by cause and effect, and that there was “no necessity to have recourse to supernatural powers to account for the formation of things.”\footnote{Baron d’Holbach, \textit{The System of Nature}, ed. by Denis Diderot and trans. by H.D. Robinson (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 1999), 25.} D’Holbach saw Christianity as a barrier which resisted improvement to society and that morality was not found in the Scriptures, but in human happiness.\footnote{D’Holbach, \textit{System of Nature}, 109.} \textit{The System of Nature} presented a set of radical and materialistic ideas that prompted an immediate reaction in France. The French Church threatened to cease its patronage to the Crown if the book was not banned from circulation. Enlightenment author, historian, and philosopher Voltaire, King of Prussia Frederick II, and French Catholic theologian Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier each drafted refutations, along with other authors and theologians. Despite his incendiary works, d’Holbach was known for his salon, in which an elite circle of European intellectuals gathered for elaborate dinner parties and philosophical discussions. Many of d’Holbach’s guests shared his atheism, including his \textit{System of Nature} editor (and possible coauthor) Denis Diderot, but other theist intellectuals attended his soirees, including Jean-
Jacques Rousseau, philosophers Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, David Hume, Claude-Adrien
Helvétius, and statesman Benjamin Franklin.\textsuperscript{60} He was commonly referred to as \textit{le premier maître d’hôtel de la philosophie}, rather than as an iconoclast atheist.\textsuperscript{61} Since Berlioz mentioned d’Holbach in his \textit{Mémoires} it is very likely that Berlioz had read his works, or was at least familiar with their contents.

Berlioz and Religion

Berlioz once shouted in a bout of compositional frustration that “I do not believe in anything!” (\textit{moi je ne crois plus à rien}!), and near the end of his life, wrote a letter to Russian music critic Vladmir Stassoff on August 21, 1868: “I feel that I am going to die. I do not believe in anything anymore; I should like to see you; perhaps you might revive me.”\textsuperscript{62} Jacques Barzun wrote that Berlioz “declared himself an atheist” later in his life, which revealed a “nihilistic outlook.”\textsuperscript{63} Barzun concluded that “he had come to the very modern Existentialist conviction that the universe is blind, cold, and senseless. He saw death and dissolution as the goal of existence.”\textsuperscript{64} Berlioz concluded his \textit{Mémoires} by musing on the meaning of life

Which of the two powers, Love or Music, can elevate man to the sublimest heights? It is a great problem, and yet it seems to me that this is the answer: “Love can give no idea of music; music can give an idea of love.” Why separate them? They are the wings of the soul.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Frank Heidlberger, “‘Artistic Religiosity’: Berlioz Between the \textit{Te Deum} and \textit{L’enfance du Christ},” in \textit{Berlioz: Scenes from the Life and Work}, ed. by Peter Bloom (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 31.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Berlioz, \textit{Memoirs}, 530.
Berlioz’s last sentence was excerpted from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, quoting “Life is but a walking shadow . . . it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Frank Heidlberger states that he does not fully accept Barzun’s “radical” conclusions, as Berlioz seems to have “at least believed in his own presence (overcoming the suicidal temptations of his earlier years that would indeed fit the existential narrative), and in the ruling power of genius over his own world.” Heidlberger does agree with Barzun’s comparison between Berlioz and existentialism, as Berlioz struggled with and overcame the urge to commit suicide in his youth, which would fit the beliefs of an existentialist. Heidlberger reached the conclusion that Berlioz replaced the authority of God with the authority of Genius. He cites a letter Berlioz wrote to Victor Hugo on December 10, 1831:

> Oh, you are a genius, a powerful being, a colossus who is at once tender, pitiless, elegant, monstrous, hoarse, melodious, volcanic, gentle, and contemptuous. The last-mentioned quality of genius is surely the least common of all; it was manifest by neither Shakespeare nor Molière. Among the immortals, only Beethoven took the just measure of the human insects that surrounded him: next to him I see only you.

Heidlberger views Berlioz’s concept of genius as one which surpasses artistic achievement and becomes a “political morality,” in which the genius determines their own rules and morality. Heidlberger sees this rejection of authority as the “sanctioning of anarchy.” The theme of the Last Judgment is present in many of Berlioz’s writings and works. Heidlberger believes that

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66 Ibid., 530-531.
68 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Existentialism,” by Steven Crowell, accessed August 8, 2012, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/existentialism/. The use of the term “existentialism” bears clarification, as Barzun’s usage deviates from the standard usage. Barzun was probably using the term “existentialism” historically, as it was used in the 1940s and 1950s, and Heidlberger appears to have used the term for the sake of the argument. Existentialism is a term that belongs to intellectual history and became identified with a cultural movement that flourished in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s. It is sometimes referred to as a past cultural movement rather than an identifiable philosophical position and not one that should be restricted to Sartre's philosophy alone.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., 29.
Berlioz “constructs his own God by converting the idea of the last judgment into a metaphor of the ritual execution of power,” using Beethoven, Hugo, Napoleon, himself, or his father as models. The Requiem, Mass in C major, Te Deum, and Le dernier jour du monde all address the authority of the final judgment “as a final existential power that allows for no compromise in life and in art.”

Berlioz’s disregard for music authority and tradition, in particular his dislike of Luigi Cherubini and the established rules of the Paris Conservatory, may indicate a concurrent disregard for the spiritual authority of the Church. In the Post-Scriptum of his Mémoires, Berlioz wrote:

In music I am a skeptic, or to speak more correctly, I belong to the religion of Beethoven, Weber, Gluck, and Spontini, who believed and proved through their works, that everything is good or that everything is bad; the effect produced by a combination being that which alone ought to sanction or condemn it.

Berlioz revered these composers because they created their own rules, concepts of quality, and aesthetic value. To Berlioz, their judgment and assessment of the quality of a work became a kind of morality, that “certain individuals have the right to establish their own laws rather than the obligation to follow the laws established by some external authority.” Heidlberger posits this “quest for a balance between condemnation and absolution” is what motivated Berlioz as a composer and devout follower of art religion. Berlioz believed the true artists were those who broke from convention to forge their own spirituality and their own dogma. To Berlioz, the

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 30.
74 Berlioz, Mémoirs, 484. Heidlberger notes in his article “Artistic Religiosity” that incrédule can also be translated as non-believer, infidel, or heretic. The original French is Je suis un incrédule en musique, ou, pour mieux dire, je suis del la religion de Beethoven, de Weber, de Gluck, de Spontini, qui croient, professent et prouvent par leurs oeuvres que tout est bon ou tout est mauvais; l’effet produit par certaines combinaisons devant seul les faire condamner ou absoudre, which is found in Hector Berlioz, Mémoires de Hector Berlioz: comprenant ses voyages en Italie, en Allemagne, en Russie et en Angleterre, 1803-1865, originally published by Calmann Lévy, Paris, 1897 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 356.
76 Ibid.
A combination of sounds and orchestral color was the most important indication of a work’s value (discussed in Chapter Two, Orchestration). Romantic composers upheld Victor Hugo’s words as a motto. “Art has absolutely nothing to do with handcuffs, limits and gags; it says to the man of genius go forth and releases him into the garden of poetry, where no fruit is forbidden.” Berlioz quoted Hugo in an article for *Le Correspondant*, published October 22, 1830, which suggests that he took Hugo’s words to heart. The allure of genius was far more powerful than any god for Berlioz, who worshipped at the altars of Beethoven, Gluck, Weber, Spontini, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Hugo. Berlioz wrote letters in his twenties describing his great love and devotion to music. “The love of my art, at least, I have still—will never leave me.” As was common in Romantic artists, Berlioz’s relationship with music had a spiritual element. He wrote to Spontini, that “there is a religion of beauty, and I am a believer. If it is a duty to admire great things and to honor great men, I feel, in shaking your hand, that it is also a happiness.”

Berlioz’s unerring faith and devotion to music allowed him to repress his unanswered questions about God and religious faith. In one decade alone (1830-1840), he composed the *Requiem*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Harold en Italie*, *Symphonie fantastique*, *Grande symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, and the opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, along with many other small works. His exhaustive lifestyle, in which he was constantly composing, touring, conducting and networking, allowed complete immersion in music, which perhaps quelled his “desperate need to believe and to worship.”

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A deep depression overcame Berlioz after his sister Nanci died of breast cancer on May 4, 1850, and he fell into a period of grieving. Her sufferings were so great that Berlioz felt it would have been kinder for the doctors to have ended her agony with a dose of chloroform. He knew that Nanci would have refused, believing that it was God’s will that she should endure her pain. Berlioz wrote “how absurd are all these questions of fatality, divinity, free-will! Endless absurdity!” He felt that it was God’s will that she died, and whether she suffered or not was her decision. Four years later, his wife Henrietta Constance (Harriet) Smithson died on March 3, 1854 after years of paralysis in her legs and diminishing health. Berlioz felt immense guilt at her passing. He had been living with his mistress, Marie Recio, and had not visited Harriet in many years. He felt crushing culpability over the end of her acting career, their failed marriage, the jealousy and heartache he had caused her, that most of her family had predeceased her, and that their son, Louis, was away much of the time. He wrote that Shakespeare alone could have understood his pain and worked to resolve his duress:

He is our father, our father in heaven—if there be a heaven. An almighty being, wrapped in his infinite indifference, is an atrocious absurdity. Shakespeare alone is the good God to the soul of the artist. Receive us into thy bosom, O father, and hide us there. De profundis ad te clamo! Death, annihilation, what are they? The immortality of genius—what? “Oh fool, fool, fool!”

This passage could have been metaphorical, or could suggest that Berlioz may have parted from religious belief. He had referred to Shakespeare as his metaphorical God as early as 1828. He wrote to his lifelong friend Humbert Ferrand in a September 1828 letter: “Shakespeare and Goethe! Silent friends who know all my misery, who alone can fathom my strange wild life.”

Shakespeare’s plays were almost completely unknown in France. Berlioz attended one of the first performances of Hamlet on September 11, 1827, in which his future wife, Harriet Smithson,

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82 Berlioz, Memoirs, 467.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., 468-469.
was cast in the role of Ophelia, and saw *Romeo and Juliet* the following day with Harriet as Juliet.\(^8^5\) He was so moved by the play and her performance that he shouted “I will marry that woman! And I will write my greatest symphony on that play!”\(^8^6\) Berlioz recaptured his mental state following the plays in his *Mémoires*:

> This sudden and unexpected revelation of Shakespeare overwhelmed me. The lightning-flash of his genius revealed the whole heaven of art to me, illuminating its remotest depths in a single flash. I recognized the meaning of real grandeur, real beauty, and real dramatic truth.\(^8^7\)

Berlioz promulgated his reverence of Shakespeare’s plays by composing works based on *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Tempest*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Othello*, and he married Harriet Smithson on October 3, 1833 in Paris.

Music scholarship often characterizes Berlioz with a colorful, elegant and “larger-than-life” dynamic personality, and as a well-educated man with a discriminating intellect and tempestuous emotions. These qualities appear to be intrinsic to Berlioz, although it is important to understand that his experiences were guided by institutions such as the French state and the Catholic Church, his parents, philosophers, authors, and other composers. These forces would ultimately result in his departure from the Catholic Church and his separation from his parents to train as a professional musician. Many of these experiences are directly reflected in his compositions. His patriotism is compounded in his arrangement of *La Marseillaise*, the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, the secular cantatas *Le Cinq Mai* and the *Hymne à la France*, and the *Requiem*. His penchant for literature was translated into in the numerous works inspired by Shakespeare, and this literary mentality can be evidenced in the *Requiem*, as well as his other large-scale sacred works. Berlioz’s adult agnosticism directly affected the composition of the

\(^8^5\) Ibid., 67-69.  
\(^8^6\) Ibid., 69.  
\(^8^7\) Ibid., 67.
Requiem, including the text setting, orchestration, and sequencing of the movements, which will be discussed in Chapter Two.
“If I was threatened with the destruction of all my scores save one, it is the Requiem I would ask to be spared.”\(^1\)

A Brief History of Requiem Masses

The Roman Catholic requiem tradition serves both to reach for eternal peace and to warn against eternal damnation. The theological implications are that through prayer, sacrifice, and paying tithes, the living can help the deceased leave Purgatory and ascend to heaven. Masses specific to the dead began appearing by the end of the tenth century.\(^2\) Preceding this, the Roman Mass included a prayer called the Memento of the Dead, which originated in the fifth century.\(^3\) The Roman Catholic requiem was standardized at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and the text of the sequence Dies irae (attributed to Thomas of Celano, d. circa 1250) was given its own section in the requiem liturgy. The first polyphonic requiem masses did not appear until 1450 or later. The earliest polyphonic requiem was composed by Jean de Ockeghem and is thought to be incomplete, as the Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Communion are absent.\(^4\) Only three settings of the Dies irae sequence predate the second half of the sixteenth-century, and were found in Italian sources. These Dies irae settings are by Antoine Brumel (1460-1512/13), Engarandus Juvenis

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\(^3\) Ibid. The Memento for the Dead was read after the Consecration of the Bread and Wine and reads: “Remember also, O Lord, thy servants (names inserted), who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who rest in the sleep of peace. To them, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, we beseech Thee to grant a place of cool refreshment, light, and peace. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.”

