

INTRODUCTION

The story of the genesis of Mozart's Requiem, that it was unfinished at his death and that the task of completing it fell eventually to Franz Xaver Süssmayr is generally so well-known that it scarcely needs to be covered again in this Introduction. Equally well documented is the fact that he was not the first to whom the undertaking was entrusted: Joseph Leopold Eybler signed a contract with Mozart's widow and took possession of the score on December 21st, 1791. Slightly less well known are the other members of the cast of players who were involved in what rapidly became the story of Mozart's Requiem: Mozart's pupil Franz Jacob Freystädler, and the respected composer and musicologist Abbé Maximilian Stadler. Their role is still open to discussion and debate.

In many ways however, the central character in this story is not the secret commissioner, nor any of the men who played a part in creating the historical artefact that we call the Mozart Requiem, but rather Mozart's widow, Constanze. Often criticised, even vilified at various different times as the story unfolded, it was Constanze, out of pressing economic need, who caused the unfinished work to be (at first secretly) finished in an attempt to fool the anonymous commissioner (who in turn was hoping to deceive by claiming the work as his own); it was Constanze who sold the work several times to different people and who by turns claimed both ignorance and intimate knowledge of how the work was completed; and it was Constanze who, either by unintended obfuscation or as the result of a brilliantly executed marketing campaign, caused such a mythology to be created around the work that the Requiem has scarcely been out of the public eye ever since.

Questions of authorship arose very quickly: in 1800 Süssmayr was asked by the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel to explain his role in the completion in conjunction with their first edition of the full score; in 1801 the publication of a vocal score by Johann Anton André led to a stream of correspondence with Constanze; in 1825 Gottfried Weber published an article 'Über die Echtheit des Mozartischen Requiem' questioning the authenticity of much of the score, which in turn led to a long series of correspondence and counter-articles including Stadler's 'Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozart'schen Requiem' in 1826 (with two sequels in 1827). Each successive edition of the Requiem contained lengthy prefaces addressing issues of authenticity. Some of these issues were resolved as the originals of Mozart's autograph began to trickle in to the Imperial Library in Vienna during the 1830s and become available for examination. But with the deaths of

Constanze in 1842 and Joseph Eybler in 1846, direct links with the work's creators were irretrievably broken.

At this point, writing on the Requiem necessarily entered a different phase, and the debate began to focus almost exclusively on Süssmayr's contributions, which by then had almost fifty years of performance history. In his 1877 edition of the Requiem, Johannes Brahms—who took a lifelong interest in Mozart and was considered a Mozart scholar in his day—continued the previous practice of using 'M' and 'S' to distinguish between Mozart's autographs and Süssmayr's contributions (based on Stadler's penciled identifications in the autograph), occasionally referring to other additions 'for once better than Süssmayr'.¹ Whilst criticising Süssmayr's technique, Brahms' scholarship limited itself to a precise notation of what Mozart had and had not written.²

In the twentieth century, the burgeoning field of musicology began to look beyond the production of the most accurate published scores possible, moving towards producing 'performing editions' of works, especially of the Mediaeval and Renaissance periods. These sometimes even required modern editors to supply entire vocal lines where the original part books were missing, based on an understanding of contemporaneous composition practices. The Early Music Movement was well established by the 1950s when Bärenreiter Verlag undertook to publish the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe* as a 'historical-critical edition' offering 'the latest state of philological-musicological procedure as well as practical knowledge.' In contrast to the 1877 Brahms edition, Leopold Nowak's 1965–6 edition of the Requiem shows where changes had already (silently) been made to Süssmayr's notes in earlier editions.³ Such changes had by this point, of course, almost one hundred and seventy five years of performance history behind them, but this facet of Nowak's edition made explicit what had previously been done tacitly in the background, thereby bringing the poverty of some of Süssmayr's work into sharper focus. Even more importantly, by publishing Eybler's version side by side with Süssmayr's, direct comparisons could be made by musicians who did not have access to the autograph scores: it could now be seen that two composers who knew Mozart at the time of his death and who knew his music intimately had come up with different orchestrations, both of which were authentic to the time. The only reason that Süssmayr's work had the performance history and not Eybler's was because Süssmayr

