



which was so prized at that time. The tragic denouement, at which ‘no fisherman could refrain from weeping’ (liner notes, 16–17), is particularly affecting.

In the *Dialogus poenitentis animae cum Deo* Brossard skilfully blends elements of French and Italian styles to create a piece of consummate refinement. It is exquisitely sung by Chantal Santon Jeffery (the Soul) and *haute-contre* Jeffrey Thompson (God), and perfectly supported by the violins and continuo group. I cannot imagine a better performance.

The CD includes also a splendid trio sonata, one of five sonatas that Brossard wrote in the last years of the seventeenth century. Its sectional nature and other aspects of its style recall Buxtehude’s instrumental writing, but Brossard also appears to have been influenced by the Italianate sonatas of Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, four of which he had copied out and apparently much admired. The present sonata is characterized by an effective C major/C minor juxtaposition, similar to the kind of tonic major–minor key relationship favoured by Jacquet, so there may be some connection here.

All in all, I found this disc revelatory. Previously I knew little of Brossard’s music, and it is immensely gratifying to be introduced to it by such passionate advocates. Complete texts given in four languages, and the liner notes by Jean Duron (in French, English and German), are highly informative. Everyone with an interest in the culture and music of early eighteenth-century France should investigate this release without delay.

JOHN KITCHEN



*Eighteenth-Century Music* © Cambridge University Press, 2012  
doi:10.1017/S1478570612000188

LUIGI CHERUBINI (1760–1842)

*REQUIEM IN C MINOR*

Kammerchor Stuttgart, Hofkapelle Stuttgart / Frieder Bernius

Carus 83.227, 2010; one disc, 46 minutes

Luigi Cherubini’s first *Missa pro defunctis* (1816) was – during the composer’s life as well as throughout the nineteenth century – his most appreciated sacred work. A few years after its earliest Parisian performances, the composition had already attained great international exposure through significant editions, both inside and outside the French borders: in 1821 Simrock issued an accurate publication of the complete score based on the original print (Paris: chez l’auteur, 1819), while in England a version for voices and organ appeared in English translation together with the original Latin text (London: Novello, no date). Within a decade, Cherubini’s Requiem had gained such a reputation among European audiences that it was performed in Vienna at the second memorial service for Beethoven on 5 April 1827.

In the last hundred years this Requiem has been among Cherubini’s most frequently performed works, right up to the recent celebrations for the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the composer’s birth. During 2010, from local choral concerts to the largest festivals, the C minor Requiem was to be heard across the world more often than any other composition (sacred, instrumental or for the stage) by Cherubini. It is therefore not unexpected that this mass has enjoyed a rather long and rich recording history: from a NBC broadcast with Arturo Toscanini (RCA GD 60272, 1950), to the releases conducted by Diego Fasolis (Naxos 8.554749, 1973), by Cherubini’s Italian devotee Riccardo Muti (EMI 763.161-4, 1982), by Matthew Best (Hyperion CDA 66805, 1995) and many others. A smaller group of recordings, to which the one under review here also belongs, is the result of newer approaches to the score by specialized period-instrument ensembles.

Following the fall of Napoleon in 1814, the Restoration brought to the throne of France Louis XVIII, brother of the guillotined Louis XVI. In order to reaffirm – above all symbolically – the power of the reigning family, Louis XVIII replaced the *drapeau tricolore* (regarded as a symbol of regicide) with the previous



white flag (representing the purity of the divine-right monarchy) and ordered the exhumation of his brother and Marie-Antoniette with the aim of giving them a proper burial. For centuries almost every king of France had been inhumed in the Cathedral of Saint-Denis, until the royal tombs were opened during the Revolution and the bones thrown in a pit. On 21 January 1815 (exactly twenty-two years after the king's execution) the two beheaded sovereigns were brought to the Cathedral in a sumptuous parade. For this reinterment ceremony, Nicholas Bochsa (1789–1856) composed a monumental *Messe de requiem* in fifteen movements for solo voices, choirs, wind band and percussion (as the piece was to be performed partly during the procession and, therefore, in the open air). Thereafter, every 21 January a commemoration of the guillotined king took place in Saint-Denis, for which different composers were asked to provide a requiem mass. In 1816 the task fell to another composer of the Royal Chapel, the aged Jean Paul Martini, 'il Tedesco' (1741–1816). After Martini's death in that same year, Cherubini was appointed his successor as superintendent of the Chapel, thus inheriting the duty of composing a requiem for the ceremony in 1817.

While the works by Bochsa and Martini present a clear panegyric intent (in the dedication of the printed editions or by allusion to the murdered king's apotheosis), Cherubini seems to have had a different agenda. Continuing his personal path of *œuvres funèbres* – such as the *Hymne et marche funèbre pour la mort du général Hoche* (1797) and the *Chant sur la mort d'Haydn* (1805) – his first Requiem points to an even higher degree of abstraction. Cherubini's meditation on the theme of death is neither grandiose nor sumptuous. In order to avoid reference to the operatic sphere, this setting has no soloists (which is very unusual in the French requiem tradition of the time). The result is a pure choral work with orchestral accompaniment, sometimes reduced to the lower strings and woodwinds: in three movements (Introitus et Kyrie, Graduale and Pie Jesu) the violins are not used at all, being replaced by two independent viola parts. Against the nineteenth-century trend of transforming the Requiem into a large-scale piece with grand orchestral forces (intended for the concert hall, like Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts*), Cherubini's setting follows strictly liturgical requirements. According to the composer himself, who in his autograph manuscript indicated the length of each movement, the mass lasts about forty minutes.

