

Recordare

As in the other movements up to this point, in the autograph all the vocal parts and orchestral bass (which is unfigured despite the ‘*ed organo*’ indication¹) are in Mozart’s hand. In addition, the opening exposition is completely and clearly written out with dynamics, phrasing slurs and articulation marks: six bars of music for the two basset horns—notated on two staves—above an intricate cello line followed by seven bars of music for the upper strings consisting of interweaving falling scales for the two violins against a rising scale with trills for the violas above a dominant pedal in the bassi. Although the scoring is *stile moderno*,² the opening basset horn lines are in species counterpoint formed by imitation at the second, the downbeat of each measure a step higher than its predecessor; when the violins enter, their lines are a canon one beat apart until bar eleven, when, instead of the upwards octave jump, the second violins continue falling at the lower octave towards the cadence in bar 14, where the voices enter. The two phrases are perfectly balanced, the first in the tonic with slower moving upper lines against a decorated bass in the alto and tenor register, the second on the dominant consisting of faster moving upper lines against a static bass introducing the soprano and bass registers. This blending of *moderno* sensibilities and *antico* techniques is at once technically perfect and effortlessly lyrical, and shows what an important component counterpoint was in the synthesis of styles and techniques that made up Mozart’s late musical language.

Mozart’s notation of the basset horns on two staves leaves only two empty on his twelve staff paper. Trumpets and timpani are out of the question in this contemplative movement, and since it is cast for solo quartet rather than full chorus, the trombones must surely also be silent: therefore the empty staves can only be intended for bassoons. Given the polyphonic nature of the music, enough for Mozart to assign the basset horns a line each, it seems logical to do the same for the bassoons.

In addition to the completely notated introduction, Mozart left *aides-mémoire* in the following five places:

34–38 (first violin)

52–53 (first violins and violas)

68–79 (first violin)

¹ Whether Mozart would have added figures when he returned to do the instrumentation is an open question

² The lack of both figures or a *tasto solo* or *senza organo* indication makes the nature of the participation of the organ problematic in this movement. While it was Nowak’s opinion in the NMA edition that ‘The inclusion of an organ is ... to be taken for granted in a work like a Requiem, usually even in passages where there is no figuring’ (p. xi), it is hard to see what an organ could contribute to this translucent opening

109–10 (violins)

126–30 (first violins)

126–29 (second violin and viola).

After such a sublime opening, one can easily imagine the trepidation with which both Eybler and Süssmayr approached completing the instrumentation of this movement. Sadly, whether for reasons of time or because he found the task too daunting, Eybler again provided no wind parts. We have no way of knowing if he worked sequentially, from movement to movement, or as inspiration struck him, therefore we don't know if he moved on to the *Confutatis* because he found it a simpler task, intending to come back and add music for the basset horns in the *Recordare* once he had had more time to think. Or perhaps the difficulty of completing this movement was a factor in his abandoning the project altogether, because clearly the basset horns have to participate after the introduction. While one can almost imagine a scenario in which Mozart might have chosen not to use the bassoons, one cannot imagine him limiting the participation of the basset horns to only seven bars.

Nor was the completion of the string writing a simple matter. Essentially, it had been possible to complete credible string parts for the *Tuba mirum* with somewhat standard accompaniment patterns. Mozart had been extremely helpful with his *aides-mémoire* in the *Dies irae* and *Rex tremendae*, so that little actual composition had been necessary, mostly only 'recycling'. But the deceptively simple, yet intricately contrapuntal nature of bars 7–14 proved extremely difficult to emulate, and ultimately proved to be out of the reach of both Eybler and Süssmayr.

Eybler's string writing is simple and direct, and while he avoids the temptation to overelaborate, his version is not immune the criticism that it overuses movement in thirds between viola and cello. It is of course the case that Mozart himself did so on occasion (for example in bar 13), but it is wise not to do so for too extended a period, as Eybler does in passages like bar 14, bars 16–18, 20–21 and 23–24 in the first phrase alone. Having said that, this same passage is mitigated by the clever crossing of parts (bar 21) and the re-use of Mozart's trill (bars 21 and 23), which shows considerable skill. He also finds an ingenious way to re-use Mozart's viola part from bars 7–8 in bars 34–35 (cf. 68–69), but lapses back to strings of thirds in bars 46–50. His second violin countermelody in this passage (bars 46–49) is worthy of Mozart himself, though it is not immune to the observation that it makes a parallel octave with the solo soprano in bars 46, 47, and 48:

The present edition uses a countermelody derived from Eybler’s an octave higher.

