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## THE STORY OF MOZART'S REQUIEM.

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*(Continued from p. 137.)*

The latest information throwing light on the history of the Requiem was obtained only a few years ago. In No. 48 of the "*Recensionen und Mittheilungen über Theater und Musik*," published at Vienna the 26th November, 1864, appeared an article entitled, "Mozart's Requiem. Nachlese zu den Forschungen über dessen Entstehen" (Sequel to the Enquiries as to its Origin), by L. von Köchel. He states that, by the kindness of a friend, he has had access to two documents, copies of which he gives.\* The first has reference to a passage in Süßmayer's letter, where he says: "The completion of the work was offered to several masters. Some of them could not undertake the work on account of pressing engagements, and others would not compromise themselves by the comparison of their talents with those of Mozart." This was confirmed by the fact that in Mozart's original manuscripts, preserved in the Court Library, at Vienna, some strange hand, not Süßmayer's, had filled in, on the lines left blank by Mozart, portions of an instrumentation altogether differing from that made by Süßmayer and adopted in the published score, and also attempts to continue the *Lacrymosa*. The document now produced offers an explanation of this. It is a certificate by Eybler, and runs as follows:—

"The undersigned hereby acknowledges that the widow Frau Constantia Mozart, has entrusted to him, for completion, the Requiem begun by her late husband. He undertakes to finish it by the middle of the ensuing Lent; and also gives his assurance that it shall neither be copied, nor given into other hands than those of the widow.

"JOSEPH EYBLER.

"Vienna, 21st December, 1791."

It is stated, in corroboration of this, that on comparing the strange handwriting in the manuscripts with that in known scores of Eybler, the identity is established.

The second document is entitled, "A true and detailed History of the Requiem by W. A. Mozart, from its origin in 1791 to the present time, 1839. By Anton Herzog, Chief District Director of Schools, and Choirmaster at Neustadt, near Vienna." The author was, in the year 1790, a teacher at Klaus, a proprietary school belonging to Count Walisegg, and acted as musician in the Count's band, particularly at the time of the first performance of the Requiem. The paper was intended for publication, and is said to bear internal and external evidences of credibility. It gives a lengthy account of the proceedings of the Count in reference to the Requiem, and, though differing in slight particulars, generally confirms the independent testimony of the two other witnesses to this part of the story, Krüchten and Zawrzel, adding some particulars which we shall incorporate in the next chapter.

Having now arrived at the end of the most wonderful series of events and disclosures pervading this most remarkable history, we cannot help looking back

to try and form some reasonable and intelligible idea of how it can have come about that a matter, so apparently simple as the history of a comparatively short piece of music, should have been beset with such a series of bewildering perplexities; at a time, too, almost close upon the occurrence of the events referred to. And, in so doing, we cannot fail to perceive that almost the whole confusion is clearly traceable to one person, the widow of the composer. Compassion for her unfortunate circumstances, and respect for the name she bore, have, to a great extent, shielded her memory from the obloquy she would otherwise have sustained. But the truth of history must be preserved; and in much of her conduct she lost even these grounds for consideration; for, long before her misdoings ceased, she had taken leave together of her poverty and of Mozart's name.

Let us look a little at her conduct in the matter. After the death of her husband, her first thought was for the unfinished Requiem. It had been already paid for; and she feared that the Unknown would, if he did not get the work, demand the restitution of his money. Hence the first temptation to that course of deception which she carried on all her life long. But a mystery at once meets us here. Mozart had clearly designated Süßmayer to finish the work. Why was it not at once put into his hands? Why did the widow go about inviting Eybler and others to do it instead of him? What are we to think of her utter disregard, not only for the character of the work and of its author, but of her husband's earnest request, while his dying voice had hardly ceased to sound in her ears? Perhaps it was from some pitiful dispute about remuneration, or as to the condition of secrecy. This we shall never know; but fortunately for Mozart and for the world, it at last got into the right hands.

