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Requiem: Psychological, Philosophical, and Aesthetic Notes on the Music of the Mass for the Dead

—Dedicated to the Victims of COVID-19 Worldwide

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Abstract

The article discusses the musical, psychological, philosophical and aesthetic essence of the Latin *Requiem*, the *Missa pro defunctis*, the Mass for the Dead. It examines in particular detail the famous Sequence *Dies irae.* Numerous *Requiems* up to the most recent ones are discussed and compared. Concepts from empirical aesthetics of Berlyne (1971, 1974) and Konečni (1979, 1982) are used to analyze the relationship between the hypothetical "power" of parts of the Mass (in psycho-aesthetic terms) and its effect on listeners. Historical reasons are examined for the difference in approaches to music for the services for the deceased between Western and Eastern Christian Churches (especially with regard to the use of instrumentation).

Keywords

Requiem Music, Requiem and Emotions, *Dies irae*, Mass for the Dead, Psychology of the Mass, Philosophy of the Mass, Aesthetics of the Mass, Orthodox Christian Liturgy, St. John of Damascus, St. John Chrysostom

1. Mass for the Dead—Preliminaries

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine—Grant them eternal rest, O Lord. The very first line of the Roman Catholic *Missa pro defunctis* (Mass for the dead) implies a web of relations between the living supplicant(s), the deceased potential recipients of the extraordinary favor requested, and a hopefully beneficent God. The five Latin words contain implicit references to grief, fear, and hope, and thus to the most profound philosophical and psychological questions of human exis-

tence. Why were we put in this world if we must die? Is there another side? What will happen there? Can we hope finally to obtain peace? These are questions of deep contemplation and emotion, but also, in regard to the quality of the music through which ideas are expressed, also of musical aesthetics.

The word "requiem" refers to a musical form; it is a shorthand for the Mass for the dead, in the singular or the plural, performed for someone who has just died, or did so long ago, or who will die, usually soon. Note that in "*Requiem*… dona *eis* Domine" the word "requiem" is in the fourth grammatical case (the *accusative*), and that "eis" means "them", so that the humble request is to give (eternal) rest to *them* not to us. In this sense, the mental stance of a relatively small number of composers who wrote requiems to be performed at their own funerals is somewhat incongruous. Nevertheless, this was almost certainly the intent of Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) in his second Requiem, in *D minor* (1836), as well as of Charles Gounod (1818-1893) in his Requiem in *C major* (*opus posthumous*). On the other hand, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756-1791) unfinished Requiem in *D minor*, and, for example, Franz Liszt's (1811-1886) austere Requiem (1871) for organ, tympani, and four male voices, in the archaic Roman style recalling Giovanni da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594), are often placed in this category erroneously (Cormican, 1991; Merrick, 1987). In any case, the act of composing an elaborate, lengthy piece for one's own funeral illustrates the enormous seriousness with which many musicians have regarded this musical form.

Almost invariably, composers who undertook the task of writing requiems, especially in the 18th and 19th century, were already very famous and did so at the peak of their creative powers. They were men mature as both musicians and human beings, who had experienced grief, joy, pain, and both the dashed and the rekindled hope. The Requiem Mass, more than any other musical form, explicitly deals with spirituality and metaphysics; thus a composer who has experienced the complexities and vagaries of life may have been more likely to have deeper sources of understanding and psychological inspiration from which to draw (cf. Abra, 1995).

2. The Context of Dying: Respect for the Deceased and for One's Ancestors

A vast proportion of peoples on our planet, from Australian Aborigines, Amazon indigenous tribes, and Inuits on three continents, to contemporary Christians, Moslems, and Buddhists, all earnestly and publicly honor their ancestors. "Ancestor worship" is one of the first concepts that students of anthropology encounter. In many societies, paying homage to the dead culminates on a particular day of the year. Among Christians, both East and West, this is the All Souls Day; in Japan, the O'bon festival; in China, the Qingming festival (Tomb-Sweeping Day).