However, when Eybler changed Mozart’s crotchet F in bar 14 to a dotted minim so he could fashion a string accompaniment for the alto and bass soloists, he made his first misstep. Surely the crotchet in both violin and viola parts implies that they stop playing here? While it is, of course, possible that Mozart simply put the crotchets there as ‘place holders’ until he returned to complete the instrumentation, faced with the empty staves in front of them, neither Eybler or Süssmayr realised that if the strings do indeed stop playing, Mozart’s opening can be re-used, the second basset horn supporting the alto and the first the bass soloist an octave higher, instead of just continuing the doubling of the voices with the strings.³ If the basset horns take over from the strings in bar 14 the form of Mozart’s sublime introduction is reproduced in a manner not unlike the two expositions of a concerto first movement.

Eybler also changed Mozart’s crotchet in bar 38 into the first of a group of quavers, with the deleterious effect of making the change from major to minor rather abruptly and awkwardly on the second quaver of the bar:

* re-uses Mozart's viola part of b.13 (except for passing 7th on last quaver)

³ Levin’s instrumentation boldly leaves the solo voices completely undoubled, accompanied only by Mozart’s ’cello line

His sudden introduction of semiquavers in bar 90–91, while it makes a pleasing enough sound, since it is a totally new idea, doesn't make sense in this context:

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The lyrics are: "di - sti, mi - hi quo - que mi - hi quo - que spem de - di - sti,". The score shows a passage where the strings introduce semiquaver figures in bars 90-91, which is noted as being out of context.

Neither did he see the opportunity, as Süßmayr did, to borrow Mozart's figuration from bar 109, adapted to F major, to introduce 'statuens in parte dextra' in bar 118, though his choice of imitation suggests why Mozart thought so highly of him:

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The lyrics are: "se - que - stra, sta - tu - ens in - sta". The score shows a passage where the strings introduce a trill in bar 118, which is noted as being out of context.

Süßmayr tried harder to imitate Mozart's counterpoint, which may have been an admirable homage, but too often the attempt does not avoid the many potential pitfalls familiar to

students of counterpoint. After doubling the voices exactly for six bars,⁴ the first passage of his own invention contains a parallel octave between first violin and viola in bar 21, a parallel unison between second violin and viola in bar 22 and a parallel octave between first violin and viola in 23—when (ironically!) a simple doubling of the voices (like the first phrase for the alto and bass) is all that is required in the violins. One can only wonder what he was thinking in bar 45, where his astonishing viola part (already edited out in the NMA⁵) results in parallel fifths with his own decoration of the soprano line, a parallel octave over the bar line and another parallel octave on the first beat of the next bar!:



Like Eybler, his handling of the modulation to C minor in bar 38 is rather clumsy and he too ignores Mozart's crotchet, emulating Eybler by changing modality on the second quaver:⁶ surely the repeated quavers should start in the second beat rather than changing from major to minor on a half beat? He adds a *fp* in the upper strings on the downbeat of bar 91 that was not in Mozart's autograph, and also gets himself into a bit of a mess in bar 92, where his first violins' C ignores the solo soprano's D appoggiatura, and his viola part makes a parallel octave with the soprano's resolution. However, Mozart's C major arpeggio figure in bar 109 that links the cadence at 'cremer igne' to the new 'inter oves' section is cleverly re-worked in F major to link the cadence on 'et ab haedis me sequestra' into the final phrase 'statuens in parte dextra' in bar 122. It would have been even stronger if he had also doubled it an octave lower in the second violins, as Mozart did in bar 109, and since his second violin was already on the right note, one wonders why he didn't see it.

