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Chapter Seventeen

The Requiem

Duruflé's greatest composition, the *Requiem*, Op. 9, completed in September 1947,[1] enjoys a reputation as one of the undisputed masterpieces of the twentieth-century choral repertoire. The single piece most responsible for establishing his fame worldwide, it continues to enjoy frequent performances in the West and the East alike. Reviewers have described it as softly luminous, sumptuous, suffused with a tender radiance, of a noble and restrained eloquence and a sweet and serene light, a work of scrupulous craft and exquisite sensibility, having beautiful unity and real grandeur.

For a long time Duruflé had been seduced by the beauty of the Gregorian chants from the Mass for the Dead. He said:

> At first I formed the project of writing a Suite for organ on these themes, each of whose sections would have been able to be adapted to the different phrases of the liturgical office. After I had finished two of them (the *Sanctus* and the *Communion*),[2] it seemed to me that it was difficult to separate the Latin words from the Gregorian text to which they are so intimately connected. It was thus that the Suite for organ was transformed into something that was more important and that called naturally for choirs and orchestra. This is how I came to write this work.[3]

Composition

Duruflé composed the piece during the day on the Elke upright piano at his mother's home in Louviers, and in the evening would refine his work on the organ in the church.[4]

Duruflé has been credited as the first to compose a requiem based upon the chants of the Gregorian *Missa pro defunctis*,[5] but he was, in fact, not the first.[6] In his nine-movement *Missa pro defunctis* for six voices (SSATTB), the Renaissance composer Tomas Luis da Vittoria incorporated the Gregorian cantus verbatim, assigning it to the second soprano part throughout. Vittoria's setting lacks parts that Duruflé included, namely, the *Pie Jesu* and the *In paradisum*. But insofar as it lacks the *Dies irae*, Vittoria's setting is similar to Duruflé's. Whether Duruflé knew of this work is a matter of conjecture. In any case, Duruflé's is the first such setting since the Renaissance.

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Feeling some anxiety about the rhythmic subtleties of plainsong, Duruflé sought technical advice about the Solesmes interpretation of Gregorian rhythms from Auguste Le Guennant, the eminent liturgist and theologian and an excellent musician, who authored the several volumes of *Précis de rythmique grégorienne: D'après les principes de Solesmes.*[7] Duruflé explained:

> I could not find better advice. [Le Guennant] explained to me the theory of the interpretation of the Benedictines of Solesmes, the placement of the rhythmic ictus, not necessarily on the tonic Latin accent, but more readily on the last syllable of the word. Consequently, the strong beat of our modern measure coinciding naturally with the ictus because of the concordance of the rhythmic support (thesis), this strong beat is considerably lightened, because it no longer supports the tonic Latin accent. It no longer has this heaviness, this monotony of our modern first beat, always weighty, always regularly accentuated. In this interpretation of the Gregorian rhythm, there remain only weak beats, so to speak. The marvelous Gregorian line and the Latin text take on a suppleness and a lightness of expression, a reserve and an ethereal gentleness that free it from the compartmentalizing of our bar lines. Besides, the irregular alternation of binary and ternary groups, based on a unit of invariable value, gives the musical rhythm a life, a density, and a constant recurrence.[8]

In his conception of the work, Duruflé kept firmly in mind the style of the Gregorian themes, while for the form of each of the nine sections he confined himself to the forms suggested by the liturgy itself, developing or interpreting these only when the idea contained in the Latin text allowed for it.[9]

In the version of the work for organ and large orchestra, Duruflé retained the normal composition of the orchestra, but with a predominance of the violas and divided cellos. The organ plays a strictly episodic role, intervening not to support the choirs, but only to emphasize particular expressive passages or to represent the calm detachment of the hereafter as over against the human sonorities of the orchestra.[10]

Sometimes the work respects the Gregorian text in its entirety, while the orchestra only supports it or comments on it, and sometimes the Gregorian is completely eliminated. Duruflé did whatever he could to reconcile the plainsong rhythms with the demands of modern meter, the Latin accent occasionally falling on a weak beat, giving the piece a greater freedom and suppleness.[11] In several passages, the Gregorian line is slightly ornamented; often it is not ornamented at all, but is simply given a rhythm and harmonized. Some of the developments are constructed on elements completely foreign to the chant, which however respect its modal character as much as possible.[12]

Duruflé constructs much of Opus 9 around the building blocks of the Solesmes two-note and three-note rhythmic units, which he exploits to the fullest. In the *Requiem* these groupings often dictate the meter, but the pulse is felt more as uplift than downbeat, a concept that goes against the grain of virtually all diatonic music, thus challenging singers and conductors alike. Peter G. Jarjisian

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suggests "that the conductor should strive to feel the impulse coming out of the beat, rather than thrusting into it."[13] But we see it also in his superimposition of duples and triples, and in the meter changes that throw off our expectation of metrical regularity and a too-earthly beat, effectively relieving much of the work of any heavy, accented pulse (there are conspicuous exceptions). Some critics have noted that Duruflé's use of triplets is alien to the steady eighth and quarter-note rhythms of plainsong (i.e., in modern notation).[14] While this is true, Duruflé's purpose, rather, was to simulate the lightness of chant by undermining a beat through cross-rhythms.