¹ See Imogen Pascal's essay 'Brahms's view of Mozart' in Robert Pascal *Brahms: Biographical, Documentary and Analytical Studies*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 50

² Other authors such as Otto Jahn and Hermann Abert also roundly criticised many aspects of Süssmayr's work: their writings and commentaries on their writings are numerous and readily available

³ See for example the viola part of bar 45 of the *Recordare*, from which Süssmayr's version is removed (p. 57)

either suppressed Eybler's work, or appropriated it without attribution.⁴ A question that had not been asked up to that point now presented itself: would a version that replaced Süssmayr's work with Eybler's have the same 'authenticity'? Much has been written on the topic of Mozart's opinions of the relative merits of the two men: on the one hand we have Mozart's testimonial for Eybler as 'a worthy pupil of his famous master Albrechtsberger, a well-grounded composer, equally skilled at chamber music and the church style. . . in short, a young musician such, one can only regret, as so seldom has his equal'⁵ versus the many and various well-documented epithets often he conferred upon Süssmayr.⁶ Should this apparent dichotomy be a factor in our evaluation of the work of the two men? Both contributions were written within three months of his death, but neither was sanctioned by Mozart. Would the inclusion of Eybler's work over Süssmayr's make the resultant even more hybrid work less historically 'authentic' (because it has no performance history) or more appropriate because Mozart thought Eybler was the better composer? In the Eybler vs Süssmayr debate, should one give the greater weight to the man whose work has the performance history or the man of whose abilities Mozart seems to have had the higher opinion?

To use the example of another late Mozart work for which we cannot know his intentions because the autograph score has been lost, it has not been possible to hear the Clarinet Concerto K.622⁷ as it was intended to be performed until recently, with the rise of modern reproductions by instrument makers of the Basset-Clarinet. Now that it is possible to play the concerto on the correct instrument, can one do so authentically without the autograph score to show us how Mozart intended to use the extra notes at the bottom of the instrument? How does one weigh two hundred years of performing a version made after Mozart's death in which the solo line has been adapted for a higher

⁴ Safe in the knowledge that, owing to the nature of how the work came about, Eybler could scarcely challenge him publicly because to do so would be to give the lie to Constanze's claim that the work was almost entirely by her husband

⁵ letter of reference for Eybler written by Mozart on May 30th, 1790

⁶ The differences in Mozart's opinions of the two men would seem to justify Constanze's choice in selecting Eybler over Süssmayr to complete the Requiem. Another element that may or not have been part of her decision is the possibility that she perceived Süssmayr as being in Salieri's 'camp', as he had been trying quite assiduously to tie his fortunes to those of the Imperial Court composer. Salieri was, at the time, not only more successful than Mozart, but thought to be harbouring a grudge against her husband as the result of the success of *Così fan tutte*, a libretto Salieri had abandoned.

See also, see David Ian Black, *Mozart and the practice of sacred music 1781-91*, PhD thesis, Harvard, 2007, p. 371-73, concluding 'It seems doubtful that Süssmayr was Mozart's "student" in the way the term is commonly understood.'

⁷ written for Anton Stadler and originally intended for Basset-Clarinet (although Mozart only wrote 'für die Clarinette' in the Verzeichnis). It is interesting to note that both Eybler and Süssmayr also composed Basset-Clarinet concertos for Stadler

instrument, a version which definitely contains notes that Mozart did not write, against the possibility of performing it on the correct instrument but using notes that may or may not be the notes Mozart would have chosen?

Wolfgang Plath's discovery in the early 1960s of a leaf of sketches related to the Requiem (among other works) re-invigorated another debate, namely whether Süssmayr's completion might have been based upon sketches on the 'Zettelchen'⁸ (scraps of paper) that may or may not have been among Mozart's papers when he died. Had sketches related to the Requiem been among them? Many a commentator has attributed the apparent 'ability gap' between the quality of some of the ideas in Süssmayr's work and the poor means of their execution to the existence of such sketches, and much ink has been spilled on both sides of the issue. (This book will spill a little more.) Does the possibility that such sketches might have existed validate Süssmayr's contributions or merely emphasise his poor workmanship?