(15th/16th century) and Cristóbal de Morales (1500-1553). Brumel’s requiem, circa 1500, is the first surviving example to include the *Dies irae* sequence. Brumel set the entire sequence, whereas Juvenis only set the first stanzas and Morales’s setting used only the last few lines. The Council of Trent allowed four sequences to remain in the liturgy, including the *Dies irae*. While the *Dies irae* sequence was used in funeral liturgies, it was not fully incorporated into the Roman Missal until 1570. This inspired many composers to include a polyphonic setting of the sequence in their requiems and the *Dies irae* became a common selection in requiem masses.

The memorial masses said for the deceased created an interest in requiem music, particularly in the seventeenth century. Notable composers included Johann Stadlmayer (1575-1648), Francesco Cavalli (1602-1676), Antonio Bertali (1605-1669), Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725), Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704), and Carl Heinrich Biber (1681-1749). This was a primarily Catholic endeavor, as the Protestant Reformation discouraged its followers from paying for Masses for the Dead. Although Protestants and Anglicans continued to use parts of the regular mass liturgy they rejected the Latin requiem mass. Roman Catholic requiems are intended to console the living and honor the dead, as well as to admonish the living, thus creating a fear of God. Yet, requiems are also full of joyful moments, “spiritual ecstasy,” and the “hope for resurrection,” classifying the requiem as “truly a bittersweet work of art.” Some composers struggled with their requiem masses, likely from the difficulty in setting traditional texts in

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5 Engarandus Juvenis is unknown beyond his entry in the *Staffarda Codex*. It is believed that he lived in Picardy, France. His exact birth and death dates are unknown.
6 *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Requiem (2),” by Fabrice Fitch.
7 Ibid.
8 The other sequences were the *Victimae paschali*, *Stabat Mater*, and *Veni Sancti Spiritus*.
10 *Grove Music Online*, “Requiem (3),” by Basil Smallman.
11 Ibid., xvii.
12 Ibid., xv.
original and stirring ways, and well as the “twinned emotions of sorrow and hope.” Currently, there are between 2,000 and 2,500 requiem masses, spanning from the Middle Ages to the present.

The development of the symphonic requiem began with the Classical Viennese School. Perhaps the most well-known and most frequently performed symphonic requiem is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Requiem (K. 626), commissioned in 1791 and initially completed by Franz Xaver Süssmayr. As instrumental music became increasingly important in the eighteenth century, it became a prominent element in requiem music, an “invaluable confederate for the choir” through expressive instrumental interludes and programmatic gestures which enhanced the text. By the middle of the century, the instruments used in requiem masses had their own independent lines and were not confined to short introductions or postludes. The increased role of the instruments contributed to the conception of the liturgical concerted requiem, which required larger orchestras. The expanded orchestras meant greater numbers of chorus members, which in turn led to performances in larger venues outside of the church. This transition from indoor sacred spaces to secularized outdoor venues (open-air concerts were especially popular in Paris), and thus sacred to “secularized” sacred music, is often seen in the Romantic era, particularly the requiems by Hector Berlioz, Charles Gounod (1818-1893), and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904).

François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829) composed a Grande messe des morts in 1760 that would be noted for its pro-revolutionary characteristics. The work featured military-inspired orchestration and enormous proportions, with 2,518 measures of music and seventy-five minute

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13 Ibid.
14 Grove Music Online, s.v. “Requiem (1),” by Theodore Karp.
15 Chase, Dies Irae, 183-184.
16 Ibid., 186.
performance time to support the work’s twenty-five movements. This pre-Revolutionary work reflected the grandiose musical style from the nation’s many public events, in which massive outdoor performances were held in Paris. A large brass section performed from an elevated platform, possibly influencing Berlioz’s orchestration for his Requiem, composed seventy-six years later. François-Joseph Fétis wrote a note in 1829 regarding Gossec’s Tuba mirum:

The audience was alarmed by the dreadful and sinister effect of the three trombones together with four clarinets, four trumpets, four horns and eight bassoons, hidden in the distance and in a lofty part of the church, to announce the last judgment, while the orchestra expressed terror with a muted tremolo in all the strings.

Gossec’s spatial division of his orchestra may have influenced Berlioz to separate his instrumentation into a main orchestra and four antiphonal brass orchestras. The French Revolution inspired Gossec to compose in a patriotic, nationalistic style which included works for extensive numbers of performers, in many ways foreshadowing Berlioz’s works, including the Requiem and the Symphonie funèbre et triomphale. Gossec was drawn to imagery and high drama, as Berlioz would be after him. Gossec and Berlioz both favored the use of militaristic percussion in their requiems, which pleased their pro-revolution audiences.

Paris Conservatory director Luigi Cherubini, composed traditional and conservative sacred music, which utilized a high degree of counterpoint and strictly adhered to the Latin text. He wrote two requiems that are considered to be among his best works. The Requiem in C minor was commissioned by Louis XVIII in 1816 to celebrate the execution of Louis XVI and his wife,

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18 Chase, Dies Irae, 186.
20 Chase, Dies Irae, 200.
Marie Antoinette. 21 This was the first French requiem composed after the French Revolution, as the last great requiem was composed by Gossec some fifty-six years earlier. One of the most intriguing aspects of Cherubini’s Requiem in C minor is the absence of vocal soloists. Instead of solo sections, he wrote unison choral lines, perhaps to represent humanity joining their voices together. The wide range of emotions is startling, from a fiery and turbulent Dies irae to a militaristic Offertory. The violins are silent in the Introit, Gradual, and Pie Jesu, lending a dark timbre to the movements. For example, the Introitus is scored for bassoon, viola, cello, bass, and chorus, and the Gradual is scored for viola, cello, bass, and chorus. 22 He used a gong in the Dies Irae, but perhaps the most unusual orchestration is found in the Agnus Dei, in which an ostinato accompanies a homophonic recitation of the text. 23 Cherubini was commissioned again in 1819 to compose the Mass in G major for the coronation of Louis XVIII, although it was removed from the ceremony, as King Louis XVIII considered the restoration of the monarchy too fragile to risk displaying the traditional pomp and grandeur. 24 As in Berlioz’s Requiem, words and phrases of the Ordinary are repeated, which allowed regular musical phrasing and recapitulation of material, such as that found in the Gloria of the G-major Mass. 25 Aside from some repetitions of key words and phrases, Cherubini maintained the religious message and overall unity of his works, whereas Berlioz manipulated his text to suit his artistic vision. In spite of Cherubini’s notoriety and adherence to traditional texts, the Requiem in D minor was rejected by the French government in favor of Berlioz’s Requiem. Cherubini’s work is notable because it is scored for male chorus (TTB) and orchestra. The unusual vocal score was utilized to please the Archbishop

22 Chase, Dies Irae, 237.
23 Grove Music Online, s.v. “Cherubini, Luigi,” by Michael Fend.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
of Paris, who objected to female voices in the church. Even with the reduced vocal forces, it retains the expressive emotional context and orchestral variety as his earlier Mass for the Dead. Cherubini’s *Dies irae* and *Sanctus* movements are scored for full orchestra but he used the orchestra less than he did in his C-minor Requiem. The Gradual and *Pie Jesu* are scored for *a cappella* choir and his thin orchestration creates a sound that is “bare and exhausted,” as if the soul were too weary to continue. Funerary compositions traditionally used sparse orchestration and Cherubini expanded on this aesthetic by removing the violins, as noted above. The overall theme to sustain hope was “overcome by gloomy resignation,” a stark contrast to Berlioz’s theatrical *Requiem.*

In the nineteenth-century, certain requiem masses were composed for concert halls rather than sacred spaces, such as Franz Liszt’s *Requiem* (1883). While the previous requiems were limited to forty or fifty minutes of performance time, these requiems exceeded one hour in length. Some extreme cases, such as the *Messa per Rossini* (1869), a collaboration between thirteen composers organized by Giuseppe Verdi, and Dvořák’s *Requiem* (1890), have durations of two hours. The Latin requiem text is richly programmatic and well-suited to dramatic orchestration. Some composers, such as Gabriel Fauré and Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901), omitted the *Dies irae* from their settings, crafting requiems centered on peaceful aspects of the text, such as the hope for eternal life. Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* was dramatically different, and presented a Mass for the Dead of “external fire and fury” with multiple insertions of the *Dies irae* text. Almost all Romantic composers included folk melodies or patriotic tunes in their settings. Dvořák modeled the opening phrase of *Recordare* on a melody evocative of a folk song,

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Chase, *Dies Irae*, 237.
30 Chase, *Dies Irae*, 238.
if not an unnamed folk tune. This was a clever way to market the mass to the increasingly important middle-class audience. Nationalism can be more difficult to ascertain, but Berlioz’s setting is almost always cited, as his use of brass bands and cortege-inspired muffled drums were evocative of revolutionary fervor. French nationalistic and pro-Revolutionary elements are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The structure of requiem masses was less restrictive than other genres and allowed for compositional freedom. An ABA form was used in many movements as a result of the tri-partite structure of the liturgical text, leading to a I-V-I key relationship in most settings. Binary and ternary forms, canons, and fugues, were favored by many composers, including Cherubini, Rheinberger, Verdi, and Dvořák. Other composers, notably Berlioz and Liszt, preferred less restrictive forms which allowed for greater compositional freedom. For example, Berlioz’s *Requiem* is largely through-composed with short orchestral interludes and a fugue in the *Sanctus*. A common practice for Romantic composers was to connect the Introit and *Kyrie* movements and Berlioz, Bruckner, and Liszt each treated the *Kyrie* as a coda for the Introit, while some composers chose to make the *Kyrie* an independent movement. The *Agnus Dei* and Communion were also joined, a practice derived from the Viennese classical tradition. The Responsory, *Libera me*, and *Pie Jesu* were typically left out of Romantic requiem settings, although Verdi’s *Libera me* is a notable exception. Romantic requiems usually included the Introit/Kyrie, Gradual, Tract, Sequence, Offertory, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei/Communion.

Berlioz’s setting is considered to be the first true Romantic-era model of a requiem mass. The *Requiem* utilizes elements from the traditional requiem mass and vocal scoring found in French grand opera, while his rejection of Classical models of balance and restraint culminate in

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 239.
33 Ibid., 242.
the penetrating horn calls of the four brass orchestras in the *Tuba mirum*, *Rex tremendae*, and *Lacrymosa*, which announce the impending Day of Judgment. The large-scale bombastic movements are balanced by thoughtful, introspective movements: *Quid sum miser*, *Quaerens me*, and the *Offertorium*, which follow the larger movements. His vocal writing is immensely varied: a solo tenor passage is in the *Sanctus* and soli passages are found for sopranos, tenors, and basses in *Quid sum miser*, four-part choral passages are present in the *Hostias*, a fugue in the *Hosanna*, choral unisons in *Domine Jesu Christe*, and a mixed homophonic-polyphonic texture in the *Rex tremendae*. Since Berlioz elected to write only one solo, contrast is achieved through soli and full choral sections. The variety of scoring and ensembles is evocative of French grand opera, while traditional elements are retained in the large-scale scoring for the *Dies irae*, *Tuba mirum*, *Rex tremendae*, and *Lacrymosa*.

