

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



# YANNICK

**PLAYBILL**

October 2012  
*The Inaugural Season*

# Season 2012-2013

**Friday, October 19, at 8:00**

**Saturday, October 20, at**

**8:00**

**Sunday, October 21, at**

**2:00**

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Marina Poplavskaya** Soprano

**Christine Rice** Mezzo-soprano

**Rolando Villazón** Tenor

**Mikhail Petrenko** Bass

**Westminster Symphonic Choir**

**Joe Miller** Director

### **Verdi** Requiem

I. Requiem (Solo Quartet and Chorus)

II. Dies irae:

Dies irae (Chorus)

Tuba mirum (Bass and Chorus)

Liber scriptus (Mezzo-soprano and Chorus)

Quid sum miser (Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, and Tenor)

Rex tremendae (Solo Quartet and Chorus)

Recordare (Soprano and Mezzo-soprano)

Ingemisco (Tenor)

Confutatis (Bass and Chorus)

Lacrymosa (Solo Quartet and Chorus)

III. Offertorio (Solo Quartet)

IV. Sanctus (Chorus I and II)

V. Agnus Dei (Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, and Chorus)

VI. Lux aeterna (Mezzo-soprano, Tenor, and Bass)

VII. Libera me (Soprano and Chorus)

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 30 minutes, and will be performed without an intermission.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra



Renowned for its distinctive sound, beloved for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for an unrivaled legacy of “firsts” in music-making, The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has cultivated an extraordinary history of artistic leaders in its 112 seasons, including music directors Fritz Scheel, Carl Pohlig, Leopold Stokowski, Eugene Ormandy, Riccardo Muti, Wolfgang Sawallisch, and Christoph Eschenbach, and Charles Dutoit, who served as chief conductor from 2008 to 2012. With the 2012-13 season, Yannick Nézet-Séguin becomes the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Named music director designate in 2010, Nézet-Séguin brings a vision that extends beyond symphonic music into the

vivid world of opera and choral music.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra nurtures an important relationship not only with patrons who support the main season at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts but also those who enjoy the Orchestra’s other area performances at the Mann Center, Penn’s Landing, and other venues. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association also continues to own the Academy of Music—a National Historic Landmark—as it has since 1957.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador for Philadelphia and for the United States. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, today The Philadelphia

Orchestra boasts a new partnership with the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center while also enjoying a three-week residency in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and a strong partnership with the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival.

The ensemble maintains an important Philadelphia tradition of presenting educational programs for students of all ages. Today the Orchestra executes a myriad of education and community partnership programs serving over 45,000 annually, including its Neighborhood Concert Series, Sound All Around and Family Concerts, and eZseatU.

For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director



**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** became the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra with the start of the 2012-13 season. Named music director designate in June 2010, he made his Orchestra debut in December 2008. Over the past decade, Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. Since 2008 he has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic, and since 2000 artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain. He has appeared with such revered ensembles as the Vienna and Berlin philharmonics; the Boston Symphony; the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia; the Dresden Staatskapelle; the Chamber Orchestra of Europe; and the major Canadian orchestras. His talents extend beyond symphonic music into opera and choral music, leading acclaimed performances at the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, London's Royal Opera House, and the Salzburg Festival.

Highlights of Yannick's inaugural season include his Carnegie Hall debut with the Verdi Requiem, two world and one U.S. premiere, and performances of *The Rite of Spring* in collaboration with New York-based Ridge Theater, complete with dancers, video projection, and theatrical lighting.

In July 2012 Yannick and Deutsche Grammophon announced a major long-term collaboration. His discography with the Rotterdam Philharmonic for BIS Records and EMI/Virgin includes an Edison Award-winning album of Ravel's orchestral works. He has also recorded several award-winning albums with the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique. In addition, his first recording with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Mahler's Symphony No. 5, is available for download.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied at that city's Conservatory of Music and continued studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. In 2012 Yannick was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honors. His other honors include Canada's National Arts Centre Award; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction for the arts in Quebec; and an honorary doctorate by the University of Quebec in Montreal.

To read Yannick's full bio, please visit [www.philorch.org/conductor](http://www.philorch.org/conductor).

# Soloist



Mich Jenkins

Russian-born soprano **Marina Poplavskaya** drew international attention after singing the role of Rachel in Halévy's *La Juive* in concerts at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in the fall of 2006. Those critically acclaimed performances resulted in invitations from theaters around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera where she made her debut the following year as Natasha in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, conducted by Valery Gergiev. She has returned each season for new productions of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, Verdi's *La traviata*, and Gounod's *Faust* and has also sung Liù in Puccini's *Turandot* and appeared with the company in Japan in *Don Carlos*.