The most remarkable instance of this is the first word of the *Sanctus*, where the stressed syllable *Sanct-* falls (rises) on (from) a short, weak note while the unstressed syllable *-tus* falls on a long note. Likewise, in the phrase *et lux perpetua luceat eis*, at rehearsals 9 and 10, accented syllables are placed on weak beats, and vice versa. The *Liber usualis* specifies that the light, arsic character of the Latin accent is to be retained even when it coincides with the rhythmic ictus of a note grouping.

Central to Duruflé's construction not only of medium and long phrases, but of the entire opus, are this arsis and thesis fundamental to the typical Gregorian phrase. The *Pie Jesu* is so organized that everything before rehearsal 58 is arsic and everything after it thetic. Furthermore, Jarjisian has perceptively shown how the magnificent *Hosanna in excelsis*, spanning measures 24–55 of the *Sanctus*, and emerging from a quiet harmonic turbulence to the excited grandeur of fanfares at measure 50, represents the conceptual middle of Duruflé's entire Opus 9, everything before it the arsis, and everything after it the thesis.[15]

The genius of the *Requiem* lies in the way the modal "harmony" merely implied in the purely horizontal, medieval melodies spreads vertically, at Duruflé's urging, and reaches our ears as a twentieth-century structure. Faithful to his own epoch, Duruflé uses block chords in parallel motion reminiscent of Debussy and Ravel.[16] His occasional shifts of harmonic center by a third reflect Debussy, Ravel, and Fauré alike.[17]

Duruflé never made any reference to the fact that the incentive to enlarge and orchestrate the organ suite was a commission from the Vichy government. It is likely that the commission for a symphonic poem helped convince him that the organ suite could be transformed into a larger work to good effect. He completed the work nearly two and a half years after his father's death on February 5, 1945,[18] and dedicated it to his memory.

Some sources recount that the commission came from Durand—certainly through his friend René Dommange—but that it came to him while he was already at work on the organ suite.[19] Given Dommange's concurrent positions with Durand and Vichy, it is reasonable to assume that the commission from Vichy would be honored by Durand virtually de facto. Duruflé's version of the story is thus compatible with the Vichy commission.

Duruflé's family and devotees, as well as the Duruflé Association, denied that the *Requiem* was written on commission from the Vichy government, basing their

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argument on the assumption that because the work is dedicated to his father, he must have started it some time after his father's death. But Duruflé could well have begun work on the piece before his father's death—the fact needs no further proving—later deciding to dedicate it to his father. The inscription of a piece does not necessarily disclose the incentive for its composition. At the same time, it is entirely possible that a dedication of the piece never occurred to Duruflé until after his father's death. In any case, his father's death certainly inspired his continued work on the composition, which was already four years in the making after he received the commission.

First Performances and Reception

Duruflé submitted his completed score to the reading committee of the radio for their consideration.[20] They accepted the work and the first performance of the *Requiem* was broadcast to a national (not merely a Parisian) audience over French radio, on November 2, 1947, on the observance of All Souls Day,[21] the day on which the Roman Catholic Church prays for the dead in purgatory. The performance took place at Salle Gaveau. On the same program were the Sixth Symphony, "In memoriam" (1944), a four-movement work composed by the Polish composer Alexandre Tansman (1897–1986) in memory of those who had died for France, and *In memoriam*, by the Hungarian composer László Lajtha (1892–1963). Roger Désormière conducted the large Orchestre national, with the Chœurs de la radio (Yvonne Gouverné, director), soloists Hélène Bouvier (whom Duruflé did not know personally, but whose voice was exactly what he was looking for[22]) and Camille Maurane.[23] Henriette Roget played the organ.[24]

The radio performance was announced in *Le Monde* neither as a premiere nor as a major musical event, and no mention was made of its being a commission. Indeed, the announcement of the broadcast appeared in small print, among the regular announcements of upcoming radio broadcasts. The critics did later note the work's being a premiere, but they made no reference to its being a commission.