**Berlioz’s Requiem: Commission and Conception**

The *Grande messe des morts* (*Requiem*) was commissioned in 1836 by Comte Adrien de Gasparin, French Minister of the Interior, to commemorate the anniversary of the death of War Minister Maréchal Édouard Mortier (1768-1835). The former War Minister was killed during an explosion engineered to assassinate King Louis-Philippe, along with forty members of the National Guard. The assault was led by French republican conspirator Giuseppe Marco Fieschi (1790-1836), who believed that King Louis-Philippe had wrongly imprisoned him.34 Gasparin designed a day of tribute and mourning to memorialize Mortier and the National Guardsmen, in which a requiem mass would be performed. This service would also honor the heroes of the 1830 Revolution. The anniversary of the July Revolution of 1830 (in which Charles X was overthrown

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for Louis-Philippe [1773-1850, ruler from 1830 to 1848]) was celebrated annually from July 26th to July 28th with three days of feasting, festivals, and services to honor the fallen heroes.\textsuperscript{35}

Gasparin sought to use his influence in the French Fine Arts Department to reinstate sacred music to an elevated position, as sacred genres had been in decay in France (as discussed in Chapter One). Each year at public expense, Gasparin would elect a composer to write a grand-scale work, either a mass or an oratorio. Gasparin wrote: “I am about to leave my post and this will be my musical legacy. . . I shall begin with Berlioz, he must write a \textit{Requiem}. I am sure he will succeed.”\textsuperscript{36} Berlioz was delighted to be approached by Gasparin and at the prospect of composing for a major state event. The commission included a large-scale orchestra and chorus of the finest musicians available, copyist fees, publication, and a check for 3,000 francs. Berlioz owed about 4,000 francs to various lenders and acquaintances and had inherited his wife’s (Harriet Smithson) considerable debt of 14,000 francs. The commission was also an opportunity to market himself as a great composer of France and to increase his renown in the neighboring counties, especially Germany. The \textit{Requiem} would play a significant role in establishing Berlioz as the leading French composer, known both in his own country and abroad. However, some disagreements arose among the French Ministers. The Director of the Department of Fine Arts, Edmond Cavé, was not a supporter of Berlioz’s work and opposed his appointment.\textsuperscript{37} Luigi Cherubini had expressed his interest in having his own music performed, having recently completed a new \textit{Requiem} in D minor.\textsuperscript{38} Cherubini was a favorite composer for state events and was the most logical choice. A more conservative and traditional court may have elected Cherubini to the post, but the liberal monarchy of Louis-Philippe called for a dynamic and

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
political composer. Berlioz was known as passionately patriotic and pro-Revolutionary, having both taken up arms in protest and composed a grand-scale version of *La Marseillaise* for the July Revolution of 1830. This liberal constitutional monarchy was ideal for Berlioz, who was known for his spectacular orchestration and staging, elements that resonated with French audiences.\(^{39}\) The greater freedom in the government and of the people allowed Berlioz to compose a work that was both traditional and revolutionary, in terms of both patriotism and innovation. The *Requiem* was scheduled for performance on July 28, 1837, the exact anniversary of Mortier’s death and the final day of celebration.\(^{40}\)

Berlioz immersed himself in preparations for the *Requiem* and was entranced by the traditional Latin text, which David Cairns believes to “enshrine humanity’s fear of death and judgment in the transcendent doggerel.”\(^{41}\) He wrote to his sister Adèle on April 17 that,

> I had difficulty controlling my ideas; at first the poem of the *Dies irae* so intoxicated and excited me that nothing lucid came to me. My head boiled, I felt dizzy . . . The outline of one piece was barely sketched before the next formed itself in my mind. It was impossible to write fast enough, and I devised a kind of musical shorthand which was a great help to me, especially in the *Lacrymosa*.\(^{42}\)

As a man who revered the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, Hugo, and Virgil, the imagery of the Latin text inspired him to devise the most dramatic and expressive orchestration. Berlioz had already orchestrated a fearful interpretation of the *Dies irae* chant in his *Symphonie fantastique* and was doubtlessly interested in composing his own version of the vocal *Dies irae*. He noted in his *Mémoires* that he had desired to set the full *Dies irae* sequence for many years and the *Resurrexit* of his first mass would become the precursor to his 1837 setting. This mass, composed at age twenty and performed at the church of St. Roch in Paris on July 10, 1825,

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\(^{42}\) Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts*, in *Hector Berlioz New Edition*, viii. These shorthand sketches are lost.
prefigured the *Requiem*. The *Resurrexit* became the fanfare introduction to the *Tuba mirum* and was copied nearly note-for-note. The rhythmic and harmonic structures of the fanfare also indicate the expansion of sound found in the *Tuba mirum*. Berlioz had been planning his representation of the Day of Judgment for seven years, and the commission allowed him to expand on his original mass and realize the full potential of his ideas.

Berlioz’s attraction to the requiem text halted shortly after the works’ completion on June 29, 1837. The Director of Fine Arts and the council of ministers elected to cancel the funeral ceremony and thus the *Requiem*. This was based on a political judgment to reduce the celebrations from the usual three days to one, but it has been suggested that Cavé’s dislike for Gasparin and Berlioz prompted the decision. Berlioz was informed of the decision only days before the premiere. He had already led three rehearsals with the chorus and had used personal funds to pay the copyist, amounting to 3,800 francs. Berlioz was outraged and petitioned endlessly to receive the promised 3,000 francs and reimbursement for copyist fees. More importantly, he had lost four months composing and the *Requiem* had not yet been performed, leaving him in financial straits. Eventually, Berlioz found a performance opportunity for the *Requiem*, adroitly seizing the death of Comte Charles-Marie Denys de Damrémont, General of the French Forces in North Africa. Damrémont was killed on October 13, 1837 in the attempt to capture the Algerian city of Constantine, an important French territory. Berlioz also secured the original performance site, the Église des Invalides, whose acoustics influenced the composition of the work. The news, according to Berlioz, “put Cherubini into a perfect fever,” as the older

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43 Ibid., iv.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Robertson, *Requiem*, 85-86.
composer was accustomed to conducting his works at state events.\footnote{Berlioz, \textit{Memoirs}, 208. “The news that my Requiem was to be performed in a grand official ceremony was no sooner brought to Cherubini than it put him into a perfect fever. It had long been the custom to perform one of these two Requiems under circumstances of this kind, and such an attack, directed against what he considered his rights, his dignity, his just celebrity, his unquestionable worth, and in favor of a young man just starting his career, with the reputation of having introduced heresy into the school, annoyed him extremely.”} Five months after completion and nearly a year after the commission, the \textit{Requiem} was performed with 270 of the promised 400 musicians and his commission payment delayed until February 1838.

\textbf{Premiere and Reception}

The \textit{Requiem} premiered on December 5, 1837 and was well-received by French audiences. The Chapel of St. Louis at the Invalides was filled to capacity with distinguished guests, members of the French and international press, and the general public. The new Minister of War, General Simon Bernard, sent a congratulatory letter to Berlioz after the premiere, which was timed perfectly, as the city of Constantine was retaken two days before the performance. The Duc d’Orléans said that he had never been so moved by a piece of music. Of the fifteen Parisian music reviews, thirteen spoke highly of the \textit{Requiem} and only two against.\footnote{Holoman, \textit{Catalogue}, 162.} Leading Parisian critics all issued favorable reports including: Joseph d’Ortigue in the \textit{Quotidienne}, Auguste Morel in the \textit{Journal de Paris}, Jules Janin for the \textit{Journal des débats}, and Bottée de Toulman in the \textit{Revue et gazette musicale}. The only negative press was found in the \textit{Constitutionnel}, the \textit{Corsaire}, the \textit{National}, and the \textit{France}. These critics were against Berlioz’s style and “raised the objection of an exalted style lacking in unity,” perhaps referring to the differences in orchestration or the remarkable variety of choral scoring.\footnote{Berlioz, \textit{Grande messe des morts}, in \textit{Hector Berlioz New Edition}, ix.} Berlioz wrote to his father that one of the singers was so overcome with emotion that he fainted during the \textit{Tuba mirum} and that a priest had burst into tears at the altar and cried for nearly fifteen minutes after...
the ceremony.\textsuperscript{52} He also noted in a letter to his close friend Humbert Ferrand that the Ministry was discussing the purchase of the \textit{Requiem} as a national work. Berlioz reported to his mother that the mass would become “the property of the nation,” a great conglomeration of religion, drama, pro-revolutionary patriotism, and grandeur. Peter Bloom notes that the majority of France identified as Catholic, whereas Berlioz had long since announced his separation from the Church, as noted on the first page of the \textit{Mémoires} and discussed in Chapter One. Bloom also believes that the \textit{Requiem} is more “theatrical than religious,” and he attributes the work’s success, despite its lack of strict tradition and piety, to its “Frenchness,” referring to the Revolutionary patriotism and militaristic elements of the \textit{Requiem}.\textsuperscript{53} François-Joseph Gossec had also used a brass choir stationed above the main orchestra. Fanfares were a traditional part of requiem masses but Berlioz surpassed all others by composing to suit the musical space, the Église des Invalides, by timing exchanges between the four brass orchestras, the main orchestra, the chorus, the decay of sound and the silences to enhance his narrative. The high drama and vast emotional contrasts of the \textit{Requiem} were well-suited to French audiences. To advance the patriotic message, Berlioz began the mass with a procession of twenty-four muffled drums to represent the twelve Paris legions. Bloom states that the \textit{Requiem} reflected the “nation” in a way that is like “a musical clenched fist raised heavenward in defiance at \textit{le dernier jour du monde}.”\textsuperscript{54} This statement recalls the many French crowds who gathered in protest at the 1830 Revolution and used music as part of their message. The French were fiercely protective of their rights and would doubtlessly respond to a \textit{Requiem} in which a “musical clenched fist” protested death, instead of accepting fate. The individualistic point of view resonated with the French people. The first-person viewpoint of the \textit{Requiem} asserted Louis-Philippe’s government, in

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Bloom, \textit{Life}, 84.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
which the people, and thus the individual, were of great importance. Combined with the commemoration of Damrémont and the French soldiers, the *Requiem* embraced public and private celebration, as well as the nation and the individual. The *Requiem* encompassed many important roles, it was patriotic and theatrical with its immense orchestral forces and militaristic scoring, and was both sacred and secular in its performance at the Église des Invalides.

**Alterations to the Text**

Berlioz was captivated by the traditional Latin text and had no qualms altering it to suit his artistic vision. The text is freely altered and rearranged to suit the musical narrative that he imagined as a “special kind of music-drama.” His setting more closely resembles a secular libretto than a thirteenth-century sacred text. How is Berlioz’s complex relationship with the Church reflected in the *Requiem*? To examine this question, I analyze the alterations to the text, including additional words and phrases (both sacred and secular), omissions, layering of verses to enhance or alter the meaning, and the shift from the traditional third-person perspective to a first-person individual perspective. The role of the orchestra is also considered in its contribution to the narrative, programmatic elements, and representations of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. I also consider aspects of musical text-setting that show how Berlioz understands the text. While Berlioz may have been captivated by the text for the *Requiem* mass, he did not constrain himself to follow the traditional text. Music theorist Edward T. Cone, in his essay “Berlioz’s Divine Comedy: The *Grande messe des morts,*” states that the Mass, like Dante Alighieri’s classic work, is crafted to be the “dramatic portrayal of an imaginary progress through this world and the next.”

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56 Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 3.
Heaven, as Dante’s work is divided into Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. A significant split from Dante’s poem is that Berlioz must use orchestration, rather than text, to convince the audience of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise through programmatic imagery. Berlioz’s ultimate goal is not to compose a simple Mass for the Dead but to present the

emotional experiences of a contemplative auditor attending such a Mass—one who, allowing his imagination full play, visualizes himself as present at the wonderful and terrible scenes described, and who returns to reality at the conclusion of the service with a consequent sense of catharsis. The measure of the composer's success is the extent to which he forces each of us . . . to assume the role of that protagonist and to share, as it were, those experiences.57

In this context, the Requiem ceases to be religious in terms of strict theology and becomes akin to art religion. All emphasis is placed on the psychological journey and the emotional experiences. Like the Symphonie fantastique, the sequencing of musical events is intentional, designed to create a journey for the listener. The movements can be separated and listened to individually, but they are meant to convey a story from beginning to end. David Cairns has suggested that the Requiem is characterized by the “absence of God.”58 The work achieves its poignancy through Berlioz’s “unsatisfied yearning” for God, his “regret for loss of faith” and “desperate need to believe and to worship.”59 What evidence is there for God’s absence in the Requiem?