Worldwide, the respect for the deceased is often mingled with a certain degree

of fear, of insecurity, of soul-searching. The fear is not just of death itself, but of uncertainty, even among the highly educated, about the possible "other side". The best educated realize that the magnificent Dante Alighieri of the *Divina Commedia* (1320) was no fool. At key life moments, doubt does not spare even the most intellectually atheistic or agnostic or self-assured. And then: can one annoy ancestors by one's behavior—with dire consequences? Fears of insulting ancestors are especially strong in the Voodoo culture in Haiti, and the related Vodun beliefs in Bénin (formerly Dahomey) in West Africa. But they are not alone!

To return to the *requiem* as a musical form: To understand what it represents in the most general sense, one has to consider it as a *unique totality of instrumental and vocal sound* that inexorably relates the composer, the performers, and the listeners (at home, in a church, or concert hall) to the entire complex context of finality, of passing away, of the deceased (who have sometimes so recently been alive), of the unknown and the unknowable—a profound philosophical, psychological, and emotional enigma explored through something trivially called music.

The context of dying—whether one thinks of it in the abstract, or watches someone's agony, or experiences one's own, as one mourns, grieves, and fears—is so emotionally taxing, and so thoroughly captured in the text and *plainchant* (or *plainsong*, Gregorian chant, such as is still sung by the Benedictine monks of the monastery of St. Pierre de Solesmes near Le Mans in France) as part of the Requiem Mass, that one is tempted to go on a limb and say that the crux of this music for the departed, the dead, is incredibly simple: If one cannot be moved by it, one can hardly be alive.

3. Mass for the Dead—Ancient Origins

According to Alec Robertson (1968): "The origins of prayers to and for the dead that were to lead, over nine centuries, to the *Missa pro defunctis*, are to be found in the [Roman] catacombs, the underground cemeteries of the early Christians." In Robertson's work one can find transcriptions of a number of pertinent and penitent "graffiti" from the catacombs.

Here are some historical points from various insufficiently identified sources:

- "Memento for the dead" in the *Kyrie Litany* from the 5th century, which is the first reference to the dead in the Mass;
- In the Canon, the most solemn part of the Mass, from the 7th century, there is a prayer for the living and the dead, just before the consecration of bread and wine:

"Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants, N & N, who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who rest in the sleep of peace."

And then, from about the 10th century, one can speak of a specific *Requiem Mass*. From various sources, some unreliable, others impossible to trace, one learns roughly the following: The Mass for the Dead is of Franco-Gallican origin.

Charles I, Charlemagne, the first Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, crowned in Aachen in the year 800, imposed the *Gregorian Antiphonale* on the Franks, but supplemented it with liturgy books already in use in France. By the 10th century, the so-called Roman liturgy returned from Franco-Germanic lands to Rome, having undergone many changes.

4. Liturgical Structure of the Requiem Mass

The full text of the Latin *Requiem Mass* reflects various psychological complexities and contains parts of *ordinarium missae,* parts of *proprium missae*, and important parts that are unique to it. *Ordinarium Missae* includes texts that are the same for every (daily) Mass, sung by the choir or the congregation; this material attracted many composers. Its parts are: *Kyrie*; *Gloria*; *Credo*; *Sanctus et Benedictus*; *Agnus Dei*.

As for *Proprium Missae*, items vary according to a Saint's Day or season of the year; they have not attracted composers for obvious reasons—they would be rarely performed. Its parts frequently are: *Introitus*; *Graduale*; *Alleluia* (or *Tract*; 4th C., Eastern Christian churches); *Sequentia*; *Offertorium*; *Communion.* The first significant settings of the *Proprium Missae* are thought to be those of Guillermus Dufay (1402-1474) around 1430.

Missa pro defunctis formally belongs to the *Proprium* category but it can be performed at any time—it is not bound by the Church calendar. Here are the essential parts of the *Requiem Mass*:

Introitus (Processional chant, 9th C.)

Kyrie eleison ("Lord, have mercy upon us")

Graduale (A chant; 4th C.)

Tractus (Used here instead of the joyous *Alleluia*; continuous structure without refrain)

Sequentia (*Dies irae;* 13th-14th C.)

Offertorium (Bread and wine are ceremoniously placed on the altar; 9th-11th C.)

