

## Requiem Opus 48 Gabriel Faure

### Format of presentation

- . Background
- . Analysis of work
- . Decisions to be made by conductor
- . Rehearsal preparation
- . Performance planning and programme notes

### Background

Requiems – history:

Sacred requiems are known to have been sung from 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, and the Latin plainchant sometimes used today comes from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The structure of the liturgical Requiem was developed across centuries, the last movement of the formal Requiem, the *Dies irae*, being added in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Composers have not always set the full service, and some have departed from the texts, especially repeating words and sections for musical purposes. The text selections, by their presence or absence, sometimes reflect the philosophy of the composer.

The regular text structure for the *Missa pro defunctis* would be:

Introit	Requiem aeternam	Rest eternal grant to them
Kyrie	Kyrie eleison	Lord have mercy
Gradual	Requiem aeternam	Rest eternal grant to them
Tract	Absolve, Domine	Absolve, O Lord, the souls of the faithful departed
Sequence	Dies irae	Day of wrath <i>Pie Jesu Domine</i> is part of verse 55 of the Sequence
Offertory	Domine Jesu Christe	Lord Jesus Christ
Sanctus	Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus	Holy, holy, holy
Benedictus	Benedictus qui venit	Blessed is he who comes
Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei	Lamb of God
Communion	Lux aeterna	May light eternal shine on them

Often added, texts from the *Burial Rite*, are the following:

Responsory	Libera me, Domine	Deliver me, O Lord
Antiphon	In paradisum	May the angels lead you into paradise.

Requiems – a selection of compositions of the *Missa pro defunctis* to the time of Faure:

La Rue (c. 1452 – 1518) Belgium; Morales (c. 1500 – 1553) Spain; Palestrina (c. 1525 – 1594) Italy; Lassus (c. 1532 – 1594) Belgium – 2 settings; Victoria (c. 1549 – 1611) Spain – 2 settings; Vecchi (c. 1550 – 1605) Italy; Viadana (1564 – 1645) Italy; Schutz (1585 – 1672) Germany – texts in German of psalm selections; Biber (1644 – 1704) Germany; A Scarlatti (1660 – 1725) Italy; Lotti (1667 – 1740) Italy; Pergolesi (1710 – 1736) Italy; Jommelli (1714 – 1774) Italy; Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809) Austria; Michael Haydn (1737 – 1806) Austria; Mozart (1756 – 1791) Austria – *Requiem* 1791; Schubert (1797 – 1828) German language, fragmentary; Donizetti (1797 – 1848) Italy; Schumann (1810 – 1856) Germany; Liszt (1811 – 1886) Hungary; Verdi (1813 – 1901) Italy – *Requiem* 1874; Bruckner (1824 – 1896) Austria; Brahms (1833 – 1897) Germany – texts in German of psalm selections – *Deutsches Requiem* 1865-69; Dvorak (1841 – 1904) Czechoslovakia.

Requiems – a selection of French compositions of the *Missa pro defunctis*, possibly known to Faure: Gilles (1668 – 1705); Charpentier (c. 1634 – 1704); Gossec (1734 – 1829); Cherubini (1760 – 1842) Italy/France – 2 settings; Berlioz (1803 – 1869) – *Requiem* 1837; Gounod (1818 – 1893) – *Requiem* 1891; Saint-Saens (1835 – 1921) – *Requiem* 1878; Dubois (1837 – 1924) – 2 settings 1876 & 1893; Massenet (1842 – 1912) – lost; **Faure (1845 – 1924) – *Requiem* 1887/8 – rev. 1890 – orch. 1900.**

Other musical styles of significance in Faure's time – dominance of German composition including the ever-present Beethoven, the Wagner school and Schumann-Brahms school; and Italian opera.

### **Life of Gabriel Faure (1845 – 1924)**

Faure's life can be summarised as composer, pianist, organist and educator.

Faure's father was director of a teacher training school with a chapel and youngest child Gabriel spent many hours playing the harmonium there.

