

## Chapter 14

# Hostias

With only three lines of text, the *Hostias* is one of the shortest movements of the Requiem, amplified in length only by the repetition of the ‘Quam olim’ fugue. It is also completely homophonic and virtually one-themed, which is perhaps why Mozart needed to write down so little of its accompaniment. Of this he showed only the opening two bars, the repeat of those bars at the beginning of the coda in bar 44, and the last nine bars of the first violin part, thus leaving the majority of the score empty. Like the *Domine Jesu*, there is also an instrumentation of the *Hostias* by Stadler, which is virtually identical to the Süssmayr’s. As noted in the previous chapter, there would seem to be no reason for Stadler to copy Süssmayr’s work after it had been done, so it is generally assumed that his comes first and Süssmayr drew liberally, virtually literally, from it, though when this can have happened is far from clear.

Mozart’s autograph is without tempo indication, but, while the textures are quite different, the mood of the *Hostias* is similar enough to the *Recordare* for Süssmayr’s ‘Andante’ to seem sensible.<sup>1</sup> It is also without figures for the ‘Basso ed Organo’, and Süssmayr took his cue from that and added none to the score handed to Count Walsegg.<sup>2</sup> This presents a problem for the theory that Süssmayr copied his orchestration from Stadler, because Stadler did add figures to his score: did Süssmayr just omit them in haste while copying, or did he decide that the lack of figures was Mozart’s intention?

It is interesting to note that the last figuring Mozart wrote into his autograph score was in the previous movement, bar 28 of the *Domine Jesu*, where it stops in the middle of a phrase.<sup>3</sup> This would seem to imply that, for the *Domine Jesu* at least, adding the figuring was not done as part of the act of writing out the final version, but as a post-composition task. The passage left unfigured is one of considerable harmonic complexity, and given the detail of his figuring up to that point, one would expect it to have received equal attention had he returned to the task. The fact that he didn’t would seem to imply that the *Domine Jesu* was written down in some haste, so perhaps it is not a surprise that the movement that followed it, the *Hostias*, should have remained unfigured. Why would Mozart write figuring for this movement if he had not completed it for the previous one? It is a little puzzling that Süssmayr did not add figures for the movement (as he had for the above-mentioned passage in the *Domine Jesu*) because after the first two bars marked

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<sup>1</sup> Stadler’s copy does not give a tempo indication

<sup>2</sup> The figuring in the NMA is from the first printed set of parts, which presents an interesting insight into the lack of unanimity among contemporary musicians about this issue, since that edition ignored Süssmayr and assumed that Mozart would have wanted the organ to participate.

<sup>3</sup> Both Stadler and Süssmayr add figures to the rest of that movement

‘solo’, Mozart clearly wrote “Tutti” over the bottom staff in bar 3, implying that the organ should join at that point.<sup>4</sup>

Mozart also fails to give any opening dynamic: all the other movements in the autograph have tempo and dynamic indications as well as articulation marks (even the incomplete *Lacrymosa*), which also might imply that he was writing in greater haste in this movement than before, at a speed that caused some of the basics to slip his mind.<sup>5</sup>

The first dynamic indication is not until the *piano* in bar 24 at ‘et preces,’ and this is problematic because bar 24 is not the beginning of the section, bar 23 is, where the text is repeated. The *piano* in bar 24 implies that bar 23 should be *forte* (otherwise the *piano* is redundant), and with that dynamic added, bars 23 to 26 become the first of a series of similar loud-soft pairings, and the basis of the form of this section, a development of the main theme:

