Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption
San Francisco, CA

Sunday, 18 April 2021
4:00 pm

Josef Rheinberger
Stabat Mater

Gabriel Fauré
Requiem

St. Mary’s Cathedral Choir and Orchestra
Christoph Tietze, Director

Mimi Ruiz, Soprano
Stephen Walsh, Baritone

Original audio track of performance:
Sunday, November 2, 2014
“Stabat Mater” .................. Josef Gabriel Rheinberger
1. Stabat mater
2. Quis est homo
3. Eja mater
4. Virgo virginum
5. Quando corpus morietur

“Requiem” ............................... Gabriel Fauré
1. Introit and Kyrie
2. Offertory
3. Sanctus
4. Pie Jesu (Mimi Ruiz, soprano)
5. Agnus Dei
6. Libera me (Stephen Walsh, baritone)
7. In paradisum

Program Notes

Gabriel Faure wrote the “Requiem” in several stages. The 6th movement, Libera me, was written as a separate composition in 1877, scored for solo baritone and organ. The first time the “Requiem” appears is 1888, in five movements (missing the Offertory and Libera me). This version was scored for the choir of men and boys at the Church of the Madeleine in Paris, solo violin, two violas, two cellos, and bass, with optional harp (Sanctus, Pie Jesu, In paradisum) and timpani (Introit). The piece was first performed for the funeral of a prominent parishioner of The Madeleine, where Faure was music director. Faure always envisioned this as a work of small dimensions, as he referred to it several times as his “petit Requiem.” The impetus for writing the work might have been related to the loss of both parents in the later 80s, although Faure himself confided to a friend that he wrote it “just for fun.”

A full version of the “Requiem” appears in 1893, where Faure added optional horns, trumpets, trombones, and bassoons, possibly to accommodate the additional forces needed to perform the revised Libera me. At this time, the publisher Hamelle was interested in publishing the work but expressed concern about the unusual string arrangement (no violins, except for a solo violin in the Sanctus). Faure set to work on revising the orchestration and also involved the help of his student Roger-Ducasse, but there is no indication that Faure actually fin-
ished the revisions himself. There is even strong evidence that Faure did not even proof-read the manuscript or the proofs before the “Requiem” was published in 1900, since he himself was usually very meticulous, and complained bitterly about mistakes after the work was already in print.

The changed orchestration, adding violins to make a full string section, does not change the layout of the string parts or the octaves that are played. However, it does change the sonority of the sound somewhat, the violas being larger instruments and providing more resonance.

The version we are performing today tries to recapture the spirit of the 1888 edition, a “petit Requiem,” where the organ is more prominent. However, we will do all seven movements, and we will use the string parts of the 1900 edition, since we will also need violins for Rheinberger’s “Stabat mater.”

*The Liturgical Context of Faure’s Requiem*

Gabriel Faure’s “Requiem”, op. 48, has been applied to funeral Masses countless times, and it is still a popular option for more important funerals. The original 1888 usage would be outlined thus:
- Introit/Kyrie at the beginning of Mass
- Sanctus without Benedictus
- Pie Jesu during the elevation
- Agnus Dei during the fraction and communion
- In paradisum as the procession left the church

One item of concern is the Sanctus without a Benedictus. In the extraordinary rite, the Benedictus is often sung during the elevation, being separated from the Sanctus. In French liturgical usage, Pie Jesu, which is taken from the sequence of the Requiem Mass, Dies irae, replaces the Benedictus as the music during the elevation at funerals. So the couplet Sanctus - Pie Jesu makes sense only in the extraordinary form of the French tradition. The Agnus Dei adds the proper text of the communion antiphon, Lux aeterna. Libera me is sung after the absolution following the Mass in the extraordinary form, but this no longer applies to the ordinary form. In paradisum is used in both the ordinary and extraordinary form as the body exits the church. In the ordinary form, therefore, a few changes must be made in order to accommodate all movements of the Faure “Requiem”, the most difficult movements to place being Pie Jesu, Agnus Dei, and Libera me.
St. Mary’s Cathedral Choir