

Requiem Aeternam

For many years it was received wisdom that, while Mozart had left most of the Requiem with only the choral parts and the figured bass finished with occasional indications of important accompanimental motifs ‘here and there’,¹ he had completed all the instrumentation of the first movement, both the *Requiem aeternam* and *Kyrie* sections. It was Leopold Nowak who challenged this wisdom in his article ‘Wer hat die Instrumental-stimmen in der Kyrie-Fuge des Requiem von W.A. Mozart geschrieben?’² by suggesting that, because of the transposing errors in the orchestration of the *Kyrie* fugue, it is unlikely that it was done by Mozart himself.³ Nowak goes on to say ‘Compared to Mozart’s normal handwriting in the choral parts and the orchestral bass, the rest of these pages look almost “sick”.’ While this is a somewhat subjective statement as far as relating the differences to Mozart’s ill health (and strange in an article whose very premise was that Mozart didn’t write the staves in question), his analysis of the different shapes of the natural sign is persuasive.

Nowak proposed that the task was actually undertaken by Franz Jacob Freystädler (1761–1841)—strings and woodwinds—and Süssmayr—trumpets and timpani—both of whose handwriting was very similar to Mozart’s. He shows that Mozart generally made his natural signs with two strokes, an italic capital *L* with a single downstroke; Süssmayr’s are often more like a flat sign with a downstroke that might be either straight or slightly curved (my description, not Nowak’s); while Freystädler’s, he posits, often have a ‘hook’ at the bottom of the stroke, upward and to the right, almost like a mirror image *J*. While the notes themselves are quite similar to Mozart’s hand, the naturals are distinctive, although, as Maunder notes,⁴ none of the three shapes is used with one hundred percent consistency. More recently, in his article “Freystädler’s Supposed Copying in the autograph of K. 626: A Case of Mistaken Identity”⁵, Michael Lorenz has gone further than that and made a persuasive case that it is not the work of Freystädler, but an as yet unidentified hand.

¹ Letter from Süssmayr to Breitkopf and Härtel, 8 February, 1800

² *Mozart Jahrbuch* (1973-74): 191-201

³ See also Franz Beyer, W. A. Mozart Requiem, Edition Kunzelmann, 1979, foreword p. 13

⁴ Richard Maunder, *Mozart’s Requiem: On Preparing a New Edition*, Oxford, 1988, p. 125-6

⁵ <http://michaelorenz.blogspot.com/2013/08/freystadtlers-supposed-copying-in.html>, dated August 21, 2013, accessed February 2016.

Beyer corroborates the transposing errors (twenty-one by his count⁶) and while he correctly posits that Mozart would be incapable of such errors, he doesn't point out that all the mistakes occur on a single note—F—which is consistently, but not always, notated a semitone too low: F natural when it should be F sharp (sounding B natural), and even occasionally F flat when it should read F natural, (sounding B flat). In each case, whoever wrote the part simply copied the same accidental that was in the soprano part. Strangely enough, the same errors are not in the *Cum sanctis* fugue at the end of the work: most of them have been corrected, but sadly some new ones introduced—all again on the same pitch, F. Only three are uncorrected.

There are also other handwriting clues that suggest non-Mozartian authorship. Unrelated to musical notation, Mozart's usual preference when writing an upper case 'A' (as in 'Adagio', or 'Andante') was to write a pointed, triangular A, as is clearly seen throughout the autograph, for example the 'Adagio' tempo indication on the first page of the score; each time he writes Alto against their staff at the beginning of each movement; and the 'Allegro' tempo marking—abbreviated to All^o (note how the final 'o' of the abbreviation is in superscript and underlined—below the bottom Organo staff at the beginning of the *Kyrie* fugue, to name but a few.⁷ All of these are unquestionably in Mozart's hand. By contrast, in the instrumental lines of the orchestrated passages of the *Kyrie*, a rounded, 'cursive' A—like a larger font lower case 'a'—is used, for example in the abbreviation 'allo' written over the second violin staff at the opening of the *Kyrie* fugue: note how here the final 'o' is neither in superscript or underlined:

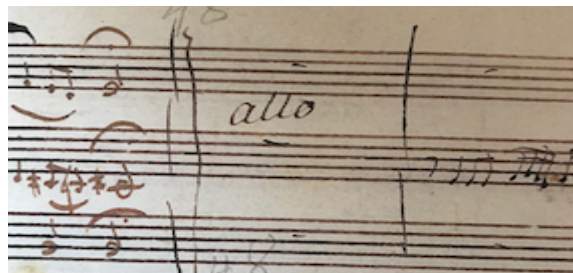


Fig. 1

This distinction can also be seen very clearly in the final 'Adagio' tempo indication, where Mozart's customary handwriting over the soprano and tenor staves has the characteristic pointed 'A' (and 'delta shaped' lower case 'd'), whereas the same word above the viola and basset horn staves has the rounded 'a':⁸

⁶ Beyer, p, 14

⁷ The autograph of *Die Zauberflöte* shows the same practice

⁸ It should be noted that the "Adagio" over the violins has a pointed 'A' but in the lighter ink, so the possibility that the string parts are by Süssmayr himself cannot be ruled out

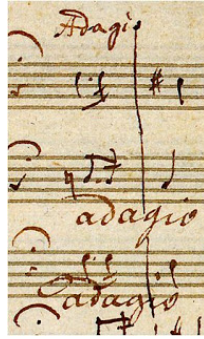


Fig. 2

Throughout the rest of the autograph there is not a single occurrence of a rounded ‘a’. Since the instances of the rounded ‘a’s appear only over the string and wind parts of the *Kyrie* fugue, this observation supports Nowak’s suggestion that those parts are not in Süßmayr’s hand,⁹ since Süßmayr was generally extremely careful to imitate Mozart’s handwriting, using the pointed ‘A’ throughout the score that was eventually handed to Count Walsegg.