(23-4)/25-6; 27-8/29-30; 31-32/33-4 *etc*

(*f*) *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Each *forte* introduces a new key, first the surprising dominant minor (B flat minor), then proceeding through D flat major, D minor via a C sharp diminished 7<sup>th</sup> (the enharmonic of D flat) before returning to the tonic E flat major via the V7 of B flat major of which the bass falls a semitone to form a French sixth before arriving at the desired dominant in bar 42. The addition of *forte* in bar 23 makes this shape explicit, the dynamics articulating the form, but it by no means follows that the movement up to that point should be *forte*.<sup>6</sup> In fact, just the opposite: it strongly implies that the cadence before it should be *piano*, or the expressivity of the opening of the new section is undermined.<sup>7</sup> So, the cadence in bar 21 should be at a *piano* dynamic, which in turn implies a *piano* opening, as the NMA has it, though it is interesting that neither Stadler or Süssmayr mark it that way.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The lack of figures for the end of the *Domine Jesu* and *Hostias* would seem to imply that the two movements were written into the autograph consecutively, reinforcing the idea that the *Hostias* was indeed the last movement Mozart worked on.

<sup>5</sup> A further indication of haste is that Mozart wrote ‘suspice’ instead of ‘suscipe’ in the choral parts

<sup>6</sup> as suggested by Maunder, (p. 188): ‘Mozart’s *forte* in bar 39 must be intended to continue to the *p* in bar 46 presumably implies that bars 44–45 are still *forte*. Hence bars 1–2 should be *forte* as well.’ However, Mozart does not always mark *crescendo* or *diminuendo* in his scores (a notable exception being in the *crescendo* marked over the phrase ‘judicandus homo reus’ in the *Lacrymosa*), and the *piano* at bar 46 could simply mean that a *diminuendo* has brought the dynamic down to *piano* by that point. (See also note 4 below for Levin’s argument for a *forte* opening.)

<sup>7</sup> A case could be made for the last phrase of the first section from bar 16-21 “quarum hodie memoriam facimus” to start *forte*, followed by the *diminuendo* that would be required to bring the dynamic level down to *piano* for the cadence. This would be a perfectly valid interpretation, (see also bars 39-44), but it is not an editorial decision, rather one of personal preference of the conductor.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps, like the figuring, this dynamic too comes from the first set of parts?

Another line of reasoning suggesting a quiet opening dynamic is that, except for the *Dies Irae*—which could hardly be anything other than *forte*—each movement up to this point has opened at a different dynamic or intensity level than its immediate predecessor,<sup>9</sup> for obvious dramatic reasons. Since there would seem to be no reason in either the text or the structure of the preceding ‘*Quam olim*’ fugue why Mozart’s *forte* indication in bar 43 shouldn’t continue to the end of the movement, it is consistent with the construction of the Requiem up to this point to assume that the *Hostias* should open with a contrasting dynamic.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps more important than all of these considerations is of course the text, though strangely it is not part of Levin’s or Maunder’s discussion of the dynamic of this movement. However it must surely have been central to a master dramatist’s conception of the most apt way to set it: “we offer Thee, O Lord, our prayers and sacrifices of praise, accept them for the souls we commemorate today. Let them pass from death to life.” This is a petitionary prayer that intensifies as the text is repeated: if the opening is *forte*, contrast is not possible, resulting in a much less satisfying dramatic arc. Not only that, it seems theologically unlikely that such a request to God would be made in such a way.

The question of dynamic is important not just for performance, but for the orchestration of the movement: a *forte* marking would have a different set of implications for which instruments should be used, and how, than a *piano* opening. The key of E flat major obviously eliminates the participation of the trumpets and timpani, and surely Stadler and Süssmayr were correct to write *senza tromboni* for this movement. The only remaining question is when and how the basset horns and bassoons should participate. Süssmayr’s wind parts are virtually identical to Stadler’s: the bassoons fulfill different roles, the second doubling the orchestral basses while the first joins the basset horns in doubling the top three choral lines. This confusion about the bassoon role is similar to the orchestration of the ‘*ne absorbeat*’ fugue, and it seems just as strange here to have the same timbre with different functions.<sup>11</sup> The rhythm of his basset horns mostly follows that of its associated voice part, where longer notes instead of the repeated crotchets required by the text would be better, allowing greater clarity for the text. He does use longer notes

