



DUX 1210 / 2015

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART

Requiem in D minor KV 626

Olga PASIECZNIK - soprano

Anna LUBANSKA - mezzo-soprano

Krzysztof SZMYT - tenor

Krzysztof BOIRYSIEWICZ - bass

Łukasz HODOR - trombone solo

"Sinfonia Amabile" Choir and Orchestra

Piotr WAJRAK – conductor

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The provenance of Mozart's last work, the *Requiem*, has always kindled people's imagination. There are few works in the entire history of music whose origins have given rise to such a blend of truth and fiction, and of facts and literary fantasy. The last months of Mozart's life were marked by the triumphant premiere of *The Magic Flute*, his increasingly frail condition, and a peculiar commission from an anonymous stranger to write the Mass for the Dead, which he kept on writing on his deathbed. These images, coupled with the story of the composer being poisoned by his arch-rival Antonio Salieri (which was completely untrue), for years provided fertile ground for Mozart's biographers. They had the right to use these images. But does it really matter today?

The facts speak for themselves. In the summer of 1791 Mozart received a commission, from a stranger, to compose a requiem mass. He took the payment but, busy as he was with *The Magic Flute*, gave no promise as to the completion date. Nevertheless, the planned work kept haunting him. "I feel a buzzing noise in my head and I am losing my strength. I have the figure of that stranger in front of my eyes all the time. He demands the work from me. I keep on composing as this is less tiring for me than relaxation. [...] I am coming to an end, before I have used my talent to the full... But one cannot change one's destiny. No one is the master of one's life... Yet I will finish my sorrowful song. I cannot leave it unfinished..."

Life took a different course though. Mozart did not manage to complete his 'sorrowful song', even though he kept on writing till the very end. On 4 December, at 4 p.m., several friends came to his apartment to sing through the score-in-progress (Mozart himself tried to sing the alto part). In the evening, while in fever, he dictated the finale of the *Lacrimosa* to his student, Franz Süssmayr. He died at night, shortly before 1 a.m.

With the consent of Mozart's wife, Constance, Süssmayr completed the score. Understandably enough, one can complain that Mozart can be heard in one place while he cannot be heard in others. But there's no sense in these kinds of deliberations. Someone once said of the *Agnus Dei*: "It was not written by Mozart – so be it. But he who wrote – is Mozart".

The mystery behind the commission soon found its explanation. It came from Count Franz von Walsegg, a music lover who liked to pass off the work of others as his own, having re-written them and supplied them with his name. A hobby of sorts. The requiem was intended as a tribute to his wife, who died at a very young age.

It is hard to disagree with the Polish musicologist Stefan Jarociński, who described the *Requiem* as neither complete nor perfect. On the one hand we have a piercing *Requiem aeternam* at the start of the piece, a double fugue in the *Kyrie*, the *Dies irae, dies illa* proceeding at break-neck pace and a moving *Lacrimosa*. But there are also fragments of lesser expressive power. For the *Requiem* is indeed an unfinished work, a fractured composition that was created in the composer's race against time and against death. And this is what makes it such an inspiring piece.

Today, Mozart's last work is inseparably linked to Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus*, which became the basis for the script of the hugely popular 1984 film by Miloš Forman. It is worth remembering that Shaffer based his play on none other but Pushkin and his *Mozart and Salieri* (which also inspired Rimski-Korsakov to compose an opera of the same title). But pop culture does not remember these things. The portrait of the good Mozart and the bad Salieri from Forman's movie has been imprinted in our minds. The *Requiem* has been included in the soundtracks of dozens of films of varying artistic calibre, if only to mention *The Big Lebowski*, *Elizabeth*, *The Affair of the Necklace*, *Happiness* and *X-Men-2*. The *Lacrimosa* has been even used as a motif in a song of the rock band Evanescence. Such practices cannot be forbidden but one can ask: what are they for?

Jacek Hawryluk, Polish Radio

Olga PASICHNYK (soprano) was born in Ukraine and studied piano and music education in her home town of Rivne and voice at the Kiev Conservatory. She continued her vocal studies as a postgraduate student at the Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw. In 1992 she made her debut at the Warsaw Chamber Opera and four years later at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris (as Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*). The latter appearance marked the beginning of a spectacular international career.

The current repertoire of Olga Pasichnyk includes over forty roles in operas by Monteverdi, Gluck, Handel, Mozart, Weber, Bizet, Rossini, Verdi, Puccini, Debussy, Tchaikovsky, as well as contemporary composers. She has also established a name for herself in chamber music (with her sister, the pianist Natalya Pasichnyk) and as an oratorio and cantata singer. She has appeared in many prestigious concert halls and opera houses, with leading European, American and Japanese orchestras under top conductors.