Sanctus et Benedictus (Acclamations: "Holy, Holy, Holy"; and: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord")

Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God", a prayer to Jesus)

Communion/Eucharist (Partaking is done in remembrance of the body and blood of Jesus)

Many polyphonic requiems omit some of the above. For example, the *Requiem* by Johannes Ockeghem (c. 1410-1497), the earliest surviving polyphonic setting (1463?), lacks *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. Others add parts: as just one well-known example, Giuseppe Verdi's (1813-1901) *Requiem* (1874) ends with the responsory *Libera me* from the burial service that follows the Mass. Charles Gounod added *Pie Jesu*, while Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) added both *Pie Jesu* and *In Paradisum.* The contemporary Russian composer Vyacheslav Artyomov's (b. 1940) *Requiem* (composed 1985-1988) is perhaps the most complete one,

with fifteen sections, including *Libera Me*, *Pie Jesu*, and *In Paradisum.*

In addition to the previously mentioned requiems [Ockeghem, Mozart, Cherubini (two), Gounod, Fauré, Verdi, Liszt], there are other well-known ones, such as by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) in 1837, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) in 1890, Max Reger (1873-1916) in 1915, Virgil Thomson (1896-1989) in 1960, György Ligeti (1923-2006) in 1965, and Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) in 1975.

Readers should be reminded of composers who would have been excellent candidates for writing requiems but did not. All, however, wrote profound Roman Catholic music: Haydn (*Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross*); Beethoven [*Mass in C major, Mass in D major* (*Missa Solemnis*)]—and he is known to have said (Deane, 1981) that if he were to write a *Requiem*, Cherubini's would be his model (referring necessarily to Cherubini's first *Requiem,* in *C minor*, performed in 1817, ten years before Beethoven's death); G. Rossini (*Stabat Mater*); K. Szymanovski (*Stabat Mater*); A. Honegger (*Symphonie No.* 3 "*Liturgique*"—instrumental, but with movements entitled *Dies irae, De Profundis, Dona Nobis Pace*); O. Messiaen (*Nativité* etc.); and A. Pärt (b. 1935; *Te Deum* etc.; he may yet compose a requiem!). This list does not include Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, and other great 16th C. composers of music for the Church.

Finally, for this section, one should be reminded of compositions carrying the name "Requiem" but which are not Roman Catholic *Missa pro defunctis.* There is, for example, Johannes Brahms's (1868) *German Requiem*, based on the Lutheran Bible; Benjamin Britten's (1962) *War Requiem*, set to poems by Wilfred Owen; and there is Dmitry Kabalevsky's (1963) *Requiem for those who died in the war against fascism.* There are also about thirty little-known, mostly non-religious, works with "Requiem" in the title, written in the 20th C. by American composers (DeVenny, 1990). Many are doctoral dissertation works. Perhaps the best known is the 28-minute *Poets' Requiem* (1955) by Ned Rorem, with movements *Kafka*, *Rilke*, *Cocteau*, *Mallarmé*, etc.

5. *Dies irae, Dies illa*

One must dig deeper into the structure of the Requiem Mass and examine the Sequentia *Dies irae*, *dies illa* ("Days of wrath, days of sorrow") to find the section most uniquely associated with the *Missa pro defunctis.* This sequence entered the Mass in the 13th or early 14th century. The author (perhaps Tomasso da Celano c. 1185-c. 1265), "drew his inspiration from the responsory *Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna*, sung in the *Absolution* at the end of the Mass", but its origin can perhaps be traced to the Vulgate Bible, with Prophet Zephaniah's (in the 7th century BC) "stern call for repentance and the abolition of idolatry," although he ends "with the 'Song of consolation'" (Robertson, 1968: pp. 15-16). Hellfire and forgiveness, stick and carrot.

Dies irae is not a part of either the *ordinarium* or the *proprium missae*, and has no equivalent in the Eastern Orthodox Mass for the Dead (St. John of Damascus, 675-749) or in other music specially composed for the Orthodox burial

(e.g. *Opelo*, 1883, of the Serbian composer Stevan Mokranjac, 1856-1914).

