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Student Ensemble: Requiem

Karyl K. Carlson, Conductor

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Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts
School of Music

REQUIEM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Concert Choir

Chamber Orchestra

Karyl K. Carlson, *Conductor*

Sarah Fallon, Soprano

Jenelle Hicks, Mezzo-soprano

Nathan Henry, Tenor

Mitchell Belusko, Bass

Center for the Performing Arts
March 1, 2012
Thursday Evening
8:00 p.m.

This is the one hundred and eighth program of the 2011-2012 season.

Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

REQUIEM, KV 626

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756- 1791)

I. Introitus Requiem

II. Kyrie

III. Sequenz

1. Dies irae
2. Tuba mirum
3. Rex tremendae
4. Recordare
5. Confutatis
6. Lacrimosa

IV. Offertorium

1. Domine Jesu
2. Hostias

V. Sanctus

VI. Benedictus

VII. Agnus Dei

VIII. Communio Lux Aeterna

Two contrasting homophonic theme sections are bridged by running string lines and woodwind sparks that ignite a pounding chromatic motif on *quantus tremor est futurus* (how great the trembling will be).

The next movement, *Tuba mirum*, uses cantabile trombone and bass soloist to spread the wondrous sound of the Last Judgement. The bass's solo melody uses the pitches available on a natural horn to accompany the singing of the trombone. This "awakens" three more singers who each make a statement and then engage in Enlightened discourse. The *Rex tremendae* movement uses French Baroque features with its royal double-dotted inegales rhythm and strict alternation of register and dynamics. Mozart borrowed the elegant *empfindsamer stil* fugue of *Recordare* from W.F. Bach's *Sinfonia in D minor*, successfully inserting this very galant texture (complete with dance cadences) as a vocal piece within a funeral memorial!

Mozart paraphrased his own *25th Symphony* in the *Confutatis* movement by using the final theme for men and wind instruments over a furious Italian roulade figure in the strings; this contrasts with women who sing with a gentle violin descant. The chorus and orchestra reunite in one of the most complex yet effortless harmonic journeys of the 18th Century, traveling through seven key areas before arriving at the final section of the Sequence prayer, *Lacrimosa*. Mozart attempted to complete *Lacrimosa* on the day he died, and the string figures have been described as crying or falling tears. Word painting aside, it is certainly one of the most emotional pieces ever written.

Domine Jesu Christe is the *barocca* (oddly-shaped pearl) of this Requiem. It begins much like a German concerted chorus, observing strict binary arrangement of dynamics, register, and musical forces. Further sections offer a choral fugue *Ne absorbeat*, then the original theme in a fugue for soloists *Sed signifer* followed by another fugal section *Quam olim Abraha*. Mozart creates subjects and countersubjects using the most modern intervallic modification while maintaining a perfect Baroque chorale fantasia. This movement is partnered with *Hostias*, a courtly minuet complete with ritornelli and hemiola dance cadences.

The *Sanctus* is the only truly joyful part of a requiem. Mozart makes his *Sanctus* decoratively elegant yet symphonic while using modern techniques like gradual dynamics. It is followed by a unique Hosanna fugue; Mozart demonstrates strict invertible counterpoint along with Romantic piling up of subjects in the stretto. The ensuing *Benedictus* is an operatic double duet, a tour de force of musical conversation amid solo lines and suave orchestral accompaniment.

The *Agnus Dei* utilizes rich harmonic content and emotional accompaniment over an old fashioned walking bass, contrasted with soft and simple a cappella sections. The movement transitions to the final Communion through an eerie chromatic deconstruction (*requiemsempiternam*) recalling Mozart's own *Dissonant Quartet*. This very modern bridge ends at the final two movements which are a musical repeat of the first two movements as well as a final homage to Baroque sensibilities of structural symmetry in music. ----Richard Gard

Program Notes

The *Requiem* is a special work within the output of Mozart for several reasons. It is well known that the work was secretly commissioned by Count Walsegg to be used for the first anniversary of Countess Walsegg's death. It is also oft-reported that Mozart died before he could complete the Requiem and that his widow, Constanze, desperately worked to have Mozart's students secretly finish the piece so she could collect the fee from Count Walsegg. It is also widely known that Mozart became convinced of his early mortality while working on the Requiem, and that it would become his own funeral music.

Due to his early death, this work and his opera, *The Magic Flute*, represent Mozart at his most mature musically. They may be his finest works, at least in terms of his compositional processes and craftsmanship if not in absolute artistic splendor. There is a definite sense of summing up in the way that Mozart uses the *Requiem* and *The Magic Flute* to showcase the variety of styles and musical conceits at his disposal, much like what Heinrich Schütz had done more than 150 years earlier when commissioned to write a funeral service for a prince. It may also be that Mozart recalled and reused music that was most memorable to him in the circumstance of his dreadful suffering and illness.

The *Requiem* begins with the core melodic idea in the bassoon; this line is a chorale melody (When my final hour is at hand) that was also used by Händel (funeral anthem *The ways of Zion do mourn* in an orchestral texture very similar to Mozart's *Introit* movement. Mozart's usage of this older material retains the embedded meanings of these two mournful texts while modernizing it in the Viennese international orchestral style. Mozart adds a soprano solo *Te decet hymnus* using a bit of Gregorian chant that had been utilized as the melody by Michael Haydn in his *Requiem* (which Mozart had sang as a young man), but instead of making it a melody over a simple accompaniment Mozart layers the chant fragment with all of his preceding introit motives.

Mozart returned to another work by Händel *Dettingen Anthem* for his *Kyrie*; Mozart shows his contrapuntal genius in working a strict Handelian choral fugue. To complete the archaic feeling of this movement Mozart cadences on empty fifths instead of full chord.

Mozart started working first on the *Dies irae* section of the *Requiem* as this fearfully dramatic text is the focus of every concert-type requiem (an Austrian tradition possibly started by Michael Haydn).

Mozart divided the twenty stanzas of the *Dies irae* poem into six musical sections so he could vary the textures, musical forces, and style features while setting the different images of the text. The opening movement uses all available forces in driving symphonic style.