The Requiem is divided into ten movements: 1. Requiem et Kyrie (Introitus) 2. Dies irae 3. Quid sum miser 4. Rex tremendae 5. Quaerens me (for unaccompanied chorus) 6. Lacrymosa 7. Offertorium (Domine Jesu Christe) 8. Hostias 9. Sanctus (with optional tenor solo) 10. Agnus Dei.60 Movement One (Requiem et Kyrie) received few alterations while the Dies irae sequence contains the most numerous and liberal changes. The eighteen verses of the Dies irae sequence are split into five movements (two through six). Movement Two (Dies irae) contains verses one through

57 Ibid., 4.
58 Cairns, Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness, 137.
59 Ibid.
60 Berlioz, Grande messe des morts, in Hector Berlioz New Edition. Refer to Appendix A for the full text and translation.
six, which describe the Day of Judgment in third-person, bystander language. Berlioz did not alter the text in terms of additions or omissions, but layered the text to enhance the message and the imagery, in service of his “music drama.” The sopranos enter in m. 13 with verse one, “dies irae, dies illa, solvet saeclum in favilla” (that day, that day of wrath shall consume the world in ashes), followed by the tenors and basses in m. 25. Berlioz delayed the completion of the verse, “teste David cum Sibylla” (as foretold by David and the Sibyl) and the basses sing verse two, “quantus tremor est futurus” (what trembling there shall be), to reinforce the fear which precedes the Day of Judgment. The chorus joins for the first time in Movement Two for “quando judex est venturus” (when the judge shall come) and repeats “dies irae, dies illa” three times before returning to the first verse, again using only the first and second lines. This setting and scoring builds tension and sets the tone for Berlioz’s interpretation of the Dies irae, one focused on terror and apprehension. At m. 64, the key changes to B-flat minor and the tempo increases to highlight a textual layering: the basses at m. 68 with the melody “quantus tremor,” the sopranos at m. 69 with a recitative “dies illa,” and the tenors at m. 72 with a marcato “dies irae,” as seen in example 1.62

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Example 1. Hector Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts*, *Dies irae*, mm. 68-75

The different styles employed by the voices inspire anxiety in the listener and foreshadow the approaching Day of Judgment. The concluding line of verse one is finally articulated in the tenor at m. 80 and is taken up by the sopranos’ recitative in m. 81. Berlioz began manipulating the text at mm. 93-99 in the tenors by repeating and layering key words, such as “quando judex, quando judex est venturus, quantus, quantus tremor!” (when the judge, when the judge shall come, what, what trembling!) The basses comment underneath the tenors, “quando judex, dies illa, quando judex est futurus” (when the judge, that day of wrath, what trembling there shall be), a reorganized set of lines to convey the nervous stutter of a terrified individual. The prose is straightforward and terrifying without introducing any changes, but Berlioz communicates the fear of an individual listener in this verbal stammer, representing the nervous heart palpitation of a person before the Day of Judgment. The third-person text is retained, but Berlioz suggests the role of the individual, who plays a significant role in his textual setting of the requiem.

Short chromatic passages link verses one and two (mm. 64-67: A minor to B-flat minor), followed by a repetition of verse two (mm. 100-103: B-flat minor to D minor). The chromatic passages connect verse one to the *Tuba mirum*, in which Berlioz modulates to E-flat major and
introduces the four brass orchestras. The basses sing the *Tuba mirum* with the first two lines intact, with the deletion of “regionum” (lands) to suit the musical syntax. Line three is also changed to fit the musical structure from “coget omnes ante thronum” (summons all before the throne) to “tuba, tuba coget omnes, coget ante thronum” (the trumpet, the trumpet summons all, summons all before the throne). This repetition of “tuba” reinforces the power of the brass ensembles, calling all before the throne of God. The placement of the brass ensembles paralyzes the vulnerable audience, unable to escape the call to Judgment or prevent the brassy assault from reaching them.

Verse four, “mors stupebit et natura” (death and nature shall be stunned), is presented in its original form with no alterations or repetitions. Verse five, “liber scriptus proferetur” (the written book shall be sought), is sung in its original form, with the third line, “unde mundus judicetur” (whereby the world shall be judged), repeated. Line three is separated from the rest of the verse by five measures in which the brass orchestras expel penetrating triplet figures creating tension and anxiety. The repeated line is given weight and meaning through its separation and exacerbates the audiences’ anxiety. The tempo reduces and returns to the *largo* tempo which introduced the *Tuba mirum* verse. Line one, “judex ergo cum sedebit” (when the Judge takes his seat), repeats “cum sedebit,” presumably for the musical structure and not for textual meaning. The verse concludes with no other alterations, but Berlioz repeats verse four, “mors stupebit,” in its entirety at m. 233. At mm. 240-249 the chorus is in unison, *sotto voce*, declaiming the words “judicanti responsura, judicanti responsura, mors stupebit et natura” (to render account before the

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63 The *Tuba mirum* brass orchestra stage directions and scoring are as follows:
- Orchestra I (North): 4 cornets in B-flat, 4 trombones, 2 tubas.
- Orchestra II (East): 2 trumpets in F, 2 trumpets in E-flat, 4 trombones.
- Orchestra III (West): 4 trumpets in E-flat, 4 trombones.
- Orchestra IV (South): 4 trumpets in B-flat, 4 trombones, 4 ophicléides.

64 See Appendix B for Berlioz’s text compared to the original.
judge, to render account before the judge, death and nature shall be stunned), as seen in example 2.  

Example 2. Hector Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts, Tuba mirum*, mm. 240-251

Refer to Appendix A for full text.
The movement ends *pianissimo*, allowing the listener to reflect on the imagery. Berlioz’s repetition of verse four reinforced the theme of Judgment and his reversal of the lines left the listener with an image of violent death.

Movement Three (*Quid sum miser*) is a quiet, intimate movement comprised of verses seven, nine, and seventeen, which are in the first person and focus on the individual experience of terror. The G-sharp minor movement is scored for 2 English horns, 8 bassoons, Tenor I and II, basses, cello, and string bass. Berlioz wrote the instructions “with an expression indicating humility and fear” (*ave un sentiment d’humilité et de crainte*) above the tenor line.\(^6\) Tenor I sing lines one and two, unchanged, with an average of two instrumental measures between each short phrase: “*quid sum miser—tunc dicturus— quem patromum—rogaturus*” (what shall I—a wretch— say then? To which protector— shall I appeal?) as seen in example 3. The pauses between the phrases allow the listeners a moment of introspection.

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Example 3. Hector Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts, Quid sum miser*, mm. 1-16

This allows the listener to look inward and ask, “What shall I, frail person, plead for myself?” Berlioz did not change the text of the verse, but charged it with personal meaning for each listener through the musical setting. The next verse, “cum vix justus sit securus?” (when even the just man is barely safe?), is adjusted to read “when even the just, when even the just man is barely safe?” while diminishing from piano to pianississimo. This repeated question takes on the role of the listener, who wonders, “Who am I to ask for mercy, when even the faithful are uncertain?” allowing them to evaluate their actions against the rest of humanity, their neighbors, their seat partners in the church. This repetition of “cum vix justus” is an opportunity for introspection and reinforces the role of the individual. The mood and structure for verse nine, “recordare, Jesu pie” (remember, gentle Jesus), is much the same, marked *dolce assai*, and
continues with the two-measure breaks and sense of introspection. The text does not change, but Berlioz marked the final line, “ne me perdas illa die” (do not forsake me on that day), with accents and reinforced the words with the same melody and rhythm in the winds. This technique was noticeably absent in this movement and the joined forces substantiated the message: “leave me not to eternal damnation!” The rendering of verse seventeen is perhaps the most movingly scored verse of Movement Three, as seen in example 4.

Example 4. Hector Berlioz, Grande messe des morts, Quid sum miser, mm. 34-49

Tenor I chorus sings the first two lines monophonically, “oro supplex et acclinis/cor contritum quasi cinis” (bowed down in supplication, I beg you/ my contrite heart as if ground to ashes,).

Tenor II joins in unison for “gere curam” (help me), diminuendo and ritenuto, and fades into
silence. The basses complete the line, their only entrance in the movement, “mei finis” (in my last hour), falling a minor second on “finis” (end). The scoring suggests the image of a man pleading with God to accept his final confession, but the passing of the line through the lower voices suggests that God either does not hear or is unwilling to forgive. The concluding phrase in the basses is a final plea, represented by the falling second, which is historically associated with sighing and sadness. Here, it suggests a man’s last prayer for forgiveness with no answer from the chorus or the orchestra. This use of silence supports Cairns’s hypothesis that the Requiem is characterized by the “absence of God.” Berlioz’s scoring supports this interpretation, as the soli male voices invoke the image of one man. As the timbre lowers from Tenor I to Bass, the man is uncertain of his place in heaven. The listener, too, becomes uncertain of their place in heaven, possibly reinforcing the absence of God for that individual. “Mei finis” concludes the movement, which would have had a long decay in the Église des Invalides, followed by a deafening silence. Berlioz may have intentionally utilized this sacred space to represent God’s presence in the Requiem, who does not answer in any musical or acoustical manner.

Movement Three (Quid sum miser) is a masterful textual setting, in which the verses convey a personal journey. In verse seven, “quid sum miser tunc dicturus?” (what shall I, a wretch, say then?), the individual wonders about their position in the long process of salvation, asking how they can atone for their actions. The individual wonders who will intercede on their behalf, when more faithful people than they are uncertain of their salvation. In verse nine, “recordare, Jesu pie” (remember, gentle Jesus), the individual beseeches Jesus to save them from eternal night, showing a progression of fear and desperation to be saved. They are amazed, perhaps for the first time, that Jesus willingly died for their sins, and that they are perhaps about

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to die as well, confronted with judgment and death for the first time. Finally, the individual makes a humble plea in verse seventeen, “oro supplex et acclinis” (bowed down in supplication I beg you), kneeling before heaven with their soul bared, “help me in my last condition.” The exotic timbral combination of English horn, bassoon, and low strings creates a mournful and somber background for this emotional development. The English horns play above the staff for 22 of 35 measures, primarily sighing falling seconds. The bassoons play above the staff for the majority of their measures as well, producing a hollow, thin timbre that is well suited to express the loneliness and desperation of the individual. Only once do the dynamics rise above a piano: in mm. 19-20 the winds and strings have two unison held notes which burst into sudden forte and diminish to piano over the course of a measure against the “cum vix justus” (when even the just), the previously noted emotionally-charged moment in verse seven.

Movement Four (Rex tremendae) contains some of the most significant alterations in the Requiem and is the least traditional of all the movements. The movement comprises verses eight, nine, sixteen, and a section from the Offertory. This highly unusual combination departs from traditional requiems and those of Berlioz’s predecessors and contemporaries. Verse eight, “Rex tremendae majestatis” (King of awful majesty), is typically set as large-scale section or movement for full orchestra and chorus. Both of Cherubini’s requiems set verse eight as a full orchestral and choral section within the large Dies irae movement. In his requiem setting, Gounod pairs verses eight and nine to form a joyous Rex tremendae movement in C-major, scored for full orchestra, harp, and chorus. Gossec’s setting is much more conservative, as verses seven and eight are paired for a solemn, thinly scored movement that has only 27 measures. Berlioz’s grand movement is scored for full orchestra and chorus, including the four brass choirs and eight pairs of timpani, which are staffed with two players to each pair. Berlioz’s combination

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68 See Appendix A for full text.
of verses allowed him to begin his movement traditionally, with full chorus and orchestra, but he reduced the instruments and vocalists until only the sopranos and thinly scored woodwinds and strings remained. The text combines both public and individual perspectives. Measures 2-15 repeat joyful unison exclamations of “Rex” and the repetition of “Rex tremendae majestatis” (King of awful majesty) with no changes to the text. The second line is left intact. The third line, “salva me, fons pietatis” (save me, fount of pity), is extended to read “salva me, salva me, salva me, fons pietatis” in mm. 25-29. Underneath, the strings hum agitated tremolos, crescendo poco a poco. The sopranos, tenors, and basses share the melodic contour of the descending minor seconds of “salva me” but enter at different times, evoking the din and clamor of a crowd, all desiring the same attention.

Verse sixteen, “confutatis maledictis” (from the convicted and accursed), is taken out of order to suit Berlioz’s music drama. This inclusion provides imagery for the fires of Hell, which are not found in the preceding verses. Words are added and repeated to enhance the message, such as the addition of “Jesu” to “confutatis maledictis, Jesu, maledictis” in mm. 42-50. “Flammis acribus addictis” (consigned to the searing flames) is enhanced to read “flammis, flammis, acribus, acribus addictis!” which conveys the frantic mindset of a damned individual in mm. 51-55. These small changes reinforce the personal experience of the Day of Judgment, rather than a public, generalized reaction. This dramatic section is halted by an accented “voca me” (call me) followed by a grand pause. There, Berlioz executes one of his most interesting interpretations, adding a four-line section from the Offertory to the Dies irae sequence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voca me . . .</th>
<th>Call me . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . et de profundo lacu.</td>
<td>. . . and from the deep abyss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libera me de ore leonis,</td>
<td>Deliver me from the jaws of the lion,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>libera me, [not in original]</td>
<td>deliver me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne cadam in obscurum;</td>
<td>lest I fall into the darkness;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Berlioz reduced the final line of verse sixteen, “voca me cum benedictis” (call me with the blessed), and connected it to a section from the Offertory to reinforce the vision of the fires of Hell discussed in the verse. Cone notes that the depictions of Hell are “embellished and extended by an interpolation from the Offertory,” a decision which reinforces the terrifying imagery of the Dies irae sequence. The most notable alteration is Berlioz’s change from the original “libera eas” to “libera me,” “deliver them” to “deliver me,” and the same change from “eas” to “me” in “ne absorbeat me Tartarus.” These one-word substitutions alter the entire meaning of the text, from a collective to a private prayer. “Libera me” is sung in imitative counterpoint from m. 64 to m. 69, suggesting a massive crowd taking up an individual call to be saved, as seen in example 5. The chorus comes together in unison for “in obscurum” at mm. 71-72, reinforcing their shared desire.