While Süssmayr at least attempted music for the basset horns and bassoons, with one notable exception, he does not always distinguish himself. As elsewhere, his default setting is automatic (but sometimes confusingly inconsistent) voice doubling, which robs both timbres of independence. His use of the bassoons is even more inconsistent than his basset horn writing: a good example is bars 46-9, where his basset horns follow the soprano and alto soloists, but the bassoons move from vocal doubling to following the cellos and his new second violin line, the kind of confusion about the role of the instrument that can be seen throughout his instrumentation:

⁴ in order to do so, like Eybler, he changed Mozart's crotchet

⁵ as is his erroneous B flat in the second violins in bar 73

⁶ this is not the obvious way to handle this passage, which raises the interesting possibility that he was copying Eybler and making changes as he went along.

The image shows a musical score for a passage from a symphony. The score is arranged in six systems. The first system contains staves for 'basset horns' and 'bassoons'. The second system contains staves for 'violin 1', 'violin 2', and 'viola'. The third system contains staves for vocalists, with lyrics: 'tan - tus la - bor non sit cas - sus'. The fourth system contains staves for 'bassi' (basses). The music is in 3/4 time and features complex textures with many overlapping parts.

Note also in this passage the parallel octave between the violas and first violins in the first bar of the example, the hidden octaves on the first beat of each following bar, the parallel fourths between second violin and viola in every bar of the example, and how the second basset horn has a minim on the second note rather than the crotchet-crotchet rest of the alto soloist, resulting in a doubled third on the last beat of each bar, carefully avoided by Mozart in the vocal parts. The resulting texture is indicative of much of Süßmayr's work in this movement: one can applaud the application, but not the result. Passages like this cannot stand.

Süßmayr's winds double Mozart's linking strings in bar 52–53, obscuring one of Mozart's *aides-mémoire*, he doubles the higher chords in the 'ingemisco' section from 72–81, unfortunately copying the singers' repeated crotchets rather than using sustained notes, or, even better, just highlighting the chromatic chord on the stressed syllable of 'in ge-MI-sco'. He does, however, see the implication of Mozart's *forte* markings in bar 75ff to use the winds to point the modulations, but it would have been more effective if they did not immediately continue their automatic doubling of the singers on the next beat.

Süßmayr's moment of true genius comes at the recapitulation: having dropped the winds out at the text 'Qui Mariam absolvisti', where a new motif is introduced and thereby allowing the voices to be accompanied by just the strings,⁷ in bar 93 he in turn writes rests for the strings, accompanying the alto and bass soloists with *just the two basset horns*.⁸ How frustrating it is that he didn't see the logical extension that this is how the opening phrase too should be orchestrated.

⁷ although there is no need for the strings to double the two quaver anacruses each time

⁸ In a rare example of work that is less accomplished than Süßmayr's, Eybler continues with string doubling

Surely that is the implication of Mozart's crotchets in bar 14? It is almost as if he didn't pay attention to what he had written before.⁹ Was he simply working too fast? Or is it too fanciful to wonder if the kind of brilliant stroke that bar 93 represents is an echo of the conversations with Mozart that he is supposed to have had? Süssmayr's bewildering blend of flashes of inspiration and technical incompetence has been a well-worn path in the Requiem literature since the earliest days, and it is tempting to propose that, while she may have exaggerated them for the purpose of maintaining that team finishing her husband's last work were merely following his instructions, Constanze did not entirely invent these conversations.¹⁰

Eybler's score, despite its superior string writing, is unsatisfactory because it omits the basset horns after Mozart's beautiful introduction (and the bassoons entirely), and Süssmayr fails what Richard Maunder calls 'the competency test' a few times too many for comfort. An appraisal of the contributions to the Requiem of both men up to this point has largely been concerned with matters of orchestration, of colour, balance and timbre; the few issues that have arisen about the actual pitches themselves have centered, for the most part, on interpretations of Mozart's figuring. With the *Recordare*, however, the focus shifts to a more difficult area: Mozart's flawless introduction has the unfortunate effect of shining a fairly harsh light on the deficiencies of both Eybler's and Süssmayr's work. While it is undoubtedly possible to reconstruct what could be called 'an early 1792 version' out of Eybler's string writing and Süssmayr's winds, the result would be unsatisfactory, the modern editor-completer enters the arena with no less trepidation than Eybler and Süssmayr did. Indeed, following in their footsteps, one can only have compassion for them as one contemplates the empty staves.