We know by the date of Eybler's agreement that Madame Mozart did not delay her proceedings, but Süßmayer's work must have taken some time. It bears no mark of hurry; and the work had not only to be completed but copied. Hence the Count must have been kept waiting some time before the score was delivered to him; and it has never been explained on what sort of pretext he could have been put off, for he must have known of Mozart's death immediately, and one would think he would at once have claimed the score. However, the widow seems to have successfully got over this difficulty, and ultimately to have made the Count believe, by Süßmayer's dexterous imitation of the handwriting, that he had the true master's work. The performance of the Requiem, and its sudden great popularity, followed close upon this; and again the temptation of the filthy lucre was too strong for the poor woman to resist. She declared it to have been entirely completed by Mozart, and straightway entered upon a new series of transactions which one cannot now look at without pain. Although she knew the Requiem was another person's property, she sold it over and over again in all directions, and at last succeeded in getting it published by the Leipsic firm. But now she began to find the inconvenience of her crooked line of conduct. The Count came down sharply upon her, and she was obliged to confess the fraud she had practised upon him. Here again we meet with a singular and unaccountable fact, namely, the entire absence from the proceedings of the principal person, after Mozart himself, concerned in them, namely, Süßmayer. The negotiations with

\* Translated in the *Musical World* of December 3, 1864.

Dr. Sortschen were conducted on the widow's behalf entirely by Stadler and Nissen. Süssmayer, who was close at hand, does not seem even to have been referred to, although his part in the composition must have been the most prominent feature in the discussion. Oulibicheff conjectures, and probably with reason, that at this time the widow's and Süssmayer's interests being so incompatible, a rupture had taken place. No doubt Süssmayer, seeing the popularity of the work, was desirous of getting credit, at any rate, for what he had done towards it; but this did not suit the policy of the widow, who wished to keep up the fiction of its completion by Mozart, and had probably secured Süssmayer's engagement to respect the secret. But her plan was frustrated by the suspicions of the Leipsic house, who pressed the widow so earnestly on the point that, as we have seen, she was compelled most reluctantly first to admit a portion of the truth, and afterwards to refer them to Süssmayer; and then followed the *eclaircissement* in the immortal letter.

But the widow had not yet done with the Requiem, which she determined to make still much more profitable. About this time, we find her writing to André the letter printed on page 104, in which, not satisfied with having already sold the Requiem to one publisher, she endeavours, under new and specious pretences, to sell it again to another. She tells André that she has now a better copy than that published by the Leipsic house, inasmuch as it has undergone correction from experienced hands; and that, moreover, in this copy some parts had been differently filled in; so that André, if he bought her copy, might choose between them. She also, as an additional bait, offers to send André the *Urschriften* (all except the No. 1, which we now know had gone to Wallsegg), and calls his attention, as a further attraction, to the abortive attempts at completion by Eybler. What the corrections and alterations in the complete score may have been, we know not. Fortunately, André did not adopt them; but the whole proceeding, carried on under the strict seal of secrecy, is sufficiently disgraceful.

With this last sale to André the widow had nearly exhausted her means of getting money by the Requiem. But she had still one further source of profit left, namely, the *Urschriften*—the manuscripts, precious beyond all estimation, left by Mozart's own dying hand—the only proof existing of his part in the composition. These had been lent to André, and returned to the widow. One would have thought that such inestimable treasures would either have been preserved as holy relics, or at least have been parted with openly and honourably. But no! this course would not do. To have made them known to the world would have caused inconvenient revelations; and they were ruthlessly broken up into fragments and disposed of in secret. No one knows what became of them for a long time; probably they passed into several hands, until, by a merciful interposition of providence, they found their way into the possession of persons who knew their value, and through whose respectful care they are now preserved.

We hear no more of Madame Mozart till after her second marriage with Nissen, which took place in 1809. She was then placed in comfort, and with the help in her affairs of a man of position in the world, she might fairly have endeavoured to make some reparation to her husband's *manes*; but, on the contrary, in 1826, we find them both engaged

in new mystifications with André. The letter of Nissen, alluded to in page 104, however obscure, appears to have had for its object to lead André to believe there was yet something further to be known, and perhaps to be purchased.

The nature of the widow's proceedings was known to Stadler, to Breitkopf and Härtel, to André, and doubtless to many others; and it was solely out of consideration for her that, during the Weber controversy, so much was concealed, and so many perversions and misstatements were allowed to get abroad.

To crown the whole, came, a year or two afterwards, the publication of Nissen's book, edited by the widow; the astounding contents, or rather, non-contents, of which, as regarded the Requiem, threw the world into amaze. The statement of the widow on the finding of the Wallsegg score, in 1839, was perhaps the most definite and trustworthy she ever made on the subject; but even then there was room for a much fuller confession, which would, in some measure, have atoned for her past misdeeds. She died in Salzburg in March, 1842, a few hours after the arrival in that town of the model of the Mozart statue.