1854, aged 9 his musical talent caused him to be sent to the music-training boarding school Ercole Niedermeyer in Paris. Studies leaned to church music – plainsong, organ, Renaissance polyphonic music, plus literary studies; and students were trained to become organists and choir masters.

The young teacher Camille Saint-Saens updated the curriculum with piano music and composition of Schumann, Liszt and Wagner. The choir sang works by such as Josquin, Palestrina, Victoria and Bach. 1865 his education was completed, and his gifts acknowledged with awards in fugue, counterpoint, harmony and solfege; plus two literary prizes. *Cantique de Jean Racine* was the award winner in the composition section, a work of poise and assurance for a twenty-year-old.

1865 appointment 1 – organist at St Sauveur, Rennes – in the rural provinces. He had time for composition – piano, symphonic, song and church music.

1870 appointment 2 – organist at Notre Dame de Clignacourt.

1871 War service in the Franco-Prussian War – in Infantry of the Imperial Guard; action in the Siege of Paris. Loss. During Commune Faure to Switzerland, teaching in transferred Ercole Neidermeyer. Appointment 3 – organist at St Honor d'Eylou in Paris.

1871 appointment 4 – second organist at St Surplise in Paris (to Widor, first). At Saint-Saens Salon he met Paris socialites and became friends with the composers d'Indy, Lalo, Duparc and Chabrier. Led by S-S, founded Societe Nationale de Musique to foster new French (non-Germanic) composition.

Appointment 5 – deputy to Saint-Saens at La Madeleine in Paris. Following his resignation in 1887 Dubois was appointed organist and Faure choir master. 1896 Faure became the chief organist.

Broken engagement; travels; met Liszt conducting Saint-Saens' *Samson and Delilah*; heard Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, *Die Valkyrie*, the *Ring* cycle, *Tannhauser*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Lohengrin* and *Tristan and Isolde* – of fascination but not compositional influence – he outgrew 'excess'. Influences, rather, were Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn.

1883 marriage – an uncommunicative but life-lasting partnership. Varied work for family needs; and a range of compositions – piano music and songs as well as choral works for church services. Bouts of depression which continued throughout his life. July 1885 death of his father. At the same time as writing the *Requiem* he was writing the second *Piano Quartet*, *Caligula* orchestral incidental music and *Shylock* orchestral incidental music. Mother died 31 December 1887, during *Requiem* writing.

1892 – 1900 English invitation performances and his incidental music for *Pelleas and Melisande*.

1896 chief organist at La Madeleine and a teacher of composition at the Paris Conservatoire (students including Ravel, Florent Schmidt, Koechlin, Aubert, Roger Ducasse, Enesco, Ladmirault, Nadia Boulanger and Vuillermoz). 1901 – opera *Promethee* – (re-orchestrated 1917).

1905 Became Director of the Paris Conservatoire. 1907 opera *Penelope*. Productive, adventurous compositions in latter years. Prepared Schumann – 37 volumes – and Bach editions for publication.

## Analysis of work

### Requiem Opus 48, written 1887-8 – revised 1890 – full orchestration 1900

Why did he write it?

Many have written speculatively that he wrote it because of the death of his father (July 1885) and then add the sudden death of his mother (31 December 1887). The work was in final stages by her death, and Faure's own words provide a different explanation to this fabrication.

Faure: "My instinct led me to stray from the established path after all these years accompanying funerals! I'd had them up to here. I wanted to do something different."

And later in life, when questioned, Faure said: "My Requiem wasn't written for anything – for pleasure, if I may call it that."

Faure: "Everything I managed to entertain by way of religious illusion (impression) I put into my *Requiem*, which moreover is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest."

Its first performance was for the funeral of architect M. Lesoufache in La Madeleine 16 January 1888. The priest for this service said of the music: "We do not need these novelties – the Madeleine's repertoire is already diverse enough."

Important framework is that this was not a commissioned work (c.f. Mozart) nor a concert spectacular (c.f. Berlioz and Verdi) but for use during funeral services. It was music for worship!