Ms. Poplavskaya was born in Moscow and studied at the Ippolitov-Ivanov State Institute of Music. After winning numerous prizes in international competitions, including first prize in the Maria Callas Grand Prix in Athens, she began her professional career at the New Opera Theatre in Moscow, making her operatic debut as Tatyana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. She joined the Jette Parker Young Artists Program of the Royal Opera in 2004 and made her company debut as the Third Norn in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* under Antonio Pappano. Following *La Juive*, Ms. Poplavskaya made her French stage debut in Avignon as Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and her Spanish debut in Valencia in the same role under Lorin Maazel; she has also sung the role at Covent Garden. In the summer of 2008 Ms. Poplavskaya debuted at the Salzburg Festival as Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*, performing under the baton of Riccardo Muti. Later that year she made her debut at La Monnaie in Brussels in a performance of Verdi's Requiem, followed by her Italian stage debut in Rome, again as Desdemona under Mr. Muti.

During the 2012-13 season Ms. Poplavskaya returns to the Metropolitan Opera in *Faust*, to Los Angeles Opera for Verdi's *I due Foscari*, to Covent Garden as Alice in Meyerbeer's rarely performed *Robert le Diable*, and to Netherlands Opera in *La traviata*. She also makes her debut at La Scala as Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* under Daniel Barenboim. Ms. Poplavskaya makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these current performances.

# Soloist



Rob Moore

British mezzo-soprano **Christine Rice** was born and educated in Manchester and studied physics at Balliol College, Oxford, before entering the Royal Northern College of Music to study with Robert Alderson. She begins the 2012-13 season with a number of concert performances and, on the operatic stage, in the title role of Bizet's *Carmen* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin. She is a regular performer at the major European opera houses, including the Royal Opera, Covent Garden; the Bavarian State Opera in Munich; Frankfurt Opera; the Teatro Real in Madrid; and English National Opera. Concert appearances this fall include Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's Mass in B minor, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, and a live BBC Radio broadcast featuring works by Britten.

For the Royal Opera Ms. Rice has sung Judith in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Concepcion in Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole*, Miranda in Adès's *The Tempest*, the title role in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, Sonetka in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Ariadne in the world premiere of Birtwistle's *The Minotaur*, and Nicklausse in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*, among others. For English National Opera her roles have included Marguerite in Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* and Arsace in Handel's *Partenope*. Other notable roles include Penelope in Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* for Frankfurt Opera; Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* for Seattle Opera and the Bavarian State Opera; Diana in Cavalli's *La Calisto* for Geneva Opera; Beatrice in Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict* for the Opera Comique in Paris; and the title roles in Handel's *Ariodante* and *Rinaldo* for the Bavarian State Opera.

Ms. Rice also has a very busy concert career, appearing throughout the U.K., Europe, and North America. She performs at the BBC Proms and at the Edinburgh International Festival, working with such conductors as Antonio Pappano and Charles Mackerras. She made her Carnegie Hall debut last October with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Fabio Luisi in the world premiere of *Closer to My Own Life* by John Harbison with text by Alice Munro. With these current performances, Ms. Rice makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut.

# Soloist



Felix Bröcker/DG

Tenor **Rolando Villazón** began the 2012-13 season with concerts at the Musikfest Bremen and the Klara Festival in Brussels. Following these current concerts, which mark his debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra, he performs with the Staatskapelle Berlin under the baton of Daniel Barenboim in concerts featuring songs by Giuseppe Verdi, Mozart's Requiem, and a world premiere of songs by Elliott Carter. This season he also embarks on a multi-city European tour with a program of songs and arias by Verdi to mark the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. On the operatic stage Mr. Villazón performs the roles of Rodolfo in Puccini's *La bohème* with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* with the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona; and Alfredo in Verdi's *La traviata* with the Vienna State Opera.

Born in Mexico City, Mr. Villazón began his musical studies at the National Conservatory of Music before entering young artist programs in Pittsburgh and at San Francisco Opera. After winning several prizes at Plácido Domingo's Operalia Competition in 1999, he made his European debut as Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon* in Genoa, swiftly followed by further debuts at the Paris Opera as Alfredo and at the Berlin Staatsoper as Macduff in Verdi's *Macbeth*. A recipient of many prestigious awards, Mr. Villazón has been named a *Chévalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, one of the highest awards in the fields of arts and literature in France.

In 2007 Mr. Villazón became an exclusive recording artist with Deutsche Grammophon. His releases on that label include a CD of operatic duets with soprano Anna Netrebko, as well as both CD and DVD recordings of *La traviata*, recorded live at the Salzburg Festival. *Duets* claimed the top spot on the *Billboard* classical chart shortly after its release in the U.S., and in Europe set a record for the best debut ever for a classical album, climbing to the top of the pop charts in several countries. His recording *México!* was released in 2010 and features new arrangements of classical Mexican songs. Releases this year include a complete recording of *Don Giovanni* as the first installment of a multi-part Mozart cycle conceived by the tenor and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