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<sup>9</sup> The *Tuba mirum* following the *Dies Irae* has no dynamic marking, but the opening with the unaccompanied solo trombone followed by bass soloist has a very different intensity than the full orchestra of the *Dies Irae*, and the strings are marked *piano* in bar 5. While the *Rex tremendae* does, of course, end softly, the overall *gestalt* of the movement is an intense tutti *forte*, the opposite of the following *Recordare*

<sup>10</sup> Levin has observed that in Baroque music the absence of an indicated dynamic most often implies *forte*, and given the many Baroque models for the Requiem the case can be made to apply that argument to the opening of the *Hostias*. Of course, the absence of anything in such an incomplete score should not be considered a final decision, so nothing can be inferred from Mozart’s lack of dynamic indication here. However, not only does the opening of the movement seem to be more ‘*stile moderno*’ than ‘*antico*’, but, since the *Hostias* is followed by a reprise of the *Quam olim* fugue, a *forte* opening would mean three successive sections at the same dynamic level. It is interesting to note that, although Levin gives parts for trombones in his edition, they are optional, suggesting that a *piano* opening is quite possible.

<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Stadler writes ‘*col basso*’ in the second bassoon part in bar 36 (even though his first bassoon is silent). Süssmayr wrote rests: did he ignore Stadler’s direction, change it, or, in haste, not see it?

to point the hemiola in bars 19–20, and that technique would have improved bars 12–13 and 17–18 considerably. While the winds drop out during the *piano* passages of the middle section (bars 23–44) and for the coda (44 to the end), after the two-bar instrumental introduction they play continuously during the first choral section.

But are the winds really necessary in this *piano* environment?<sup>12</sup> Would it not be more effective to hold them in reserve them for specific moments? The final Allegro chorus section of *Die Zauberflöte* “Es sieget die Stärke” shows that Mozart did not consider *piano* choruses needed automatically to be doubled by winds. A more effective use of the winds in the *Hostias* would be to hold them until bar 16 to support the final six bars of the opening phrase, as in the present edition.

Both men use them very effectively to support the *forte* chorus at the intensified repetition of the text in bar 23-32, correctly inserting rests during the *piano* measures, though the basset horn rhythm in bar 35 is quite bizarre, entering *forte* on an unstressed syllable and then completely unnecessarily repeating the chord on the third beat of the next bar, which again emphasises an unstressed final syllable, and then abruptly stops :<sup>13</sup>

Süssmayr (strings omitted)

Present edition (strings omitted)

*f* NB Mozart's forte is on the second beat, not the third where Süssmayr write it

As the first measure of the above examples show, both Stadler and Süssmayr incorrectly notate Mozart's *forte* on the third beat instead of the second. The example on the right shows how bars 34-6 are handled in the present edition, though a case could equally be made for bringing them in two beats earlier, with Mozart's *forte* marking. Stadler/Süssmayr did not use the winds after the cadence in bar 44, and this does have the effect of emptying the texture before the return of the complexities of the *Quam olim* fugue. However, their timbre is very effective during this modulating coda, especially as Mozart's violin part develops its own independent line at this

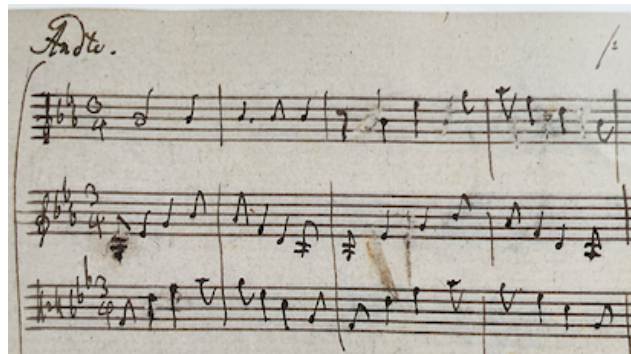
<sup>12</sup> Especially with the participation of the organ in a not dissimilar timbre

<sup>13</sup> The last bar of the example on the left is where Stadler's second bassoon continues 'col bassi'

point, offering less support for the chorus. Their inclusion in this phrase also provides a solution to a thorny question in the last two bars: should the violins play alone, or have some harmonic support? If the basset horns and bassoons are already playing, they would be available if desired. This will be discussed further at the end of the chapter.