Olga Pasichnyk is a prizewinner of several major competitions, including the International Vocal Competition in s'Hertogenbosch (the Netherlands), the Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition in Helsinki and The Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition in Brussels. Her honours also include the Fryderyk Prize of the Polish recording industry (1997, 2004), the Orpheus Prize of Polish critics at the Warsaw Autumn Festival (1999), the Golden Cross of Merit (2001), the Andrzej Hiolski Prize for the best female opera role of 2004 (Melisande in Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* at the National Opera in Warsaw), the Münchner Opernfestspiele Prize (2006), the Cyprian Kamil Norwid Prize (2007), the annual Award of the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage (2011) and the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland (2012). She recorded over 50 CDs and DVDs for various labels (Dabringhaus und Grimm, Harmonia Mundi, Naxos, Opus 111).

Anna LUBAŃSKA (mezzo-soprano) graduated with distinction from the Music Academy in Warsaw, where she studied with Krystyna Szostek-Radkowa. In 1993 she won First Prize and three honourable mentions at the Ada Sari International Vocal Competition in Nowy Sącz. Her major successes include roles in operas by Verdi (the Princess Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Amneris in *Aida*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*), Richard Strauss (Herodias in *Salome*), Moniuszko (Jadwiga and Cześnikowa in *The Haunted Manor*), Wagner (Ortrud in *Lohengrin*) and Penderecki (Mother Ubu in *Ubu Rex*). She has also won a reputation for her interpretations of songs by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Wolf, Mahler, Moniuszko, Karłowicz, Szymanowski, de Falla and Tchaikovsky.

She also appears regularly in oratorios and cantatas (Berlioz's *Dramatic symphony Romeo and Juliet*, Krzysztof Penderecki's *Seven Gates of Jerusalem*, Wojciech Kilar's *Missa pro pace*, the *Stabat Mater* settings by Dvořák, Szymanowski and Rossini, the *Requiem* settings by Mozart, Verdi and Dvořák, Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* and Ninth Symphony and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*).

She has been a member of the National Opera company since 1993, with which she has performed at the Bolshoi in Moscow, the Wiesbaden Festival in Germany and in Cyprus. She has performed in all of Poland's leading opera houses and philharmonic halls. Foreign tours have also taken her to Japan, Norway and Hong Kong. She has participated in numerous recordings for Polish Radio and Polish Television, as well as for various labels, including Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor* (for EMI) and Penderecki's *Ubu Rex*, conducted by Jacek Kaspszyk.

Krzysztof SZMYT (tenor) was born in Wiry near Poznań. He started his musical education at the Jerzy Kurczewski Choral School in Poznań and the city's secondary music school, where he studied voice and oboe. He continued his studies at the Music Academy in Warsaw, graduating with first class honours, and subsequently in Vienna. He is a prizewinner of many national and international vocal competitions, including those in Salzburg and Vienna (the Song Competition and the 'Belvedere' Opera Competition).

He has been a soloist of the National Opera in Warsaw since 1982, taking leading roles in operas by Handel, Mozart, Rossini, Tchaikovsky and Penderecki. He has also scored successes in works by Bach, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Elgare and Britten. He has performed under such prominent conductors as Henryk Czyż, Agnieszka Duczmal, Michael Gielen, Milan Horvat, Vladimir Kranjčević, Jan Krenz, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Helmut Rilling, Volke Schmidt-Gertenbach, Jerzy Semkow, Stefan Stuligrosz, Heinz Wallberg, and Filippo Zigante. He has recorded over 20 CDs and has made numerous recordings for radio stations in Poland and Germany as well as for television. Highlights in his career have included song recitals in the birthplace of Haydn (Rohrau), Schubert's house (Vienna), and at the Heinrich-Heine-Haus in Lüneburg.

In 1999 he was invited to take part in the performance of Mozart's *Requiem* at a gala concert at La Madelaine Church in Paris to mark the 150th anniversary of Chopin's death, with the National Orchestra and Choir of France conducted by Jerzy Semkow. His major engagements also include Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Kilar's *Missa pro pace*.

He has been on the faculty of the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw since 2001.

Krzysztof BORYSIEWICZ (bass), born in Warsaw, started his musical education by studying the clarinet and singing in the 'Lutnia' Warsaw Boys' Choir. A keen sportsman, he graduated from the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw before taking up vocal studies at the city's Music Academy. In 1992 he gained a diploma from the class of Magdalena Bojanowska and made his debut at the National Opera as Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville*. He continued his studies at the Accademia Verdiana Carlo Bergonzi in Busseto and Parma.

