

Andrew Lloyd Webber – Requiem (1984)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Requiem & Kyrie*
2. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Dies Irae... Rex Tremendae*
3. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Recordare*
4. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Ingemisco... Lacrymosa*
5. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Offertorium*
6. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Hosanna*
7. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Pie Jesu*
8. *Requiem for Soloists, Chorus & Orchestra: Lux Aeterna & Libera Me*

Placido Domingo, Sarah Brightman
English Chamber Orchestra
Winchester Cathedral Choir
Lorin Maazel – conductor

Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem was inspired in part by the death of his father, William, in 1982. The senior Lloyd Webber was an organist at both All Saints church and at Central Hall, Westminster, in London. Lloyd Webber thought it appropriate to commemorate the death of his father by setting a liturgical text. A newspaper article about a Cambodian boy and his sister then suggested the choice of soloists: a boy, a girl, and a man. In Lloyd Webber's mind, the girl became an adult soprano and the man a tenor, but the boy remained.

Like many composers who have set the Requiem Mass, Lloyd Webber omits some of the Mass text. He foregoes the tract and combines other texts into larger sections in non-traditional ways. Lloyd Webber wrote the tenor solo part for Placido Domingo, allowing him to explore a much greater melodic range than possible in his stage works. The composer has referred to the Requiem as "the most personal of all my compositions."

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Low brass and flute flourishes begin the work, followed by the boy soprano singing a melody featuring a downward leap. This grows through repeats until the full choir and orchestra return to the opening text. The tenor and soprano soloists first appear in the Kyrie, which is subsumed into the introit. An angular melody, introduced by the organ, sets the Recordare text and returns several times in the piece, each time delivered by the soprano. The Offertorium, including the Hostias, is the most subdued movement of the Requiem, but has an aggressive instrumental interlude at its midpoint. Lloyd Webber separates the hosanna and Benedictus from the Sanctus, creating a number that stands out from the rest of the piece. It begins with a climbing tune for tenor solo, over a drone that reaches its peak at the word "benedictus." When the boys' chorus enters, imitation begins with repeated text, which carries on until the injection of a lively rhythm and electric drums, à la 1977 pop music. The Requiem closes as it opens, with the boy soprano. ---John Palmer, Rovi

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