# Soloist



In addition to making his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these current performances, bass **Mikhail Petrenko's** concerts this season include the role of Hunding in Wagner's *Die Walküre* and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Simon Rattle. Future operatic engagements include *Die Walküre* and Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan and the Berlin Staatsoper, Oreste in Strauss's *Elektra* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and appearances at the Metropolitan Opera. He has also recently made his big screen debut, appearing as Leporello in Kasper Holten's *Juan*, a film version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Born in St. Petersburg, Mr. Petrenko graduated from the St. Petersburg State Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory. He was a prizewinner at the International Rimsky-Korsakov Competition for Young Opera Singers and a finalist and diploma-winner at the Maria Callas New Verdi Voices Competition in Parma in 2000. He has toured with the Mariinsky Opera Company, performing with Valery Gergiev at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; La Scala; the Teatro Real in Madrid; the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris; Suntory Hall in Tokyo; the Salzburg Festival; and the Melbourne Festival. In the 2001-02 season he made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. Most recently he appeared with Mr. Gergiev in Baden-Baden singing Hagen and Fafner in Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. He has also appeared as Heinrich in Wagner's *Lohengrin* and Daland in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*. Other roles include Pistola in Verdi's *Falstaff*, Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Genoa and Varlaam in Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, and Ramfis in Verdi's *Aida*.

Mr. Petrenko has appeared at the BBC Proms as the Storm Knight in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Kashchey the Immortal* with the London Philharmonic, conducted by Vladimir Jurowski; as Basilio in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* and Hunding at the Hamburg State Opera; in Verdi's *Il trovatore* at the Royal Opera House; and in Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* with Tokyo's NHK Symphony and Charles Dutoit, now conductor laureate of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Mr. Petrenko also sang Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.



# Choir



Peter Burg

Recognized as one of the world's leading choral ensembles, the **Westminster Symphonic Choir** has recorded and performed with major orchestras under virtually every internationally acclaimed conductor of the past 77 years. Led by conductor Joe Miller, director of choral activities at Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, the ensemble is composed of all the juniors and seniors and half of the graduate students at the college.

The Choir made its Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 1934 with Leopold Stokowski in Bach's Mass in B minor and most recently performed Brahms's Requiem with the Orchestra last season with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who studied choral conducting at Westminster Choir College.

The Choir has performed Verdi's Requiem 11 times, including performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Ormandy in 1964 and 1965. Two other performances of the Requiem have been televised: A 1980 concert with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Zubin Mehta, was the first choral performance featured on a *Live from Lincoln Center* broadcast; a 2002 *Great Performances* broadcast, featuring the choir with the New Jersey Symphony and conductor Zdenek Macal, was a memorial observing the first anniversary of September 11.

The Choir has sung more than 350 performances with the New York Philharmonic alone. Recent seasons have also included concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle, the Dresden Staatskapelle and Daniel Harding, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra and David Robertson, the San Francisco Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas, the Staatskapelle Berlin and Pierre Boulez, and the Bavarian Radio Symphony and Mariss Jansons. The Choir's 2012-13 season includes Berg's *Wozzeck* with the London Philharmonic and Esa-Pekka Salonen; Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. 10* and Estévez's *Cantata criolla* with the Simón Bolívar Symphony and Gustavo Dudamel; Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and Daniel Barenboim; and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Westminster Festival Orchestra conducted by Dr. Miller.

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1874**

**Verdi**

Requiem

**Music**

Musorgsky

*Pictures from an  
Exhibition*

**Literature**

Hardy

*Far from the  
Madding Crowd*

**Art**

Renoir

*La Loge*

**History**

First American  
zoo established  
in Philadelphia

One need not agree with the old quip that Verdi's Requiem is his "greatest opera" to recognize that this choral masterpiece abundantly displays the insights, passion, and drama of a supreme opera composer setting an old and venerable text.

Its composition came near the end of Verdi's long career, after he had written all but his final two operas. His initial plan in 1868 was to compose a composite Requiem Mass honoring the death of Gioachino Rossini to which a dozen Italian composers would each contribute a part. Verdi composed the concluding Libera me, but in the end the joint venture was not performed. A few years later, in May 1873, the celebrated Italian writer and patriot Alessandro Manzoni died and Verdi decided to revise the Libera me and compose the other sections of the Mass to commemorate him on the first anniversary of his death.

This program by The Philadelphia Orchestra marks the inaugural concerts of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the ensemble's eighth music director. With Verdi's overpowering work the conductor continues his exploration of the great requiems, following performances of those by Mozart and Brahms during the past two seasons. This exciting project proves Verdi was wrong when he declared: "There are so many, many Requiem Masses!!! It is useless to add one more."

# The Music

## Requiem



**Giuseppe Verdi**  
**Born in Roncole, near**  
**Busseto, October 9 or 10,**  
**1813**  
**Died in Milan, January 27,**  
**1901**

That a man who was by all reports an agnostic should have written one of the most effective pieces of sacred music in the repertoire might give us pause. But if Verdi's Requiem is not exactly what Rome might have ordered, it has become lodged in the Western imagination as an expression of the 19th century's new view of faith as being an intensely personal affair. While using the trappings of the liturgically flexible Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead, Verdi's 1874 masterpiece pushed sacred music beyond extremes of expression already approached in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, and Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts*.