#### CHAP. IV.—*Connected Narrative.*

It will be convenient now to combine, into a short connected narrative, the facts which were disclosed at intervals during the long series of events described in the three preceding chapters.

At a place called Stuppach, in Lower Austria, four and a-half posts from Vienna, on the high road to Trieste, resided a large landed proprietor, named Count von Wallsegg. He was a great lover of music, kept a number of musicians in his service, and had frequent musical performances, in which he himself took part, playing the violin or flute. He had received only an indifferent musical education, but he had the ambition to be thought an eminent musician. He had maintained relations with several composers, from whom he purchased, on liberal terms, quartets and other works, which he transcribed with his own hand, and passed off as his own.

His Countess, to whom he was much attached, died early in 1791; and the idea occurred to him of doing honour at once to her and to himself, by the performance of a grand Requiem, ostensibly of his own composition. He had heard of the fame of Mozart, whom he decided to employ to write the work, under the seal of strict secrecy, and under such precautions as should prevent discovery. Some months elapsed before he carried his intention into effect; but in 1791 he instructed one of his stewards, a man named Leutgeb,\* (residing at Schottwein, a village near Stuppach, belonging to the Count), to pay a visit to Mozart at Vienna, for the purpose of executing his commission.

Accordingly, shortly before Mozart received the invitation to visit Prague, and produce there his

\* The very names of the parties to this history appear to have added to its complication. There was, for example, another Leutgeb, an intimate friend of Mozart, a horn player; and another Stadler, a clarinettist, who swindled him cruelly. It is still more singular that for the latter he wrote a clarinet concerto immediately before he undertook the Requiem, if not during its composition. Many other odd things connected with the history might be cited. The dating of the score by Mozart the year after his death, was one of the oddest of these. Jahn mentions also a droll occurrence in reference to an excellent critique on the Requiem, which was originally published in a German journal, then translated into French, and afterwards actually cited, by the journal that originally published it, as an admirable example of French criticism!

opera of *La Clemenza di Tito* for the coronation of the Emperor Leopold, a stranger appeared before him, bearing a letter without signature, in which, after much flattering of Mozart's talent, the writer enquired whether he was willing to undertake the composition of a Requiem, and if so, for what remuneration, and in what time. The messenger was a tall, lank looking man, with a solemn expression of countenance, and clad in sombre gray; and the strange and unusual apparition made on Mozart a deep and lasting impression. He consulted his wife, and expressed his wish to attempt this species of composition, particularly as, he said, the higher pathetic kind of church music had ever been his favourite style, and he would endeavour to write a work of this kind which, after his death, both his friends and his enemies should admire and study. His wife advised him to accept the commission; and Mozart answered that he would compose the Requiem for fifty (or, according to other accounts, for 100) ducats. He was unable to state precisely when it would be completed, but he desired to know the place where he should deliver it when it was ready. After some time, the messenger again appeared, and brought with him not only the sum demanded, but also the promise of a considerable additional payment on the delivery of the score, as the demand had been so moderate. Full permission was given for the composer to write according to his own fancy and inclination, but he was forbidden to make any attempt to discover the name of the person ordering the work, which would certainly be in vain.

In the meantime, Mozart had arranged to go to Prague; and, as he and his wife were stepping into the carriage, the mysterious messenger again appeared, like a spirit, standing by their side; he pulled Madame Mozart by her dress, and asked, "What will now become of the Requiem?" Mozart excused himself on the ground of the necessity of the journey, and the impossibility of giving his unknown patron notice of his intention, promising, however, that it should be his first work on his return, if the person would wait so long. With this answer the messenger appeared fully satisfied.

Mozart returned, in the middle of September, to Vienna, and set to work at the Requiem; but he was called off from it for the *Zauberflöte*, which was then pressed forward by Shikaneder, and which was produced for the first time on the 30th of that month. After this he was free, and he set himself zealously to work to complete the composition. His friend, Joseph von Jacquin, came to him to request him to give lessons to a lady, and he found him at his writing-table at work at the Requiem. Mozart asked for a short delay; for, he said, he had a work in hand which was pressing, and which lay heavily on his mind, and that till this was finished he could think of nothing else. Other friends also afterwards remembered that this work exclusively occupied him.

