



Photo by Shannon Langman

TRACK LISTING

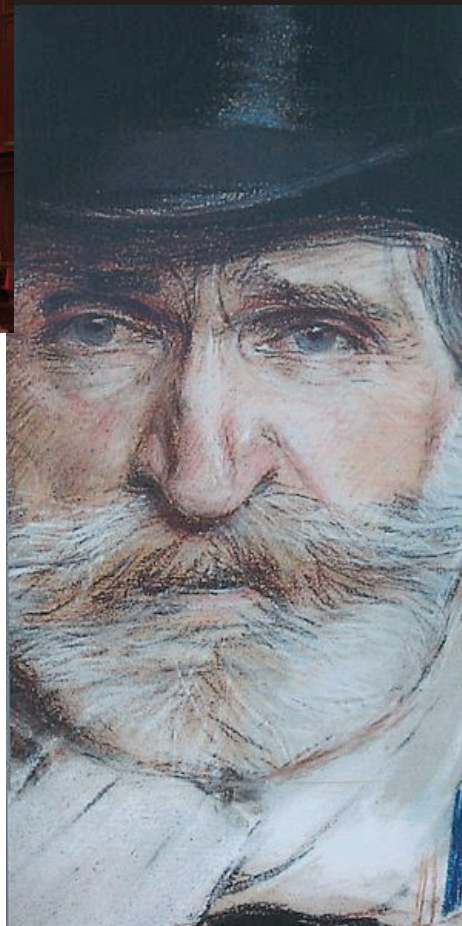
1. Introit and Kyrie
2. Dies irae
3. Mors stupebit
4. Quid sum miser
5. Rex tremendae
6. Ingemisco
7. Domine Jesu Christe
8. Sanctus
9. Agnus Dei
10. Lux aeterna
11. Libera me



The Houston Masterworks Chorus and Tom Jaber are deeply grateful to the many generous donors who made this landmark performance possible.

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VERDI Requiem

**HOUSTON MASTERWORKS
CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA**

Barbara Paver, soprano
Andrea Jaber, mezzo-soprano
Cameron Schutza, tenor
Hector Vasquez, bass-baritone

THOMAS JABER, conductor

RECORDED LIVE



24/96 High Resolution
5.0 Surround
2.0 Stereo



Messa da Requiem by Giuseppe Verdi (1813 - 1901)

Premiere in St. Mark's Cathedral, Milan, 22 May 1874, the composer conducting

Giuseppe Verdi was not an openly religious person, but he was an ardent patriot. Italian nationalism and the glorification of Italian culture remained sacred causes for him. He venerated freedom fighters, such as Garibaldi, and those artists whose work he regarded as essentially and purely Italian. Two creative personalities were especially important to Verdi: Gioacchino Rossini, his predecessor as the foremost composer of Italian opera; and Alessandro Manzoni, the writer and statesman. The passing of each of these men inspired Verdi's major sacred composition, the great "Requiem Mass," which may accurately be heard as both a patriotic and a spiritual statement.

Rossini died in November 1868. Verdi, while not personally familiar with the composer of *The Barber of Seville* and *William Tell*, had long regarded Rossini as "a glory of Italy," as he told a correspondent, and he now conceived a unique sort of tribute to the late musician's memory. According to Verdi's idea, thirteen of Italy's leading composers would contribute movements to a requiem mass to be performed on the anniversary of Rossini's death. Verdi himself set about writing the closing *Libera me*. Political and artistic infighting, however, triumphed over real progress. Verdi briefly considered completing the mass himself, but he had important opera commissions to fulfill, not the least being the creation of *Aida* to commemorate the opening of the Suez Canal. Five years later, however, the death of Manzoni prompted Verdi to revive his idea for a requiem mass. The author of novels, plays and poetry, Manzoni was Italy's leading man of letters during the first half of the 19th century. He was also an ardent supporter of the struggle for Italian independence and unification, as was Verdi. On June 3, 1873, the composer wrote to his publisher: "I would like to show my love and esteem for that Great Man [Manzoni] who is no more. . . . I would like to compose a *Messa da morto* to be performed next year on the anniversary of his death. This mass would be of quite vast proportions. . ." Unlike the projected mass for Rossini, this plan came to splendid fruition. Using the *Libera me* and sketches for a *Dies irae* he had completed for the abortive Rossini memorial, Verdi spent much of the next year composing his Requiem. He completed the score in April 1874 and directed its first performance in Milan on May 22, one year after Manzoni's death, just as he had intended. The first performance of the *Messa di Requiem* took place on 22nd May 1874, the first anniversary of Manzoni's death, in St. Mark's Church, Milan. Special permission had to be obtained from the Archbishop for the inclusion of the female choristers, who were hidden behind a screen and clad in full-length black dresses and mourning veils. Though it was a successful performance, the restrained circumstances and prohibition against applause produced a somewhat muted reaction. In contrast, the second performance three days later, at La Scala Opera House, was received by the capacity crowd with tumultuous enthusiasm. The Requiem became an overnight sensation, and was equally ecstatically received at the many European performances that soon followed. Its British premiere took place in May 1875 at the Albert Hall, conducted by Verdi himself, with a chorus of over 1000 and an orchestra of 140. One journalist described the work as "the most beautiful music for the church that has been produced since the Requiem of Mozart" – a view that was echoed by most people. However, a significant minority found it offensive that Verdi, an agnostic, should be writing a Requiem. For them the very qualities which made his music so ideally suited to the theatre made it wholly unacceptable for the church. Today this difference between traditional sacred music and Verdi's operatic treatment of the Requiem text no longer presents a problem.