A review by Clarendon (Bernard Gavoty), appearing in *Le Figaro* on November 8, compares Duruflé's work with that of Fauré:

> Because he is an organist—which is an indelible blemish—we do not sufficiently know that Duruflé is a marvelously gifted composer. He writes little, but he signs only pages of the first order, where there are manifest a scrupulous craft and an exquisite sensibility. He is the Fauré of the organ. And precisely at the moment of writing a *Requiem*, his first care was to move away as much as possible from the inimitable and discouraging model that the *Requiem* of Fauré suggests to composers. He kept only its Gregorian ambiance; or rather, like Fauré, but very differently, he attempted and succeeded at a savory compromise between the austerity of the lines of the plainchant and the unobtrusive delight of a modern harmonization. A well-placed seventh chord weakens the

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rigor of the Gregorian monotony and gives the illusion of a rose that blossoms suddenly on a bare branch.[25]

Another review, by Henriette Roget (it is peculiar that a musician involved in the performance should write a review of it) appeared in *Les Lettres françaises* on November 27. Identifying the *Requiem* as "an intense expression of its era," Roget writes:

> The work of Maurice Duruflé pertains no more to tomorrow than to today or yesterday: it bears a permanent character which is communicated by the immutability of the faith that enlivens it. Constructed by pious hands, this score is outside of time. Inspired by the Gregorian, it is the expression of a belief rather than the voice of a man.
>
> If the *Requiem*s of Mozart, Berlioz, or Fauré instruct us very exactly on the state of soul of their authors in the face of death, if the *Requiem* of Verdi is the cry of a people at a specific era, Duruflé's Mass brings a great peace, an absolute serenity, as anonymous as the collective impetus to which we owe our cathedrals. . . .
>
> The orchestration and the choral writing are precisely what they should be.
>
> Finally, a work essentially of the church which is neither sweetened nor plaintive and which bears the mystical spark that César Franck had revived after the end of the too excited spirit of the eighteenth century and the physical turmoil of romanticism.[26]

The first concert performance of the *Requiem* was presented at the Palais de Chaillot nearly two months after the radio broadcast, on December 28, 1947, by the Chorale Yvonne Gouverné, with soloists Hélène Bouvier and Charles Cambon, and organist Henriette Roget, along with the Orchestre Colonne under the direction of Paul Paray. The work was performed alongside the *Rédemption* of Franck and the Piano Concerto of Schumann.

A brief and hesitant review that appeared in *L'Ordre*, on December 30—after noting the incongruity of presenting a *Requiem* during the Christmas season—had little to say, other than that the work, "skillfully and dramatically paraphrasing the liturgical prose, . . . recalling the Franckian element in its totality, a restrained pathos that reached the imposing, attests to a classic solidity of high quality, free of vulgarity, showing the fruits of long study, with all the license of an acceptable modernism."[27]

On November 14, 1948, the *Requiem* was performed again, this time by Concerts Pasdeloup, with the Chorale Brasseur, under the baton of Pierre Dervaux. The concert was reviewed by Clarendon in *Le Figaro*, in which he again draws a comparison with Fauré:

> I add that Maurice Duruflé is today one of the best French musicians—and we barely have enough of his caliber. He is the most authentic heir of the Fauré tradition, this tradition made of elegance, of modesty, and of effective sobriety. Duruflé is, moreover, an organist as was Fauré, and their familiarity with plainchant raises certain stylistic parallels between the two composers. They are, both of them, "voluptuous Gregorianists," as our Reynaldo Hahn said of the composer of *La Bonne Chanson*. More obviously than

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> Fauré, Duruflé uses the liturgical language, cites certain textual motifs and uses a harmonic system whose modal simplicity daringly espouses the refinements of contemporary writing. Like Fauré's *Requiem*, Duruflé's offers the surprise of many shimmering chords that appear suddenly from the Gregorian aridity, just as a flower blossoms by chance in the desert sand. What a lot of devices concealed by a magician's hand in these discreet and fervent pages![28]

The *Requiem*s by Duruflé and Fauré contrast sharply with earlier, more wrathful settings by Mozart/Süssmayer, Berlioz, and Verdi, in large part because they omit the sequence *Dies irae*,[29] which, with its depictions of the gloom and terror of the last judgment, reinforces the fear of God and the eternal punishment of the deceased.

But it is not merely in the omission of the *Dies irae* that the two settings are alike. Both divide the lower strings to obtain a darker timbre. Both also include settings of the *Pie Jesu* and the *In paradisum*, which reinforce the loving-kindness of God and the peacefulness of paradise. Neither movement appears in the settings by Mozart, Berlioz, or Verdi.

