

The Swiss conductor, Ernest Ansermet, came from a musical family; he successively studied the clarinet, violin and brass instruments, which he used in fanfares; later he wrote military marches for the Swiss army which he did not consider important. Besides Music, he studied Mathematics in Lausanne and graduated with a Diploma in 1903; until 1906 he taught at the Lausanne Grammar School, then he decided to continue his studies at the Sorbonne and, at the same time, to attend courses at the Paris Conservatory. After his return to Lausanne, he taught Mathematics for one more year before devoting himself entirely to music.



Ansermet was a particular advocate of the Swiss composers Arthur Honegger and Frank Martin. He conducted the first performances of the following works of A. Honegger: *Horace victorieux* (1921), *Chant de joie* (1923), *Rugby* (1928) and *Pacific 231* (1923), which was dedicated to him, and of the following works of Frank Martin: *Symphonie* (1938), *In terra pax* (1945), *Der Sturm* (1956), *Le mystère de la Nativité* (1959), *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (1963) and *Les Quatre Éléments*, which were dedicated to him. Also important were the first performances of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Cantata misericordium* (1963).



Requiem in D Minor, Op. 48, composition by Gabriel Fauré. Largely composed in the late 1880s, the work was not completed until 1900. Unusually gentle for a requiem mass, the work is often reminiscent of the composer's best-known work, the restful and graceful Pavane of 1887. Fauré himself described his Requiem as "a lullaby of death."

Resident in Paris from the age of nine, and occasional organist at some of the city's most prestigious churches, including St. Sulpice and the Madeleine, Fauré composed a large number of sacred works for chorus and orchestra. Grandest of these is his Requiem. Postdating his countryman Berlioz's by more than sixty years, it is, nonetheless, a more conservative work with none of the high drama that Berlioz had provided. Even Mozart's Requiem in D Minor from 1791 has a larger quantity of fire and brimstone than Fauré's, as the latter's is almost entirely gentle in spirit. To achieve that mood, the Frenchman altered the text as he saw fit, omitting most of the usual Dies irae and including In Paradisum as a closing movement.

Scored for pairs of woodwinds and brass, though no tubas, timpani, organ, strings, and harp, Fauré's Requiem also has soprano and baritone soloists with SATB chorus. Its opening Introit et Kyrie is at first mysterious of mood, though with occasional startling changes of dynamics. No startling moments are to be found in the subsequent Offertoire, unless one is startled by rapturous beauty. Opening pages of the movement have the chorus in thoroughly peaceful mood, and even when the baritone solo joins for the Hostia portion, gentle reverence continues to be the focus.

The third movement Sanctus continues in this calm demeanor until the chorus reaches the phrase Hosanna in excelsis, for which, suitably, Fauré has chosen

to use rich brass textures. The fourth movement Pie Jesu, dealing with a prayer to Christ for rest, is a suitably restful as one might wish, with solo soprano in mid-range accompanied mostly by organ. Strings and woodwinds have their place in transitions between verses, but stay quite out of the way of the singer.

Next comes the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), treating the chorus in sweet fashion with occasional richer passages, but none in assertive vein. In the following Libera me, it is the baritone soloist who pleads for deliverance and the chorus quaking in fear; here one finds the boldest music in the entire work, in the Libera me, with strong brass statements and anxious vocal phrases. The movement closes with a restatement of the opening plea.

For the finale of his Requiem, Fauré opted for a most peaceable vision of paradise, with sopranos of the chorus—and, in place, the soprano soloist alone—set at first against a high, repeating, three-note pattern from the organ. Only later, on the word "Jerusalem," do the male singers join in, and the closing lines of the movement bring Fauré's Requiem to the most serene of conclusions. The composer himself once observed in a letter to a friend that he viewed death "as a happy deliverance, an aspiration to happiness above rather than as a painful experience." The music he created is the very embodiment of that philosophy.



# Gabriel Fauré Réquiem

Ernest Ansermet

L'Orchestre De La Suisse Romande

Chorus - L'Union Chorale De La Tour De Peilz

1 Introit And Kyrie 6:55

2 Offertoire 8:30

3 Sanctus 3:02

4 Pie Jesu 3:08

5 Agnus Dei 5:12

6 Libera Me 5:16

7 In Paradisum 4:00

Total Time: 43:47

Recorded by Decca 16 Oct 1955 Victoria Hall, Geneva

Producer: James Walker Engineer: Roy Wallace

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