Example 5. Hector Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts, Rex Tremendae*, mm. 57–68
Verse eight “Rex tremendae” returns at m. 88, with freely interjected repetitions of “salva me” so the text is understood as “King of awful majesty, save me.” At the conclusion of the movement, mm. 102-105, the sopranos intone a piano falling second, “salva me, salva me, salva me,” each repetition decreasing in volume. Three times they plead, but there is no answer from the chorus or the orchestra. Pianississimo, they finish the verse “fons pietatis, fons pietatis” joined by the tenors and basses for the final repetition. The thinly scored “salva me” repetitions could also be understood as the “absence of God,” in which the silence speaks as clearly as the music (see example 6 at the end of this chapter). But as Cairns notes, Berlioz also expresses his “regret for loss of faith,” perhaps best seen in example 6, which could be interpreted as Berlioz’s desire to be restored to God’s flock. The lack of response could suggest that Berlioz could not find God, despite his desire. This section also utilizes the acoustics of the church to sustain the decay of sound and the resulting silence. The three “salva me” pleas of mm. 102-105 conclude the movement and would reverberate in the eaves of the structure, reminiscent of prayers buoyed up to God by faith. But, they also dissipate with no discernible response. None of Berlioz’s contemporaries interpret the “salva me” in this manner. Cherubini’s Requiem in C minor (1813) treated the line “salva me, fons pietatis” (mm. 118-125) in passing, moving directly into verse eight, “recordare, Jesu pie.” The lines are sung by the full chorus and there are responding lines in the clarinet, oboe, and bassoon. Cherubini’s Requiem in D minor (1836) features a high amount of exchanges between the chorus singing “salva me” and the woodwinds answering in an embellished form of the vocal melody. These active exchanges move quickly into verse eight,

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72 Ibid.
as they do in the earlier C-minor requiem. Gounod’s *Messe de Requiem* (1842) sets verse eight and nine together and the chorus sings the verses in four-part harmony with special emphasis given to “Rex” at the beginning of the movement. The phrase “salva me, fons pietatis” is repeated to complete a phrase but does not receive any unique setting or orchestral imagery. In direct contrast to Berlioz’s requiem, verse eight is sung confidently in a simple melody, emphasizing the power, rather than the terror, of the Lord. The setting is reinforced by the seamless segue into verse nine, whose delicate harp passages and solo boy soprano emphasize the “childlike trustfulness” of the setting.75 The requiem clearly conveys Gounod’s own religious beliefs, as he had a premonition of his own death while composing the work. He wrote a letter to the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire* on February 21, 1893 saying “I have just put the finishing touches to a *messe de Requiem*, without doubt my last work.”76 Gounod’s posthumously published requiem more closely resembles Cherubini’s traditional and conservative compositional style and his text-setting is faithful to the original. Earlier requiems show similar circumstances. Berlioz and Gossec composed similar movements for *Quid sum miser*. Both composers’ movements are brief: Gossec’s 1760 setting is only twenty-seven measures, scored for solo alto voice, oboes, and strings, while Berlioz’s setting is forty-nine measures and scored for tenors, basses, English horn, bassoon, and low strings. Gossec set verses seven and eight while Berlioz set verses seven, nine, and seventeen, perhaps accounting for the additional measures. Gossec’s text is set simply as a recitative with no repetitions or emphasis on key words. The “salva me” rises a major second on “me,” perhaps suggesting hope. There is no suggestion of the melancholy which pervades Berlioz’s setting of the verse. While Gossec was

76 Ibid., xiii.
an influential patriotic figure, his text setting is strikingly different than Berlioz’s and does not appear to be charged with additional meaning.

Movement Five (Quaerens me) proceeds from verses ten to fifteen, with verses thirteen and fourteen reversed, in which the individual experience remains the focus of the movement.\footnote{See Appendix B for full text.} This movement for unaccompanied chorus is intimate and quiet. Berlioz’s directions are to use “the same tempo as the preceding movement and very softly throughout” (\textit{mème mouvement que le morceau précédent, et toujours très doux}).\footnote{Berlioz, \textit{Grande messe des morts}, in \textit{Hector Berlioz New Edition}.} This continuation of tempo and dynamics allows the listener to reflect on the fading “salva me” and transition into a contemplative and thoughtful movement, perhaps finding intimacy in the unaccompanied choir, as if humanity raised its voices together to pray. Verse ten, “quaerens me” (seeking me), is presented from mm. 1 to 17 in its entirety, with certain phrases and words reiterated, such as “quaerens me” (seeking me), “crucem passus” (enduring the cross), and “tantus labor” (may such labor). A similar approach is taken with verse eleven, “juste judex” (righteous judge), in which “ante diem rationis” (before the day of reckoning) is repeated in several word groupings and “donum fac remissionis” (award the gift of forgiveness) is rearranged to read “fac donum remissionis” which does not change the meaning. It is possible that this is an error committed in Berlioz’s rush to complete the \textit{Requiem} in time to employ copyists and begin rehearsals. Interestingly, line two of verse twelve is removed from the movement: “culpa rubet vultus meus” (all my shame with anguish owning). This is intriguing due to the nature of the verse, which is based on the individual acknowledging and perhaps regretting their sins. However, line one, “ingemisco, tanquam reus” (I groan, sinner that I am), mm. 31-39, is repeated six times, perhaps similar enough in meaning to allow the omission. Cone suggests this omission is simply to “tighten the musical structure,” although the
six repetitions suggest that Berlioz could have used the full verse had he so desired.\textsuperscript{79} Perhaps the nature of shame was unappealing to Berlioz. As a man who referred to composers as “inspired creator[s]” and revered human genius to the point of worship, humility and shame may not have had a place in his \textit{Requiem}.\textsuperscript{80} The final line and Bass I soli, “supplicanti parce, Deus” (O God, spare the supplicant), is elongated to “parce, parce, Deus, supplicanti parce, Deus!” in m.37 through m. 42. Verses ten and fourteen are sung simultaneously, verse ten in the sopranos, altos, Tenor I and II, and verse fourteen in Bass I and II chorus:

\begin{quote}
Quærens me, sedisti lassus
redemisti Crucem passus,
tantus labor non sit cassus.

Preces meæ non sunt dignæ,
sed tu bonus fac benigne,
ne perenni cremer igne.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Seeking me, you sank down wearily
you saved me by enduring the cross,
may such labor not be in vain.

My prayers are unworthy,
but you, who are good, in pity,
let me not burn in the eternal fire.
\end{quote}

The texts are complimentary and work well as a pair. At times, the phrases interlock, creating a polytextuality which Cone believes is used to contrast the image of the crucified Christ against the sinner, perhaps enhancing the individualistic experience.\textsuperscript{81} Berlioz was likely linking them together in a strictly narrative sense to reinforce the concept of the repentant sinner, as verse thirteen, “qui Mariam absolvisti” (you who pardoned Mary Magdalene), is a hopeful verse addressing forgiveness. The continuation into verse fifteen, “inter oves locum praesta” (give me a place among the sheep), is one of the most uplifting and hopeful verses in the traditional \textit{Dies irae} sequence. To reinforce this message, the six-part chorus joins to sing “statuens in parte dextra” (but to thy right hand upraise me) which concludes the movement. The frequent layering of verses may suggest that Berlioz was attempting to reduce the delivery of the text and the

\textsuperscript{79} Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 4.
\textsuperscript{81} Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 8. He notes a juncture of “Quærens me sedisti lassus, non sum dingus, sed tantus labor non sit cassus.”
length of the *Requiem*. The greatest weight is placed upon the *Dies irae, Tuba mirum, Rex tremendae*, and *Lacrymosa*, which are scored for full orchestra, chorus, and the four brass orchestras.

The *Lacrymosa* appears in a shortened format, which Cone likens to a final, personal moment of prayer. The theme of Judgment is again stressed, as “judicandus” is repeated three times in mm. 10-13, and again in mm. 20-24, the first repetitions in the *Lacrymosa*. “Dies illa” is also repeated three times in each voice in mm. 38-42. The fourth line of the *Lacrymosa* is omitted, presumably to strengthen the musical structure, and Berlioz composes a thinly scored “Pie Jesu Domine” (gentle Lord Jesus) for English horn, bassoon, and strings.\(^{82}\) The “pie Jesu” and “dona eis requiem” (grant them eternal rest) verses are composed as a separate section with different orchestration. The four brass choirs return in m. 136 and play pulsating triplets reminiscent of the *Tuba mirum* scoring, imagery fitting for the lines they partner:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Lacrymosa dies illa,} & \quad \text{That day will be full of tears,} \\
\text{qua resurget ex favilla} & \quad \text{when from the ashes} \\
\text{judicandus homo reus.} & \quad \text{guilty man arises to be judged.}
\end{align*}
\]

Berlioz revisited the triplet rhythms and apocalyptic atmosphere as a kind of recapitulation for the *Requiem*, contributing to the structure of this “colossal” work.\(^{83}\) Cone also notes that both the *Rex tremendae* and *Lacrymosa* end after a final repetition of their first verse as a type of “musical reprise” and to reinforce the “public-private contrast so basic to Berlioz’s conception.”\(^{84}\) The omission of the fourth line, “huic ergo parce, Deus” (O God, in mercy spare him), retains the focus on the individual and the event, but avoids a direct reference to God. Given the length of the *Lacrymosa*, this omission appears to be intentional and in service to Berlioz’s narrative.

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\(^{82}\) The fourth line of the *Lacrymosa* is “Huic ergo parce, Deus” (O God, in mercy spare him). Also see Appendix A.

\(^{83}\) Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 8, 10.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 8.
Berlioz interpreted the Offertory as a “chorus of the souls in Purgatory” (choeur des âmes du purgatoire), a subtitle added to the second edition that was later withdrawn. In Movement Seven (Offertorium), Berlioz left the first phrase intact but removed the “libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbate eas Tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum,” which was unnecessary after its role in Movement Four (Rex tremendae). This omission reduces the references to Hell, perhaps lightening the tone of the movement. Berlioz’s version of the Offertory is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae} & \quad \text{Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory}, \\
\text{libera animas omnium fidelium} & \quad \text{deliver the souls of all the} \\
\text{de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.} & \quad \text{departed from the pains of hell and the bottomless pit.}
\end{align*}
\]

[omitted phrases]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Libera eas [Berlioz’s addition]} & \quad \text{Deliver them} \\
\text{et sanctus Michael signifier} & \quad \text{and let Saint Michael the standard-bearer} \\
\text{repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam.} & \quad \text{lead them into the holy light.} \\
\text{Quam olim Abrahae et semini ejus promisisti.} & \quad \text{As you promised to Abraham and his seed.}
\end{align*}
\]

Berlioz designed this movement as a third-person, public experience and interjected the original “libera eas” (deliver us) statements in mm. 82-83 and mm. 100-103. The final verse, traditionally “quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus,” is altered grammatically to end on “promisisti” (you promised), or “quam olim Abrahae et semini ejus promisisti.” Cone states this is a hopeful word upon which to resolve. Through this grammatical alteration, the focus of the verse subtly shifts from man and his offspring to God and his promise of eternal life. “Promisisti” is sung in imitative counterpoint, one measure apart, beginning in the sopranos and moving through all six parts to Bass II in mm. 137-154, as seen in example 7.

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85 Ibid., 7.
86 Ibid.
The scoring for “promisisti” is particularly intriguing. Each vocal part sings the word twice spanning the ten measures, a *pianississimo* crescendo to *mezzo forte* in mm. 143-146. The imitation aligns different syllables and dynamic levels to create a cascade of sound, emulating the calls of a great crowd. The thin scoring and fugal theme invoke heaven and light while also suggesting a communal plea taken up by humanity to be forgiven of their sins and to be taken up to heaven, as God once promised Abraham. Like the *Rex tremendae* and *Lacrymosa*, the Offertorium ends on a repetition of the first verse and a *pianississimo* “Amen,” the first heard in the *Requiem*.