While Nowak’s article suggested that the Requiem was even more incomplete on his death than had been believed up to that point, it was still received wisdom that the orchestration of the *Requiem aeternam* was by Mozart himself. As Beyer states unequivocally in the foreword to his 1979 edition of the Requiem: ‘The *Introitus* is Mozart’s composition throughout.’¹⁰ He goes on to refer to the often quoted letter of February 8th, 1800 from Süßmayr to Breitkopf & Härtel in which Süßmayr explained his contribution to the Requiem, with the assertion that Süßmayr ‘throws a dubious light on his own credibility, for he gives the impression that he also orchestrated the *Introitus* which Mozart had composed completely.’¹¹

...of the Requiem¹² including the *Kyrie* – *Dies Irae* – *Domine Jesu Christe* – Mozart completed the four vocal parts and the figured bass; of the instrumentation, however, he indicated only the motivic idea here and there.¹³

Why does it ‘throw a dubious light’? If Nowak is correct and the *Kyrie* fugue was indeed not orchestrated by Mozart, then Süßmayr knew that to be the case because he was part of the team that did the instrumentation:¹⁴ not only is his statement accurate, but it actually overstates Mozart’s contribution to the *Kyrie* orchestration, for which he left no hints at all. If Süßmayr’s

⁹ Like Lorenz, David Ian Black also contends that Freystädler’s authorship is not established. See Black, *Mozart and the practice of sacred music*, 1781-91, PhD thesis, Harvard, 2007, pp. 403–08

¹⁰ Beyer, p. 13

¹¹ Beyer, p. 10

¹² It is generally agreed that this means the opening *Requiem aeternam* movement

¹³ As translated in Wolff, p. 146 Doc. 17

¹⁴ The trumpets and timpani, according to Nowak.

description of the *Kyrie* fugue is accurate, the question arises inexorably whether it is also accurate for the *Requiem aeternam*.

It is a long overlooked, or at least under-reported, fact that neither in this letter, nor in all the copious correspondence inspired by the famous *Requiem-Streit* resulting from Gottfried Weber's poisonous article 'Über die Echtheit des Mozartschen Requiem' in 1825, does anybody ever state specifically that the *Requiem aeternam* and *Kyrie* were orchestrated by Mozart, even though, by reducing Süssmayr's contribution by four sections,¹⁵ it would have considerably strengthened their case. Even Stadler, who could easily have done so during the back and forth, goes out of his way to avoid saying so. It is surprising that more weight has not been given to his comment in his *Vertheidigung*:

The first movement, "Requiem" with the fugue, and the second, "Dies irae" up to "Lacrymosa", were *for the most part* orchestrated by Mozart himself.¹⁶

In describing it thus, Stadler corroborates Süssmayr's statement. Is it not strange, at a time when all were rallying to Constanze's defence and falling over themselves to emphasise how little Mozart left undone, that *everyone* failed to mention that the whole of the opening movement—and therefore also the conclusion of the work—was completed by Mozart?¹⁷ How easy it would have been for Süssmayr to say in his letter to Breitkopf & Härtel:

...of the Requiem - including the Kyrie - Mozart completed the four vocal parts, the figured bass and the orchestration. Of the Dies Irae – Domine Jesu Christe – he completed the four vocal parts and the figured bass only, of the instrumentation only the motivic idea here and there

or Stadler:

The first movement, "Requiem" with the fugue, were completely orchestrated by Mozart. The "Dies irae" up to "Lacrymosa", only for the most part.

They did not. The only explanation would seem to be that they knew that Mozart had not orchestrated the movements in question, and with this artful imprecision sidestepped a deliberate falsehood.

Nowak's assertion that Mozart did not orchestrate the *Kyrie* fugue is accepted by the scholarly community,¹⁸ but he did not ask whether there is any evidence to doubt the authorship

¹⁵ if one includes the repeat of the opening movements at the end of the work

¹⁶ As translated in Wolff, Doc. 22 p. 150 (my italics)

¹⁷ There is a comment in a letter by Stadler dated October 19th, 1828, (cf. Wolff, p. 171) which could be interpreted as implying that the *Requiem aeternam* was orchestrated by Mozart: '...and it would never have entered my head that Süssmayr could have laid a finger on even the smallest part of the "Requiem" up to the "Kyrie," where he continues with the instruments accompanying the voices as indicated by Mozart'. By 'up to the Kyrie' does he mean that Süssmayr orchestrated the Kyrie, or continued after the Kyrie?

¹⁸ although, as mentioned above, not everyone accepts the participation of Franz Jacob Freystädler as definitely established

of the orchestration of the *Requiem aeternam*. However, a detailed study of that movement suggests that reasons to doubt do indeed exist, so that, far from casting ‘a dubious light’ on Süssmayr’s credibility, Mozart’s part in the orchestration of the *Introitus* is most likely to have been exactly as Süssmayr described it. The silence of all the people involved in the early dissemination of the Requiem does nothing to dispel those doubts.

The opening of the *Requiem aeternam* displays great clarity of texture. The lengthy, fully orchestrated introduction, one of only two in Mozart’s torso, features interweaving contrapuntal lines in the basset horns and bassoons accompanied by four-part string writing. After they enter in bar 8, the chorus plays the central role. At that point the orchestration changes: the opening off-beat quaver rest-quaver pattern in the upper strings intensifies into a syncopated quaver-semiquaver octave leap *unisono* in the violins, and the violas, who had what could be called a ‘string quartet’ or *stile moderno* role in the three-voice off-beat chords, now change to a ‘baroque’ or *stile antico* role, doubling the orchestral bassi an octave higher. The text is a solemn prayer to God, and the falling octave motif has a sighing quality, amplifying the pathetic character of the music in an independent line, sometimes coinciding with the voices for a couple of beats, sometimes adding the notes in the figuring that are not in the vocal lines.

The second line of text switches the focus from earth-bound mourning to the perpetual light of heaven, so a new musical idea (and modulation to F major) is introduced in bar 15. All the instrumental functions change: the woodwinds answer the homophonic chords of the chorus’ “et lux perpetua” with block chords of their own (reminiscent of passages in *Die Zauberflöte*) and the strings have a unison falling arpeggio moving twice as fast, contrasting with the more static repeated notes of the rest of the texture.