In both scores, the *Pie Jesu*—which is, in fact, the final couplet of the sequence text *Dies irae*—is not positioned after the tract, where the sequence properly occurs. Instead, Fauré and Duruflé postponed it until after the *Sanctus*. While the liturgy does not specify the singing of a *Pie Jesu* between the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei*, the *motu proprio* of 1903 allowed a motet to be sung after the *Benedictus*,[30] during the silent recitation of the canon by the priest, and that is probably where the two composers intended it to be sung (even though the *Pie Jesu*, as the two men set it, is not a motet as such, but rather more of an aria).

Gwilym Beechey points out that in Duruflé's setting of the *Pie Jesu*

> there may be an unconscious reminiscence . . . of Princess Eboli's aria, *O mia Regina*, in Act IV of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, which is also in A flat major, and which has a slightly similar melodic and rhythmic basis to Duruflé's theme here. Duruflé's movement is perhaps a little too simple and straightforward in its rhythm to make a memorable impact in spite of its melodic and harmonic attractiveness. The intensity of the climax between Figures 48 and 50 seems to call perhaps for a little stronger rhythmic activity.[31]

The *Dies irae* is not alone responsible for the depiction of a wrathful God in the requiem; the same imagery appears in other movements. In Duruflé's setting of the *Domine Jesu Christe*, for instance, the choir pleads, at a *forte*, that the departed be freed from the jaws of the lion, and that they not be swallowed up by hell or fall into darkness. And in the *Libera me*, the baritone sings the text *Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae*, in effect retaining the words otherwise lost by the omission of the sequence, while the choir asks to be freed from everlasting judgment by fire. Duruflé himself acknowledged the presence of terror in his work.[32]

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Fauré and Duruflé both link the *Introit* and the *Kyrie* because in the pre–Vatican II requiem mass, the first segues into the latter, nothing else intervening between the two.[33] Both settings are unique in this regard, suggesting that both composers were writing more for a liturgical context than for a concert. Duruflé, however, separates the *Agnus Dei* from the *Lux aeterna*, which are also contiguous in the ritual; this suggests the very opposite.

But there are distinct differences between the two settings as well. Duruflé's orchestra is considerably larger than that of Fauré, especially compared to the latter's original version. Fauré excluded the *Benedictus* altogether,[34] whereas Duruflé included it with the *Sanctus*,[35] choosing to treat them as a unit. In thus restoring the original and ancient unity of these texts, Duruflé effectively made his *Sanctus-Benedictus* a little less practical for use in the Tridentine rite, because of their combined length, perhaps implying that he had a concert venue in mind for the performance of the *Requiem*. By the same token, his approach anticipated, by nearly twenty years, the mass of the Second Vatican Council, in which the unity of the sung *Sanctus-Benedictus* was restored.

Fauré also excluded the communion, *Lux aeterna*, which Duruflé and Mozart retained. The *Libera me*, which is sung for the absolution of the deceased during the burial, is added by Verdi, Fauré, and Duruflé alike. The latter two composers were the first to include settings of the *In paradisum*, which is sung as the body is borne from the church.

Fauré's setting of the requiem has been described correctly as having a liturgical quality and a modal character. This accounts for Reynaldo Hahn's having called him "the voluptuous Gregorianist," a moniker that Bernard Gavoty said could be applied to Duruflé as well.[36] But Fauré's setting has incorrectly been characterized as being based on Gregorian chant, which it is not. In this regard Duruflé's setting is unique in the history of post-Renaissance requiems.

Alec Robertson observes that, compared to Fauré's setting, Duruflé's style "is not so pure," a critique that has some merit.

> It would not be difficult to write it off, on a superficial view, as a pastiche of Fauré's *Requiem*. . . . There are echoes of the harmonies of Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas, but if these on paper suggest a work less integrated than that of Fauré, the result in performances puts the matter in a more favourable perspective. There is a personal quality that surpasses these influences and unifies the disparate elements.[37]

Felix Aprahamian makes a similar observation:

> Plain-chant and polyphony, dominant ninths and the orchestra of Debussy—without the evidence of an actual performance, Duruflé's *Requiem* might appear to be a hotch-potch. But it is the absolute unification in a very personal manner of these seemingly disparate elements that constitutes Duruflé's chief claim to be taken seriously as a composer.[38]

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And likewise Gwilym Beechey:

> For some performers and listeners the Op. 9 *Requiem* may not be as original in conception, mood and content as they might have wished or expected, and the music of older French composers may have influenced it to too great an extent. For some tastes the work may be too restrained and quiet, and the *Libera me* movement may not be so striking in its context as the similar movement in the Fauré *Requiem*. Nonetheless the overall impression of Duruflé's work in performance is one of deep religious feeling and commitment, and it reveals a fluent creative mind that is full of sensitivity to vocal and instrumental colour.[39]

Nevertheless, Duruflé himself denied being influenced by the *Requiem* of Fauré:

> I do not think I was influenced by Fauré, contrary to the opinion of certain musical critics, who, anyway have never given any explanation concerning their viewpoint. I have simply tried to surround myself with the style suitable to the Gregorian chants as well as the rhythmic interpretation of the Benedictines of Solesmes.[40]

One of the more arresting facts about the reception of the *Requiem* in North America is that, after the *Requiem* of Fauré, it is only the second French choral work that holds a place in the standard repertory among the much more numerous English, Italian, and German works such as Bach's *Magnificat* or Mass in B Minor, Handel's *Messiah*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Mozart's *Requiem*, to name a few examples. That both of the French works happen to be requiems is also noteworthy.[41] A case could be made for a third French choral work, Théodore Dubois's *Sept Paroles du Christ*, by virtue of its immense popularity in North America earlier in the twentieth century, but the work lacks the stature of the works by Fauré and Duruflé. In France it was never as popular as the two requiems.

Certainly the choral tradition in France has always been mediocre, a fact that advances our reverence for Duruflé's work, insofar as it succeeded in such a climate. As far back as the reopening of the Paris Conservatoire, on October 22, 1796, for example, the director Bernard Sarrette delivered a merciless depiction of the state of vocal music in France, blaming the church's choir schools for the poor condition of music education and performance across the land.

> Singing, such an essential part of music, has always been taught badly in France: the *maîtrises* of the cathedrals were the only schools that existed for this purpose under the former government, and it seems that the goal of these establishments, created and maintained for the service of worship, whose principal need was to fill an immense space with voluminous sound, forced the choir directors to show them only how to sing loudly, a method that naturally tended to exclude nuance and expression. We cannot speak here about these former schools of song and declamation, now disenfranchised, or their restricted boundaries and bad institutions, ill equipped to allow their skilled professors any appreciable reform in the manner of singing.[42]

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Early in the twentieth century Albert Schweitzer wrote an article for *Die Musik* entitled "Why It Is So Difficult to Organize a Good Chorus in Paris."[43] Schweitzer identified the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, the Concerts Colonne, and the Schola Cantorum as having the best choirs, but he wrote that none of them had any real success. He noted that French choral singers had little sense of ensemble.

> Everyone brings to the rehearsals his full personality; he does not become a member of the chorus, a stop that the director pulls, but remains Mr. So-and-So, or Mrs. So-and-So, who wants to be recognized as such. The modern Frenchman has an instinctive anxiety about anything that is called discipline; he sees in it nothing but a submission that is unworthy of a free being. The higher conception, that discipline means the natural expression of the individual in a society united for a purpose, is in all circumstances foreign to the French spirit. He sees first of all in discipline the sacrifice of freedom and personal worth.[44]

First-hand descriptions of Parisian church choirs early in the century are rare. The few critiques that do exist, like those of the writer Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848–1907), command our attention for their assessment of plainsong and choral music as they were sung in the churches of Paris around the turn of the century. "Most choirs," he wrote, in the persona of Durtal, "when they intone [plainsong], like to imitate the rumbling and gurgling of water-pipes, others the grating of rattles, the creaking of pulleys, the grinding of a crane, but, in spite of all, its beauty remains unextinguished, dulled though it be by the wild bellowing of the singers."[45]

At Sainte Clotilde, Durtal thought: "The psalmody, at least, is upright, and has not . . . lost all shame," but he still "encountered dance music and profane tunes, a worldly orgie [*sic*]."[46] At Notre-Dame, "the voices of the choir boys always wanted mending; they broke, while the advanced age of the basses made them hoarse."[47]

But Durtal declared that "St. Étienne-du-Mont . . . was worse still; the shell of the church was charming, but the choir was an offshoot of the school of Sanfourche, you might think yourself in a kennel, where a medley pack of sick beasts were growling."[48] As for the churches on the right bank, "they were worthless, plain chant was as far as possible suppressed, and the poverty of the voices was everywhere ornamented with promiscuous tunes."[49]

In the early 1920s, when Duruflé was able to hear many of the choirs in question, *The American Organist* published articles by Paul De Launay, Marshall Bidwell, Hugh McAmis, and G. Criss Simpson, in which they made cursory observations about the choirs at several Paris churches.[50] Not a single prominent church escaped their criticism, but the two parish choirs that made a name for themselves among concertgoers during Duruflé's lifetime were those of Saint Eustache and the Madeleine, both on the right bank. Choirs not associated with churches, such as the radio choir and the Chorale Yvonne Gouverné, fared better still.

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Despite the prevailing choral climate, Duruflé's *Requiem* continued to be performed by various choirs in Paris every November through 1950, but according to Gwilym Beechey, performances of the work were relatively infrequent for some time thereafter.[51]

The *Requiem* was first performed in the United States on February 24, 1952,[52] at Calvary Episcopal Church, New York City, under the direction of Jack Ossewaarde, with Frederick Swann as organist.[53] Seth Bingham wrote afterward, in what proved to be an understatement, that the work "seems destined to achieve many performances and win a wide circle of friends in this country."[54] The British premiere of the *Requiem* was presented in the same year by the City of Birmingham Choir and Orchestra, at Birmingham Town Hall, with conductor David Willcocks.[55] It was presented in England again, by the Liverpool Philharmonia in 1953, with Nicolai Malko conducting and Duruflé at the organ.

Versions of the *Requiem* and Its Publication

Duruflé provided four versions for the accompaniment: large orchestra and organ; reduced orchestra and organ; solo organ; and solo piano. The version for large orchestra calls for the usual complement of strings, plus four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, a tuba, two flutes, a piccolo, two oboes, an English horn, two clarinets, one bass clarinet, two bassoons, four timpani, cymbals, a bass drum, gong, celesta, harp, and organ. Anticipating that there would be occasions when an organ is not available, Duruflé made orchestral provision so that the piece can be performed without one. The inclusion of bass drum, cymbals, and timpani was contrary to liturgical law then in force—another indication that Duruflé's earliest intended venue for the work was the concert hall. The reduced version calls for the strings and retains the three trumpets, the four timpani, and the harp, but these instruments are all ad libitum. The version for solo organ includes the cello solo for the *Pie Jesu*, but it is ad libitum.

The three versions were published in a different order, however: first came the version for solo organ (1948); then the version for organ and large orchestra (1950); and lastly the version for organ and reduced orchestra (1961). The chronology of their publication has often led to a mistaken chronology of their composition.

The version for solo organ is the one most commonly used, because, despite its formidable technical demands, it is the easiest and the least expensive to mount.[56] The fourth version, for piano accompaniment,[57] still unpublished, would be useful in situations where even an organ is unavailable. It would also allow a further analysis of Duruflé's approach to transcription and reduction, and would be useful for rehearsals. Needless to say, however, for actual performance a piano accompaniment would be no match for the organ version, to say nothing of the orchestral versions.

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It is futile to try to determine which version of the *Requiem* is the most authentic. As Claude Costa has written, "It is useless to embark upon inevitably subjective classifications that seek to determine the most authentic version."[58] And François Sabatier compares the version for large orchestra with the version for organ: "The fact remains that the original version calls upon the orchestra and that the second is content with the organ only in the absence of the latter. . . . That said, the instrument with pipes sounds marvelous and is not treated as a simple reduction of the orchestra."[59]

It bears noting that Duruflé did not consider the versions for reduced orchestra and organ solo as transcriptions of the version for large orchestra, but rather as reductions,[60] a telling distinction of some importance, as it reflects how Duruflé perceived the various means and intentions of transferring a musical idea from one medium to another. We do not know exactly how he distinguished the act of transcription from the act of reduction.

In any case, of the three published versions, Duruflé preferred the original version for large orchestra, which was used for the two premieres in 1947. The version for organ and reduced orchestra was his next favorite, because he believed it gave the illusion of a complete orchestra and is more interesting to the audience than the version for organ alone.[61] In the composer's note in the score for reduced orchestra, Duruflé writes that the organ version

> was done with a practical purpose. Indeed, it is rarely possible to gather together in a church the choirs, the organ and a complete orchestra. On the other hand, the reduction for organ alone seems insufficient in certain parts of the *Requiem* where the expressive timbre of the strings stands out. At the same time, this intermediary formula allows a lightening of the organ part in blending it or in opposing it to the other instruments.
>
> There was anticipated the possible addition, in total or in part and by order of priority, of a harp, of 2 or 3 trumpets and of 2, 3, or 4 timpani, according to the circumstances. Certain pieces can content themselves with the organ and a string quartet, for example: *Agnus Dei*, *Lux aeterna*. Others demand at least 2 first violins, 2 seconds, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 2 double basses, for example: *Domine Jesu Christe*, *Libera me*. In these two pieces, more numerous strings will be even preferable owing to the balance of sound, above all if there is the addition of trumpets and timpani. The same in the *Sanctus*. On the whole, the part of the double bass was deliberately reduced, the sound of this instrument blending with the basses of the organ with difficulty.
>
> To sum up, here is the minimum composition of strings for each piece:
> *Introit*: double string quartet*
> *Kyrie*: double string quartet*
> *Domine Jesu Christe*: double string quintet
> *Sanctus*: string quintet (It is possible to do without the double bass.)
> *Pie Jesu*: cello solo
> *Agnus Dei*: string quartet
> *Lux aeterna*: 2 violins and 1 viola
> *Libera me*: double string quintet

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In Paradisum: double string quintet* (A 3rd first violin is wished for at No. 100 if there is a double quartet.)