The strings are the heart of the accompaniment of this movement. However, Mozart left quite a dilemma: his opening two measures have an unusual variation of a three-part texture for the strings—the violas play in unison with the second violins rather than the basses. Does this mean that these two instruments should play unison throughout,<sup>14</sup> or is this a configuration only for the introduction and the interludes, when the chorus is silent? The Requiem is not replete with examples of how Mozart used the strings during homophonic chorus passages, but a comparison with his masses and the *Messiah* orchestration—a comparison that the modern editor-completer is, of course, in a better position to make than Süssmayr was—would suggest that a four-part string texture is the more likely, that the string parts should have their own identity while coinciding with the chorus lines on important beats, and they should be spaced in the same way as they would normally be if there were no singers present. Perhaps Mozart notated the three-part texture in the introduction and interludes precisely *because* they were different from when the chorus is singing.

Like the wind writing, Stadler's and Süssmayr's string parts are almost identical, though there is an interesting anomaly in the opening: corrections in his score suggest that Süssmayr originally intended to double the soprano and alto lines exactly in the violins, but changed his mind:



Is this just an error made in haste, starting off with every intention of doing his own version, but deciding after all just to copy Stadler? Since there are also corrections to the first note in the second violins and the second and third viola notes of Mozart's incipit, perhaps miscopying is the

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<sup>14</sup> As Levin does

most likely explanation. It is undoubtedly, however, the correct decision to use the syncopated rhythm throughout, but it is a shame that both men suspended the figure in bars 4 and 5, where for two measures the syncopated motif is abandoned, instead copying the minims and crotchets of the sopranos. The *Hostias* is virtually one-themed, and to abandon that theme for two bars in the middle of the phrase and then resume it is somewhat mercurial, at best.<sup>15</sup> Yet, as the corrected opening shows, it was no easy task. It is hard to divine the source of Maunder's confidence that 'the violin part almost writes itself.'<sup>16</sup> On the contrary, this last movement for which Mozart completed the choral parts has the fewest clues to work with. There are no real models within the Requiem itself and relatively few applicable extended passages in the rest of his *oeuvre*. Although it may be simple-looking on the page, it is no easy matter to provide a sympathetic and convincing accompaniment that is both supportive of the chorus yet independent in its own right, as Mozart's accompaniments always are.

While Stadler and Süßmayr may have been able to glean very few things from Mozart's *aides-mémoire*, one observation might have been that Mozart only uses the syncopated motif as an actual melody in the coda (bar 46 to the end). This would be an appropriate place to make a departure from what had gone before, developing a theme after the main body of the movement is done and we begin to modulate away from E flat major to prepare for the repeat of the 'Quam olim' fugue. This would in turn imply that the figure should not be used in that way during the main body of this movement. Could that be why the first violin part of bars 3–4 doesn't seem quite to fit there as a melodic line? Dramatically it is too near the opening of the movement to 'pull focus' from the chorus by being independent, since it happens at the same time as we hear the opening melody for the first time. It is also strange to start such an independent line only to abandon it after two bars, and then for the not particularly good reason of doubling the sopranos. Once he introduces it in bar 46, Mozart continues the 'new' motif for the whole nine-bar phrase, not part of one, to the end of the movement. Having said that, one can certainly understand how it might have been difficult to pass up a snippet of actual Mozart that seemed to match a hole in the autograph, whether it truly fit or not.<sup>17</sup>

It is hard to see why Stadler/Süßmayr did not adapt Mozart's introduction exactly for the interlude in bars 21–22: it is a mystery why Mozart's second violin part was changed and doubled an octave lower in the violas rather than in unison. Continuing, surely the *piano* indications for

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<sup>15</sup> The *Sanctus* of K. 192, the first violin part of which does bear a more than passing resemblance to the *Hostias*, (as cited by Maunder on p. 188), is actually not much help on this point, since there are no violas, the second violins have a completely independent line and the syncopated pattern only lasts six bars, not the entire movement.