### Versions:

#### 1887

Movements – 1 *Introit* and *Kyrie*, 2 *Sanctus*, 3 *Pie Jesu*, 4 *Agnus Dei* ending with *Requiem aeternam* – end of Requiem Mass; then 5 Antiphon – *In paradisum* from Burial Rite.

Choral forces available at la Madeleine for the first funeral were 40 men and boys plus treble soloist. Choir SATTBB.

Orchestration – solo violin, violas – 2 parts, cellos – 2 parts, d. bass, timpani, harp, organ.

#### 1893 revision

Added are the *Offertory* – *O Domine* with baritone solo and *Responsory* – *Libera me*, with baritone solo. The *Libera me* had been written for a previous purpose and was adapted for the *Requiem*.

Where possible Faure himself used a female soloist due to phrasing / breath required in the *Pie Jesu*.

Orchestration – added are 2 bassoons, 4 horns and 2 trumpets.

#### 1900 orchestration, published 1901

Movements as established.

This was intended for large concert hall performances and large concert choirs.

It is unclear if Faure himself orchestrated it, if the task was given to a pupil, or left to the publisher.

In full it has soprano solo, baritone solo, choir SATTBB, 2 flutes, 2 clarinets (only for the *Pie Jesu*), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets (only in *Kyrie* and *Sanctus*), 3 trombones (only for the *Responsory*), timpani, harp, organ, strings as above but with a violin section added (one part not two).

First performed July 1900 at Trocadero Palace at time of Paris World Exhibition, conducted Taffanel.

## 1 Introit and Kyrie

*Largo:*

D minor / mode (ambivalent C natural/sharp)

*Requiem aeternam* – 17 bars chant-like, homophonic, slow moving, ending on dominant of D for next section. Needs to be very legato, and to observe the beautifully set Latin for accent (shaping every phrase). Sombre is the steadily descending bass – D C sharp B flat A G F E flat D flat C before ending with A chord for cadence. Dynamic gradations *f* – *p* and instrumental gradations – can be executed with voices and orchestral instruments, but if using organ is difficult to achieve. Faure's thought is clear – 'and light perpetual shine, shine, shine on them, shine on them'.

*Andante moderato:*

Note the moderato – steady, in keeping with the sombre overview. Allow it space.

D minor / mode

Repeat *Requiem aeternam* – 2 bar instrumental introduction, 8 bar tenor unison melody with repeat and expansion. Maybe tenor voice selected as equivalent to the cantor role – and the lyrical, wide-ranging melody indicates fine tenors available to sing it. Unison voice as if an individual is pleading, with contemplative spaces in vocal-rest bars. Accompaniment simple and lyrical, the bass built on a melodic cell of 2 bars, expanding, with upper accompaniment in 3rds. Ends in A Major.

Bar 40 introduction to treble/soprano unison – chant-like, simpler than the tenor melody.

*Exaudi* – hear my prayer – set up by 1 bar changing the mood / intention for homophonic pleading.

Again dynamic contrasts – *ff* – *p*, mostly structured in 2 bar phrases. Ending in D minor.

*Kyrie* – the ambivalent minor / mode again appears, the melody imitating bars 20 & firstly in choral unison, then the melody is harmonised.

*Christe* – instrumental chords assist the change of mood; off-beat entries, emotional and melodic relation to bars 50 – 53, dynamic contrasts *ff* – *p*, return to key D bar 78 and the remaining bars like a coda with ambiguous E flat/E natural to the D ending, balancing the first notes of the movement.

Note – there is no ending *Kyrie. Kyrie, Christe, Kyrie* would be the usual structure.

## 2 Offertory – O Domine (1889)

*Adagio molto*

A section

A 6-bar lower strings – viola and cello – polyphonic beginning sets the sparse landscape for the entry of alto and tenor voices, also in imitation, based on interval of a 3<sup>rd</sup>. The instrumental motive rises but the echoing vocal pattern falls. The slow dotted rhythm may suggest a funeral dirge. Instruments and voices alternate, but are not together until 4 bars underpinning from bars 12 to 15 and forward from bar 20, when the voices again become homophonic. The keys / modes are ambiguous, maybe D, maybe B to start, although the rising alto melodies at bars 7, 15 and 23 lead the first section toward F sharp major / minor to end section A; and A (V) to D (1) chords begin the baritone solo. From bar 23 – 27 the instruments are *colle parte* (together) with the voices.