**A Transcendent Work** The *Messa da Requiem per l'anniversario della morte di Manzoni 22 maggio 1874*, to cite Verdi's full title, was composed ostensibly in memory of the great Italian author and nationalist Alessandro Manzoni. Although it was clearly more than the sum of its parts, the work also transcended the cliché, established early on, of an "opera in ecclesiastical garb," to cite the conductor Hans von Bülow's misguided early appraisal of the piece. Further, its qualities go beyond merely being "the summit of 19th-century liturgical music," in Julian Budden's phrase, to which the Verdi expert acceded that there was not much competition.

More than that, the Requiem represented a sea-change in the way Europeans, and ultimately Americans along with them, viewed their bargain with religion. It strayed further from the rituals of liturgy than Mozart or Rossini had, into a realm where the politics of 19th-century Italian church-and-state divisions mingled with the European mind's growing sense that each individual had to find a way to faith through a struggle that might or might not have anything to do with traditional religion.

The Requiem was by general agreement the work in which Italy's greatest composer concentrated his musical energies most effectively and explosively. Quite apart from the question of whether the Requiem is Verdi's "greatest work," it is at least the piece into which the composer poured "all the purely musical resources that he had developed in the course of 26 operas," as Budden

summarizes, “and which he could here exploit to the full without having to take into account the special [demands] which a stage action inevitably imposes.”

**The Work’s Genesis** The Requiem came about through a sporadic course of events, whereby Verdi—who had all but decided that *Aida* of 1871 would be his last opera—began reevaluating his artistic mission. The Italy of the 1870s was a period of great change, with the nationalist movement in politics giving way to decentralized and corrupt leadership, and the musical scene becoming gradually “Germanized,” to use Verdi’s word for the influx of works like Wagner’s *Lohengrin* and the presence of musicians like Liszt and Bülow. Sacred music, it went without saying, languished.

It was Rossini’s death years earlier that sparked Verdi’s first attempt to take part in composing a requiem: When the elder composer died in 1868, Verdi had proposed a plan in which the leading composers of the day would each contribute a movement to a requiem, which would be performed on the anniversary of Rossini’s death. Intrigue on the part of the conductor and impresario Angelo Mariani would ultimately foil the plan, but not before Verdi had already composed his contribution, the *Libera me*, a revised version of which became the final movement in his own Requiem five years later.

During the ensuing years, when friends began hinting that Verdi should take up a requiem, the composer seemed to resist the idea, while implicitly admitting that he had entertained the notion. “It is a temptation that will pass like so many others,” he wrote to conductor Alberto Mazzucato in February 1871. “I do not like useless things. There are so many, many Requiem Masses!!! It is useless to add one more.”

Despite these overemphatic words, some speculate that Verdi might have been contemplating such a work already in 1873, after his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, returned to him the score of the unused *Libera me*, then (apparently) planted a letter in the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* urging Verdi to “give new life to sacred music, now fallen to such a low point.”

In any event it was Manzoni’s death a month later, on May 22, that activated Verdi’s resolve to complete the piece. “I am profoundly saddened by the death of our great man!” he wrote to Ricordi of the man whose writings represented the goal of Italian linguistic and national unity. “Now it is all ended!” he wrote subsequently to Clara

Maffei. “And with Him ends the purest, the most holy, the highest of our glories.” In Verdi’s eyes Manzoni so represented the ideals of 19th-century Italian nationhood that some have speculated that what Verdi was ultimately composing was a “Requiem for the *risorgimento*”—the Italian national “awakening” that had found such powerful resonance in the composer’s art and imagination.

**A Requiem Goes Out into the World** The notion of “operatic” sacred music was hardly new with Verdi. Just to look at the 19th-century Italian sphere, Donizetti (in his Requiem composed to honor Bellini) and Rossini had both set precedents for writing religious music that was essentially informed by operatic style. Beethoven’s *Missa solemnis* certainly has operatic qualities, and moreover Budden argues that works like Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* or Handel’s *Messiah* are essentially operatic in outlook. (The scholar David Rosen also points to the sacred works of Cherubini and Berlioz as probable influences on Verdi’s large-gestured approach.)

But Verdi’s remains a work of sacred music to its core, despite a certain dispassionate approach to the strictly liturgical aspects of the text. While scored for four soloists with chorus, it does not turn the singers into characters playing roles—at least not in any traditional sense. There is a certain “depersonalized” aspect to their involvement, to use Budden’s word, as they speak at times to the general narrative and at other times, obliquely, as individual supplicants seeking mercy. The way in which the soloists are used is atypical as well: Mozart had employed the soloists in his Requiem generally as a quartet; Cherubini used no soloists at all in his two Requiems, while Berlioz used only a single tenor in one movement.