Mozart took a great deal of care in his planning of the movement: only the opening *Requiem aeternam* has more details of orchestration,¹¹ and only the *Tuba mirum* has music for anything other than strings. At 130 bars, it is not only the longest movement in Mozart's autograph—the only one, after the first, with a long introduction before the voices sing¹²—it is

⁹ Bar 110 is another example of how two parallel passages are treated differently: why do the bassoons not support the bass soloist's re-introduction of the motif, here with the text 'inter oves locum praesta', that we heard in bar 26? Is this an oversight, or a poorly thought out choice?

¹⁰ It is impossible to assess the accuracy of Sophie Haibl's account of Mozart's last hours, that she found 'Süssmaier' [sic] by his bedside and that Mozart was explaining how the Requiem should be finished after his death [see *Wolff*, Doc. 10, p. 126], whether it is the result of her own fanciful imagination, or related as part of a carefully crafted campaign designed by Constanze. In her letter to Stadler, dated May 31st 1827, Constanze seems to have forgotten the contract that she and Eybler signed on December 21st, 1791: '[...] since he declined at once with fair words, he never laid hands on it' (see *Wolff*, Doc. 28, p. 170), so her recounting in the same letter that Süssmayr 'often had to sing through what [Mozart] had written' should be treated with some suspicion. So too should the famous 'Ey—there you go again, like a dying duck in a thunderstorm; you won't understand that for a long time.' (*ibid*) Whether these 'memories' are complete fabrications, intentional embellishments, or whether they simply grew in the re-telling will probably never be known.

¹¹ See Chapter 5

¹² The only other movement that may have been intended to have an introduction of more than one or two bars is the *Benedictus*. See Chapter 16.

also the only movement that shows to such a great extent the influence of sonata form. It has a double exposition, the first instrumental (1–13), the second with the voices (14–26); a recapitulation that includes a key adjusted reprise (compare bars 26–34 with 110–118); and a middle section (34–92) that goes through many keys and introduces new material. It also shows the influence of Baroque ritornello form in that the introduction of new material in this middle section flanks an abbreviated version of the principal idea in the subdominant (bar 54–68), in a manner not unlike the alternation of ritornellos and episodes which often balance subdominant and dominant entries of the main ritornello theme.

Mozart's use of keys and voice pairings follows these formal structures, and, I believe, contains clues to how to complete the orchestration of the movement. For example, in the instrumental exposition the basset horns use the tonic, then the strings enter over a dominant pedal. This pairing of key and timbre is lost in the soloists' exposition if Mozart's clearly written crotchets in all three string parts on the down beat of bar 14 are ignored and the strings continue to play, as both Eybler and Süssmayr did. The structure of Mozart's carefully crafted introduction and his crotchets suggest that the strings should not play until the C major entry of the soprano and tenor in bar 20. Furthermore, this orchestration allows the bassoons, an instrument that hasn't yet been heard, to announce the next line of the text "ne me perdas illa die" and new section in bar 26. That Süssmayr saw this structural possibility is very much to his credit, but it is a shame that his bassoons merely copy the same rhythm of the bass soloist rather than entering on the down beat, and there is no need for both bassoons *unisono*: a single bassoon (the second, in the present edition) is enough in this *piano* context and transparent texture.

The exposition divided the soloists into alto/bass and soprano/tenor.¹³ Perhaps we should not be surprised that the higher voices use the higher key and often have the text which looks more towards heaven, whereas the lower voices refer more often to the darker emotions, a distinction used to such dramatic effect in the next movement, *Confutatis*, where the male voices sing of the 'flames of woe' while the sopranos and altos sing the supplication 'voca me cum benedictis'. While such gender stereotyping may not suit a more modern sensibility, such views of the sexes permeated the late eighteenth century world-view, and are the basis of much of the psychological underpinnings of the Requiem. It is therefore always the lowest voice that introduces the music that is first heard with the text 'ne me perdas illa die' in bars 26, 60 and 110, which in turn introduces the minor mode.

