

Andrew Lloyd Webber – Pie Jesu

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 29 August 2012 12:14 - Last Updated Thursday, 19 March 2015 09:39

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"Dies Irae" (Day of Wrath) is a thirteenth century Latin hymn thought to be written by Thomas of Celano. The poem describes the day of judgment, the last trumpet summoning souls before the throne of God, where the saved will be delivered and the unsaved cast into eternal flames. The final couplet derived from the *Dies Irae* is motet **"Pie Jesu"**.

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Pie Jesu is best known from its use as a sequence in the Roman Catholic Requiem mass.



Memling - Judgment Day

No composer can approach a Mass for the dead as though it were simply the next item on his list of opus numbers, certainly not if the impulse to write it is a private grief. **Lloyd Webber's Requiem** is

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inscribed to the memory of his father, and he had also in mind the death of a friend from a terrorist attack.



Andrew Lloyd Webber

Yet the 38-year-old British composer of such blockbuster musicals as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Evita* and *Cats*, who has written such enormously popular melodies as "I Don't Know How to Love Him," "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" and "Memories," demonstrated in the Requiem that he can also write beautiful serious music in the English choral tradition -- while still holding on to his more rock-inspired identity.



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Requiem, which premiered in New York in 1985, was immediately subject to both controversy and criticism. Many thought it a surprising turn for such a populist composer as Lloyd Webber to produce a piece of "serious" music. As one critic wrote, *"Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem? Why not give us Sylvester Stallone as King Lear while we're at it?"*



Jackie Evancho sings Pie Jesu

Both musically and theologically the Requiem is far removed from Lloyd Webber's earlier works. Its colorful collage of musical images coheres largely because of the work's persistent overall theme of death. This theme is treated from a variety of perspectives -- confusion and resistance, anger and bitterness, mourning and sadness, and a simple but profound proclamation -- "perpetua." We mourn the dead, but we, too, will soon be among them.



Andrew Lloyd Webber & Sarah Brightman

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Lloyd Webber seems to have come a long way from the days of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, with its flippant caricature of Jesus and its use of 1960s-style English slang. The composer has referred to the Requiem as *"the most personal of all my compositions."*

Requiem won the 1986 Grammy Award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition.

"Pie Jesu" has been steadily increasing in popularity since its premier in 1985, massively in part to the large successes of Angelis, a six-member group of preteens created by Simon Cowell in 2006.



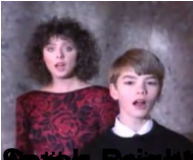
Angelis

"Pie Jesu", performed by Sarah Brightman and Paul Miles-Kingston, was certified Gold in the UK.

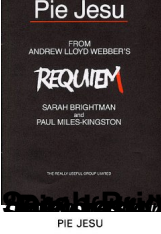
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Sarah Brightman & Paul Miles-Kingston - The slow motion video of the Pie Jesu and Dona



Single by Paul Miles-Kingston - Pie Jesu (with Sarah Brightman) - The Requiem Group Sings



Pie Jesu