There are a couple of interesting details of orchestration during this passage that will have implications for the passages where it is known that Süssmayr provided the instrumentation. First, is the wind writing in bar 17, in which the bassoons double the basset horns an octave lower, rather than the choral tenors and basses (as was Süssmayr’s usual practice):



Fig. 3

The second is the next bar, where the basset horns drop out, thus making their entry in bar 19 more effective for the fact that they sat out for a bar, and the bassoons double the harmonic

content of the soprano and tenor lines in bar 18 without following either part exactly. In fact, no chorus part has note-for-note doubling, in contrast to Süssmayr's 'default' setting:

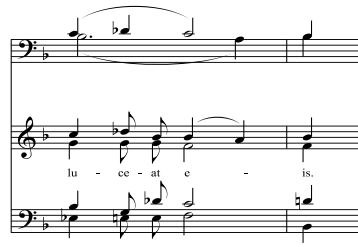


Fig. 4

This is one of Mozart's standard uses of the bassoon, again emphasizing not only his economy of means, but also how he maintains the independence of different timbres and registers. Bars 19–20 consolidate the modulation to B flat major, subtly changing the off-beat quaver pattern into a web of contrapuntal semiquavers which becomes the accompaniment for the soprano solo in bar 21 (and the alto countersubject 'dona eis requiem'). The Baroque influenced *stile antico* rendering of 'Requiem aeternam' has become Mozart's late period *stile moderno*: the organ is *tasto solo* and the basses drop out, the violas return to their 'string quartet' role.¹⁹

The chorus returns in bar 26 with "exaudi orationem meam" in G minor, and with the new text comes another change of texture, a return to *stile antico*. All the instrumental functions change back: the double basses and organ continuo return, the bassoons, which could have doubled the chorus bassi follow instead the orchestral bassi.²⁰ Interestingly, the violas, who could also have just doubled the orchestral bassi in a Baroque model, have their own line that completes the harmony. In this way, the bottom of the string texture parallels the top:



Fig. 5

As expected by now, in Mozart's *antico* scoring, the bassoons double the orchestral bassi *a2*, not the voices, and the basset horns, also in unison, fashion their own line that leads into the sopranos' continuation of the plainsong melody:

¹⁹ Note how the celli and violas move in thirds in measure 21-22, something for which Süssmayr has perhaps been unfairly criticized in his completion

²⁰ In accordance with the practice described by Johann Albrechtsberger in his treatise *Gründliche Anweisung zur Composition* (1790) 'Die Fagotte müssen mit dem Violon, wenn sie nichts obligates haben, einhergehen.' (p. 379)



Fig. 6

In this passage, *none of the other choral lines is doubled by the winds or strings*. It would seem that for Mozart support of the altos, tenors and basses by the trombones was sufficient, and the resulting clarity of texture, how the timbres and registers are kept quite distinct, is once again in contrast with the automatic doubling of the choral parts in so much of the rest of the traditional version.

Bars 32–33 reprise the bridge passage from bars 19–20, though now in the minor, introducing another fugal section, this time a double fugue with the original *Requiem aeternam* theme against a new melody (derived from the string accompaniment to the Soprano solo) to the text ‘*dona eis requiem*’. The octave sighing figure returns, further intensified by rising instead of falling, and the violas return to their Baroque function doubling the orchestral bass line:

Fig. 7

But then in measure 37, it all changes. Suddenly the violins’ sighing figure disappears, changing *in mid-phrase* to a doubling role that they have never had up to this point; the violas

double no-one, instead merely just fill in the harmony for a bar (with a suspicious-looking syncopated D) before changing role once more, again in the middle of the phrase, to double the tenors, which they too have never done before:

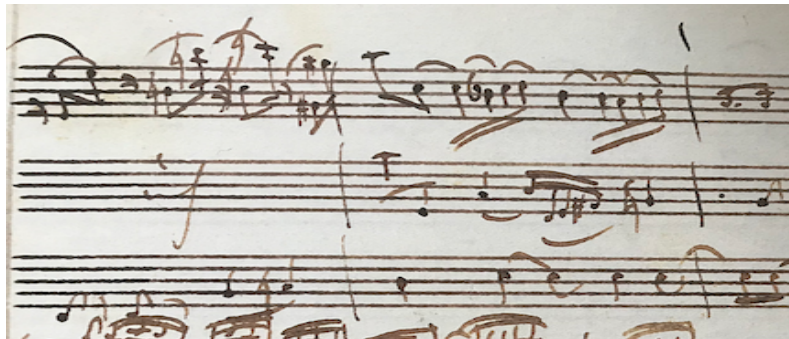


Fig. 8

This note for note doubling continues to the end of the section at measure 43, when the text ‘et lux perpetua’ is repeated with the same music as before. A *piano* three bar coda finishes the movement.

If some slips in transposition and minute differences in handwriting were enough to cause Nowak to challenge the authorship of the orchestration of the *Kyrie* fugue, surely a sudden change of compositional technique in the middle of a phrase might reasonably raise the same question? The orchestration of these bars is uncomfortably unique: in every other section the function of each group of instruments is very clear and consistent, never changing within the section. Everywhere else a change of function is due only to a change in character of the music, which is in turn dictated by the text. Not once did the strings follow the choral parts note for note as they do starting in bar 37 in the middle of a phrase. Why do the violas not follow the bassi, as they had done in comparable passages up to that point? Why does the rising, syncopated octave figure not continue to the cadence as it did in the parallel passage?

The circumstances are not hard to picture. We know, or at least it is supposed,²¹ that parts of the Requiem were performed during a solemn Mass at St. Michael’s church on December 10th, 1791, a mere five days after Mozart’s death. The only sections that could have been performed are the *Requiem aeternam* and *Kyrie*.²² Many authors have noted the haste with which any performing materials must therefore have been assembled. This was probably the reason why the instrumentation of the *Kyrie* fugue was written directly into Mozart’s autograph: there was simply

²¹ see David Ian Black, *Mozart and the practice of sacred music, 1781-91*, PhD thesis, Harvard, 2007 p. 377–97 and the discussion in the next chapter

²² Eybler began his work with the instrumentation of the next movement, the *Dies irae*, and did not receive the score until after this service at St Michael’s, around December 21st, 1791 when he signed a contract to that effect.

no time to make a clean copy of Mozart's manuscript, complete the instrumentation²³ and either write out the individual parts or have them made. With so little time can surely no-one could be blamed for taking the easiest path to ensure that at least some of the work was in a condition to be performed. While still suffering from grief and shock, and faced with six empty measures and very little time to think clearly, one can easily appreciate how the most expedient course was simply to double the voices.