*Andante moderato*

B section

The baritone solo *Hostias*, commencing in D major, is mostly chant-like and *p*. There are two rises to *mf*. The instrumental rocking figure is pre-determined in bars 6-7 and 27-28. Between the two solo sections is a four-bar organ interlude. The second solo section derives its melody from Movement 1 bar 42. This is presented in crotchets in the orchestra and in dotted rhythm in the baritone, thus linking it to the fugal pattern commencing the movement.

### *Adagio molto*

A section – so ternary form

Return of the words *O Domine* in a four-part fugue on the original vocal motive, with the instruments *colle parte*. D major is firmly established. A fervent plea 'deliver us from the pains of hell' resolves to a gentle B major with an Amen coda chant-like in all voices.

Faure selects only some text from the Offertory prayer, but does leave in part of the text relating fearful pains of death; and resolves the movement as if darkness is come to light.

### **3 Sanctus (8 January 1888)**

A foretaste of the music of heaven?

#### *Andante moderato*

G minor, with long G pedal note, and many chords are in first inversion so as to make chord roots less defined and keys ambiguous.

Instrumentation light; and solo violin and harp feature.

Dialogue set up between the sopranos and the tenors / baritones together in unison.

The chant-like melody is sung in the upper voices and echoed in the lower, the first 9 choral phrases commencing on b flat; with overlapping phrase ends. The part is set high for the men.

The chant is limited to three notes at the commencement, but ranges further into the *Sanctus*.

D flat & D natural melodies wander through modes and ambiguities. Care needed with these pitches.

The dynamics are between *p* and *pp* until bar 42.

At bar 42 the mood changes to triumph, *f* and *ff*, the orchestra in short quavers with horn and trumpet calls, the triumphal awaking of the dead, with voices responding with '*Hosanna in excelsis*'.

The brasses die away and the music returns as in ABA form, to a gentle close, the violin drawing the ear to higher realms.

The patient altos have been waiting to sing just the two final chords in this movement.

The *Benedictus* usually follows the *Sanctus* but Faure has not chosen to include it.

### **4 Pie Jesu**

#### *Adagio*

As centre movement this is unusually placed in the *Requiem* – but cyclic form makes it the pivot.

The *Dies irae – Day of wrath* – did not resonate with a composer whose *Requiem* was to give solace and the promise of rest eternal. But from it he could take the final sentence – *Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem – Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest* – to provide a beautiful centrepiece for his music.

The form is AABA and key B flat major, moving to F major for the B section and back to B flat major to end. The B section has a F pedal underlying the chord changes.

Apart from instrumental sections of 1, 3 & 2 bars the work is in regular 2 bar phrases.

Orchestration is light – strings, organ and harp; and from the second version, clarinets and bassoons.

The soprano solo was first sung by a boy treble, but Faure's later preference was for a female soloist.

### **5 Agnus Dei (6 January 1888)**

#### *Andante*

There are three over-all sections to this movement:

Agnus Dei

Communion – Lux aeterna

Requiem aeternam

*Agnus Dei* is characterised by a syncopated orchestral melody whose tied notes foil any sense of rest. There is feeling of the Bach preludes to this music. Tenor chant-like music floats above it, moving for the F major starting key to A major for the second statement of the *Agnus*. This statement, from bar 19, is by the four-part choir. Dynamic swings between *p* and *f* and chromatic changes eventually resolve gently in F major. The tenor melody and its orchestral countermelody return with the third statement of the *Agnus*, but ends with a variation for the appropriate 'sempiternam'; the three sections fulfilling Trinitarian symbolism; and the key ending being C major. *Communion – Lux aeterna* commences with the soprano line suspended in space before entry of other choral forces and orchestra in A flat major. Crescendo builds to '*quia pius es*'- 'for you are merciful', and the orchestra carries the mood *ff* to V of the D minor to come. There is a pause, and *Requiem aeternam* is sung. While a part of the Communion text, it provides the possibility of a related opening and closing of the whole work. The return to common time and D minor is followed by 8 bars directly from the *Introit*. The end modulates differently to ease into a gentle D major. The returned 3/4 coda uses the flowing orchestral melody that commences the *Agnus Dei*. By ending with *Requiem aeternam* Faure has indicated that this music ends the *Requiem Mass*. The remaining movements relate to *Burial Rites*.

## **6 Responsory – Libera me (1877)**

*Moderato*

Added in 1893, this was an adaptation of an earlier composition.

The words are used as part of the Burial Rite where the coffin is sprinkled with holy water and / or perfumed with incense before church departure.

This movement is as close as Faure gets to the spirit of the *Dies irae*, the text including 'free me, Lord from death eternal on the dreadful day when heavens and earth quake and you will come to judge ..' He does not use the entire *Responsory*.

A / the instrumental pedal pulsing establishes a sombre D minor mood, with baritone singing as a lone soul pleading for delivery. Dramatic wide-interval writing and contrasting dynamic range set the urgency of the plea.

B / The vision of judgement is taken up by a trembling choir, ranging dynamically from *pp* to *f*, in homophonic chords. Then on, *piu mosso* and in 6/4 to the day of wrath, rhythmic, urgent, *ff* with a bounding orchestral bass, and horns heralding Judgement day, eventually calmed to a *sempre dolce*, *p*, A major resolution. *Moderato* ends the plea for light, the pulsing cut-time orchestra leads back to A / *Libera me, Domine*, the whole choir singing the music of the baritone in unison.

The baritone returns to complete the section, ended by a murmuring *pp* chant from the choir returning the key to D minor.

## **7 In paradisum**

*Andante moderato*

This text is intended to be said at the graveside as a Burial Rite.

From D minor vision of hell to D major vision of heaven.

'In paradisum' floats aloft in soprano line accompanied by organ and strings, with a ground bass motive. From bar 21 tenor and basses support the soprano from a distance, the alto only entering cadentially. Sopranos continue with '*Chorus angelorum*' supported by harp and violin solo, the motive continuing in the bass. Now ATB voice '*requiem*', settling at bar 49 into D major. Now the prayer 'grant them eternal rest' brings the work to a cyclic close using with the opening text. There is continual flow of melody with few cadential stopping points – continuity and uplift. Dynamic of *f* highlights just 2 words – the heavenly '*Jerusalem*' and life '*aeternam*'.

## Observations

This work does not stand in the German or Italian tradition. It is distinctly French.  
This Requiem is purposed for the liturgy above any consideration for the concert hall.  
It is thoughtful, expressive but restrained, and subtle rather than overt and dramatic.  
The instruments add colour and mood, but never overpower the vocal, text material, solo or choral.  
The harmonies are individual to Faure, frequently adventurous but not drawing attention to themselves. They are fluid but not definably Impressionistic. Frequent use of first inversion chords evades the definition and clarity of chord roots.  
The melodies frequently draw on the linear chant tradition and the polyphony of Faure's heritage.  
The spirit of the work is of pure, confident faith rather than of fear of judgement and punishment.  
Whether intended or a result of the composition process there is a cyclic shape to the movements, both when 5 and 7 movements.