In bar 38 the voice pairings change to bass/tenor and soprano/alto (38–45). In bar 54 the opening material returns, now in the subdominant and in the soprano/tenor pairing, which again saves the entrance of the lowest voice for the darker text 'ante diem rationis'. For the introduction

¹³ Note how with the introduction of the new idea 'ne me perdas illa die' the pairing is still observed, the soprano and tenor responding to the bass melody in homophonic rhythm and thirds. Nor should we be surprised by the rhythmic imitation of the entries.

of the new material ‘ingemisco tanquam reus’ we have a new voice combination (and new accompaniment figure): all four parts in homophony. Mozart is telling us that the need to bewail one’s sins is a communal one. The end of the middle section introduces a new motif and therefore new voice combinations, short solos then building down from the top, SA, SAT then finally SATB. The recapitulation is different only in the insertion of five bars to the text ‘ne perenni cremer igne’, again in a four-part homophonic setting because the need to be ‘rescued from the fire’ is universal. In other words, the form of the music flows directly from its function, as related to the text. It seems clear that changes in the way instruments are used should follow closely these structural outlines.

The change of key and accompaniment figure to repeated quavers are sufficient change of texture in bar 38 “Quaerens me”¹⁴; the added wind support for the modulation to D minor in bar 42 is a very Mozartian usage; while Süßmayr saw the need for the winds to enter during the ravishing quartet in bars 46–52, it is much more effective if his basset horn lines are smoothed out into a series of falling 2–3 suspensions in an inversion of their opening gesture. The bassoons (who, as noted above, have the ‘wrong’ function in this passage in Süßmayr¹⁵) are best left out of this already busy texture, waiting until bar 51 to reinforce the cadence where all four solo voices sing homophonically. Süßmayr added an indication of *mf* to Mozart’s *aides-mémoire* for the first violins and violas in bars 52-3: Eybler did not, and there would seem to be no good reason to do so. It has been removed in the present edition. In bar 60-8 the winds follow the model of bar 26-33, point the modulations in bars 75-6 and 79-80, are very effective if they add their weight to the cadence in bar 91.

Mozart’s lack of figuring in this movement sometimes led Eybler and Süßmayr astray: both added ninths to the chords on the downbeats of bars 85 and 87:¹⁶ while they are expressive moments, they seem wrong for the words on which they occur, ‘absolve’ and ‘listened to’ in the sentence ‘You, who absolved Mary and listened to the prayer of the robber, have given me hope’: it is God’s forgiveness that is being illustrated here, so less anguished harmonies would be better suited to the text. The present edition removes the ninths, and the anacrusic quavers on the last beats of bars 83, 85 and 87, where surely the singers need no support:

¹⁴ The present edition restores Mozart’s crotchet on the downbeat, starting the quavers and minor mode on the second beat

¹⁵ see musical example on p.127 above

¹⁶ Since this is an unusual choice, it would seem to reinforce the probability that Süßmayr borrowed the idea from Eybler

De - us. Qui Ma - ri - am ab - sol - vi - sti, mi - hi quo - que spem de -
 De - us. mi - hi quo - que mi - hi
 De - us. et la - tro - nem ex - au - di - sti, mi - hi
 De - us.

83

Surely Mozart would not have orchestrated bars 118–122 and 123–126 identically, as Süssmayr did? Literal repeats are very rare in Mozart. The present edition uses the winds only in the second iteration, leaving the voices in the first accompanied only by doubling strings. Rests for the violins begin the repeat of the text ‘statuens in parte dextra’ before they re-enter with repeated quavers, lending more energy to the singers’ final cadence.

The final *aide-mémoire* allows the movement to close with authentic Mozart, and the present edition re-uses Mozart’s bar 13 where his autograph lacks notes in the second violin and viola in the last two bars.

Score: <https://www.simonwandrews.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/5-Recordare-score.22.pdf>