The mystery in which the commission was enveloped appeared to take a strong hold of his imagination. He sank into a deeply thoughtful state of mind; and, regardless of all advice, worked at the score with untiring earnestness and energy. The interest he took in it appeared to increase with every bar, and he wrote constantly, day and night. This exertion, however, was too much for his feeble frame, which had suffered by illness shortly before at Prague, and his weakness increased to such an extent that he would sometimes faint at his labour.

His wife noticed, with deep concern, his failing health, and tried to enliven him with society, but in vain, for he remained absent and melancholy. She, however, took him occasionally for a drive in the Prater. On these occasions she noticed he would sit silent and thoughtful; and on one fine autumn day, as they were sitting alone during their drive, he began to speak of his death, and declared that he was writing the Requiem for himself. Tears stood in his eyes; and as she endeavoured to prove to him the fallacy of his sad foreboding, he said: "No, no! I feel it too strongly; I am not much longer for this world." From this idea he was not to be turned. He gave utterance to other strange fancies about the mysterious appearance and the commission of the unknown messenger; and when his friends attempted to reason him out of them, he remained silent, but unconvinced.

His wife, finding his illness increasing, and believing that his work at the Requiem was too much for him, consulted his physician, and took the score out of his hands. After this, his state somewhat improved, and he was able, on the 15th of November, to compose the little Cantata, *Das Lob der Freundschaft*, the successful performance of which, and the great applause it obtained, gave him new spirits. He again asked for the Requiem, in order to continue and complete it, and his wife felt now no hesitation in restoring it to him. But this hopeful state did not last long. In a few days he relapsed into his former melancholy; he became constantly weaker, until at last he took to his bed, from which he never rose again.

But still he worked on at the Requiem, as hard as his failing powers would allow him. When he had finished any part he would get it sung, and played the instrumental part on the pianoforte by his bedside. On the day of his death, he caused the score to be brought to him, and sung as usual. Shack (who relates the anecdote) sang the soprano; Mozart himself the alto; Hofer, Mozart's brother-in-law, the tenor; and Gerle (afterwards a public singer in Mannheim) the bass. They were singing the first bars of the *Lacrymosa*, when Mozart began to weep bitterly (he was always easily moved to tears by music) and laid the score aside. This was at 2 P.M. on the 4th of December. In the course of the afternoon his wife's sister found Süssmayer at Mozart's bedside in eager conversation with him about the Requiem. "Have I not told you," said the dying man, as with tearful eyes he turned over the score, "that I was writing this Requiem for myself?" He soon became worse; but even in his last moments the Requiem seemed to occupy his thoughts. He puffed out his cheeks and tried to imitate the effect of the drums. Soon afterwards, he raised himself up, but his eyes were glazed; he leaned his head against the wall and seemed to slumber; and an hour after midnight his spirit passed peaceably away.

After the funeral, when the widow had time to look round her, her first attention was directed to the Requiem, which Mozart had left unfinished. She was in very bad circumstances; and she feared that when the person who had ordered it came to know it was left incomplete, he would refuse to take it, and demand the return of his money. In this state of things, the idea occurred to her and her friends that it might be possible to get the Requiem finished by some other hand, and so to give it over in a complete state to the unknown owner. Several

musicians were applied to, and, among the number, was Eybler, the chief of the court orchestra at Vienna, who undertook the work under a formal agreement, dated 21st December, 1791, binding himself to secrecy. He began to fill in the instrumentation, and to continue the *Lacrymosa*; but, being dissatisfied with his work, he declined to continue it. Probably others who were applied to hesitated to measure their capabilities against those of Mozart, or refused to be parties to the deception; and at length it was offered to Süßmayer, who appears to have had no scruples in the matter. Leaving untouched the *Requiem* and *Kyrie*, which had been finished by Mozart, he copied out, note for note, the subsequent parts which Mozart had written, filling in the instrumentation according to Mozart's design. The parts which were wanting to complete the work, and which Mozart had not commenced, Süßmayer composed, he says, entirely himself. The score so copied and completed by Süßmayer, was written, as before stated, in a handwriting so remarkably similar to Mozart's, as to pass perfectly well for it. It was accordingly joined to the *Requiem* and *Kyrie* (really in Mozart's hand), and so formed a complete Requiem, which, after it had been copied for the widow's use, was given over to Count Wallsegg's messenger. From the copy retained by the widow, the work was afterwards performed and published.