As far as the sketch debate is concerned, only three things can be stated with some certainty: first, that the Berlin *Skizzenblatt* discovery confirms that in the Requiem Mozart did indeed follow his usual practice of using sketches as he worked through some of the details of the work. Second, as a comparison between the sketch related to the *Rex tremendae* and the same passage in the autograph shows, his thinking often evolved between sketch and final execution, which is also consistent with this usual practice:⁹ therefore the sketches are proof of nothing except the fact that Mozart used sketches. Third, if such sketches did exist, to throw out Süssmayr's work lock, stock and barrel is also to throw out any vestiges of Mozart's thinking Süssmayr's work might contain. Therefore, the modern editor-completer must examine all of Süssmayr's contributions through the same critical lens quite separately from the possibility of whether those ideas were gleaned from a sketch.

Another important impetus that provided the spark for what has become a small industry of modern edition-completions of the Requiem was Leopold Nowak's 1973 article 'Wer hat die Instrumentalstimmen in der Kyrie-Fuge des Requiem von W.A. Mozart geschrieben?'¹⁰ In this article he proposed that errors of transposition in the basset horns, combined with certain handwriting traits, made it virtually certain that the task of orchestrating the *Kyrie* fugue was not undertaken by Mozart himself, meaning that

⁸ as Constanze described them

⁹ See Konrad Ulrich, *Mozart's Sketches*, Early Music, Vol, 20, No.1

¹⁰ Mozart Jahrbuch, 1973-4 p. 191-201

the Requiem had been even more incomplete at the time of his death than had previously been believed. Novak proposed that only the trumpet and drum parts had been written into Mozart's autograph by Süssmayr, the errant bass horn parts being provided by Franz Jacob Freystädler.¹¹ This addition of a third composer to the version that the world had known for almost two hundred years meant that Mozart's Requiem was even more of a hybrid document than had been realised up to that point.

Thus the modern performer is left in a difficult position: on one hand there is the incomplete torso—unperformable as it stands—and on the other a flawed, hybrid document, completed, with or without the aid of the composer's sketches, by a number of musicians all of whom knew the composer well, but whose contributions fall short of the mark. If one of the purposes of scholarship and editorial practice is to achieve as authoritative a performing version as possible, the Requiem presents quite a problem, for how can such divergent sources be accommodated? Correcting obvious slips of the pen; reconciling autograph, first edition and early performing materials; the addition of missing or misplaced dynamics—even filling gaps caused by missing part books—all these tasks are the daily work of editors, yet the resultant hybrid pieces are still considered as authentic to the time of composition, not the time of editing. The incompleteness of the Mozart Requiem presents an even thornier question: on what point of the continuum between error removal and providing new material is a musical work altered to such an extent that it can no longer be considered of its time? Can a modern hybrid ever be an improvement on a rich performance history, however flawed its source?

There are, of course, many ways of answering that question, and the point at which intervention becomes too invasive will vary from person to person. But it is equally true that modern scholars have two significant advantages over the team of musicians that shaped the Mozart Requiem: time for reflection, and the ability to look at all Mozart's music and make considered observations and deductions. In short, while what Mozart might have done will always remain speculation unless more documentary evidence is discovered, with the benefit of hindsight what he would *not* have done is often much less open to question. That said, criticising the quality of Süssmayr's work is one thing, taking the next step and attempting to remedy it is quite another. From one perspective, the decision to cross the boundary of extending the common editorial practice of removing obvious 'typos'—such as the wrong accidentals in the orchestration of the *Kyrie* fugue, or Süssmayr's alteration of Mozart's tenor line from F to E natural in the last quaver of bar 18 of the *Domine Jesu*—to removing the parallel fifths in

¹¹ an assertion now challenged by scholars such as Michael Lorenz

Süssmayr's *Agnus Dei* is fraught with difficulty. The counterargument believes it is justifiable on the grounds that such imperfections distance us from Mozart just as surely as an obvious 'typo'.