Robertson (1968: p. 17) states that "the enormous popularity of *Dies irae* does not justify … its presence in the Requiem Mass", but fails to justify this view. After all, Franz Liszt is quoted by Merrick (1987: p. 140) as exclaiming in its favor: "Despite the terrors of *Dies irae*…" My view is that in *Dies irae* one has a mixture of God's anger that we have sinned and fallen from grace, thus forcing Him to make us die, and of our own anger at living a life with the knowledge of the imminence of death. Add to that the pain of witnessing the suffering and death of our loved ones (and even of our enemies?), and one has a very hot and bitter brew indeed. If one is a believer, the sorrow about what *could have been* is present alongside the anger and the pain, all these powerful emotions rising and subsiding, evoked and accompanied by the text and the music. *Dies irae* is indeed a multi-faceted, turbulent structure full of arousal-raising possibilities, one of the most important emotional centers of the *Requiem Mass*. It predicts the horror of the Last Judgement together with prayers for salvation on that day.

The essential truthfulness of the claims in the preceding paragraph can be illustrated by the profound effect of *Dies irae* on a prominent classical music critic, Basil Deane. Writing about Cherubini's first *Requiem* in *C minor* (1817), he states: "The short *Graduale* ends in a quiet atmosphere on a sustained *G major* chord. Then the silence is shattered by a clangorous outburst from the brass, followed by a thunderous stroke on the gong. The *Dies irae* has begun and we are transported from a world of cloistered contemplation to that of Dante's *Inferno*" (Deane, 1981). And in regard to Cherubini's second *Requiem* (in *D minor*, 1836): "The *Graduale* is entirely unaccompanied, an unusual treatment… But the opening bars of the following *Dies irae* show that Cherubini had a specifically dramatic purpose in mind. For the first time in the work the violins enter with a surging figure that culminates in a great outburst by voices and orchestra to the opening words of the poem. From then on, the music moves with overwhelming impetus, illustrating precisely and succinctly each phrase of the vivid text" (Deane, 1979).[1]

The poem is written in trochaic metre, each line of each of the eighteen three-line stanzas having eight syllables; the lines are rhyming. Here are a few stanzas: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 9th, and 16th. As for the English translation, it is given by Robertson (1968: p. 17) as coming from "a *Manual* of 1673, and is perhaps by J. Austin (d. 1669)." One also finds in Robertson (1968: p. 17) the following statement: "According to John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892) there were at that time over 150 English translations of the Sequence, and several have been added since."

[1]In this article, when discussing the effects on listeners of the *Requiem Mass* and of the *Dies irae*, "emotions" are frequently mentioned. It is essential to note that this does not in any sense imply support for the erroneous claims in the "music-causes-emotion" literature that *absolute music* may give rise to listeners' *fundamental emotions*. The *Requiem Mass*, or any *Mass*, is not absolute music. It contains text that is sung and numerous non- or extra-musical meanings. The entire context, significantly beyond the *instrumental sound* alone is one of *sadness*—and perhaps hope (Kivy, 1990; Konečni, 2008, 2013).

Dies irae, dies illa, Solvet saeclum in favilla: Teste David cum Sibylla	Ah, come it will, that direful day Which shall the world in ashes lay As David and the Sibyl say
Quantus tremor est futurus, Quando judex est venturus, Cuncta stricte discussurus!	How men will tremble and grow pale When Justice comes with sword and scale To weigh the faults and sort the fates of all!
Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulcra regionum, Coget omnes ante thronum	A trumpet first shall rend the skies And all, wherever laid, must rise And come unto the Bar in prisoner's guise
Rex tremendae majestatis, Qui salvandos salvas gratis, Salva me, fons pietatis	Dread King, to thee thyself run I, Who savest the saved, without a why, And so mayst me, thou source of clemency
Recordare, Jesu pie, Quod sum causa tuae, viae: Ne me perdas illa die	Think! Who did once thy pity move And drew thee from thy throne above? Cast me not off, at last, thy former love!
Confutatis maledictis, Flammis acribus addictis; Voca me cum benedictis	And then, those great Assizes done, And all the cursed i' the fire thrown, Say: 'Come ye blessed', meaning me for one