Movement Eight (*Hostias*) is reduced from four lines to two, omitting the third line, *facades, Domine, de morte transpire ad vitam* (let them, O Lord, pass over from death to life), and a repetition of *Quam olim Abrahae*. These reductions help tighten the musical structure, as well as an omission of the words *Domine* in line one and *tu* in line three. Cone suggests that the omission of the third line and its “intimation of eternal life” serve to heighten the contrast between the *Hostias* and the following *Sanctus*, a movement he believes represents Paradise. In the *Hostias*, Berlioz focuses on the orchestration, which illuminates the remaining text:

- Hostias et preces tibi, laudis offerimus; suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
  - In praise we offer you sacrifices and prayers; accept them on behalf of those whom we remember today.

The *Hostias* is often noted for the rare timbral combination of flute and trombone and the resulting “uneartly sound.” The three flutes and eight trombones from Orchestras III and IV frame the individual phrases, with the flutes split into three parts and the trombones sharing one part, as seen in example 8.

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87 Cone’s article compares the *Requiem* to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. He likens the Offertory and *Hostias* to Purgatory and the *Sanctus* to Paradise. While not explicitly mentioned in the article, the *Dies irae/Tuba mirum* represent Hell.  

Cone states that the extreme registers allow the listener to visualize the spatial contrast between the winds and voices and interprets them as “symbolizing the gulf between the human and the divine.”

He speculates that the contrast can be seen as the “possibility of God’s grace and the peril of His condemnation, between the heavenly real and the abyss.”

The text references souls who can be helped by prayer, such as those in Purgatory, which is illustrated by the dark timbre of the male voices. The “starkness” of the winds delineates the contrast between those on Earth and those in Purgatory.

Cone suggests the *Hostias* embodies the “entire visionary range of the *Requiem*,” through multilayered imagery and orchestration.

Alec Robertson suggests this “eccentric” scoring is used not only to model heaven and earth, but also to express the text Berlioz omitted, “de morte transpire ad vitam” (pass over from death to life).

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89 Ibid., 12. Note that the voices are Tenor I and II and Bass I and II.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Robertson, *Requiem*, 95.
represented by ethereal orchestration. This scoring could be interpreted as Berlioz’s “unsatisfied yearning” for God, in which he constructs a musical approximation of heaven and earth, characterized by extreme differences in range and thin-scoring. Berlioz’s version of heaven is fragile and brief, although of immense beauty. He may have rejected organized religion, but this movement suggests that a part of him still wanted to believe in God and the afterlife.

Traditionally, the Sanctus is scored for full orchestra with forceful orchestration, as seen in Cherubini’s requiems, discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter Two. Berlioz parted from convention and composed a thinly-scored, intimate Sanctus for solo tenor and sparse orchestra. Movement Seven (Sanctus) begins with a tenor soloist, who sings “Sanctus” four times, although the traditional text calls for three, representing the holy trinity. The fourth “Sanctus,” sung by a lone male voice, has many possible interpretations. Berlioz may have included the additional “Sanctus” to represent man. This could reflect Berlioz’s ideas about man as artist/creator, and the genius as a god figure, as discussed later in this chapter. This interpretation would subtly reference the first-person narrative Berlioz created. The additional “Sanctus” could simply be part of the musical structure, as referenced by Cone. Notably absent from the Sanctus is the Benedictus section, “Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini” (Blessed is he who comes in the same of the Lord). Instead, the tenor solo and fugue on “Hosanna in excelsis” (Hosanna in the highest) are heard twice. Cone suggests the omission of the Benedictus is to retain the focus on the divine, as the “mundane” Benedictus references man. While Berlioz’s ideals seem to support the value of the individual man, this focus on the divine extends the interpretation and imagery detailed in the Hostias. It is also possible that Berlioz omitted the

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94 Grove Music Online, s.v. “Cherubini, Luigi,” by Michael Fend.
95 Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 7.
line because it prostrates man before God, and his interpretation is focused more on man’s journey to the divine.

The final movement, Agnus Dei, distills the repetitive text to “Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam” (Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them eternal rest). Berlioz replaced the Communion text with material previously used in the Introit, Te decet hymnus and Exaudi. The Introit and Communion texts are similar, and Berlioz may have utilized these movements to provide a framework for the Requiem and to provide a sense of cyclicism, possibly reinforcing the cycle of life and death. The non-liturgical extension emphasizes the framing effect of the outer movements and provides a larger cyclical structure to the work. Berlioz noted in the score at the Te decet hymnus that “after the following 25 bars the tempo must be gradually increased up to $\frac{2}{4} = 69$, the original tempo of the 1st movement, the second half of which is repeated here” (après les 25 mesures suivantes, le mouvement devra s’animer peu à peu jusqu’au $\frac{2}{4} = 69$ qui est le mouvement primitive du 1er morceau (Requiem), dont la dernière moitié reparaît ici). Te decet hymnus is repeated verbatim from Movement One, including text, scoring, and orchestration, as is the Requiem aeternam dona defunctis. Instead of transitioning into the Kyrie eleison, as in Movement One, the final movement intones “cum sanctis tuis in aeternam, Domine, quia pius es” (Lord, with your saints forever, for you are compassionate), and sing “Amen” six times to conclude the Requiem. Structurally, the Requiem has something of a cyclical conception, which Peter Bloom believes conveys a “vision of eternal rest.” The mood and setting of the Dies irae is present in the Rex tremendae and the Lacrymosa, in which grandiose and intimate passages alternate. The closing Agnus Dei recapitulates sections of the Kyrie and Hostias, shaping the large structure of

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96 See Appendix A for full text.
the mass. The alterations, additions, omissions and rearrangement of the *Requiem* text clearly delineate a public view and a personal experience of the Day of Judgment. Berlioz’s method allowed him to select the text with the most impact and the most significant imagery. Berlioz changed the focus to the individual, which allowed the listener to imagine their personal judgment.

Orchestration

For Berlioz, the ideal way to convey his message was through enormous forces, the “monumental orchestra” which he described in his “Grand Treatise of Instrumentation and Modern Orchestration,” op. 10 (*Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*).\(^9^9\) He wrote:

> It seemed to me impossible to explain how beautiful orchestral effects are invented, and that this . . . is like the faculty of creating melody, expression, and even harmony, one of the precious gifts that the poet-musician, like an inspired creator, must have received from nature.\(^1^0^0\)

As the inspired creator of the *Requiem*, Berlioz placed himself in a god-like role as one who created, controlled, and manipulated a sonic universe, directly or indirectly affecting his audience. The audiences’ reaction to his music is based on their understanding of the music, perhaps like the reaction of a congregation to a sermon. Like the congregation, the audience may be taken by surprise at sublime moments and become believers, even if they doubted their commitment to the work. His ideal orchestra would allow him to achieve “a harmonic richness, a variety of sounds, a succession of contrasts, which cannot be compared with anything that has

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\(^9^9\) Macdonald, *Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise*, 322.

\(^1^0^0\) Ibid., 319.
been achieved in art” to that day. Indeed, Berlioz related the power of his orchestra in religious terminology:

It would have an incalculable melodic, expressive and rhythmic power, a penetrating force like no other, a prodigious sensitivity in all nuances . . . When at rest it would be majestic like a slumbering ocean. When in a state of agitation it would recall tropical storms. It would erupt like a volcano. It would convey the laments, whispers and mysterious sounds of virgin forests, the shouts, prayers, songs of triumph or lamentation of a people with an expansive soul, an ardent heart, and fiery passions. Its silence would strike awe through its solemnity, and the most recalcitrant temperaments would shudder at the sight of its surging crescendo, like the roar of an immense and sublime conflagration!

In his introduction to the treatise, Berlioz cautioned readers that his goals were to present the ranges and timbres of instruments, their character and potential, and how to group them together. He wrote that to attempt to go beyond these elements “would be stepping into the domain of inspiration, where only genius may make discoveries and where only genius is allowed to tread.” Yet, Berlioz described his own orchestra as a formidable power, able to convey music that embodied the joy and desperation of humanity. This suggests that Berlioz considered his ideal orchestra to have exceeded the realm of the common man and into the realm of genius, inhabited by his idols, Beethoven, Gluck, Weber, and Spontini.

The proportions of Berlioz’s ideal orchestra and his Requiem orchestra are similar, as demonstrated in Table 1:

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101 Ibid., 335.
102 Macdonald, Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise, 335.
103 Ibid., 6.
Table 1: Comparison of the “Monumental” orchestra with the *Requiem* orchestra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Monumental” Orchestra Model$^{104}$</th>
<th><em>Requiem</em> Orchestra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 first violins</td>
<td>25 first violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 second violins</td>
<td>25 second violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 violas</td>
<td>20 violas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 cellos (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
<td>20 cellos (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 double basses</td>
<td>18 double basses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 harps</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 piccolos</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 flutes</td>
<td>4 flutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 oboes</td>
<td>2 oboes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cor anglais</td>
<td>2 cor anglais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 clarinets</td>
<td>4 clarinets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 basset horn or bass clarinet</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 bassoons</td>
<td>8 bassoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 cylinder horns</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cylinder trumpets</td>
<td>12 trumpets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cylinder or piston cornets</td>
<td>4 cornets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 trombones (1 alto and 2 tenors, or 3 tenors)</td>
<td>16 trombones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bass trombone</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ophicleide or tuba</td>
<td>4 ophicleides and 2 tubas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pairs of timpani and 4 timpanists</td>
<td>8 pairs of timpani and 16 timpanists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bass drum</td>
<td>1 bass drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair of cymbals</td>
<td>10 pairs of cymbals (for procession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 tenor drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 gongs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 first sopranos (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
<td>80 sopranos and altos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 tenors (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
<td>60 tenors (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 basses (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
<td>70 basses (<em>divisi</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The upper string sections are nearly identical, with a few more players allotted to the *Requiem* orchestra. This was likely a precaution against having too few musicians for the performance, as Berlioz had experienced this issue in the past, notably in the performance of his first mass, the Mass in C Major.$^{105}$ However, the string basses are nearly doubled, perhaps to balance the

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$^{104}$ Ibid., 335. “Monumental” is Berlioz’s word choice.

increased high brass of the *Requiem.* The wind sections match more closely. The two piccolo players of the monumental orchestra are reassigned to flute in the *Requiem.* The piccolo is not utilized in the *Requiem,* as its timbre may have been deemed too abrasive for the Église des Invalides. The bassoons and clarinets are doubled in the *Requiem,* and are used to balance the extended brass instruments utilized in the four antiphonal orchestras. The extended brass is the most significant departure from the monumental orchestra, and the additional instruments are balanced in a number of ways. The brass orchestras are used selectively in the *Tuba mirum, Rex tremendae,* and *Lacrymosa* to represent the Day of Judgment, but are used more conservatively in other movements. For example, the *Offertorium* uses four trumpets in F and two tubas, and the *Hostias* provides contrast to the three flutes with eight unison trombones, which play *piano* for most of the movement. The monumental chorus is increased from 126 vocalists to 210, but the addition of the altos to the *Requiem* maintains the balance between the vocal parts. Without the alterations to suit the brass orchestras, and the additional choir members (probably to suit the musical space), the *Requiem* orchestra may have been modeled from the monumental orchestra. This suggests that Berlioz may have composed the work with the intent to demonstrate “a harmonic richness, a variety of sounds, a succession of contrasts, which cannot be compared with anything that has been achieved in art to this day.”

Berlioz published his orchestration treatise in 1843/4 and reissued it in 1855 with an additional chapter on the role of the conductor. He noted in the treatise that the monumental orchestra was meant as a guide and that the “composer should choose his combination of players to match the style and character of the work in hand and to achieve the main effects its subject-

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Berlioz proceeded to say that this was the process he had used to achieve the unusual brass instrumentation used in the *Requiem*, writing that “it is undeniable that the special effects achieved by this new kind of orchestra could not possibly be obtained in any other way.” This suggests that Berlioz highly valued his monumental orchestra but was willing to experiment with new techniques to create imaginative orchestration.

Early in the *Requiem* score, Berlioz noted that choral forces could be doubled or tripled, with the orchestra increased accordingly. Always a master of grandiose forces, he wrote that if an exceptionally large chorus of 700 to 800 could be obtained, then the full chorus should be utilized only in the *Dies irae*, *Tuba mirum*, and *Lacrymosa*. The remaining movements should be restricted to 400 voices, perhaps half the available number. Berlioz understood the power of the *Dies irae* text and the final plea to “grant them rest” in the *Lacrymosa*. His selections reveal a man intent on conveying the most vivid imagery and the most emotional passages in the text.

