Why should we—a group of people with diverse views on the workings of the universe, whether we call that view “faith” or not—come together to listen to a Requiem, let alone two in one evening? Composers have often struggled with similar questions about a genre now over ten centuries old and the horrific conflicts of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries have only raised the stakes. Henriette Roget, who heard the premiere of Maurice Duruflé’s Requiem, offers us an answer that still rings true: “this score is outside of time.” While more dramatic Requiems tell us about the “state of soul” of the composer in the face of death (Mozart and Berlioz), or about the faith of a people tested (Verdi), Duruflé’s music “brings a great peace, and absolute serenity, as anonymous as the collective impetus to which we owe our cathedrals.” Such anonymity is difficult to come by now, with so many platforms devoted to curating our digital selves and a politics that demands identification with an “us” and a “them.” In contrast, as early as the second century, the Requiem Mass has stood at the edge of human experience and asked us to step out of our selves. Most often performed on the occasion of a funeral or other memorial, the Requiem also marks All Souls Day, a holy day with many local variations, from the Mexican traditions of the Dia de los Muertos to the absorption of the Gaelic rituals of Samhain in the churches of the British Isles. (Duruflé’s Requiem was premiered during a radio broadcast on All Souls Day in 1942.) The music of the Requiem—whether timeless plainchant or the mysterious chromaticism of Fauré—unmoors our minds and allows us to transcend our own experience. In turn, both Fauré and Duruflé offer deep peace if we are willing to give up our selves to their music.

Fauré and Duruflé focused on the “rest” sought through the Requiem, rather than fear of judgment. Both composers omitted most of the Dies irae sequence, which contemplates the day of reckoning and its terrors, instead setting only its last two lines in the Pie Jesu. Each also added the antiphon for the burial service, In paradisum, to their mass—instead of ending with the penitence of the Libera me, Fauré and Duruflé offer a tender prayer for the departed that sees them sung to rest by choirs of angels. For Fauré this sound is conjured in the soprano soli over a fluttering accompaniment in the organ, an airy texture and
a melodic line that drifts upward, lifting the listener with it. Duruflé’s *paradisum*, on the other hand, is striking in its stillness. From the organ he draws a harmony shimmering and strange in its voicing, over which the sopranos quietly chant. Along the way to this final farewell, Fauré and Duruflé offer glimpses of the transcendence achieved by the souls of the departed—musical out of body experiences unique to each composer as they balance shared traditions and influences.

Gregorian chant had been the center of Fauré’s education at the École Niedermeyer in Paris, along with the counterpoint of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, but when Camille Saint-Saëns assumed directorship there in 1861 he introduced Fauré to the lush harmonies of Liszt and Wagner as well. His setting of the offertory *O Domine Jesu Christi* combines these techniques to effect a moment of transfiguration. Beginning in a shadowy B minor, the twisting chromatic lines of the organ climb slowly upward, yearning and sighing in a way evocative of Wagner. The voices when they enter, even though their lines are filled with morose half steps and drooping contours, are sternly controlled in counterpoint Bach would have admired. Through this submission of the self to the request for mercy, the music leads us into the light—a radiant turn to the relative D major—for the baritone solo on the “Hostias” portion of the text. This is the core of the offertory, in which bread and wine are set upon the altar on behalf of the souls of the departed, that they be allowed to “pass over from death to life.” Fauré specified that the soloist should be a quiet bass-baritone of “the cantor type,” the better to evoke plainchant, stirring but meditative, with a gently oscillating accompaniment from the organ.

While Fauré had the spirit of Gregorian chant in mind, Duruflé adapted actual plainchant melodies in his Requiem. He also studied the rhythmic practices for singing plainchant preserved from the Middle Ages by the Benedictine monks of Solesmes (plainchant has no pre-determined rhythm). Duruflé was fascinated by the unmetered flow of their singing, with the ictus (the stress in the music) often falling on the last syllable of a word rather than on the Latin accent (the stress in the text). The result, he said, was that “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.” To recreate this practice, Duruflé wrote cross-rhythms between the voices and the organ—a powerful dissociative effect that he used to different ends in the offertory (*O Domine Jesu Christi*) and the Sanctus.

Like Fauré, Duruflé casts the offertory into chromatic shadows, as is fitting for the image of Tartarus, although the parallel chords in both organ and choir sound more like Debussy or Ravel than Wagner. Having begun with harmonic ambiguity, at the second statement of the phrase “Libera eas de ore leonis” Duruflé uncouples the organ and the voices, with the organ beginning to play in triplets and the choir continuing in duple time. There is rhythm here, but no regulating meter, and the tension between the organ and choir is unsettling. Duruflé does eventually let us rest in the “Hostias,” with a passage for baritone soli that is also unmetered but more meditative. Then the Sanctus opens with the same dissociation between organ and choir, but in this case the flute and *voix celeste* stops of the organ, and the placid parallel motion of the sopranos and altos, let the music and the listener float free—not just of bar lines but of all earthly constraints.

