

October 14, 2003

Dear ASOC,

The "wrong" words in the Berlioz REQUIEM are intentional and essential to Berlioz' Romantic-Era artistic conception:

In his REQUIEM setting, Berlioz sought to create a contrast between a private (personal) and a public (all-of-humanity) apocalypse. -Hence his deliberate choice to alter the liturgical text from third person to first person point of view in a few spots:

Mvt. 4 Rex Tremendae
pages 39-40

From "libera eas de ore leonis" to "libera ME..."
and from "ne cadant in obscurum" to "ne cadam..."
[Free me from the mouth of the lion, lest I fall into obscurity].
-Also, from "ne absorbeat eas Tartatus" to "ne absorbeat ME Tartarus"
[lest the abyss swallow me up].

The added exclamation "O" in the 6th measure of "Rex tremendae majestatis" is more reminiscent of Beethoven's insertions of the same word into the text of the MISSA SOLEMNIS ("O, miserere!").

If you ever visit the Libraries of Georgia State or Emory University, you may read more about it in the Journal "19th Century Music" at:

Edward T. Cone, "Berlioz' Divine Comedy: The Grande Messe des morts," *19th Century Music*, 4 (1980), 3-16.

Thoughtfully yours,

Jeffrey W. Baxter
Choral Administrator
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra