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Kozłowski Requiem

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SINGAPORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, CHORUS & YOUTH CHOIR

HANS GRAF

Józef Kozłowski (1757-1831)

Requiem in E-flat Minor (1798. Ed. Hans Graf 2023)

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Total playing time: 49. 17

Olga Peretyatko, soprano
Olesya Petrova, mezzo-soprano
Boris Stepanov, tenor
Christoph Seidl, bass
Singapore Symphony Orchestra
Singapore Symphony Chorus
Singapore Symphony Youth Choir
Eudence Palaruan, choral director
Wong Lai Foon, choirmaster
 Conducted by **Hans Graf**



Singapore Symphony Orchestra
 © Jack Yam



When a composer receives a commission from his monarch to write a requiem mass for a royal funeral, this should normally be a noble burden or honour, but in the case of the Polish composer Józef Kozłowski, this commission by the abdicated king of Poland must have produced mixed feelings. For in a way, Kozłowski's work was not only a requiem for him, but for his nation.

Józef Kozłowski was born in 1759 in Warsaw, which was the capital of a flourishing Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and a centre of culture and the arts, even having Europe's largest public library. In his youth, he trained in church singing, violin and organ, and became music tutor to the princely Oginsky family. By the 1780s, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had become a de facto client state of Imperial Russia, so Kozłowski, aged 27, moved to St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1786. Enlisting in the Russian Army, he became aide-de-camp to Prince Dolgoruky, who was one of the generals commanding the Russian troops in the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792). Kozłowski's talents caught the attention of Prince Grigory Potemkin, then prime minister of Russia and lover of Empress Catherine, who introduced him to the imperial court circles.

Kozłowski then returned to music full time, composing operas, sacred choral music, songs, polonaises (most appropriately), and music for court balls. Between 1799 and 1819 he supervised the theatre orchestras and theatrical college at St. Petersburg until paralysis forced his retirement.

Maintaining his contact with the Polish community in St. Petersburg must have been how he met his king, Stanisław August Poniatowski, bearer of the very grand titles King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania and Duke of Ruthenia, Prussia, Masovia, Samogitia, Kiev,

Volhynia, Podolia, Podlasie, Livonia, Smolensk, Severia and Chernihiv. King Stanisław was forced to abdicate the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 and lived in St. Petersburg from 1797 as a virtual prisoner of the Russian tsar, surviving on a pension granted by Empress Catherine. The commonwealth itself had been dissected with the Third Partition of Poland, its territory and peoples split between the Habsburg Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian Empire, and Poland ceased to exist as a sovereign nation. Sensing that his end was near, the last king of independent Poland desired a requiem for his own funeral and the commission came to Kozłowski.

Soon after, Stanisław died of a stroke on 12 February 1798 and the Requiem was performed on 25 February during a state funeral at Catholic Church of St. Catherine in St. Petersburg. It had an unexpected revival in 1825 where it was performed again at the funeral for Tsar Alexander I of Russia. The requiem, as a musical setting of the mass for the departed, is specific to the Roman Catholic Church, and is not used in the Russian Orthodox Church, to which Tsar Alexander belonged. Yet, Tsar Alexander bore the title "King of Poland" among his subsidiary titles, so it was deemed meet and right that a Roman Catholic requiem was celebrated for him, in addition to the regular Orthodox funeral rites. For this occasion, the aged and ailing Kozłowski altered some movements of the original score, adding heavier instrumentation and choruses for more drama. The gentler and quieter original 1798 version performed here has been carefully edited by Singapore Symphony Orchestra Music Director Hans Graf.

This chapter of the work's history began in 2018 when Hans Sørensen, Director of Artistic Planning at the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, first heard a recording of the Requiem and was struck by its musical quality. He sought to programme it for



performance, only to discover that a score was not available from any publisher. Investigating further, the manuscript was finally located in a library in St. Petersburg from where Sørensen obtained a copy.

The work was scheduled in the orchestra's 2020/21 season, to be conducted by Russian conductor Alexander Vedernikov. Sadly, not only was the concert cancelled due to the pandemic, but Vedernikov himself succumbed to complications from COVID-19 in 2020.

It was not until the 2022/23 season that the Requiem could finally be programmed again, this time to be conducted by Hans Graf. Sørensen obtained a Soviet edition of the score and piano score from St. Petersburg, as well as the 1798 autograph and subsequent first print edition by Breitkopf and Härtel in Leipzig. Kozłowski's own 1798 reduction for keyboard and violin, used for rehearsals with singers and choruses, was also a valuable source of additional editorial information. It also tells us that the singers then were Italian and the soprano and alto parts were sung by men. Graf decided to perform the original 1798 version, thus leaving out the 1825 additions, such as a funeral march and a Salve Regina movement. The result of all these efforts is the modern score performed in this album. Set in the very unusual key of E-flat Minor, the work starts with a combined *Requiem et Kyrie* movement, a feature common to Austro-Hungarian composers. Sombre strings punctuated by horns accompany a largely homophonic chorus, and the movement ends in hushed pianissimo with the voices alone.

"...the final movement fades into nothing ... It's humility in front of death: it's the perfect death."

– Hans Graf (Bachtrack)

I. Requiem et Kyrie

(choir)

Requiem æternam dona eis Domine
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine upon them.

(soprano & mezzo-soprano solo)

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion

You, O God, are praised in Sion, and unto
You

(tenor & bass solo)

et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.

shall the vow be performed in Jerusalem.

(choir)

Exaudi orationem meam
ad te omnis caro veniet.

Hear my prayer,
unto You shall all flesh come.

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.





Singapore Symphony Chorus
© Michelle Tng Ying

The *Dies irae* throbs in classic requiem fashion, yet is strikingly different from Mozart's Requiem, followed by a *Tuba mirum* where a solo trombone and a group of brass represent the trumpet of the last judgement, accompanied by a persistent oboe.

II. *Dies irae*

(choir)

Dies irae, dies illa.

Solvat saeculum in favilla:

teste David cum Sybilla.

Quantus tremor est futurus,

quando iudex est venturus,

cuncta stricte discussurus!

The day of wrath, that day,

will dissolve the world in ashes:

(this is) the testimony of David along with
the Sibyl.

How great will be the quaking,
when the Judge is about to come,

III. *Tuba mirum*

(bass solo)

Tuba, mirum spargens sonum

Per sepulchra regionum,

Coget omnes ante thronum

Mors stupebit, et natura,

Cum resurget creatura,

judicanti responsura.

Liber scriptus proferetur,

In quo totum continetur,

Unde mundus judicetur.

The trumpet, scattering a wondrous sound
through the sepulchres of the regions,
will summon all before the throne.

Death and nature will marvel,
when the creature will rise again,
to respond to the Judge.

The written book will be brought forth,
in which all is contained,
from which the world shall be judged.



In the *Judex ergo*, two lamenting solo celli introduce a soprano aria that becomes a duet when the alto joins in

IV. *Judex ergo*

(soprano solo)

Judex ergo cum sedebit,
Quidquid latet, apparebit:
Nil inultum remanebit.
Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus?

When therefore the Judge will sit,
whatever lies hidden, will appear:
nothing will remain unpunished.
What then shall I, poor wretch [that I am],
say?
Which patron shall I entreat,
when [even] the just may [only] hardly be
sure?

(soprano & mezzo-soprano solo)

Rex tremendæ majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salva me, fons pietatis
Recordare, jesu pie,
Quod sum causa tuæ viæ:
Ne me perdas illa die.

King of fearsome majesty,
Who gladly save those fit to be saved,
save me, O fount of mercy.
Remember, merciful Jesus,
that I am the cause of Your journey:
lest You lose me in that day.

The bass solo returns threateningly at the *Confutatis* to tell us of the torments in Hell awaiting the wicked, but the music becomes gentle as the words turn to a plea for mercy.

V. *Confutatis*

(bass solo)

Confutatis maledictis,
Flammis acribus addictis,
Voca me cum benedictis.
Oro supplex et acclinis,
Cor contritum quasi cinis:
Gere curum mei finis.

Once the cursed have been silenced,
sentenced to acrid flames,
Call me, with the blessed.
[Humbly] kneeling and bowed I pray,
[my] heart crushed as ashes:
take care of my end.

Throughout his Requiem, Kozłowski uses dynamics from very soft to very loud as part of his artistic palette, dramatically differentiating sections and painting the text. A striking example of this is the *Lacrymosa* where the chorus sings of that tearful day of judgement, only to be interrupted by a powerful unison outbreak of the orchestra and chorus, ending with the soprano and mezzo-soprano soloists and chorus doing a call-and-answer prayer at *dona eis requiem* ("grant them rest").



VI. Lacrymosa

(choir)

Lacrymosa dies illa,
 Qua resurget ex favilla
 judicandus homo reus:
 Huic ergo parce, Deus:
 Pie Iesu, Iesu Domine,
 (choir, soprano & mezzo-soprano solo)
 Dona eis requiem. Amen.

Tearful [will be] that day,
 on which from the glowing embers will
 arise
 the guilty man who is to be judged:
 Then spare him, O God.

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest. Amen.

Domine Jesu Christe occurs in the middle of the service and features the quartet of solo voices as well as a notable clarinet solo. At the heart of the service comes the *Sanctus*, alternating hushed and reverential passages with loud proclamations of glory.

VII. Domine Iesu Christe

(choir)

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
 (tenor solo)
 Libera animas omnium
 fidelium defunctorum
 (soprano, mezzo-soprano,
 tenor & bass solo)
 Quam olim Abrahae promisisti

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,

deliver the souls of all
 the faithful departed

which of old Thou didst promise Abraham



Singapore Symphony Youth Choir
 © Michelle Tng Ying



(soprano & bass solo)

et semini ejus.

(mezzo-soprano & tenor solo)

et semini ejus.

(choir)

Quam olim Abrahae promisisti

et semini ejus.

and his seed.

and his seed.

which of old Thou didst promise Abraham

and his seed.

VIII. **Sanctus**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus

Dominus Deus Sabaoth!

Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.

(Soprano & mezzo-soprano solo)

Osanna, Osanna,

(choir)

Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Lord God of hosts!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna, Hosanna,

Hosanna in the highest.

The usually mellow and welcoming *Benedictus* is set as an unexpectedly dramatic soprano solo with chromatic touches reminiscent of the contemporary Viennese Classical style. Along with the *Dies irae*, the *Benedictus* is the most dramatic movement in the requiem.

IX. **Benedictus**

(soprano solo)

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.

The deeply tragic beginning of the *Agnus Dei* introduces an insistent plea by the tenor, joined by the chorus and soprano and mezzo-soprano soloists soon after.

X. **Agnus Dei**

(tenor solo)

Agnus Dei,

qui tollis peccata mundi

(choir, soprano & mezzo-soprano solo)

Dona eis Domine

(tenor solo)

Agnus Dei,

qui tollis peccata mundi

(choir)

Dona eis requiem

Agnus Dei,

qui tollis peccata mundi

dona eis Domine

dona eis requiem

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,

grant them, O Lord.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,

Grant them rest.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,

grant them, O Lord.

Grant them rest.

Quia pius es, largely a cappella, anticipates the simple majesty of choral music by Anton Bruckner.



XI. Quia pius es

(choir)

Quia pius es,
cum Sanctis tuis,
quia pius es,
(soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor solo)
quia pius es,
(choir)
quia pius es,
in æternum.

for Thou art gracious,
with Thy Saints,
for Thou art gracious,
for Thou art gracious,
for Thou art gracious,
for evermore.

The final movement recapitulates the *Requiem æternam* of the beginning, ending quietly and peacefully *a cappella*. Brief and heartfelt, it encapsulates the spirit of the 1798 work.

XII. Requiem Æternam

(choir)

Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine:
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
dona eis, Domine,
dona eis requiem.

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

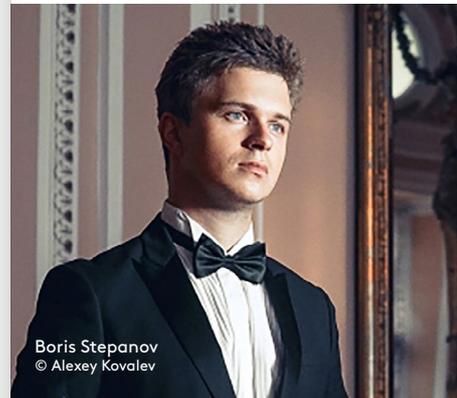
It is hard not to see in the music an image of the Polish nation (which was not to see independence again for over 120 years) submitting itself to Fate.



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In memory of Maestro Alexander Vedernikov.



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