Franz Beyer was the first to take such a step in his ground-breaking edition.¹² Not only did he re-introduce some of Eybler's orchestration, in places he re-wrote Süssmayr's string parts, not limiting himself to error removal but *including what he considered stylistic improvements*. Pandora's box was opened. Beyer also made changes to the orchestration in areas where Eybler had not worked, and altered Süssmayr's vocal parts where he thought they were contrary to Mozartian practice. On the whole, the changes he made and were designed to be virtually imperceptible to all but those who know the Requiem on a very detailed and deep level. His philosophy was akin to that of a restorer of paintings, and while his approach did step well beyond the usual bounds of editorial practice, his goal was to remove Süssmayr's infelicities so that the listener would be able to discern Mozart's voice more clearly.

Without a doubt, Beyer's boldest change was the addition of six bars of new music at the end of the *Sanctus* fugue, which he introduced as a 'Zweiter Schluss', an alternative ending to replace Süssmayr's (which he gives as the 'Erste Schluss'). Beyer's new ending was designed to 'let these movements come to rest in a more organic manner.'¹³ This is the first time since 1791-2 that newly composed material had been added to the work, and marked a radical philosophical departure: while Beyer's general approach respected fully the historicity of what is now referred to as the 'Traditional Version', this insertion of a twentieth century voice, albeit speaking in an eighteenth century language, opened a brand new chapter in Requiem scholarship.

Other editions quickly followed, no doubt emboldened both by Beyer's new approach and the fast approaching Mozart bicentennial in 1991. Richard Maunder, H.C. Robbins Landon, Robert Levin, and Duncan Druce contributed their own versions, which span the gamut from minimally invasive to radical surgery. Both Maunder and Levin include ingenious music based on the *Amen* sketch from the *Skizzenblatt*; Maunder excludes the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* since there is no Mozart autograph for them,¹⁴ but inconsistently includes the *Agnus Dei*, for which there is also no autograph (but without which the work can hardly be performed); Duncan Druce adds a great deal of wonderfully constructed music in many areas, notably the *Benedictus*. With the exception of his *Amen*

¹² Edition Kunzelmann, 1971/9

¹³ *ibid*, Introduction p. 20

¹⁴ Including them only in an appendix at the end

fugue, and the addition a modulating passage at the end of the *Benedictus* to allow the reprise of the *Osanna* fugue in D major—a solution first proposed in the earliest version of my edition performed in Oxford in 1985—Levin’s version follows the traditional version the most closely, staying the nearest to Beyer’s philosophy. Long after both the 1991 bicentennial and the 250th celebrations in 2006, others have continued to add to the collection, including Claus Klemme, Panczel Tamas, Benjamin-Gunnar Cohrs, the present author, and English composer Michael Finnissy, who says that in his reconstruction ‘he imagined Mozart in the present day.’¹⁵

All the post-Beyer versions bump up against a single dilemma, each one coming to a different conclusion: on the one hand is the question ‘at what point do alterations to a historical artefact rise to the level that its historicity is debatable?’, on the other the question that might be phrased ‘if the goal of modern scholarship is to divine as clearly as possible the composer’s original intentions, and if one can be sure from the stylistic analysis of other contemporaneous Mozart works that a mistake in Süssmayr’s completion is unthinkable in Mozart, surely it would be contrary to that goal to allow such an error to stand?’

After conducting Beyer’s edition with the Oxford Chamber Choir in 1985 (inserting my own expansion of the *Osanna* fugues and a modulation at the end of the *Benedictus*), I was convinced by the latter line of reasoning. I decided to undertake my own edition-completion, while trying at all times to keep at the front of my mind that the “edit or replace as necessary” approach is the thin end of a very thick wedge. If, however, the modern editor-completer sees the task as involving more editing than completing, as more the attempt to bring Süssmayr’s work as far as possible within the stylistic and technical parameters of Mozart’s autograph and late style than to create *ex nihil*, then that wedge can—and should—remain suitably thin. As Christoph Wolff says, describing Robert Levin’s edition: [it] ‘critically evaluates the movements by Süssmayr (Sanctus through Agnus Dei) thus reinforcing their documentary value. Now as ever, I am convinced that the attempt to approach Mozart on the basis of that type of analytical understanding is well worth making, so long as it is fully understood that it is only an attempt and that it will not be the last.’¹⁶ The analysis, evaluation and—where necessary—correction of Süssmayr’s work is of value because, while acknowledging its shortcomings, it respects its historical value. It is, after all, ‘the only source that offers

¹⁵ see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-15751924>, 16th November, 2011