It remains to trace the history of the two principal manuscripts, namely:—

(1) The complete score, partly in Mozart's, and partly in Süßmayer's hand, given to Count Wallsegg; and—

(2) Mozart's original unfinished manuscript of the portions of the work following the *Requiem* and *Kyrie*.

(1) When Count Wallsegg received the score from his messenger Leutgeb (who had been bound over to secrecy, and had, as he conceived, secured similar secrecy on the part of the real composer), he shut himself up in his writing-room, and made a copy of it in his own hand, putting on it the title, "Requiem composto dal Conte Wallsegg." This copy afterwards passed into the possession of the Count's sister, the Countess Sternberg; and it must have been this which Zawrzel saw, when partly finished, as stated in his letter to André (see page 104).

From this copy the Count proceeded to have the work rehearsed and, ultimately, performed, giving it out as his own composition. Performances took place first in Neustadt, near Vienna, and afterwards at an estate of his on the Sömmering; and detailed particulars connected with these performances are given by Krüchten and Herzog.

It seems strange that a new work of this magnitude and merit should have been performed at Vienna and at Neustadt, only about fifteen miles apart, at about the same time, and under two different composers' names, without the anomaly exciting attention; but this is only one of the many strange things in the story. We may, however, take it for granted that though the Vienna public knew nothing of the Count's assumption, the Count very soon heard of the performance of the work under Mozart's name at Vienna; and we may imagine that this performance, and the public knowledge of the work to which it gave rise, were not very palatable to him. He kept, however, his own counsel till he heard of the proposed publication by Breitkopf and Härtel, and to the claim set up by Süßmayer for a share in the composition; for there can

be no doubt that he was originally given to understand by Madame Mozart that the complete score given to him was not only entirely Mozart's composition, but was in Mozart's own hand. At these disclosures his forbearance would hold out no longer, and he set his advocate upon the widow in the way already related; and, after his pacification by Stadler and Nissen, we lose sight of him in the history. He died in November, 1827, soon after the commencement of the great controversy in which he was so nearly concerned.

The Mozart-Süßmayer score of the Requiem had been carefully locked up in his library; and, on his death, it was sold along with the rest of his music. It passed through several hands, until, in 1838, one of the officers of the Imperial Library at Vienna became aware of its existence, purchased it for fifty ducats, and lodged it safely in the Library, where it still remains, open to public inspection.

(2) The history of the other, or unfinished manuscript is not so clear. It remained in the widow's hands for some time after Süßmayer had copied it to make Count Wallsegg's score, and it was submitted by her to André in 1800. After this, it would appear that she pulled it to pieces, and sold it, in detached parts, to different persons, with so little care or attention to its inestimable value, that it could not afterwards be traced, and so it was lost sight of entirely for many years. The first we hear of it afterwards is, that at the time when the Abbé Stadler was hotly engaged in the dispute with Weber, the detached parts were put into his hands, to aid him in establishing his argument; and that they were there formally examined by a number of eminent men, as we before related.

From this time they were taken care of; and we find them existing in two portions. One portion belonged to Stadler, and the other to Eybler; but the source from whence they obtained them are unknown. They were afterwards both bequeathed to the Imperial Library, in Vienna, where they still remain, with the Wallsegg score.

(To be continued.)

## A COMIC CONCERT.

By HENRY C. LUNN.

WE remember once reading of a man who, whilst he was employed as a mute by an undertaker, was one of the merriest fellows in existence; but afterwards taking up the profession of a clown, his spirits entirely left him; he became morbid and melancholy; and eventually, if we recollect rightly, died from sheer despondency of mind. A recent entertainment, at which we "assisted," has made us consider whether the "great," "unrivalled," and "jolly," vocalists who devote their energies to the interpretation of so-called "comic songs," are ever troubled with those fits of depression which they, no doubt unintentionally, convey to their audience: whether, in fact, it does not sometimes occur to them that a battered hat, a black face, a seedy coat, or a red nose, are merely the colouring to a caricature which, if it do not in itself possess merit, must utterly fail in its intended effect. To us it appears strange that by those whose profession it is to excite mirth, the theory of laughter should be so little understood that scarcely two lines in any of their songs should raise a smile; and that those who undertake to sing these effusions should therefore be compelled to resort to dancing and