Usually, the slight differences of the string quintet have been indicated for a minimum number of 22 instrumentalists (6–6–4–4–2). When trumpets are lacking, the part has been noted on the organ part (in small notes).

So as not to exceed the duration permitted in the course of the celebration of the mass, there has been allowed a cut in the *Sanctus* at rehearsal 46. For the same reason, the *Introit* can easily be separated from the *Kyrie* and be performed alone while adding a *point d'orgue* [fermata] on the 3rd beat of the last measure.

In the *Domine Jesu Christe* from rehearsal 34 to rehearsal 36, in the *Libera* from rehearsal 93 to rehearsal 94, and at the beginning of the *In Paradisum* up to rehearsal 101, it will be preferable to have a small group of sopranos sing, or better, a children's choir.

*It is possible, in a pinch, to content oneself with a string quartet. A version in this sense has been indicated in the score and the material.

On his tours of North America, Duruflé consented to the performance of extracts from the *Requiem*, specifying several options for a performance in Toledo, Ohio in 1966. One option featured the *Introit* and *Kyrie*, the *Pie Jesu*, and the *Agnus Dei*; another featured the *Introit*, the *Pie Jesu*, and the *Agnus Dei*; and the third featured the *Sanctus*, the *Pie Jesu*, and the *Agnus Dei*. For a performance in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1971, he suggested the *Domine Jesu Christe*, the *Pie Jesu*, and the *Lux aeterna*.[62] Despite his early disdain for it, Duruflé evidently became fond of the *Pie Jesu*, which he included in all four options.

It is remarkable that the organ part is scored not for a three-manual instrument, but for an ample but otherwise typical two-manual French-style organ, that is, a grand orgue, récit, and pedal. For the récit, Duruflé calls for the usual complement of fonds 8′ and 4′, flûtes at 8′, 4′, and 2′, mixtures, reeds 8′ and 4′. For the grand orgue he requires ample fonds 8′ and 4′, including a salicional, flûtes 8′ and 4′, and a flûte harmonique 8′, with mixtures and a bourdon 16′, but no reeds. Apart from a single exception, the only stops specified for the pedal are the bourdons 8′ and 16′, a flûte 8′, and, at the end of the Pie Jesu, a bourdon 32′. Only in the version for reduced orchestra does he also call for reeds 16′, 8′, and 4′ in the single pedal line at a place where, in the organ-only version, he writes instead for double pedal, the right foot playing at the octave. For the *Domine Jesu Christe*, in the organ-only version, the solo line is assigned to the principal 8′ on the grand orgue, but he suggests a clarinette as an alternative, implying the desirability of a third manual division, such as a positif, where the clarinette is often found. At the same place in the version for reduced orchestra, however, he specifies a récit clarinette, or, in lieu of it, an hautbois, with the accompaniment played by the violas in the orchestra. In the reduced orchestral version he specifies a dulciana where he had asked for a salicional in the organ-solo version. But in neither version does he call for any reeds in the grand orgue.

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Whereas the organ plays almost as prominent a role in the version for reduced orchestra as it does in the version for solo organ, in the version for large orchestra it plays a decidedly subsidiary role. With few exceptions, even its solo passages are usually mere background, often only doubling the orchestra or the voices, and only rarely having any thematic importance. There are long passages where the organ is silent, and when it does play, it often fulfills the function that the organ usually fills in orchestral works, providing body and mass behind the orchestra, playing mostly larger note values. In this version, the organ does not appear in the *Introit* at all. It plays at the beginning of the *Kyrie*, and in several passages of the *Domine Jesu Christe* and the *Libera me* it accompanies the chorus, without the orchestra. At the end of the *In paradisum* the Gregorian melody is played by a flute on the organ, over the chorus and orchestra. The version for large orchestra therefore presents none of the technical demands that the organist faces in the other two versions.