In his choice of texts Verdi put a personal stamp on the requiem, too. There is no one requiem text: Composers choose from a basic core liturgy and can add sequences and other texts. Nevertheless the goal of a requiem is generally always the same, as George Martin points out: to evoke in the listener a sense of peace. To the basic texts Verdi added the *Libera me* and expanded the *Dies irae*.

The score for the Requiem was composed chiefly in Paris, Sant’Agata, and Milan from the latter part of 1873 to the spring of 1874. “I’m working on my Mass and doing so with great pleasure,” the composer wrote to Camille du Locle. “I feel as if I’ve become a solid citizen and am no longer the public’s clown who, with a big *tamburone* and

bass drum shouts 'come, come, step right up', etc. etc. As you can imagine, when I hear operas spoken of now, my conscience is scandalized, and I immediately make the sign of the Cross!!"

It was complete by April 16, 1874, and the venue for its premiere set for the Church of San Marco, Milan—partly because Verdi favored its acoustics. The performance took place on May 22, a year after Manzoni's death according to plan, and three more performances followed during the next week. It was a popular if not wholly a critical success at its early performances: The most notorious initial criticism, Bülow's celebrated attack, was in general the exception to the rule.

In any event Johannes Brahms came out in Verdi's defense: "Bülow has made an almighty fool of himself. Only a genius could have written such a work." (Two decades later the conductor withdrew his condemnation, which had reportedly been based on a cursory view of the score.) Further successes continued to underscore the work's special nature, in Paris and at the relatively new Royal Albert Hall in London. It was at the latter, on May 15, that a new version appeared for the first time, with the "Liber scriptus" fugue turned into a solo for mezzo-soprano. The Londoners were nevertheless lukewarm about the piece, whereas in Vienna the success was "into the torrid zone," as Giuseppina Strepponi, Verdi's wife, observed.

The official United States premiere took place in the Academy of Music in New York on November 17, 1874, under the baton of a former Verdi pupil, Emanuele Muzio. (A previous performance in October had preceded this, though, at St. Ann's Church in New York, with a chorus of 20 and organ accompaniment.)

From the outset, Verdi had emphasized that the piece was not to be performed in an overly operatic style. "One mustn't sing this Mass in the way one sings an opera," he wrote, "and therefore phrasing and dynamics that may be fine in the theater won't satisfy me at all, not at all." Indeed, as Rosen points out, Verdi was especially pleased with the Paris renderings because they were less "theatrical" than the barn-storming Italian performances.

The forces used in these early performances varied a great deal, as Rosen has shown: The Milan premiere employed a chorus of 120 and an orchestra of about 100, though on other occasions Verdi authorized much larger forces, most outlandishly a performance at Royal

Albert Hall, which featured—according to the testimony of the organist for the performance—a chorus that was 1,200 strong. Moreover the original performances were sometimes broken by applause, and sometimes numbers were even encored. An intermission usually followed the *Dies irae*.

**A Closer Look** The Requiem begins with an initial **Requiem aeternam** cast in A-B-A form, with the opening portion introducing the mournful thematic material and a central section formed by the “Te decet hymnus.” In the first full-throated cry for mercy (“Kyrie”), the composer introduces his soloists as if they were characters in a drama. The entreaty moves upward in a bone-tingling registral expansion achieved by the soloists ascending successively while the accompaniment descends. The critic Donald Francis Tovey called this “the most moving passage in all Verdi’s works; unquestionably one of the greater monuments of musical pathos.”

The **Dies irae** finds Verdi at his most ferocious. The composer has turned the 13th-century text by Thomas of Celano into a huge structure with almost unprecedented extremes of emotion—from hand-wringing cries for mercy to hysterical fears of doom. The initial onslaught is equaled in Verdi’s output perhaps only by the opening storm scene of *Otello* composed several years later. The subsequent Tuba mirum becomes a terrifying antiphony of orchestral and off-stage (or often balconied) trumpet players; here Verdi is at his most theatrical: The slap-dash *risorgimento* choruses of his operas have been transformed into something close to what we might imagine the last trumpet(s) could indeed sound like. In the shattered silence that follows, the bass is dazed (“Mors stupebit”), the mezzo imperious (“Liber scriptus”).

The chorus softly intones “*Dies irae*” to remind us of the terror before the brief trio of soprano, mezzo, and tenor (Quid sum miser) introduces the entreaty of a single sinner pleading for mercy, as it were. This sets up an ongoing contrast between the narrative cries of all Christians (“*Dies irae*”) with the increasingly personal plea of real individuals, expressed by the soloists singly or in combination.