¹⁶ Wolff, *Mozart’s Requiem: Historical and Analytical studies*, trans. Mary Whittall, University of California Press, 1994, p. 52, note 131

the opportunity to discover the ideas that originated with Mozart: basic musical elements, motives, fragments, forms and techniques.¹⁷

The opposite is also therefore true: ‘Rejecting Süssmayr’s score out of hand, as has been done, most drastically by Maunder, means rejecting the chance of preserving what traces there are of Mozart’s original material.’¹⁸ In his attempt to purge all Süssmayr from the traditional version and replace it with his own material—based on stylistic arguments that are sometimes cogent, but all too often grounded not in an evenhanded analysis, but rather a desire to exclude based on a highly selective (and occasionally inaccurate) presentation of Mozartian models—Maunder makes drastic changes to a historical artefact. To fill the gaps thus created, he also sometimes makes unwarranted and unfounded assumptions about the structure of the work. For example, there is simply no evidence that Mozart ever even considered re-using the soprano soloist’s *Te decet hymnus* plainsong melody in the *Lacrymosa*, in a different key and to transition to a large ‘Amen’ fugue. While it may be ingenious, and one can commend his command of late eighteenth century style, the result is even more hybrid than the traditional version, with the additional disadvantage of being written two hundred years later.

What is worse, the more structural changes a modern editor-completer makes, the more they run the risk of actually going against what Mozart’s intentions may have been. The newly composed material in Duncan Druce’s edition—which in some places almost becomes a sort of trope—contains much beautiful and impeccably crafted music in a Mozartian style, but the additions have serious consequences for the overall balance of the work and the relative proportions of the movements. The additions by Michael Finnissy are similarly beautiful, but are perhaps more illuminating of our time than Mozart’s.

My edition has been a thirty-year labour of love: its goal is to preserve as much of the traditional version as possible. Wherever it can be shown that the traditional version contains infelicities inconsistent with Mozart’s own practice, like Beyer and Levin, I have corrected and adapted in the least obtrusive way I could find. I have used Eybler’s instrumentation wherever it was practical, and adapted it where I think greater internal correspondences can be made. Sometimes the infelicities of the traditional version rise to the point that a complete re-working of instrumental passages has been necessary, such as in the *Domine Jesu* and the *Recordare*. Wherever possible, I have maintained the proportions of the traditional version, both for the reasons explained above and for some that will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters.

¹⁷ *ibid*, p.52

¹⁸ *ibid*, p.52

Of course, it is with the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*—especially the infamous *Osanna* fugues—that my hand is most in evidence. All the post-Beyer completions intervene at this point, but of them all mine is the least intrusive. I have expanded the fugues, adjusted the end of the *Benedictus* to allow a D major reprise of the *Osanna* fugue—surely there can be little doubt that Mozart would not have repeated the fugue in a different key—and made other small formal adjustments within the *Benedictus*.¹⁹ These changes do not alter the structure of the piece,²⁰ but are designed to allow the well-known material to unfold in a manner more consistent with Mozartian practice. I hope that the reader will be gentle, and I offer them in the spirit described by Christoph Wolff above: ‘knowing it is only an attempt and that it will not be the last.’

The purpose of this book is to chart the philosophical, historical and musicological journey I undertook as a composer, theory teacher and conductor while making a new edition. *Mozart’s Requiem: from 18th century forgery to modern hybrid* is in equal parts detective story, comparative analysis and brief discussion of some current thinking, leading to chronological and musical conclusions. Writing it caused me to examine my score with as detailed a microscope as I used on Süßmayr and Eybler, a process which not infrequently led to changes and improvements. I am also indebted to the many conductors, players and singers who have performed my edition in its many versions over the last thirty-five years.

While it may not be possible for any human being who is not Mozart to bring this sublime work into a ‘worthy form’, as Ernst Hess puts it, the attempt will always be worth the making, for each time we get a slightly longer, deeper glimpse into a creative world that is hidden to most of us, but which for Mozart seems to have been almost routine.

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November 1996
Revised January 2022*

¹⁹ including an expanded introduction that may be omitted at the discretion of the conductor

²⁰ there is no Amen fugue at the end of the *Lacrymosa* for the same reason