A few brief words about how different composers dealt with the *Dies irae.* Mozart has two repeats of the first two stanzas. But according to Wolff (1991/1994: p. 96), "Mozart's starting point in the selection of his principal key [*D minor*] was, we may be certain, the Dorian mode of the Sequence's 'Dies irae', which thus comes to impress itself decisively on the entire Requiem, even if the medieval melody associated with the mode is never actually heard." Liszt and Dvořák address the first three stanzas (including *Tuba mirum*…). Gounod interferes with the metre: The first two lines of the first stanza, then their repeat, then the third line. Verdi deals with the text operatically, Reger in the Late Romantic style. Honegger's instrumental *Dies irae* lasts only 21 seconds. Artyomov's tremendous *Dies irae* lasts 7 minutes and 28 seconds, about one-tenth of the length of his entire *Requiem*, and thus is both in absolute terms and proportionately the longest such section in any Requiem.

6. Relevant Principles from the Psychological Aesthetic Analysis

The following discussion stems from a branch of psychology called *empirical aesthetics*, and specifically from the work of the eminent psychobiologist and aesthetician Daniel E. Berlyne (1924-1976), and of the present author, one of whose doctoral mentors at the University of Toronto (1970-1973) was Professor Berlyne. The sources in question are Berlyne (1971, 1974) and Konečni (1979, 1982, 2015).

With regard to the analysis of works of art, including music, it is useful to dis-

tinguish three categories of variables, that is, three categories of attributes or properties that any work of music and visual art possess (examples are from music):

Psychophysical properties: dynamic range, instrumentation, timbre, mode, tempo, use of voice, etc.

Referential (or "meaning") properties: associations that are made through text and sound to the existentially important outcomes.

Statistical properties: these can be mathematically expressed, for example, in information theory terms, and include properties such as novelty, complexity, violation of expectations (surprisingness), and incongruity.

All three categories of properties or attributes can independently and jointly affect the listeners' physiological arousal (especially the sympathetic part of the autonomous nervous system). Furthermore, one can meaningfully speak of the *hedonic appeal*, *pleasure*, that one receives from fluctuations of arousal (within certain boundaries).

Most pertinently, one can with good reason think of the various decisions that a composer makes as *musical artistic devices* that are related to the three categories of variables outlined above. Many of the decisions involve a very high degree of musical knowledge, including form, instrumentation, orchestration, and a thorough familiarity with the past and contemporary works. Intuition and subconscious manipulation of musical ideas almost certainly play a part, and so does "inspiration" that often implies striving for innovation, for pushing or breaking the boundaries of, for example, a musical form.

Compositional decisions undoubtedly affect arousal-level fluctuations, producing what Berlyne (1971) has called arousal boosts, drops, jags, and boost-jags. This can happen in both small-scale and large-scale musical structures—involving the type of instrumentation, thematic development, relations between sections of a musical piece, dynamics, tonal closure, and dissonances (Konečni, 1986a, 1986b). Some of these ideas are perhaps more appropriate for the description of the goals and devices of composers before the 20th C., but many remain valid in contemporary compositions, such as those that deal with devices the characteristics of which fall on the psychophysical (timbre more than dynamics) and statistical (surprisingness, aleatorics, unpredictability) dimensions—referentiality perhaps less so.

Let us first briefly, without detail and complications, examine a simple example—the likely arousal-level fluctuations of listeners exposed to a classical musical form, the *sonata* (also sometimes called the *sonata-allegro* form). The standard sections are: fast movement, such as *allegro* (engaging the audience, raising arousal); slow movement, such as *adagio* (reducing arousal, for example, for the purpose of calm contemplation); a *scherzo* or dance, such as *minuet* (moderately raising arousal for entertainment); and ending with another fast movement, such as *presto* or *vivace* (presumably leaving listeners in an "up", "happy" mood).

Turning now to the more complicated context of the Roman Catholic *Mass*:

The Church—both intuitively and from many centuries of experience—understands the significance of arousal-level fluctuations, possibly even better than do composers. Furthermore, the Church is aware of the positive relationship between the hedonic appeal of music and listeners' receptivity and openness to the religious message. Therefore, precisely the order, sequence, in which the *text* of the *Mass* has been laid out over time already takes such factors into account and facilitates the task of composers' setting the text to music.