This kind of precise minutage – such as '8 minutes 1/2' or '4 min 3/4' – is typical of Cherubini's scores for the Royal Chapel. Together with the metronome indications, these timings offer a clear picture of the composer's intentions for the tempo in each section of the work. One of the merits of this Carus release is that the Kammerchor and Hofkapelle Stuttgart match the tempo prescriptions more closely than anyone else so far. The traditional recordings mentioned above are, in general, distinctly slower: this is in part a common trait of earlier performances, but also an echo of the imaginary portrait representing Cherubini as an austere composer of sombre and solemn music. In this regard, it is perhaps significant that Muti's interpretation in 1982 lasts even longer than the one by Toscanini in 1950. In crucial movements such as the Introitus, the Sequentia and the Offertorium, Frieder Bernius seems to have found a very convincing compromise (7'02", 8'53" and 14'46") in relation to the composer's problematic expectations (5'30", 8'30", 13'50"). Curiously enough, in a 2006 recording (Telarc 60658) the eighteenth-century specialist Martin Pearlman took even faster tempos than those suggested by Cherubini: especially in the Sequentia (which in his disc lasts only 7'53") and the Offertorium (12'41").

The true strength of Bernius's interpretation lies, none the less, in his own (and in his ensembles') background. By contrast, the above-mentioned Telarc recording represents the first foray into nineteenth-century repertoire for Pearlman's period-instrument orchestra. Bernius's forty-year activity with the Kammerchor Stuttgart has combined historically informed practice with the intent to reach optimal balance between vocal and instrumental parts in the choral-symphonic literature. Some of their most recent achievements have focused on nineteenth-century choral music, with internationally awarded recordings of works by Brahms and Kalliwoda, and the complete church music of Mendelssohn. This experience has proved to be crucial in approaching a choir-centred work such as Cherubini's first Requiem. Within each part (Soprano, Alto, Tenore and Basso), the voices of the Kammerchor are here perfectly blended to create a homogeneous sound, in which the listener is unable to distinguish the voices of individual singers. This impersonality of tone fits particularly well with the general conception of the piece, since the composer also made use of the



four parts individually, though never with the character of solo passages. In fact, the unison sections sung responsorially by female and male voices (Recordare, Jesu pie) recall rather the chorus of an ancient Greek tragedy: the individuals dissolve in the representation of the community, whose unison singing has a strophe/antistrophe structure.

Including Cherubini de facto in the canon of nineteenth-century opera composers, many interpreters have employed large forces and operatic verve, aimed at rendering a colossal and tremendous picture of the Day of Judgment (as depicted, for instance, in Verdi's *Dies irae*). Bernius's reading of the score avoids this oversimplification, offering instead a diverse yet nuanced palette accurately shaped according to the characteristically bare gestures of Cherubini's music (such as the unearthly tone produced by the high non-vibrato unison on the words 'Rex tremendae majestatis').

Another point of great interest on this Carus disc is the inclusion of one movement that is missing from all previous recordings of the work. The text of the Tractus ('Absolve, Domine'), which Cherubini did not set to music, appears here sung in Gregorian chant by the Schola Gregoriana Tübingen (track 3). In this respect, Bernius takes into account a specific indication by the composer, who at the end of the Graduale in the autograph score wrote: 'Follows the Tractus, sung by the choir. Immediately after the Tractus one says the *Dies irae*'. Due to a translation mistake in the Peters edition (ed. Rudolf Lück, 1964, page 10), this annotation has been often misunderstood: in a recent monograph on Cherubini's sacred music it is still erroneously claimed that, according to the composer, the *Dies irae* should begin immediately after the Graduale (Oliver Schwarz-Roosmann, *Luigi Cherubini und seine Kirchenmusik* (Cologne: Dohr, 2006), 200). Unfortunately, the booklet notes by Wolfgang Hochstein – who also edited the score used in this recording (Luigi Cherubini, ed. Hochstein, *Requiem in c* (Stuttgart: Carus, 1996)) – do not explain or even mention the presence of the Tractus in the disc. The listener is thus unable to judge the propriety of such a plainchant insertion in between two movements of Cherubini's setting.

Although one might have wished for a few more details in the liner notes, this finely recorded Carus super-audio CD offers a splendid account of Cherubini's C minor Requiem. This is not limited to the creation of an appropriate sound (though this is more than achieved with the high performance standards of Bernius's period-instrument ensembles), but also involves informed choices such as the reintroduction of the Tractus and an awareness of the composer's tempo indications. In helping to restore the original liturgical framework in which the work was conceived, such measures pay a fitting tribute to Cherubini's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

FABIO MORABITO



*Eighteenth-Century Music* © Cambridge University Press, 2012  
doi:10.1017/S147857061200019X

RAPHAEL COURTEVILLE (*fl.* c1675–c1735), WILLIAM CROFT (1678–1727),  
GIOVANNI BATTISTA DRAGHI (c1640–1708), GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759),  
NICOLA FRANCESCO HAYM (1678–1729), JOHANN CHRISTOPH PEPUSCH (1667–1752),  
HENRY PURCELL (1659–1695), JOHN WELDON (1676–1736)

*MUSICAL LONDON c. 1700: FROM PURCELL TO HANDEL*

Philippa Hyde (soprano), Oliver Webber (violin) / The Parley of Instruments / Peter Holman  
Chandos CHAN 0776, 2010; one disc, 76 minutes

This disc sets out to illustrate what Holman describes in the accompanying booklet as the 'great change in English music' that occurred in the fifteen years between the death of Purcell and the arrival of Handel in 1710 (9). While this is essentially a story of the increasing influence and ultimate domination of the Italian