The *Requiem* orchestra consisted of over one hundred string instruments, with the woodwinds doubled or tripled. In addition, Berlioz increased the customary number of timpani from two to eight, each tuned to different pitches. This alone was an innovative feature, as the common practice was to have two timpani tuned to the tonic and the dominant, and used to accent important passages. This unfamiliar scoring would create an imposing aural experience for the audience. Another innovation was separating the bass drum from its assumed partnership with the cymbals. Berlioz’s percussionist must strike the sides of the bass drum with snare sticks, allowing them to play more complex rhythms. Played simultaneously with the expanded timpani and combined with “orchestration that emphasizes the note of terror, they suggest the strange and

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107 Ibid., 327.
108 Ibid.
awesome sounds that accompany the great cataclysms of nature.”\textsuperscript{110} This technique was particularly effective in the Église des Invalides, as noted earlier in the chapter.

The \textit{Tuba mirum} is perhaps the most memorable section of the \textit{Requiem}. Berlioz wrote that to invoke the “great images of the mass for the dead in a \textit{Requiem}, I have used four small orchestras of brass instruments (trumpets, trombones, cornets and ophicleides) placed some distance from each other at the four corners of the large orchestra.”\textsuperscript{111} The four brass orchestras are prominently situated at cardinal points of the church. They enter in a sequential pattern from west to east and then from north to south. This harmonic aural assault is driven by an aggressive sixteenth-note pattern, repeated and layered by the brass instruments. Combatively struck timpani, eight pairs with two players each, amplify the sound against the firm heartbeat of the two bass drums. Berlioz designed this overwhelming and awe-inspiring effect with the structure of the Église des Invalides in mind. Berlioz was well aware of the acoustic principles of structures and how to exploit them. He wrote in \textit{Le Rénovateur} on July 19, 1835:

\begin{quote}
Many fail to recognize that the very building in which music is made is itself a musical instrument, that it is to the performers what the sound board is to the strings of the violin, viola, cello, bass, harp, and piano stretched above.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

The acoustics of the Église des Invalides helped shape the orchestration of the \textit{Requiem}, particularly the four brass orchestras. This four orchestra system would allow the listener to be overwhelmed by an inescapable sonic force, as inevitable as the Day of Judgment it described. Berlioz was well aware of this effect and wrote of the importance of different points of origin in composition, that “different sections of the orchestra are sometimes meant by the composer to give questions and answers, and this idea can only clear and effective if the dialoguing sections

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{110} Macdonald, \textit{Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise}, 281.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 327.
\textsuperscript{112} Bloom, \textit{Life}, 84.
\end{footnotes}
are far enough apart.”

The acoustics may have also functioned as a call-and-response between the chorus and heaven. This somewhat underused technique clarifies some unusual pauses and silences in the Requiem. The listener is struck by the unanswered “salva me” repetitions at the conclusions of Movement Four (Rex tremendae). Berlioz’s use of silence and the unanswered decay of sound suggest an unmerciful heaven which does not answer its supplicants.

The inclusion of the ophicleide into the brass orchestras was perhaps utilized for color contrast and a certain grotesqueness. The original edition of the Requiem included four ophicleides in the fourth brass orchestra. Berlioz wrote in his orchestration treatise that “The truth is that of all instruments, both high and low, I know none with a voice as dreadful as this, none so easily played out of tube, none with such an ignoble sound.” Berlioz felt the instrument lacked the noble character of the trombone as well as its grandeur. Despite his negativity toward the instrument in the orchestration treatise, Berlioz frequently used the instrument for its “bestial character.” For example, the ophicleide is used in the final movement of the Symphonie fantastique for the Dies irae. Along with a serpent and four bassoons, the sextet is used in a grotesque parody of the plainchant. This type of orchestration was common in French parish churches. Berlioz also composed ophicleide parts in Benvenuto Cellini and La damnation de Faust, in which it is melodically paired with a cornet to display its “vulgar virtuosity.” Macdonald notes the importance of using an ophicleide to faithfully reproduce the Berlioz sound.

The movements are also structured to reflect the focus on public, third-person events with private, individual introspection, and thus subtly further the narrative. Berlioz alternated forceful,

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113 Macdonald, Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise, 328.
114 Macdonald, Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise, 235.
115 Ibid., 231.
116 Ibid., 236.
117 Ibid.
massive movements with thinly-scored intimate ones. David Cairns believes (somewhat
contradictorily) these represent the largeness of God against the “littleness” of humans, but
Berlioz may have alternated the movements to allow the listener time to process the emotional
intensity of the larger movements. Once the ear is overwhelmed, the composer has to lessen the
intensity or risk losing the audience all together. In the Book of Revelation, the apocalypse
comes in seven stages, some more terrifying than others, and all are spaced apart from each
other. The listener may find solace in the intimate movements, or they may hear the thinly scored
“salva me” as the absence of God, where the silence is as much a part of the score as the notes,
as discussed earlier in this chapter. “Salva me, salva me, salva me,” three times the choir pleaded
with God and there was no answer.118

Cone notes that several viewpoints amalgamate in the Requiem and are present in several
levels of composition, including the thematic and tonal structures, the orchestration, and in the
vertical and horizontal sonorities, first presented by the four brass orchestras. The simple
melodies gradually expand and interact to form the polyphonic texture, increasing anticipation
for the listener, such as the entrances of the brass orchestras in the Tuba mirum. The tempos
become livelier and Berlioz devises ever greater combinations of instruments and programmatic
nuances. Berlioz’s programmatic journey allows small elements of the music to slowly solidify.

Harmonic Structure and Key Relationships

The Requiem is known as an architectural composition due to the large-scale key
relationships and cyclical nature of the work. Berlioz noted that in defining works in this manner
refers to “the scale of the movements, the breadth of style and the formidably slow and deliberate
pace of certain progressions, whose final goal cannot be guessed, that give these works their

peculiarly ‘gigantic’ character and ‘colossal’ aspect.” The Requiem, in particular, embodies these large-scale progressions. Berlioz’s text-setting slowly creates a programmatic journey for the listener, from the initial Day of Judgment to the eternal rest, culminating in a work where the whole is greater than its individual movements. Cone notes that

"Just as the various melodic strands only gradually weave themselves into a definitive polyphonic texture, just as the tempo quickens, the dynamic force increases, and the key level rises—so do the poetic stanzas only gradually complete themselves, as if mankind only slowly and unwillingly accepted the reality of the terrible event."  

He is primarily referring to the transition between the Dies irae and the Tuba mirum, but this statement is largely true for the entire work. The main key areas are as follows:

I. *Introitus*: G minor—B-flat major—G minor (Coda)
II. *Dies Irae*: A minor—B-flat major—D minor—E-flat major
III. *Quid Sum Miser*: A-flat minor—G-sharp minor
IV. *Rex tremendae*: E major
V. *Quaerens me*: A major
VI. *Lacrymosa*: A minor—A major
VII. *Offertorium*: D minor—D major
VIII. *Hostias*: G major—B-flat minor
IX. *Sanctus*: D-flat major
X. *Angus Dei*: G major—B-flat major—G minor—G major (Coda)

The tonal ambiguity of the Requiem may suggest a programmatic outline. Cone notes that the Dies irae is comprised of alternating A minor—A major key areas and that the E-flat major of the Tuba mirum is illuminated as the tritone, reinforcing the menace of the brass bands, the invasive sixteenth-note patterns, and cacophonous antiphonal execution. The tritone section acts as a stark contrast to the D-flat major of the Sanctus. Cone believes this distant key relationship highlights the distance between the two vivid programmatic areas, in which the “heavenly scene

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120 Cone, “Divine Comedy,” 7.
appears as an element of other-worldly contrast” which “seems to make Paradise even less attainable, owing to its cyclical key connection.”

The harmonic relationships between the movements confirm an architectural or large-scale conception. The G minor to B-flat major to G minor key relationships of the Introitus are present in the final Agnus Dei movement, although G minor modulates to its parallel key in the final movement, perhaps to end optimistically and reinforce the vision of eternal rest. These outer movements also share thematic material in their codas. Progressing inwardly, movements two and three share thematic material (Dies irae and Quid sum miser) while movements eight and ten share a key relationship. Cone notes that several small recapitulations are enclosed within the greater cyclical framework of the movements. In particular, he believes the repetition of verse four, “Mors stupebit,” is used as a musical reprise to reinforce the public to private point of view. Movement Eight (Hostias) is structured on G major and B-flat minor while Movement Ten (Agnus Dei) has the progression of G major to B-flat major to G minor to G major. A prominent cadence in Movement Four (Rex tremendae) is also heard in the final movement. Cone suggests a breakdown of the movements and key areas, represented in Table 2:

**Table 2: Implied Large-Scale Harmonic Progression**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key areas</td>
<td>g-B♭-g (Coda)</td>
<td>a-b♭-d-E♭</td>
<td>a♭=g♯</td>
<td>E (Cad.)</td>
<td>a-A</td>
<td>d-D</td>
<td>G-b♭</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>G-B♭-g-G (Cad.) (Coda)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied Harmonic Progression</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I → b VI</td>
<td>b VI</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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121 Ibid., 8.
122 Ibid., 9.
Cone suggests this large-scale progression, which is representative of architectural music. He notes that “such long-range tonal plans occur too often in Berlioz’s music to be the result of pure chance.”¹²³ Movements One and Two represent the tonic, moving to a flat-VI in Movements Two and Three, the submediant in Movement Four, the supertonic in Movements Five and Six, the dominant in movement Seven, and an extended tonic area in Movements Eight through Ten.¹²⁴ The distinct key areas support the programmatic divisions of the Requiem into the Day of Judgment, uncertainty of salvation, and the ascent to Heaven. Berlioz’s Romantic interpretation of the Roman Catholic requiem tradition extended through the text-setting, imagery, orchestration, form, key areas, and harmonic structure to create a first-person experience that was both secular and spiritual. These elements and central questions will be addressed further in the following chapter, in which I summarize my main arguments and present a conclusion.

¹²³ Ibid.
¹²⁴ Ibid.
Example 6. Hector Berlioz, *Grande messe des morts, Rex tremendae*, mm. 97-110
Example 6, continued.
CONCLUSIONS

“I have not the least wish either to appear before God book in hand as the best
of men, or to write ‘Confessions.’ I shall say only what I choose to say.”¹

Berlioz’s 1836 commission was set by the French Minister of the Interior, Comte Adrien
de Gasparin, to return sacred music to an elevated position in France and honor the victims of the
1830 Revolution. Berlioz presented a work that was more theatrical than sacred and more
centralized on the individual than the divine. His own patriotism won him the commission and
inspired him to include orchestration and scoring that resonated with French political culture at
this time. The French Revolution left in its wake a country of people who were eager to return to
religion but also retained their pro-revolution patriotism. The fierce individualism of the
Requiem resonated with France’s post-revolutionary audiences and was heralded as a work of the
nation, representative of its citizens, and its composer.

Berlioz’s Requiem is representative of a spiritual and psychological journey, utilizing a
first-person perspective to create a psychological and programmatic journey of the Day of
Judgment, the period of uncertainty preceding the hope of eternal rest, and a musical depiction of
Heaven. This Romantic interpretation of the Roman Catholic requiem both utilizes and expands
upon tradition. The traditional text comprised most of the text setting, but Berlioz provided a
Romantic interpretation by altering and arranging the text to present the maximum amount of
imagery. The Requiem may reveal Berlioz’s philosophy on the importance of the individual, a
position that is based upon secular artistic philosophy.

Berlioz created the *Requiem* in the context of his own complex relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Barzun, Bloom, Citron, and Heidberger agree that the *Requiem* does not represent the work of an adherent Catholic (although Catholic interpretations are possible). Berlioz did not aim to set a traditional requiem, but one that used the Latin text as poetry rather than as an unchangeable text. This concept of sacred texts as literature resonated with Romantic artists, and Berlioz exemplified the practice. Many of Berlioz’s contemporaries continued to set the requiem text conservatively, which further highlights the *Requiem* as an innovative Romantic interpretation. However, the labyrinthine quality of his relationship with the Church is retained by positive memories of his Catholic past, as well as his knowledge in the power of religious ceremonies, sacred music, and ecclesiastical ritual. In consequence, the *Requiem* is open to many interpretations and draws from many influences, so that it, too, becomes complex and ambiguous, and is representative of Berlioz’s aesthetic and political views, as well as those of his audience.

Berlioz did not intentionally model his *Requiem* on Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*, but Edward Cone posits that the *Requiem* imitates Dante’s prose in several ways. Dante’s book is characterized by a visceral first-person perspective in which the reader experiences the descent to Hell and the slow, but glorious assent to Paradise. The works share structural similarities and it is not unreasonable that Berlioz’s bibliophilic imagination created a requiem complimentary to Dante’s work. These connections to not appear to be conscious or intentional but can be argued through the structure and psychological nature of each work.

