

October 15, 2003

Dear ASOC,

Same song.... now verse two.

Those cuts in our choral score in the "Quaerens me" (p.45) are from Berlioz and his publishers (not Robert Shaw) and are retained in both the Bärenreiter and (even) the Kalmus full scores.

-From scholar, Hugh Macdonald:

"The REQUIEM was published soon after the first performance [5 December 1837] by Schlesinger of Paris. Berlioz conducted it himself three times in Paris in later years, in 1846, 1850 and 1852. It was then re-issued in a second edition by Ricordi of Milan, incorporating some revisions, chief of which was the removal of nine bars from the "Quaerens me."

Somehow the measures that should have been cut remained in the published choral scores (probably because they never were cut from the choral "parts" -- yes, the choruses Berlioz conducted sang the REQUIEM from "part-books," not SATB choral scores!).

-But why did Berlioz make the cut?

Oddly enough, Berlioz's cut (the truncation of the B-section, "Ingemisco...") disturbed the movement's neat ABA symmetry. -And philosophically, there was no reason to cut *culpa rubet vultus meus* [guilt reddens my face] but still include *preces meae non sunt dignae* [my prayers are not worthy]: both get the "guilt" thing in.

I think there are two reasons he made the cut:

1. Berlioz, in true Romantic-era fashion, was all about bending and breaking the rules -- of traditional harmony, form and even the "rules" of orchestration (c.f. his opening "Requiem and Kyrie" movement which Robert Shaw described as a "Sonata form, twisted and torn by grief.") In the "Quaerens me" Berlioz had the good sense to off-set the nice symmetry he had created in favor of a more taunt, slightly uneven structure -- a structure that favors the "Hauptmotiv," or main tune.

2. The cut also gives the accompanimental, four, even eighth-note ostinato-pattern in m. 42 prominence (the "drum-taps" or "heartbeats," if you will). The related rhythmic pattern he composed in the later-to-be-cut measures (long-long-short-short) is not nearly as effective, both emotionally or textually (not that the French ever concern themselves with proper text-stress!) Luckily, Berlioz's superior artistic instincts almost always won out, as they did here.

-More than you wanted to know, maybe?

Jeff