<sup>16</sup> Maunder, p. 189

<sup>17</sup> Another reason for the poor fit, as Maunder is correct to point out on p. 188, is the A flat on the last note of bar 2 in the second violins/violas: while fine against the bass part as it rises into bar 3, when repeated in bar 4 it creates an awkward diminished fifth-perfect fifth progression when the bass line descends into bar 5.

the upper strings in bars 24, 28 and 32 happen a beat too late? It would have been better to anticipate the chorus' *piano* entry a beat earlier than to cover it with strings that are still *forte*:

This musical score shows four systems of staves. The first system contains three staves (violin I, violin II, and viola) with dynamics *f* and *p* and a *cresc.* marking. The second system contains two staves (violin I and violin II) with lyrics 'ho - sti as et pre ces' and dynamics *f* and *p*. The third system contains two staves (violin I and violin II) with dynamics *f* and *p*. The fourth system contains two staves (violin I and violin II) with dynamics *f* and *p*.

Furthermore, the violin parts are left hanging in mid-air whenever they make the dynamic change. The present edition renders it thus, so that the strings are already *piano* before the choral entry. Note also how the first *piano* soprano note is anticipated, making a smoother transition:

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An interesting detail is that Mozart himself varied his opening second violin part in bar 44—the rising motion now starts on the fifth of the arpeggio instead of the tonic, approaching the A flat from the G below rather than falling from the B flat above.<sup>18</sup> The reason would seem to be that it is in this changed form that he uses it as a countermelody in the first violins two bars later, in bars 46–47 (though with a changed last note, the B natural necessary for the modulation to C minor). Stadler/Süssmayr are at their least convincing here, with the contrary motion second violin part (with the violas in thirds) underneath this ‘new’ melody. Such instances, and the

<sup>18</sup> i.e. the form in which it is used in bar 3-5

problems listed above, necessitated a complete re-working of the upper string writing in the present edition.

The last puzzle is what to do with the final string gesture in bar 53–54. Stadler/Süssmayr were surely correct to double the first violins with the seconds (it is a pity that the implications of this were not followed, starting the doubling back at the beginning of the coda), but should they remain unsupported harmonically? The rests in the orchestral bassi would seem to suggest that the other strings should be silent during the final two bars, but perhaps the rests are just there because the basses of the chorus don't sing, thus leaving the upper strings available. This was both Beyer's and Maunder's opinion, and, although they differ in the details, they had the first violins play alone and added notes for the second violins and violas (Beyer concluding the movement somewhat strangely on a first inversion rather than root position). Levin leaves the first violins unaccompanied by winds or strings, exactly as Mozart left it.

In the present edition, having doubled the chorus in their last phrase, the basset horns and bassoons add two cadential chords under the string figure at the end of the movement: <sup>19</sup>

The image shows a musical score for the final two bars of a movement. It consists of four staves. The top staff is for 'basset horns (transposed)' in treble clef, showing two chords. The second staff is for 'bassoons' in bass clef, also showing two chords. The third staff is for 'violins' in treble clef, showing a melodic line with a fermata at the end. The bottom staff is for 'violas and bassi' in bass clef, showing a bass line with a fermata at the end. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

Score: <https://www.simonwandrews.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/9-Hostias.22.pdf>

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<sup>19</sup> Which may be omitted, at the discretion of the conductor