I believe that Berlioz’s requiem was inspired by his worship of human genius and celebrates the individual. The alternation of movements seems to be in service of his narrative, in which large-scale orchestration is partnered with the texts representative of Hell, and the smaller
movements show man's struggle to find God (such as in *Quaerens me*) and his eventual ascent to a heaven, (such as in the *Sanctus*). His adult agnosticism, in combination with his Catholic childhood, patriotism, and literary enthusiasm, along with the political and cultural attitudes of both France and the Romantic era, amalgamate to form a fiercely individual composition.

The *Requiem* is open to other interpretations that support Christian, humanistic, secular, and agnostic interpretations, which is perhaps an affirmation of its aesthetic value, among other qualities. It seems unlikely that the *Requiem* will ever be fully understood by scholars and much research remains with this topic. The *Requiem* could be examined in greater detail for adherence to the Roman Catholic requiem tradition and how the work expands or departs from the tradition. A greater amount of contextual knowledge would be required to fully understand what position the work holds in the history of the genre, and a large number of requiems would need to be examined for comparison. A larger discussion of Berlioz’s sacred works could also be beneficial to understanding the *Requiem*, especially *Te Deum* and *L’enfance du Christ*. While there is a great deal of room for future scholarship on this work, I believe the evidence I presented supports the concept of a Romantic interpretation of the requiem tradition that embodies Berlioz’s aesthetics and politics as a statement of secular artistic philosophy.
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APPENDIX A

Thirteenth-Century Requiem Text and Translation

Introit
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Te decet hymnus Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
You shall have praise in Zion, O God,
and homage shall be paid to you in Jerusalem.

Exaudi orationem meam.
Ad te omnis caro veniet.
Hear my prayer.
All flesh shall come to you.

Requiem aeternam defunctis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Grant the departed eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Kyrie eleison;
Christe eleison;
Kyrie eleison.
Lord have mercy;
Christ have mercy;
Lord have mercy.

Sequence
Dies iræ, dies illa,
solvet sæculum in favilla,
teste David cum Sibylla.
That day, that day of wrath
shall consume the world in ashes,
as foretold by David and the Sibyl.

Quantus tremor est futurus,
quando judex est venturus,
cuncta stricte discussurus!
What trembling there shall be
when the judge shall come
to weigh everything strictly.

Tuba mirum spargens sonum
per sepulchra regionum
coget omnes ante thronum.
The trumpet, scattering its awesome sound
across the grave of all lands,
summons all before the throne.

Mors stupebit et natura,
cum resurget creatura
judicanti responsura.
Death and nature shall be stunned
when mankind arises
to render account before the judge.

Liber scriptus proferetur
in quo totum continetur
unde mundus judicetur.
The written book shall be brought
in which all is contained
whereby the world shall be judged.

Judex ergo cum sedebit
When the Judge takes his seat,

---

quidquid latet, apparebit: all that is hidden shall appear,
nil inultum remanebit. nothing will remain unavenged.

Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? What shall I, a wretch, say then?
quem patronum rogaturus, to which protector shall I appeal
cum vix justus sit securus? when even the just man is barely safe?

Rex tremendæ majestatis, King of awful majesty,
qui salvandos salvas gratis, you freely save those worthy of deliverance,
salva me, fons pietatis. save me, fount of pity.

Recordare, Jesu pie, Remember, gentle Jesus,
quod sum causa tuæ viæ, that I am the reason for your time on earth,
ne me perdas illa die. do not forsake me on that day.

Quærens me, sedisti lassus, Seeking me, you sat down wearily,
redemisti Crucem passus, you saved me by enduring the cross,
tantus labor non sit cassus. may such labor not be in vain.

Juste judex ultionis, Righteous judge of vengeance,
donum fac remissionis award the gift of forgiveness
ante diem rationis. before the day of reckoning.

Ingemisco, tamquam reus: I groan, sinner that I am:
culpa rubet vultus meus, you can read my guilt,
supplicanti parce, Deus. O God, spare the supplicant.

Qui Mariam absolvisti You who pardoned Mary Magdalene
et latronem exaudisti, and heeded the thief
mihi quoque spem dedisti. have given me hope as well.

Preces meæ non sunt dignæ, My prayers are not worthy,
sed tu bonus fac benigne, but you, who are good, in pity
ne perenni cremer igne. let me not burn in the eternal fire.

Inter oves locum præsta, Give me a place among the sheep,
et ab hædis me sequestra, and separate me from the goats,
statuens in parte dextra. let me stand at your right hand.

Confutatis maledictis, From the convicted and accurst,
flammis acribus addictis, consigned to the searing flames,
voca me cum benedictis. call me with the blessed.

Oro supplex et acclinis, Bowed down in supplication I beg you,
cor contritum quasi cinis, my contrite heart as if ground to ashes,
gere curam mei finis. help me in my last condition.
Lacrimosa, dies illa, 
quae resurget ex favilla 
judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce, Deus:

Pie Jesu Domine, 
dona eis requiem aeternam.

Offertory
Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae, 
libera animas
omnia fidelium deunctorum
de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.
Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas Tartarum,
ne cadant in obscumur;
se signifer sanctus Michael
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti
et semini ejus.

Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, 
laudis offerimus;
tu suscipe pro animabus illis,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
Fac eas, Domine, de morte
transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti
et semini ejus.

Sanctus
Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth;
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Communion
Lux aeternam luceat eis,
Domine, cum sanctis tuis
in aeternam, quia pius es.
Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis,
cum Sanctis tuis in aeternam,
quia pius es. Amen

grant them rest.

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
grant them rest.

Lamb of God, who take away the sins of the world,
grant them eternal rest.

May everlasting light shine upon them,
O Lord, with your saints forever,
for you are kind.
Grant them eternal rest,
O Lord, and may everlasting light shine upon them,
with your Saints forever,
for you are merciful. Amen.
## APPENDIX B

Berlioz’s *Requiem* Text Setting Compared to the Traditional Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Text</th>
<th>Berlioz’s Setting¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introit</strong></td>
<td><strong>I Introitus: Requiem et Kyrie</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te decet hymnus Deus, in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.</td>
<td>Te decet hymnus Deus, in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaudi orationem meam. Ad te omnis caro veniet.</td>
<td>Exaudi orationem meam. ad te omnis caro veniet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrie eleison; Christe eleison; Kyrie eleison.</td>
<td>Kyrie eleison; Christe eleison; Kyrie eleison.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sequence</strong></th>
<th><strong>II Dies irae</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dies iræ, dies illa, solvet sæculum in favilla, teste David cum Sibylla.</td>
<td>1. Dies iræ, dies illa, solvet sæculum in favilla . . . [teste David cum Sibylla.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quantus tremor est futurus, quando judex est venturus, cuncta stricte discussurus!</td>
<td>2. Quantus tremor est futurus, quando judex est venturus, quantus tremor-dies iræ-dies illa quando judex, quando judex venturus, quantus, quantus tremor! quando judex, dies illa, quando judex est futurus, cuncta stricte discussurus!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulchra regionum,</td>
<td>3. Tuba mirum spargens sonum per sepulchra [regionum.]²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Note: Omissions are indicated by brackets. All other changes (additional words, changed order of words or verses, and repeated verses) are underlined. Repeated words are not noted, as this is common in requiem text settings.
coget omnes ante thronum.   \(\textit{tuba, tuba, coget omnes, coget ante thronum.}\)

4. Mors stupebit et natura, cum resurget creatura, judicanti responsura.  
   \(\textit{4. Mors stupebit et natura, cum resurget creatura, judicanti responsura.}\)

5. Liber scriptus proferetur, in quo totum continetur, unde mundus judicetur.  
   \(\textit{5. Liber scriptus proferetur, in quo totum continetur, unde mundus judicetur.}\)

   \(\textit{6. Judex ergo cum sedebit, quidquid latet, apparebit, nil inultum remanebit.}\)

III Quid sum miser

7. Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? quem patronum rogaturus, cum vix justus sit securus?  
   \(\textit{7. Quid sum miser tunc dicturus? quem patronum rogaturus, cum vix justus sit securus?}\)

9. Recordare, Jesu pie, quod sum causa tuæ viæ: ne me perdas illa die.  
   \(\textit{9. Recordare, Jesu pie, quod sum causa tuæ viæ: ne me perdas illa die.}\)

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

IV Rex tremendæ

8. Rex tremendæ majestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis, salva me, fons pietatis.  
   \(\textit{8. Rex tremendæ majestatis, qui salvandos salvas gratis, salva me, fons pietatis}\)

9. Recordare, Jesu pie, quod sum causa tuæ viæ: ne me perdas illa die.  
   \(\textit{9. Recordare, Jesu pie, quod sum causa tuæ viæ: ne me perdas illa die.}\)

\(\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\) “Regionum” (lands) is restored to the text when the verse repeats at measure 169.
96

16. Confutatis maledictis, Jesu³
flammis aceribus addictis,
voca me [cum benedictis.]

. . . et de profundo lacu.⁴
Libera me [eas]⁵
Libera me [eas] de ore leonis,⁶
ne cadam in obscurnum
ne absorbeat me Tartarus.

8. Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
salva me, salva me, salva me, fons pietis.⁷
Rex tremendae majestatis,
salva me, salva me, salva me, fons pietis.

V Quaerens me

10. Quaerens me, sedisti lassus,
redemisti Crucem passus,
tantus labor non sit cassus.

11. Juste judex ultionis,
donum fac remissionis
ante diem rationis.

12. Ingemisco, tamquam reus:
culpa rubet vultus meus:
suppplicanti parce, Deus.

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

14. Preces meæ non sunt dignæ:
redemisti Crucem passus,
tantus labor non sit cassus.
ne perenni cremer igne.

10. Quaerens me, sedisti lassus,
redemisti Crucem passus,
tantus labor non sit cassus.

11. Juste judex ultionis,
donum fac remissionis
ante diem rationis.

12. Ingemisco, tamquam reus:
culpa rubet vultus meus:
suppplicanti parce, Deus.

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

³ “Jesu” (Jesus) is Berlioz’s addition.
⁴ Lines 4-6 of the Offertory. Berlioz’s addition.
⁵ “Libera me” (deliver me) is Berlioz’s addition.
⁶ Note that the original reads “libera eas” (deliver them).
⁷ Repetition of “salva me” (save me) noted due to its role in the textual analysis presented in Chapter 4.
⁸ Verses 10 and 14 are sung simultaneously, which creates polytextuality.
14. Preces meæ non sunt dignæ,  
    sed tu bonus fac benigne,  
    ne perenni cremer igne.  

15. Inter oves locum præsta,  
    et ab hædis me sequestra,  
    statuens in parte dextra.  

16. Confutatis maledictis,  
    flammis acribus addectis,  
    voca me cum benedictis.  

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

18. Lacrymosa dies illa,  
    Qua resurget ex favilla  
    Judicandus homo reus.  
    Huic ergo parce, Deus:  

    Pie Jesu Domine,  
    dona eis requiem. Amen.  

**Offertory**

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,  
libera animas omnium fidelium  
deunctorum  
de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.  
Libera eas de ore leonis,  
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,  
ne cadant in obscurum;  
sed signifer sanctus Michael  
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam,  
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti  
et semini ejus.  

**VII Offertorium**

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,  
libera animas omnium fidelium  
deunctorum  
de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.  
Libera eas de ore leonis,  
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,  
ne cadant in obscurum;  
et sanctus Michael signifer  
repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam,  
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti  
et semini ejus.  
Domine Jesu Christe! Amen.
Hostias

Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus;
tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam.
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini ejus.

VIII Hostias

Hostias et preces tibi, [Domine,]
laudis offerimus;
[tu] suscipe pro animabus illis, quarum hodie memoriam facimus.
[Fac eas, Domine, de morte]
[transire ad vitam.]
[Quam olim Abrahae promisisti]
[et semini ejus.]

Hostias et preces tibi laudis offerimus.
Suscipe pro animabus illus,
quarum hodie memoriam facimus.

Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth;
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

IX Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
[Domini] Deus Sabaoth;
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

[Benedictus qui venit]
in nomine Domini.
[Hosanna in excelsis.]

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.

X Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem sempiternam.

tea decet hymnus Deus, in Sion, et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.

Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Requiem aeternam dona defunctis Domine.
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Communion
Lux aeternam luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis
in aeternam, quia pius es.

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

Requiem aeternam dona defunctis Domine. ⁹
[cum sanctis tuis]
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, Domine,
quia pius es, Amen.

⁹ Berlioz appears to have restructured the Latin to suit his musical syntax.