The immutability of God’s power (Rex tremendae) is offered as a response to the plea for salvation, which seems little comfort to the soprano and mezzo-soprano (Recordare), who sing a tender operatic duet. Likewise the tenor’s tormented *Ingemisco* is answered by the

*Verdi's Requiem was composed from 1873 to 1874.*

*The first Philadelphia Orchestra performance of the Requiem was in Toronto, on February 24, 1920, with soprano Florence Hinkle, mezzo-soprano Ellen Rumsey, tenor Lambert Murphy, bass J. Campbell McInnes, the Mendelssohn Choir, and conductor H.A. Fricker. The most recent performances were in June 2002, with soprano Christine Brewer, mezzo-soprano Nancy Maultsby, tenor Stuart Neill, bass James Morris, the Philadelphia Singers Chorale, and conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch.*

*The Philadelphia Orchestra recorded the Requiem in 1964 for CBS, with soprano Lucine Amara, contralto Maureen Forrester, tenor Richard Tucker, bass George London, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and Eugene Ormandy.*

*The score calls for three flutes (III doubling piccolo), two oboes, two bassoons, four clarinets, four horns, eight trumpets (four offstage), three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum), strings, four vocal soloists, and mixed chorus.*

*The Requiem runs approximately one hour and 25 minutes.*

bass' stern Confutatis. A fierce "Dies irae" reprise ushers in the emotional high-point of the section, the plangent lament of the Lacrymosa, filled with sigh-motifs and a sort of inexorable forward-motion. In this case the operatic nature of the piece is overt: It is derived from a duet composed for the opera *Don Carlos* but discarded before its premiere.

After so much high-decibel gnashing-of-teeth, the **Offertorio** comes as a welcome moment of serenity, and ushers in a more tranquil series of movements. The "Domine Jesu" grows from a solo cello theme heard toward the beginning, which moves into a short-lived fugue ("Quam olim Abrahae"). More emphatic still is the double fugue of the **Sanctus**, which together with the "Benedictus" is set as a continuous contrapuntal texture broken only by the simpler textures of the "Pleni sunt coeli." The **Agnus Dei** is built from a plainchant-like theme in octaves; with the **Lux aeterna** for soloists, conflict arises again, but is quickly dispelled in a shimmer of B-flat major.

The **Libera me** plunges us back into the intense personal drama of the Dies irae, "as though someone had said the wrong thing and God suddenly appeared," in George Martin's formulation. This is essentially the same Libera me as that composed in 1869 for the Rossini Requiem, though with some elaboration of the vocal part—"a revealing but not radical revision of the piece," as Rosen writes. The choral interpolations of the "Requiem aeternam" and "Dies irae" have been taken to suggest that Verdi intended even then to expand the Rossini Requiem into a full composition some day. The emphatic fugue is a momentary gesture in a piece that concludes the Requiem on a note of tranquility and, finally, uncertainty.

—Paul J. Horsley



## I. REQUIEM

### Chorus

*Requiem aeternam dona  
eis, Domine,  
et lux perpetua luceat  
eis.*

*Te decet hymnus, Deus in  
Sion,  
et tibi reddetur votum in  
Jerusalem;  
exaudi orationem meam,  
ad te omnis caro veniet.*

Eternal rest grant to them,  
O Lord,  
and let eternal light shine  
upon them.  
A hymn, O God, becometh  
Thee in Zion;  
and a vow shall be paid to  
Thee in Jerusalem:  
hear my prayer,  
to Thee all flesh shall come.

### Soloists, Chorus

*Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.*

Lord have mercy on us.  
Christ have mercy on us.  
Lord have mercy on us.

## II. DIES IRAE

### Chorus

*Dies irae, dies illa,  
solvat saeculum in  
favilla,  
teste David cum  
Sybilla.*

*Quantus tremor est  
futura,  
quando Judex est venturus,  
cuncta stricte  
discussurus!*

*Tuba mirum spargens  
sonum,  
per sepulchra  
regionum,  
coget omnes ante  
thronum.*

The day of wrath, that day,  
will dissolve the world in  
ashes,  
as David prophesied with  
the Sibyl.

How great a terror there  
will be,  
when the Judge shall come  
who will thresh out  
everything thoroughly.

The trumpet, scattering a  
wondrous sound,  
through the tombs of  
every land,  
will gather all before  
the throne.

### Bass

*Mors stupebit et  
natura,  
cum resurget creatura,  
judicanti responsura.*

Death and nature shall  
stand amazed,  
when creation rises again  
to answer to the Judge.

**Mezzo-soprano**

*Liber scriptus  
proferetur,  
in quo totum continetur,  
unde mundus  
judicetur.*

A written book will be  
brought forth,  
which contains everything  
from which the world shall  
be judged.

**Chorus**

*Dies irae.*

The day of wrath.

**Mezzo-soprano**

*Judex ergo cum  
sedebit,  
quidquid latet  
apparebit,  
nil inultum  
remanebit.*

When the Judge takes  
his seat,  
whatever is hidden shall  
be made manifest,  
nothing shall remain  
unavenged.

**Chorus**

*Dies irae, dies illa, etc.*

The day of wrath, etc.