If Mozart did not complete the orchestration from bar 37 to the end of the movement, what would this part of the autograph have looked like on December 6th? Since the choral parts and the basso continuo were obviously complete, only the instrumental staves would have been blank: from these and the cello figure in bar 43 (replicating bars 15–17), it would not have been too taxing to reverse engineer, as it were, bars 43–46, and then close out the movement with simple doubling. The kind of work this would require comes very close to what Stadler described as a task that could be left 'for an amanuensis to do'.

To generate string parts for bar 37 to the downbeat of bar 43 proved more complicated, however. Here the colour of the ink tells a story. The violins' octave figure is in the darker ink until bar 36, where it changes to a lighter ink on the second beat (see Fig. 8 above). After three beats in the lighter ink, it is abandoned altogether: is this the result of a second mind trying to continue an *aide-mémoire*, but running out of ideas, or time, or both, after only three beats? There are some other interesting anomalies about this motif. In bars 8–14, the majority of the octave jumps are written with 'reverse' stems between the upper and lower notes:



Fig.9

Until bar 14, Mozart is consistent in writing all the octave leaps in this way except for the jump down to the low A (bar 9) and from high D and E (bar 8, 12 and 14). His only inconsistency is the A in bar 14, which he writes with both stems down where they are usually reverse stem. However, in bar 37, after the reverse stem E in the dark ink, the stems on the B natural, C and G sharp, which one would expect to be reverse stem, are written in the same direction:



Fig. 10

²³ As Black has pointed out, the realised organ part for portions of the *Requiem aeternam* and *Kyrie* fugues found among Süßmayr's papers may well be attached to the *Lux aeterna* and *Cum sanctis* fugues rather than the opening, and are of a paper type that suggest they cannot be associated with the December 10th service (Black, p. 397–402)

Every other octave leap from G to G in the movement is written with reverse stem. Is it a coincidence that the change in calligraphy happens at the same point as the change in ink colour and orchestrational technique in bar 37? These observations and arguments lead me to believe that the instrumentation of this passage cannot be by Mozart.

In the present edition, the violins continue the syncopated rising octave figure starting at the point where the doubling of the voices starts in the traditional version. Analysis of bars 9–14 reveals that the line mostly follows an internal voice in the chorus (from the last note of measure 9 all but three beats double either alto or tenor, the soprano only once and never the bass): following this model, a similar line has been constructed from bar 37 that rises pleasingly to the cadence at measure 43 (as it had in the equivalent point in bar 15):

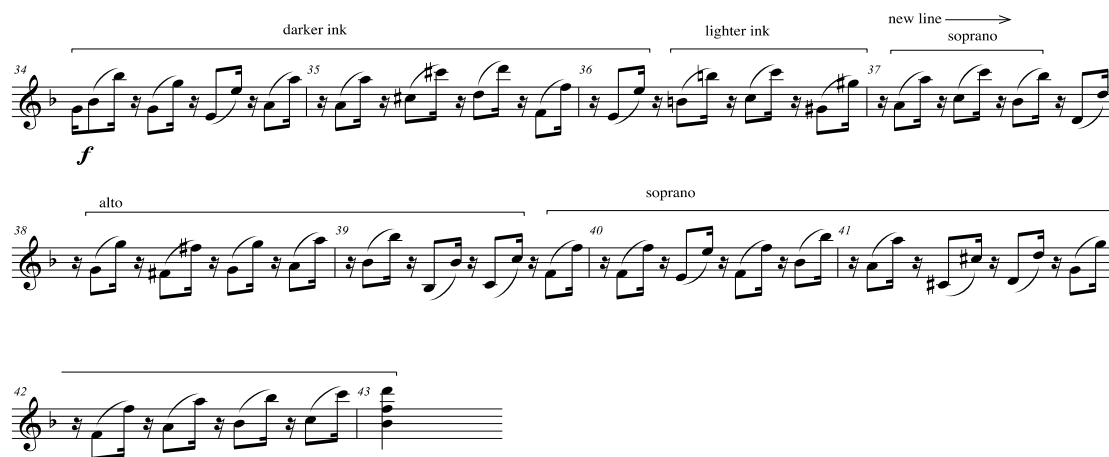


Fig. 11

If the situation is as I have suggested and there is good reason to doubt the authorship of the orchestration of the *Requiem aeternam* from bar 37 to the end of the movement, then it follows inexorably that all of the orchestration after the entry of the chorus (i.e. the end of the introduction) should not automatically be assumed to be by Mozart. In his usual working method, he would only return to a draft to undertake all the instrumentation once the main building blocks were in place and the composition was more or less fixed in his mind.²⁴ Orchestration was a single, organic process with a rigorous logic and consistency. It is therefore unlikely that he would abandon the instrumentation half-way through the process. The orchestration of bars 8-37 deserves close examination, one that I believe reveals that there are indeed sufficient inconsistencies and questions to suggest that the orchestration of the *Requiem aeternam* may not have had a single author.

²⁴ as the comments in his letters about “Stadler’s Rondo” and Act I of *Die Zauberflöte* testify

Franz Beyer observes that Mozart did indeed follow his usual working methods, and that the stages can be observed in the differences in ink colour. The first stage, in a ‘jet-black, Indian-type ink’ (with slightly thinner strokes²⁵) includes the choral parts, the basso continuo and some, but not all, of the connecting orchestral figures. The second, in a lighter, ‘greyish-green’ ink (with slightly thicker strokes) completes the orchestration and includes indications such as the standard abbreviations for ‘col 1^o’ or ‘col basso’. It is impossible to know how long after the primary act of notating the choral portions this secondary process took place, but since the choral parts of the following *Kyrie* fugue that continues on the same page are in the darker ink and thinner strokes of the first phase, it was presumably after its conclusion. Beyer does not, however, address the possibility that this second phase of the *Requiem aeternam*, like that of the *Kyrie*, might not have been undertaken by Mozart any more than Nowak did. Neither of them asked the question: why would Mozart spend time on instrumentation when so much of the *Requiem* was not yet sufficiently fixed in his mind to warrant committing it to paper?