Here I offer a representation of the relationship between the traditional components of the *Mass*—specifically in reference to the great *Mass* in *B minor*, BWV 232, of Johann Sebastian Bach—and listeners' hypothetically experienced "power" of the music, where "power" summarizes the effect of arousal-raising and arousal-moderating devices that have been outlined above with regard to the three categories of psycho-aesthetic variables (**Figure 1**).

Briefly, the arousal-potential ("Power") peaks of the *Mass* are *Gloria* and especially *Sanctus* (acclamations: "Holy, Holy, Holy"). The physiological thrills or chills associated with these peaks have been discussed elsewhere (Konečni, 2005, 2011; Konečni, Wanic, & Brown, 2007). The comparative "valleys" (especially *Credo* and *Agnus Dei*) are unlikely to imply listeners' detachment, but rather deep contemplation and "being moved" or "touched" in the language of the *Aesthetic Trinity Theory* of Konečni (2005, 2011).

7. "Power" of Music and Church Doctrine East and West

Before discussing this issue explicitly in music, it is useful to consider first a comparable issue in the visual arts. Presumably because of the prohibition of images in the Old Testament, there was hostility to their use in early Christianity, but this position was later gradually relaxed. Until, that is, in the 8th C., the powerful *iconoclastic* movement reaffirmed the belief in the absolute transcendence and invisibility of God and insisted on the total abolition of pictorial representation. However, there was much popular support for the veneration (not worship) of images, led by monastic communities. After much struggle, sometimes unseemly, the view advanced especially by St. John of Damascus (John

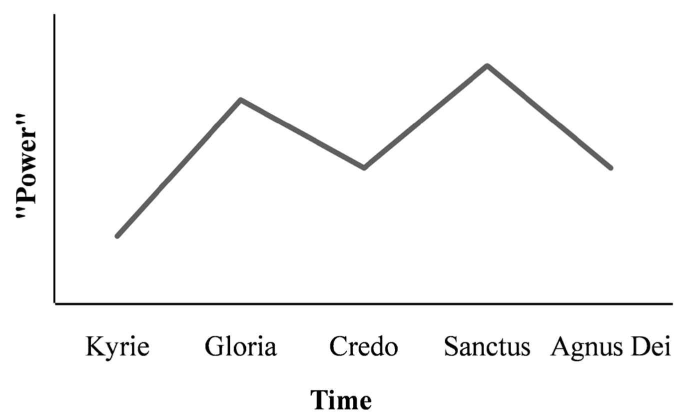

Figure 1. *Arousal Potential* ("Power") over time.

Damascene, the "golden speaker") prevailed: "God, though invisible by nature, can and must be represented in His human nature, as Jesus Christ" (Meyendorff, 1926: p. 23).

Consider, then, the momentous importance for all humanity, the visual arts both East and West, of this decisive defeat of iconoclasm at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 AD (this was the last of seven ecumenical councils of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church). Thus, one now has the great Western religious paintings and the magnificent Eastern frescoes and icons.

The somewhat analogous, but even more consequential, issue in music has to do with the use of instrumentation in Church service. In this regard, East and West diverged early and to this day the Eastern Orthodox Church believes that the voice of God is best and sufficiently expressed without any adornment, through the human voice alone. In contrast, the Western Church moved from the pure Gregorian plainchant first to polyphony and then to instrumental accompaniment. Because of such developments, Orthodox composers have had very limited choices in liturgical creativity. It is clear that the possibility of instrumentation not only hugely increased the range of compositional choices of Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant) composers, but also the number and type of arousal-raising and arousal-moderating devices at their disposal. Western religious music could thus become more multi-faceted and more "beautiful"—although some would say "prettier", at the cost of losing ancient purity and depth.

Orthodox Churches of, for example, Bulgaria, Russia, and Serbia are heirs in the Slavic world of Byzantium, for by the 6th C., the ancient Christian Churches in Alexandria (Coptic) and Antioch (now Syria) had broken off with Constantinopolis (the "Second Rome") over various schisms. Incidentally, it is worth remembering that from the 6th to the 11th C. Constantinopolis was the richest and most powerful city in Christendom. Many complicated, painful, and indeed sordid events (such as the sacking of Constantinopolis in 1204, in the Fourth Crusade, by the Western "Latins") ensued over the centuries.