Throughout his American tours Duruflé consistently requested that the two brief passages for baritone solo in the third and eighth movements be sung by the entire bass section, or by the bass and tenor sections together (both movements go up to an F), not by a soloist. The rationale he usually supplied was that, unlike the mezzo-soprano solo in the *Pie Jesu*, those for the baritone were too brief to justify the expense of a professional soloist. Duruflé wrote the following note in the published score: "The baritone solo being of too short a duration, it is preferable to have it sung by the ensemble of tenors and basses (*Domine Jesu Christe* and *Libera me*)." For a few occasions on tour he asked that the *Pie Jesu* be sung by a children's choir instead of a mezzo-soprano.[63] But for the recording of the *Requiem* by Robert Shaw and the Atlanta Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, the *Pie Jesu* is sung by the women's chorus, a practice that was not condoned by Duruflé.[64]

Duruflé's insecurity as a composer is nowhere better documented than with regard to the *Requiem*. He obtained the advice of Jean Gallon and Noël Gallon, and consulted with Nadia Boulanger,[65] "whose severity of judgment always attracted me, although this severity was sometimes terrible."[66] She considered the *Requiem* weak and made some suggestions to him.[67] In a letter to her, dated December 11, 1947, in which he invited her to attend the public premiere, Duruflé mentioned, "I did not have time to redo the middle of my *Offertoire*, but I will recast it entirely next month in the way you indicated to me." In several other letters Duruflé acknowledged his debt to her because it was for the *Requiem*, he said, that the Holy See raised him to knighthood in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great.[68] In 1957, she wrote complimentary words to him following a performance of the *Requiem*, which he heard from the audience. He replied on July 13, 1957, "I was profoundly moved by your very touching letter. This *Requiem* is nevertheless very modest music. I am happy for this occasion to express to you again all my gratitude for the wonderful advice you gave me at the time when I was working with difficulty on this music. It is indeed thanks to you that I was able to overcome my troubles."[69]

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On the other hand, the *Requiem* might never have been completed without the urging of Marcel Dupré, who is reported to have liked the piece very much.[70]

> Maurice went to Dupré in order to show him his *Requiem*, and Dupré said (as [he had] already before, concerning the Suite and other compositions he had brought with him, in order to hear his opinion), "This music is perfect." Maurice then answered disbelievingly that this or that spot, perhaps, was, in fact, somewhat unsuccessful, but in time Dupré knew how to deal with Duruflé's self doubt, and said only, jokingly: Oh, don't come by any further with your own compositions.[71]

But Duruflé's doubts persisted and he originally intended to retract the work from publication. Marie-Claire Alain remembered him saying, "Oh what a disaster that I let this work be published! The *Pie Jesu* is a complete failure! . . . an unsuccessful and detestable work."[72] As it turned out, the *Requiem* is one of few works that Duruflé did not subject to continual revision over the years, for his later preference for the baritone section to replace the solos never led to a revised edition.

The fact that the original version of the *Requiem*, the one technically specified by the commission, is accompanied by a large orchestra, makes it a departure from some of the prescriptions of the *motu proprio* of 1903:

> 15. Although the proper music of the Church is only vocal, nevertheless the accompaniment of an organ is allowed. In any special case, within proper limits and with due care, other instruments may be allowed too, but never without special leave from the Bishop of the Diocese, according to the rule of the *Cæremoniale Episcoporum*.
> 16. Since the singing must always be the chief thing, the organ and the instruments may only sustain and never crush it.
> 17. It is not lawful to introduce the singing with long preludes, or to interrupt it with *intermezzi*.
> . . .
> 19. The use of the piano-forte is forbidden in churches, as also that of all noisy or irreverent instruments, such as drums, kettledrums, cymbals, triangles and so on.
> 20. Bands are strictly forbidden to play in church, and only for some special reason, after the consent of the Bishop has been obtained, may a certain number of specially-chosen wind instruments be allowed, which must be carefully selected and suitable to their object; and the music they play must always be reverent, appropriate, and in every way like that of the organ.[73]

While the spirit of the *Requiem* is liturgical, its length, its manipulation of a few texts, and its orchestral accompaniment theoretically banned it from liturgical use, if the *motu proprio* was to be observed jot and tittle. Duruflé took some liberties with the text, delivering, for example, the entire phrase *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabbaoth* three times instead of the prescribed once, a practice at odds with the *motu proprio*.[74] Likewise, he presents the text *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem* more than the prescribed three times. These

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features may help to explain why the earliest performances of the work occurred not in churches, but on the radio and in concert halls.

Mme Duruflé did not often disclose personal memories of her husband. But in an interview during the last year of her life, she said: "And now I will entrust to you what I have never said yet to anyone. My husband confessed to me that he had wept several times while writing the *Requiem*. That touched me very deeply. Certainly in the *Agnus Dei* or the *In paradisum* the theme is so sensitive, and so eloquent, that it does not surprise me that he broke down in tears."[75]

The last performance of the *Requiem* given in the presence of the composer was that on April 25, 1980 by the Chorale Colbert, conducted at Saint Étienne-du-Mont by Éliane Chevalier.[76] It was subsequently performed for the public funeral of Duruflé at Saint Étienne-du-Mont.

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