The discussion of the orchestration of bars 37 to the end was premised on the change in orchestration technique and ink colour occurring at the same point. There are other observations arising from what is written in the different ink colours that also pose interesting questions. Mozart was quite meticulous in the opening pages of the movement in notating when a particular line was played by a single wind instrument: the number always written first, with the usual abbreviations—1^{mo} and 2^{do} (with the abbreviations in superscript)—for primo and secundo—then the instrument name followed by a colon, the whole usually underlined where there is room.²⁶ He always used a ‘delta’ shaped ‘d’ in 2^{do}. (see Fig. 12 a). However, in bar 34 the second basset horn in lighter ink is indicated by ‘2do’ but not with a ‘delta’ ‘d’, and the first bassoon in bar 35 as ‘1mo’ but with the ‘mo’ not in superscript. Neither have colons or underlining.²⁷ (see Fig. 12b)

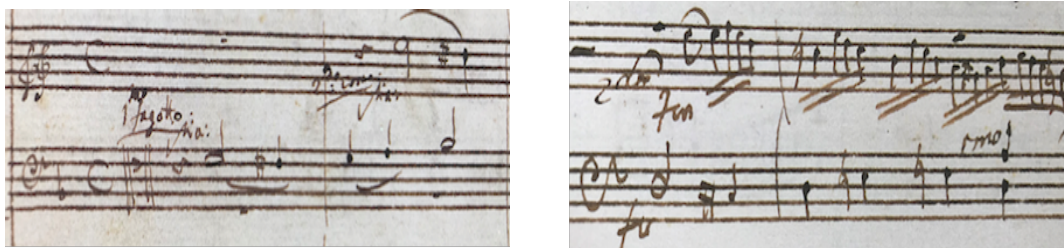


Fig. 12 a and b

²⁵ the observations on the thickness of the pen strokes are mine, not Beyer’s

²⁶ for the indication ‘1^{mo}’ at the first basset horn entry in bar 3 there wasn’t room and there is no underlining

²⁷ In the *Kyrie* we see ‘Cor 2^{do}’—i.e. the instrument name first, not the number—which we see again in Süssmayr’s *Lux aeterna*, reinforcing the theory that the orchestration is not in Mozart’s hand.

Mozart was also quite particular about using ‘for:’ for *forte* and ‘pia:’ for *piano* instead of *f* and *p*, and always followed them with a colon²⁸ unless there really was no room to do so. With the first entry of the bassoons in bar 9, in lighter ink, the dynamic marking is ‘f.’ not ‘for:’ One often sees ‘f.’ in Süßmayr’s score. It should be pointed out, however, that in bar 32, where the non-Mozartian variances in ‘2do’ and 1mo’ appear, just as it seemed a pattern might be emerging, the dynamic is given as ‘for:’, Mozart’s usual way of writing it. However, the designation ‘for:’ is also not infrequently used by Süßmayr in his completion, as well as in his own works.

More closely related to Nowak’s observations in the *Kyrie* orchestration are several cases of differences in the shape of how the naturals are written, all of which occur in passages in the lighter ink. The first occurs on the fourth beat of bar 9 in the first bassoon, which has a ‘flat’ type natural, observed frequently in the *Kyrie* instrumentation where it has the appearance of a flat sign with a downstroke added. This natural is formed quite differently from the B naturals in the first violin part immediately above.²⁹ Other instances of this shape of natural appear in bar 20 (bassoons) and bar 35 and 37 (basset horns and bassoons). There is even a ‘hooked’ natural in the second bassoon in bar 13, fourth beat: if Nowak’s logic is to be followed, this would mean that Freystädler is a candidate for some of the orchestration of this movement. However, there are also several hooked naturals in the *Lux aeterna* and *Cum sanctis* of Süßmayr’s score.³⁰

Another curiosity is the placement of a couple of ties in the first basset horn part. Whereas Mozart nearly always put slurs below the note head irrespective of what direction the stems were facing, he is generally very careful to write the ties above the note heads for first instruments and underneath for the second. By contrast, bars 20 and 37 have ties for the first basset horn that go underneath, occasionally making it hard to see:

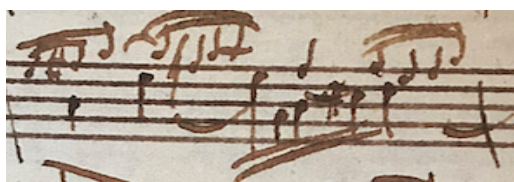


Fig. 13

²⁸ Sometimes in the choral parts he will write *f*: or *p*: for the alto and tenor parts but ‘for:’ or ‘pia:’ for soprano and bass, especially where space was an issue, for example in the *Domine Deus* with its sudden switches between loud and soft.

²⁹ It should be remembered that the strings were written at the top of Mozart’s score, not below the winds and brass as in the modern practice.

³⁰ There are only a very few instances of ‘hooked’ naturals in Mozart’s handwriting, (for example in the continuo part of bar 34 of the *Kyrie*) but in each case the rest of the natural is formed as he usually did, with the capital *L* stroke rather than the more rounded *b*: it looks more as if, writing in haste, his pen simply didn’t come up in time as his hand moved on.

In bar 8 it looks as if whoever did the orchestration had a change of mind. The first bassoon D is double stemmed, and until the second beat of bar 10, each top note has both up and down stems as if the original idea was for both bassoons to play the first note of the basses and then follow the tenor line, also together (note the two ties over the first bar line):

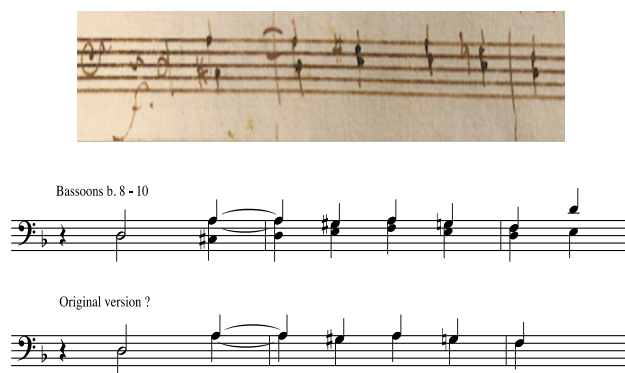


Fig. 14

It seems unlikely that Mozart would start notating an idea before the function of each part was clear in his mind. True, there are corrections in the first eight bars of the *Requiem aeternam*: both the basset horn and bassoon rhythm was changed in bar 5, the basset horns from repeated crotchets to a single minim, and the bassoons crotchet on the third beat also into a minim:

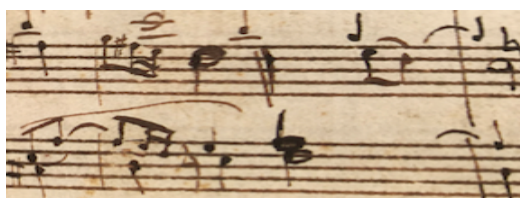


Fig. 15

but those corrections do not constitute a change of role for the instruments. It is also the case that the bassoon notes in bars 8-10 were specifically written into the continuo line by Mozart for the organ to play, so the bassoon part is, in a sense redundant, especially if he intended the trombones to double the chorus as well, since it would mean that three different timbres would be playing along with the chorus. Even in the chordal textures of *Die Zauberflöte* where bassoons and trombones play together (and also the basset horns) such as The March of Priests and the aria 'O Isis und Isiris', Mozart generally avoids large scale duplication either by introducing slight rhythmic variations such as held notes versus repeated notes or by varying who doubles whom

every few bars. After such a translucent introduction one would hardly want to pull focus from the chorus with such a thick texture, especially if the number of singers were relatively small.³¹

An interesting anomaly was introduced in the viola part of bars 20 and 33, where they are doubling the orchestral basses, but have sustained, slurred crotchets on the first beats of the bar and a slur over beats three and four compared with a quaver-quaver rest pattern and no slur in the lower part:



Fig. 16

Mozart is quite clear in not writing a slur in the continuo part on either occasion, so it seems a little incongruous to have a slur in the doubling part, and a rhythm in that part (two crotchets instead of quaver-quaver rest) that counteracts what is almost a motto rhythm of the movement. This has all the hallmarks of two minds at work. Is it a coincidence that the viola part is in the lighter ink?

Bar 32 offers a fascinating insight into the two stages of composition and later orchestration, though it is not possible to discern from it much about who may have done the instrumentation. From the dark ink one can tell that the music for the basset horns and first bassoon was one of the ‘motifs here and there’ that Mozart wrote down as he notated the choral parts:

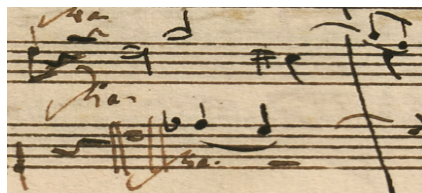


Fig. 17

It originally read:



Fig 18

³¹ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the forces Mozart may have anticipated

However, the most interesting correction made in the lighter ink is in bar 37, because it is a correction made to Mozart's handwriting in the dark ink. It seems that the soprano part originally read:



Since the violins, in the lighter ink, have the flat on the second beat in front of the note head not above, one can confidently infer that the correction to the choral line was made at the same time as the doubling parts were written: perhaps because the act of writing them out revealed the error, or at least the ambiguity:³²

70

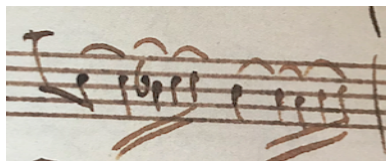


Fig. 21

Having redundant cautionary accidentals is not out of the question in Mozart's writing: elsewhere in the autograph we see that he frequently repeats accidentals in a bar where they are not strictly necessary, for example in chromatic passages of the *Kyrie*, and there are plenty of examples of him writing in a cautionary accidental where another version of that pitch has appeared in a previous bar or even in the same bar in a different instrument. What makes this so interesting is that it was not necessary to cross out the flat on the third beat: all that would have been necessary was to add the flat on the second. Does this mean that the correction was made by someone else?³³ Or is it a merely a coincidence that bar 37 is the bar where the change of orchestrational technique starts?

This summarises the issues of authorship arising from the autograph itself, from the differences in ink colour and handwriting, issues which raise questions about passages other than bar 37 to the end. Examination of the rest of the movement from the same perspective from which those bars were approached also elicits interesting observations. Some passages can be accepted without any discussion as unquestionably in Mozart's hand since they are in the dark ink. The string writing in bars 21–25, accompanying the soprano solo, is one such passage. The imitation in these bars is an integral part of the work and needed to be worked out on the first pass, especially since the altos' countersubject in bar 34–35 is based on this motif. We see Mozart doing the same thing in the *Recordare*—the only other movement with an extended, fully scored introduction—where the interludes are based on parts of the opening motif and needed to be worked out in detail as part of the original act of composition.

The first passage that raises questions is from bar 8, where the lighter ink starts in the basset horn and bassoon staves, to halfway through bar 17, where the crotchets in the basset horns and first bassoon are in dark ink. Here the orchestration is in the style of the *Kyrie* fugue, with each of the wind instruments copying an individual line of the chorus, resulting in a four-part wind texture. The same thing is true of the parallel passage from bars 34–42, where the main 'Requiem aeternam' melody returns, now with the countersubject. This passage too is in the lighter ink. These constitute the first and third of the three tutti choral sections of the movement.

The middle section, however, from bars 26 to 32 is scored quite differently. Here the bassoons are in unison following the orchestral basses, while the basset horns are also *a 2*,

³³ It must be pointed out that this kind of crossing out—five lines through the object to be deleted—can be also be found in the autograph of *Die Zauberflöte*

doubling the choral sopranos. This section is of course homophonic rather than contrapuntal, and that in itself could explain the difference in the use of the bassoons: since the tenors and basses are already presumably doubled by trombones, there would really be no need for yet another instrument to do so, and given the Baroque nature of the music it seems appropriate to use a Baroque scoring, the bassoons reinforcing the continuo. The case of the basset horns is a little different: here the sopranos are continuing the *tonus peregrinus* melody introduced by the soprano solo, it makes sense that this plainsong melody should be emphasised, not only because Mozart would expect it to be recognised by his audience, but because it is separate from the rest of the texture, moving much more slowly than the other parts, like a *cantus firmus*. In a subtle touch, the basset horns are not introduced at the same time as the sopranos, but in the previous measure with a simplified version of first violin motif so that the ear is already drawn to that register in preparation for hearing the plainsong melody (see Fig. 6 above).

It is difficult to say with certainty where the ink colour here falls in the spectrum between light and dark, but the scoring of this passage would seem to be so skillfully crafted that its authorship can be attributed to Mozart with great confidence. Whilst it is of course true that the only instruments in the ensemble that Mozart had chosen that could support the sopranos is the basset horn, surely his work in the rest of the Requiem would strongly suggest that if he had orchestrated this passage, Süssmayr would have followed the soprano line exactly and brought the basset horns in at the same time as the sopranos?