Duruflé, too, shows his training in counterpoint. The overlapping statements of the Kyrie, which seem never to pause for breath, are reminiscent of Palestrina. But as is clear from his fascination with the traditions of Solesmes, he favors practices that are even older, like the antiphonal call and response between the basses and the rest of the choir in the *Libera me*. As church musicians, Fauré and Duruflé shared many of the same traditions and they also seemed to have shared a more peaceful approach to the Requiem. This is remarkable in Duruflé’s case, as his mass was begun in the end days of World War II and in the wake of the death of his father. As organists, they both located their instrument at the center of these two works, even though the size of their orchestras grew in later arrangements. Fauré’s began as a “little Requiem,” with only a small orchestra and depending on the organ for much of its color, and Duruflé’s *Requiem* began as a suite of plainchant tunes for organ. The performance of these two masses with the Memorial Chapel’s Casavant organ returns them to a sound world more like that which Fauré and Duruflé first imagined. In order to enter this world, though, you will need to leave yourself behind and let their music take you.
Requiem, Opus 48

I. Introit and Kyrie

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine
et lux perpetua luceatis eis

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion
et tibi reddetur votum in Sion.

Exaudi orationem meam
ad te omnis caro veniet

Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison.

II. Offertory

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Gloriae
libera animas defunctorum
de poenis inferni
et de profundo lacu

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Gloriae
libera animas defunctorum
de ore leonis
ne absorbeat eus Tartarus
ne cadant in obscurum.

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Gloriae
ne cadant in obscurum.

Hostias et preces tibi Domine,
laudis offerimus
tu suscipe pro animabus illis
quarum hodie memoriam facimus

Fac eas, Domine,
de morte transire ad vitam
Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eus.

O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Gloriae
libera animas defunctorum
de poenis inferni
et de profundo lacu
ne cadant in obscurum.

III. Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua
Hosanna in excelsis.

IV. Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu, Domine,
dona eis requiem
dona eis requiem
sempiternam requiem

V. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem,
sempiternam requiem.
VII. In Paradisum

In Paradisum dedicant Angeli
May the angels receive them
in tuo adventu suscipiant te Martyres
at thy coming may the martyrs
et perducant te in civitatem receive thee and bring thee
sanctam Jerusalem into the holy city Jerusalem
Chorus Angelorum There may the chorus of angels
tesuscipit receive thee,
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
aeternam habeas requiem may thou have eternal rest.

Requiem, Opus 9

I. Introït

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, give to them, O Lord,
et lux perpetua luceat and let perpetual light shine
et lux perpetua luceat eis upon them.

Te decet hymnus, A hymn, O God,
deus in Sion, becometh Thee in Zion,
et tibi reddetur votum and a vow shall be paid to Thee
exaudi orationem meam, O Lord, hear my prayer,
ad te omnis caro veniet. all flesh shall come to Thee.

II. Kyrie

Kyrie eleison, Lord have mercy on us,
Christe eleison, Christ have mercy on us,
Kyrie eleison. Lord have mercy on us.

Maurice Duruflé
III. Domine Jesu Christe

Domine Jesu Christe, rex gloriae, liberas animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu.

Libera eas de ore leonis, ne absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum. Sed signifer sanctus Michael repraesentet eas in lucem sanctam, quam olim Abrahæ promisisti et semini ejus. Hostias et preces tibi, Domine, laudis offerimus. Tu suscipe pro animabus illis, quorum hodie memoriam facimus, fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam quam olim Abrahæ promisisti et semini ejus.

IV. Sanctus

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

V. Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eas requiem sempiternam. Pie Jesu Domine, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the deep pit;

Deliver them from the lion’s mouth that hell engulf them not, nor they fall into darkness. But that Michael, the holy standardbearer, bring them into the holy light, which Thou once didst promise to Abraham and his seed.

We offer Thee, O Lord, sacrifices and prayers of praise; do Thou accept them for those souls whom we this day commemorate; grant them, O Lord, to pass from death to the life which Thou once didst promise to Abraham and his seed.

V. Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu Domine, dona eas requiem sempiternam. Gentle Lord Jesus, grant them eternal rest.

VI. Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eas requiem sempiternam. Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world; grant them eternal rest.

VII. Lux aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine, cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

VIII. Libera Me

Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda, quando coeli movendi sunt et terra, dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem. Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that dreadful day when the heavens and the earth shall be moved, and Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. I quake with fear and I tremble awaiting the day of account and the wrath to come, when the heavens and the earth shall be moved.

Day of mourning, day of wrath, of calamity, of misery, the great day, and most bitter. Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that dreadful day when the heavens and the earth shall be moved.
dum veneris judicare
saeculum per ignem.

IX. In Paradisum

In Paradisum
deducant Angeli in tuo
adventu suscipiant te Martyres
et perducant te in civitatem
sanctam Jerusalem.
Chorus Angelorum
to suscipit
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem.

and Thou shalt come to judge
the world by fire.

May the angels
receive them in Paradise,
at thy coming may the martyrs
receive thee and bring thee into
the holy city Jerusalem.
There may the chorus of angels
receive thee,
and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may thou have eternal rest.

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