**Mezzo-soprano**

*Quid sum miser tunc  
dicturus?  
Quem patronum  
rogaturus,  
cum vix justus  
sit securus?*

What shall I, wretch,  
say?  
Whom shall I ask  
to plead for me,  
when scarcely the  
righteous shall be safe?

**Soprano, Mezzo-  
soprano, Tenor**

*Quid sum miser,  
etc.*

What shall I, wretch, say?  
etc.

**Chorus**

*Rex tremendae majestatis,  
qui salvandos salvas  
gratis.*

King of dreadful majesty,  
who freely saves the  
redeemed.

**Soloists, Chorus**

*Salva me, fons pietatis.*

Save me, O Fount of Pity.

**Soprano, Mezzo-  
soprano**

*Recordare Jesu pie,  
quod sum causa  
tuae viae,  
ne me perdas  
illa die.  
Quaerens me  
sedisti lassus,*

Recall, merciful Jesus,  
that I was the reason for  
Thy journey:  
do not destroy me  
on that day.  
Seeking me, Thou didst  
sit down weary,

*redemisti  
 crucem  
 passus;  
 tantus labor non  
 sit cassus.  
 Juste Judex  
 ultionis,  
 donum fac  
 remissionis  
 ante diem  
 rationis.*

### **Tenor**

*Ingemisco tamquam reus,  
 culpa rubet vultus  
 meus;  
 supplicanti parce, Deus.  
 Qui Mariam  
 absolvisti,  
 et latronem  
 exaudisti;  
 mihi quoque spem dedisti.  
 Preces meae non sunt  
 dignae,  
 sed tu bonus,  
 fac benigne,  
 ne perenni cremer  
 igne.  
 Inter oves locum  
 praesta,  
 et ab haedis me  
 sequestra,  
 statuens in parte  
 dextra.*

### **Bass**

*Confutatis  
 maledictis,  
 flammis acribus  
 addictis,  
 voca me cum benedictis.  
 Oro supplex et  
 acclinis,  
 cor contritum quasi  
 cinis,  
 gere curam mei  
 finis.*

Thou didst redeem me,  
 having endured the  
 Cross:  
 let not such great pains  
 have been in vain.  
 Righteous Judge of  
 vengeance,  
 give me the gift of  
 redemption,  
 before the day of  
 reckoning.

I groan as one guilty,  
 and my face blushes with  
 guilt;  
 spare the suppliant, O God.  
 Thou who didst absolve  
 Mary,  
 and hear the prayer of the  
 thief,  
 hast given me hope, too.  
 My prayers are not  
 worthy,  
 but Thou, O good one,  
 show mercy,  
 lest I burn in everlasting  
 fire.  
 Give me a place among  
 the sheep,  
 and separate me from  
 the goats,  
 placing me on Thy  
 right hand.

When the damned are  
 confounded  
 and consigned to keen  
 flames,  
 call me with the blessed.  
 I pray, suppliant and  
 kneeling,  
 a heart as contrite as  
 ashes:  
 take Thou my ending into  
 Thy care.

**Chorus**

*Dies irae, dies illa, etc.*

The day of wrath, etc.

**Soloists, Chorus**

*Lacrymosa dies illa,  
qua resurget ex  
favilla,  
judicandus homo  
reus.*

That day is one of weeping  
on which shall rise again  
from the ashes  
the guilty man, to be  
judged.

*Huic ergo parce  
Deus.*

Therefore spare this one,

*Pie Jesu Domine,  
dona eis requiem.  
Amen.*

O God,  
merciful Lord Jesus.  
Grant them rest.  
Amen.

**III. OFFERTORIO**

**Soloists**

*Domine Jesu Christe,  
Rex gloriae,  
libera animas omnium  
fidelium defunctorum  
de poenis inferni et de  
profundo lacu.*

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of Glory,  
deliver the souls of all the  
departed faithful  
from the pains of hell and  
from the deep pit.

*Libera eas de  
ore Leonis,  
ne absorbeat eas  
tartarus,  
ne cadant in  
obscurum:*

Deliver them from the  
lion's mouth,  
that hell may not swallow  
them up,  
and they may not fall into  
darkness;

*sed signifer sanctus  
Michael*

but may the holy standard-  
bearer Michael  
bring them into the holy  
light;

*repraesentet eas in lucem  
sanctam.*

which Thou didst promise  
of old to Abraham  
and his seed.

*Quam olim Abraham  
promisisti  
et semini ejus.*

*Hostias et preces tibi,  
Domine,*

We offer unto Thee,  
O Lord,

*laudis  
offerimus.*

sacrifices and prayers of  
praise.

*Tu suscipe pro animabus  
illis,*

Do Thou receive them on  
behalf of those souls,

*quarum hodie memoriam  
facimus,*

whom we commemorate  
this day;

*fac eas, Domine, de morte  
transire ad vitam.*

grant them, O Lord, to pass  
from death to life.

## IV. SANCTUS

### Double Chorus

*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth,  
pleni sunt coeli  
et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Benedictus, qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis!*

Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God of Sabaoth.  
Heaven and earth  
are full of Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he that cometh  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest!