To make a long story short, from the standpoint of musical aesthetics, in Russia and Serbia there is *Liturgy* (the equivalent of the Roman Catholic Mass), which is a Eucharistic service of the Eastern Orthodox Church. There are several versions, the most celebrated being the *Divine Liturgy* of St. John Chrysostom (347-407 AD), Archbishop of Constantinopolis, "the golden-mouthed", renowned for his intelligence and eloquence. In this *Liturgy*, musical instruments are never used and for a long time there were male voices only. A number of Orthodox composers have tackled it, notably Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Tchaikovsky's Op. 41 (1878) is a deeply felt, obviously *a cappella*, composition that consists of settings of texts from St. John's *Divine Liturgy*. In an 1878 letter to Nadezhda F. von Meck, Tchaikovsky wrote: "The Church possesses much poetic charm. I very often attend services and consider the liturgy of St. John

Chrysostom one of the greatest productions of art. If we follow the service very carefully, and enter into the meaning of every ceremony, it is impossible not to be profoundly moved by the liturgy of our Orthodox Church" (Modest I. Tchaikovsky, 1904: pp. 237-238).

Rachmaninoff's Op. 31 (1910) is an Eastern Orthodox *Liturgy* that consists of twenty sections for unaccompanied mixed choir. The 2nd ("Bless the Lord, O My Soul"), 10th (*Nicene Creed*), and 12th ("We Praise Thee") sections contain solo passages for alto, basso, and soprano, respectively. Rachmaninoff wrote the following to Nikita Morozov: "I have been thinking about the Liturgy for a long time and strove to write it. I suddenly became fascinated with it and then finished it very quickly. Not for a long time have I written anything with such pleasure" (Moody, 1994).

Additional comments should be accorded at this point to the previously mentioned Vyacheslav Artyomov and his (Latin) *Requiem*.[2] Artyomov stands alone as the only Russian, or indeed as the only Orthodox, composer to have been drawn to the *Missa pro defunctis*, the pinnacle of Roman Catholic musical structures. Especially given his profound Russianness and his sincere Orthodox Christianity, surely such a choice of musical form is musically, socially, and psychologically of interest. At least three facts should be noted. First, Artyomov's music suffered an official boycott for some twenty years prior to 1985. Second, the dedication of his *Requiem* is: "To the Martyrs of the Long-Suffering Russia". Third, this composition was certainly not meant for church performance: 78-minute duration, six soloists, two choirs (one children's), a symphony orchestra, some 250 performers in all. And while the entire detailed structure of the Requiem Mass is present, this is, in a sense, a musical representation of a *generalized idea of the Requiem*: of agony, death, and, hopefully, redemption.

Perhaps precisely in order to be able to deal with martyrdom on a gigantic scale and the breadth of emotions and musical ideas it inspired in him, Artyomov may have opted for the ancient and firm, yet "alien", structure of the Latin *Requiem Mass* as a vehicle that would harness and discipline his ideas and musical forces. In this light, it is also perhaps not surprising that Artyomov gave such, previously mentioned, prominence to the setting of *Dies irae*. This powerful, archaic text, with both the divine and human emotions of anger, grief, and forgiveness, and the philosophical implications of terrible sin and infinite grace, rises to the demands of the occasion. In Artyomov's *Requiem*, ancient sensibilities and mysticism of Orthodox Christianity and the unspoken sounds of mediaeval Church Slavonic gently emerge between the lines of the formidable Latin text, mellowing it.

8. Final Thoughts

At the time (1988) when Artyomov completed his *Requiem*, one ventured to think that on the threshold of the new millennium a sublime fusion could occur

[2]A small part of this article draws on unpublished symposium lecture and concert program notes by V. J. Konečni (1997a, 1997b) regarding Vyacheslav Artyomov's *Requiem* (1985-1988).

between the sentiments of the Old and New Testaments, between East and West, Orthodoxy and Catholicism—among Rome, Constantinopolis, and the Third Rome, Moscow. As of this writing, in late April of 2020, this hope has sadly not materialized.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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