REQUIEM - Giuseppe Verdi

Houston Masterworks Chorus and Orchestra

Tom Jaber, Conductor

Barbara Paver, Soprano - Andrea Jaber, Mezzo-Soprano - Cameron Schutzta, Tenor - Hector Vasquez, Bass-Baritone

Live Performance - Grace Presbyterian Church - Houston, Texas - 30 March 2014

Credits: Sam Houston State University Concert Choir, Dr. Eric Esparza, conductor - Richard Brown, Orchestra Contractor
John Proffitt, Recording Engineer - Grace Presbyterian Church - Rita R. La Rue, HMC Board President

Houston Masterworks Chorus is a community arts organization dedicated to the presentation of great choral music and to the continuation of the choral society tradition. Our purpose is to provide performance opportunities for skilled volunteer singers, choral arts education for young people and adults, and a musical experience that lifts the spirits of performers and audiences alike. Founded in 1986 as the Houston Oratorio Society, HMC is Houston's largest independent chorus. Brought together by the love of choral music and a commitment to the task of preparing great works for performance, HMC members represent all walks of life and all areas of Houston. The all-volunteer chorus is selected by audition and offers performances which cover the entire range of the choral repertoire from classical to contemporary.

BIOGRAPHIES

Barbara Paver, soprano, is Associate Professor of Voice at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, having taught previously for nine years at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Dr. Paver enjoys a very active career as a recitalist, clinician and teacher. She has most recently been heard in recital at the Crane School of Music in Potsdam, New York. This performance marks her debut with the Houston Masterworks Chorus.

Andrea Jaber, mezzo-soprano, is the Associate Chair of Fine Arts in Music at Houston Community College Southwest. Throughout her long and varied career, Dr. Jaber has been heard in operatic roles, oratorio roles and in recitals both here and abroad. Recent appearances have included the Houston Masterworks Chorus, the Amalfi Coast Music Festival, the Houston Symphony Orchestra and the Shepherd School of Symphony Orchestra.

Cameron Schutzta, lyric tenor, a Houston native, is currently living and working in New York City. Mr. Schutzta has been featured in concerts and operas with the Houston Masterworks Chorus, Caramoor Summer Music Festival, Michigan Opera Theatre, Opera in the Heights, Santa Fe Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the Bel Canto Young Artist Program.

Hector Vásquez, bass-baritone, is a native of California and has appeared throughout the United States as a soloist in concert repertoire and opera. Mr. Vásquez has performed leading roles with many opera companies in the United States: Houston Grand Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera, San Diego Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. He is on the faculty of the University of Houston's Moores School of Music.

Thomas Jaber is Professor of Music at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. This season marks his 26th year of teaching there. Appointed in 2011 as the Artistic Director and Conductor of Houston Masterworks Chorus, Dr. Jaber has enjoyed presenting a number of performances with the ensemble in the past three years. Tom Jaber has appeared nationally and internationally in countless concerts and recitals and opera productions with singers and instrumentalists as conductor, pianist and harpsichordist.



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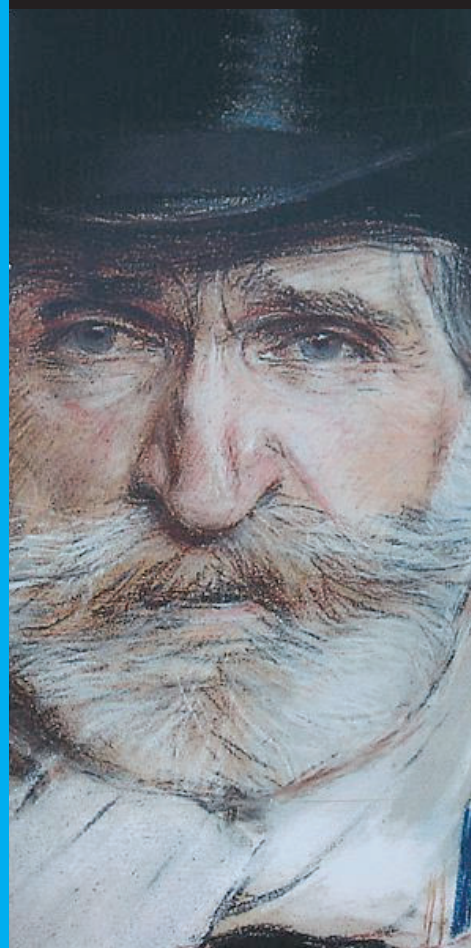
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VERDI Requiem

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HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

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