## V. AGNUS DEI

### Soprano, Mezzo- soprano, Chorus

*Agnus Dei,  
qui tollis peccata  
mundi,  
dona eis requiem.  
Dona eis requiem  
sempiternam.*

Lamb of God,  
who takest away the sins  
of the world,  
grant them rest.  
Grant them eternal  
rest.

## VI. LUX AETERNA

### Mezzo-soprano, Tenor, Bass

*Lux aeterna luceat  
eis, Domine,  
cum Sanctis tuis in  
aeternum,  
quia pius es.  
Requiem aeternam dona  
eis, Domine,  
et lux perpetua  
luceat eis.*

Let eternal light shine  
on them, O Lord,  
with Thy saints  
forever,  
for Thou art merciful.  
Grant them eternal rest,  
O Lord,  
and let perpetual light  
shine upon them.

## VII. LIBERA ME

### Soprano

*Libera me, Domine, de  
morte aeterna,  
in die illa tremenda,  
quando coeli movendi sunt  
et terra.*

Deliver me, O Lord, from  
eternal death,  
on that fearful day  
when the heavens and the  
earth shall be moved.

### Chorus

*Libera me, Domine, etc.*

Deliver me, O Lord, etc.

**Soprano**

*Dum veneris iudicare  
saeculum  
per ignem.  
Tremens factus sum ego et  
timeo,  
dum discussio venerit  
atque  
ventura ira.  
Quando coeli movendi  
sunt et terra.*

When Thou shalt come to  
judge the  
world by fire.  
I am seized with trembling  
and I fear  
the time when the trial  
shall approach,  
and the wrath to come;  
when the heavens and  
earth shall be moved.

**Chorus**

*Dies illa, dies irae,  
calamitatis et miseriae,  
dies magna et  
amara valde.  
Dies irae, etc.*

A day of wrath, that day  
of calamity and woe,  
a great day and  
bitter indeed.  
The day of wrath, etc.

**Soprano**

*Dum veneris iudicare  
saeculum  
per ignem.*

When Thou shalt come to  
judge the  
world by fire.

**Soprano, Chorus**

*Requiem aeternam dona  
eis, Domine,  
et lux perpetua luceat  
eis.*

Eternal rest grant  
them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light  
shine upon them.

**Soprano**

*Libera me, Domine, de  
morte aeterna,  
in die illa tremenda,  
quando coeli movendi  
sunt et terra.*

Deliver me, O Lord, from  
eternal death,  
on that fearful day,  
when the heavens and the  
earth shall be moved.

**Chorus**

*Libera me, etc.  
Dum veneris iudicare  
saeculum  
per ignem.  
Libera me, etc.*

Deliver me, etc.  
When Thou shalt come to  
judge the  
world by fire.  
Deliver me, etc.

# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Antiphonal:** Works in which an ensemble is divided into distinct groups, performing in alternation and together

**Aria:** An accompanied solo song (often in ternary form), usually in an opera or oratorio

**Cadence:** The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

**Cadenza:** A passage or section in a style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a movement or composition

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Chromatic:** Relating to tones foreign to a given key (scale) or chord

**Coda:** A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

**Contrapuntal:** See counterpoint

**Counterpoint:** A term that describes the combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

**Fugue:** A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout

the entire piece in all the voices at different places

**Legato:** Smooth, even, without any break between notes

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**Monophony:** Music for a single voice or part

**Octave:** The interval between any two notes that are seven diatonic (non-chromatic) scale degrees apart. Two notes an octave apart are different only in their relative registers.

**Op.:** Abbreviation for opus, a term used to indicate the chronological position of a composition within a composer's output. Opus numbers are not always reliable because they are often applied in the order of publication rather than composition.

**Plainchant:** The official monophonic unison chant (originally unaccompanied) of the Christian liturgies

**Recitative:** Declamatory singing, free in tempo and rhythm

**Requiem:** A musical setting of the Latin mass for the dead

**Rondo:** A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

**Scale:** The series of tones which form (a) any major or minor key or (b) the chromatic scale of successive semi-tonic steps

**Scherzo:** Literally "a joke." Usually the third movement of symphonies and quartets that was introduced by Beethoven to replace the minuet. The scherzo is followed by a gentler section called a trio, after which the scherzo is repeated. Its characteristics are a rapid tempo in triple time, vigorous rhythm, and humorous contrasts.

**Sonata form:** The form in which the first movements (and sometimes others) of symphonies are usually cast. The sections are exposition, development, and recapitulation, the last sometimes followed by a coda. The exposition is the introduction of the musical ideas, which are then "developed." In the recapitulation, the exposition is repeated with modifications.

**Tonic:** The keynote of a scale

**Treble:** A high vocal or instrumental part

**Triad:** A three-tone chord composed of a given tone (the "root") with its third and fifth in ascending order in the scale