This leaves the *colle parte* scoring of the two fugal passages. Sadly, there are no other examples of fugal writing in the choral context in late Mozart that can guide us.³⁴ As noted in the next chapter, Mozart's four orchestrations of works by Handel for Gottfried van Swieten contain many settings of fugues and imitative choral music, which, given the Baroque models for the Requiem, and the use of Handelian material in this movement, would seem to be germane to the discussion. Since a detailed discussion of the many issues raised will be found there, I will list only a few salient points here:

1. as far as the bassoons are concerned, most of the time Mozart used them either in what may be called a 'woodwind' function (doubling the oboes an octave lower) or they double the orchestral basses rather than the choral basses (see point 4 below)
2. both *And with his stripes*, and *He trusted in God*, the first two fugues of Messiah, are scored for strings only, even though he had a full complement of winds available.

³⁴ The incomplete grand Mass in C minor K. 427 was written some eight years earlier for the much larger Salzburg orchestra and for a very different circumstance, has perhaps been given too much weight in this regard

3. only in the great final ‘Amen’ fugue do Mozart’s winds play a doubling role, and then only in the opening section, where Handel’s strings are silent.³⁵ Once the strings start playing with the chorus, the bassoons go with the cellos and basses, not the choral basses.
4. in his treatise on composition *Anweisung zur Composition*, Johann Albrechtstberger writes: ‘Die Fagotte müssen mit dem Violon, wenn sie nichts obligates haben, einhergehen.’ (The bassoons should follow the double bass, if they do not have an obligato part)³⁶

We see both of these functions in the *Requiem aeternam*, the bassoons following the continuo in bars 26–32, in Mozart’s hand (points 1, 3 and 4), and, although they are in the lighter ink, we also see the bassoons doubling the higher winds—here of course basset horns rather than oboes—an octave lower (point 2) in bars 15–17 and 43–44: these passages follow Mozartian practice whoever wrote them. However this is not the case in bars 8–14 and 34–42 of the traditional version, where instead the bassoons double the bass and tenor choral lines, a technique virtually never used by Mozart in his own music or the Handel orchestrations.

Therefore the present edition brings the bassoon writing in these passages into line with Mozart’s more normal practice, and maintains the *antico* function, the bassoons doubling the orchestral basses *a 2*, using the same quaver-quaver rest pattern. This results in a greater clarity of texture in the opening of the fugal sections, since the rests allow the voices (and presumably trombones) to be more prominent since they sustain through the rests.³⁷

What of the basset horns? The same problem pertains here as in the *Kyrie*: in bar 41 the ambit of the sopranos exceed its the range.³⁸ The orchestrator of the traditional version tried to circumvent this problem by having the first basset horn drop to double the altos for two and a half beats, and moving the second part down rather unsatisfactorily to double the tenors for those two beats, and therefore also the first bassoon and tenor trombone:

³⁵ Van Swieten’s salon had no organ to provide the continuo, so the woodwinds in this passage are probably fulfilling that role

³⁶ Albrechtstberger, *Anweisung zur Composition*, Breitkopf, Leipzig, 1790, p. 379

³⁷ note also how the organ continuo part here doubles the choral parts, with the opening six beats written into the score by Mozart

³⁸ the present edition introduces the trumpets in bar 41 to reinforce the soprano high A

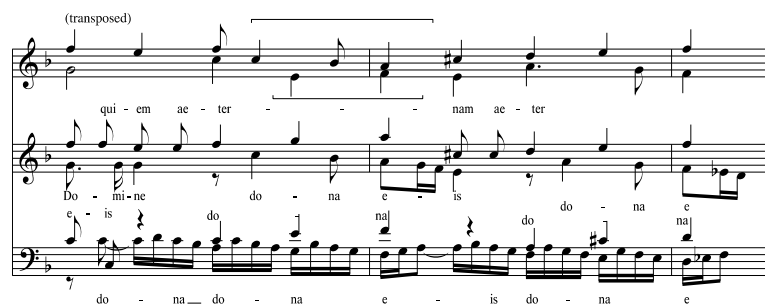


Fig. 22

Note how in this jury-rigged scoring the second basset horn anticipates both the alto C on ‘dona’ (where the singers have a quaver rest) and the A in the next bar, thus robbing the voice part of a syncopated entry. This solution seems so retro-engineered that it cannot have been made at the time of composition, and therefore surely Mozart can be excluded as its author. His woodwind writing is always independent and idiomatic, and it is hard to imagine him assigning a role to an instrument that it cannot fulfill consistently.

For the modern editor-completer, who is less concerned with ‘who’ and more with ‘what’, the salient point in all these observations is that in the passages where the chorus does not sing the wind writing is above reproach: *all the anomalies and inconsistencies come only in the passages where they are doubling the voices in a four-voice texture*. The present edition eliminates all automatic note-for-note doubling of the chorus by the basset horns and bassoons. The resultant texture is much clearer, and allows the chorus greater prominence.

This leaves only the trombones, for which neither Mozart or Süssmayr left any instructions. After their dramatic entry in bar 7, their timbre adds to the solemnity of the choral entries, and the first declamation of ‘et lux perpetua’ in bar 15. But surely they would obscure Mozart’s delicate orchestration in bar 18?³⁹ Süssmayr sometimes failed to indicate *senza tromboni* in the *pianissimo* passages of the *Agnus Dei*: surely such an indication is missing here. The wind particella of the finale of Act II of *Die Zauberflöte* has many such indications, and the fact that there are no such indications anywhere in his autograph is perhaps another indication that Mozart had not yet come to consider the details of orchestration: in other words, *it was still a draft*. If the bassoons double the orchestral basses in bars 26–32 (“exaudi orationem meam”), the trombones are needed in this passage, and the declamatory nature of the music surely calls for them, but the return of the *Requiem aeternam* theme in bar 34 could be considered a different situation. As Franz Beyer suggested, they ‘could remain silent in bar 34 onwards in order to give a special

³⁹ see Fig. 4

luminosity to the words *et lux perpetua* with their entry in bar 43.⁴⁰ Here their weight is also needed to counterbalance the trumpets and drums. An objection to this could be that if the bassoons are doubling the continuo and the basset horns are *tacent* from 34—43, it would mean that the tenors, altos and sopranos are singing unsupported. A closer look at this passage, however, reveals that owing to rests in the bass and tenor parts, the continuo part covers most of both lines, and if a new violin part is to be constructed to avoid the mid-phrase doubling that started in bar 37, it would cover much of the soprano and alto parts (see Fig.11 above). The moving semiquavers of the choral parts in this passage create a much thicker texture than crotchets and quavers of bars 8–14, so a thinner instrumental component here is helpful to the voices, the core of the work. The present edition withholds the trombones until bar 43, once again aligning a change of instrumentation with a change of key and a new section, a recall of previous material.