In 1996 he won the Grand Prix at the Francisco Vinas Vocal Competition in Barcelona. In 2001, after several seasons with the National Opera in Warsaw, he began an international career. He is currently a soloist with Mainfranken Theater Würzburg, Salzburger Landestheater, and Staatstheater Kassel, also appearing regularly at the Wiener

Festwochen, the Glyndebourne Festival, Opera de Lille, and Opera Dijon in numerous leading roles (Leporello, Sarastro, Mephisto, Don Pasquale, King Heinrich, Zaccaria, Don Quichotte).

Krzysztof Borysiewicz has also developed a career as a concert singer. He resides in Salzburg.

'SINFONIA AMABILE' CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA functioned in the years 1988-2001. It was founded on the initiative of Father Andrzej Borzęcki as Cantate Deo, and brought together highly talented students of music schools in Lublin. They performed religious and symphonic music under the direction of Agnieszka Greczkowska, giving concerts in Poland and abroad, including those during the Grzegorz Gerwazy Gorczycki Festival in Kraków and Midnight Christmas Mass at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. With the passing of time, the ensemble was joined by students of music academies and prominent soloists for a series of concerts across Poland featuring large-scale oratorios and symphonic works. Among those who started working closely with Sinfonia Amabile in 1994 were Kazimierz Bukat (conductor of the National Philharmonic Choir), Stanisław Krawczyński (conductor, choirmaster, professor of the Music Academy in Kraków), Mirosław M. Banach (conductor of the National Opera Chorus) and Piotr Wajrak (conductor of the National Opera Orchestra). Thanks to assistance from the Cantate Deo Foundation and the Sinfonia Amabile Association a wide selection of masterpieces of classical music has been presented to broad audiences, while the contact with outstanding soloists and conductors proved of enormous importance for the artistic development and Professional experience of young performers.

The discography of 'Sinfonia Amabile' includes Beethoven's Mass in C major and Fifth Symphony, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (released by Polskie Nagrania) as well as a selection of popular Polish songs from the 1960s recorded by Adam Kruszewski (arranged and conducted by Krzesimir Dębski).

Piotr WAJRAK (conductor, teacher, manager, business coach) studied conducting with Bogusław Madey. In 1995-2006 he was a conductor with the Grand Theatre – National Opera in Warsaw, where he conducted Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor* in the controversial production by Andrzej Żuławski and directed the orchestra for the ceremony of the unveiling of the Quadriga on the theatre's façade.

He also worked closely for many years with the opera companies in Bydgoszcz, Poznań, Gdańsk and Szczecin. Since 2010 he has worked frequently with Kraków Opera. He also regularly performs with Polish symphony orchestras. In 2004-2008 he served as artistic director of the Olsztyn Philharmonic. He has also worked with the orchestras of Teatro La Fenice in Venice, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa and Teatro de Bellas Artes in Bogota.

In April 2013 he inaugurated the 20th Bydgoszcz Opera Festival with a new production of Moniuszko's *Halka*, which won popular and critical acclaim. Ballet music occupies an important place in his repertoire, with numerous productions of *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Harnasie*, and *Zorba the Greek*. Ludomir Różycki's *Pan Twardowski* was named the best Polish ballet production of 2007 and won the Jan Kiepura Music Prize.

In 2014 he made his debut at the Grand Theatre in Łódź with the acclaimed ballet version of Tchaikovsky's *Onegin*, followed by Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor* (dir. Krystyna Janda) for the theatre's 60th anniversary. He opened the 21st Bydgoszcz Opera Festival with Kalman's *Die Csárdásfürstin* (dir. Wojciech Adamczyk) and made the premiere recording of Józef Wieniawski's Overture and Symphony, with the Podkarpacka Philharmonic in Rzeszów (Acte Préalable AP331).

Piotr Wajrak is a member of faculty of the Music Academy in Bydgoszcz, leading a conducting class and directing the orchestra and vocal opera ensembles.

For more information: facebook.com/PiotrWajrak

THE STRASZNY DWÓR FOUNDATION aims to promote Polish artists, primarily composers, conductors, instrumentalists, singers and dancers, in Poland and around the world. The present recording, which won excellent reviews for its artistic and technical merit, was first released in 1998, in a limited distribution for the sponsor's promotional activities. The Foundation has undertaken an organisational and financial effort to make accessible to a broader public the result of what was a unique collaboration between young musicians and well-established soloists and artists.