### 5 movements:

1 Introit and Kyrie	2 Sanctus	<b>3 Pie Jesu</b>	4 Agnus Dei	5 In paradisum
D minor	G minor	B flat major	F major	D major resolution
Choir	Dialogue	Solo	Dialogue	Based on solo lines
then solo lines	upper & lower lines		solo line & choir	Choir cadential

Cycle of fifths – E flat, B flat, F

### 7 movements:

1 Introit & Kyrie	2 O Domine	3 Sanctus	<b>4 Pie Jesu</b>	5 Agnus Dei	6 Libera me	7 In paradisum
D minor	D/B minor	G minor	B flat M	F major	D minor	D major
Choir	Choir	Dialogue	Solo	Dialogue	Baritone	Based on solo lines
then solo lines	Baritone				Choir	Choir cadential

## Decisions to be made by the conductor

Size of choir determining size of orchestra  
Budget determining size of orchestra / and how many calls  
Choir or hired soloists – 2; treble? or adult? Soprano and Baritone  
Size and layout of venue of performance  
Edition to use  
Numbers for choral parts  
Rehearsal schedule and progression goals; plus learning methods e.g. sectionals.

Small choir – maybe organ alone or organ and selected instruments e.g. harp, solo violin  
Choir to 30-40 – singers maybe instrumental option 2  
Choir 70-80 – singers maybe instrumental option 3

Festival choir – possibility large orchestra  
For information: La Madeleine first choir about 40 voices. Given treble sopranos & altos most these  
Divided tenors and basses are constant and need to be considered for balance of sound.

## Orchestral ensembles

- 1 Organ with maybe added instruments for colour (organ has a continuo function throughout)
  - 2 First orchestra – Viola 1, Viola 2, Cello 1, Cello 2, D Bass (1 but better 2), Timpani, Harp, Organ, solo Violin (11 or 14? total)
  - 3 Second orchestra – additions to the above – Viola 1, Viola 2, Cello 1, Cello 2, D Basses, Timpani, Harp, Organ, solo Violin, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns, 2 Trumpets  
Need to add to strings to balance brass / wind (26-28 players?)
  - 4 Third orchestra – 1900 size – festival – Violin (1 part, not V1/V2), Viola 1, Viola 2, Cello 1, Cello 2, D Bass, 2 Flutes, 2 Clarinets, 2 Bassoons, 2 Trumpets, 4 Horns, 3 Trombones, Timpani, Harp (one score says Harfes – 2), Organ, solo Violin. (maybe 44 players?)
- Consider weight of orchestra to weight of choir; and weight of instruments to quality of vocal soli.  
Consider where they will fit in venue – do not skimp space for the choir

## Proportions in choir

All choirs have to work within the skills and limits of membership, but with fairly even skills e.g.  
Sopranos 12, altos 10, tenors 8 (4 & 4), basses 10 (5 & 5) = 40 singers, or  
Sopranos 14, altos 10, tenors 7 (4 & 3) basses 9 (5 & 4) = 40 singers

## Rehearsal preparation

First consideration is tone quality – pure, clean, no scooping between intervals, not operatic  
Tenor and soprano exposed lines – legato, dolce, phrasing, quiet breath, breath in tempo  
Phrasing and direction of phrase  
Breath for slow, lengthy, exposed phrases; breathing in tempo  
Importance of Latin word accent and pronunciation  
Balance in chords  
Proportion in dynamic contrasts within choir and with orchestra  
When to rehearse soli, and how many rehearsals with them  
Getting entry pitches  
Notes for clean-up / working on yet:  
Introit/Sanctus: entries bars 50, 54, 63, 71, 75, 82; get phrasing right from first rehearsal;  
entries 23,24; amen phrasing  
Sanctus: pitch bar 3; clean d flat d natural; breathing; pronunciation excelsis (soften);  
Pie Jesu: entries; breaths, phrasing, clean purity  
Agnus Dei: spirit of it; pitches 7, 19, 45, \*47; accurate accidentals; thinking bar 83 onward;  
f – ff quality of tone; 92 pitch; no sliding between intervals  
Libera me: baritone – separate rehearsal several times?; pitches 37  
In paradisum: challenge for sopranos – tone, breath, phrase, purity, high sustained; pitches 21,  
alto 26, 47, 52

## Performance planning and programme notes

How many rehearsals in concert venue?  
Who writes the programme notes? Conductor? Or does conductor at least outline his / her views –  
and have veto. Take on board that the notes are part of the performance – they matter.  
Warm up related to singing.