Three final observations. First, the timpani part of bar 44 has an interesting variation when compared with the parallel passage in the final movement. In bar 25 of the *Lux aeterna* Süssmayr writes a dominant note in the timpani instead of the tonic that appears in bar 44 of the *Requiem aeternam*. As noted in the NMA ‘This departure from Mozart’s original...seems to express Süssmayr’s deliberate intention.’⁴¹ However, it is hard to imagine Süssmayr thinking he knew better than Mozart, and one would dismiss it as a slip of the pen, easily imagined if the timpani just followed the trumpet line which also moves from tonic to dominant, if it were not for the fact that in Süssmayr’s autograph the first note was originally a tonic note which he corrected to a dominant:

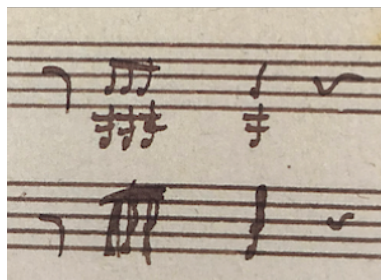


Fig. 23

It is much easier to imagine him correcting a colleague than Mozart himself, and if this is indeed the case, it would by no means be the only occasion in his completion where he altered

⁴⁰ Beyer, *ibid* p. 16 These notes are shown with small note heads in the edition

⁴¹ NMA note on p. 150

another composer's completion to put his own stamp on the work.⁴² Does this mean that he knew that the orchestration of the *Requiem aeternam* was not by Mozart?

Second, the woodwind and brass writing in bar 45 seems very clumsy, obscuring the rhythmic subtlety of Mozart's choral parts. This measure is a *quasi* augmentation of the previous two measures in which 'et lux perpetua' was a quaver rhythm starting on the off-beat: in bar 45, the soprano rhythm starts with notes that are twice as long, crotchet rest-mimim, thus giving the first syllable of 'luceat' a strong agogic accent:



Fig. 23

The traditional version has the winds, trumpets and drums entering on the first beat of bar 45, a beat before the sopranos, which completely undercuts their entry. Surely they should enter *with* the sopranos on the second beat, and the first violins should follow suit.⁴³ Similarly, the first note of the lower three voices is twice as long in this bar as it was in the previous two: if the trumpet and timpani entry is reserved for the third beat (instead of the first, where the traditional version has it), then they highlight this difference. With these simple changes the structure of the choral parts is reinforced by the orchestration, which would seem to be more along the lines of Mozartian practice:

⁴² See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the *Dies irae*

⁴³ There is an interesting correction in the autograph score at this point: originally the second violins doubled the altos, but this was changed to the violas rising above them, the seconds following the tenor line. In the equivalent passage in the *Cum sanctis* no correction was necessary



Fig. 24

Third, the automatic doubling of the voices by the strings in the final bars seems a little unimaginative: by inserting a quaver rest on the beginning of each beat and playing the chord on the off-beat instead, the upper strings can recall the opening rhythmic motif of the movement, thereby both unifying the movement and offering harmonic support whilst being differentiated from the chorus:

Figure 25 displays a musical score for a piano part, marked *pia:* (piano). The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves. The first two staves are for the right hand, and the next two staves are for the left hand. The lyrics are: "et - lux - per pe - tu - a - lu - ce - at e - is. et - lux - per pe - tu - a - lu - ce - at e - is." The piano part features a rhythmic motif of eighth notes in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

Fig. 25

To summarise, no satisfactory answer has ever been presented to the question “why would Mozart spend time on instrumentation when so much of the Requiem was not yet sufficiently fixed in his mind to warrant committing it to paper?” Nowhere is it *explicitly* stated in the literature of the time that Mozart himself completed it after the introduction. Furthermore, there is at least as much evidence present in the autograph score of the *Requiem aeternam* to doubt Mozart’s authorship of the orchestration as there is to support the same hypothesis for the *Kyrie* fugue.

It seems to me entirely logical that, in all probability, on December 5th, 1791, the pages on which the striking vocal parts of the *Requiem aeternam* were written would have looked very much like folios containing the *Dies irae*, *Recordare* and *Domine Jesu*. Indeed, I suggest that in the autograph score left by Mozart the staves of all but the *coro* and continuo parts of at least measures 37 to the end of the *Requiem aeternam*—and probably much more—were blank, and that they were filled in by either Süssmayr, or an as yet unidentified composer, as part of the hasty preparations for the service at St. Michael’s church on December 10th. Because the handwriting was so similar to Mozart’s own, and because the work was done so close to Mozart’s death, the authenticity of the orchestration of these passages, like that of the *Kyrie* fugue, was not challenged at the time, and has since become canon.

I find it surprising that the revelation that the *Kyrie* was not orchestrated by Mozart has not, before now, led to a similar examination of the *Requiem aeternam*, despite the fact that both Süssmayr and Stadler include it among the parts of the Requiem for which Mozart left only ‘an indication here and there’ for its instrumentation. To the best of my knowledge, my edition is the first to undertake such an examination. Since the vast majority of the changes I have made to the traditional version affect only the *colle parte* doubling of the voices by the basset horns and bassoons, only those who know the requiem on a very deep level will notice what is different. My goal has not been to make changes for the sake of changes, but to enhance clarity by bringing the wind writing more closely into alignment with Mozart’s practices as gleaned from the sources detailed above.

In the many performances I have conducted, I have found that the resultant clarity of texture brings Mozart’s remarkable counterpoint into even greater prominence and the colours inherent in his choice of instrumentation are considerably enhanced.

Link to the score:

<https://www.simonwandrews.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/1-Introitus-score.16.pdf>