

“JUST THE FACTS, MA’AM...” – MOZART’S REQUIEM AND ITS SCORE(S)
(Jeffrey Baxter - January 22, 2009)

THE ACCOMPLICES

Besides Mozart, there were at least three other men (and one woman) involved in the completion of the *Requiem*:

1. Firstly, there was **Franz Jakob Freystädtler** (1761-1841), a friend and assistant of Mozart’s. Freystädtler – a native Salzburger like Mozart – was organist at St. Peter’s and most likely took part in the first performance of the C-Minor Mass; he moved to Vienna in 1786 and accompanied Mozart on his visit to Prague in 1787. He also helped Mozart with the coaching of the two prima donnas for the premiere of *Così fan tutte*. It is Freystädtler who helped Mozart fill out the orchestration of the “Kyrie” movement (he quite possibly did this with Mozart and Süssmayr present).
2. **Constanze Weber Mozart** (1762-1842) – Mozart’s wife and “executrix” of the incomplete *Requiem*.
3. **Joseph Eybler** (1765-1846) – After Mozart’s death on December 5, 1791, Constanze asked the composer/organist Eybler to complete the *Requiem*. Mozart had known Eybler for several years and had a high opinion of his abilities (Eybler even helped nurse Mozart during his final illness). Though Eybler made a valiant effort to complete the work (he made it about halfway through), he eventually returned the incomplete score to Constanze either because the task proved too daunting or because he had recently taken on a new church job (and therefore had little free time).
4. **Franz Xaver Süssmayr** (1766-1803) – Constanze then approached several other musicians before finally turning to Süssmayr, a composer and violinist who was one of Mozart’s busiest assistants. He did much copy-work for Mozart and even helped him finish his last *opera seria* (*La Clemenza di Tito*) by composing the *secco* recitatives. In letters Mozart constantly joked about Süssmayr, calling him an “ass” and teasing him about his less-than-great compositional talents. Some think that this is the reason he was Constanze’s last choice (this, and the fact that he was a pupil and friend of court composer Antonio Salieri). Nonetheless, he did complete his task, but evidently with the help of some compositional sketches by Mozart that Constanze had recently dug up for him (she later complained that her husband was “not very tidy with his papers”). Süssmayr’s “completion” involved filling out the *Requiem*’s orchestration, supplying a “Sanctus” and “Benedictus” movement and recapitulating Mozart’s opening music for the final movement. The existence of the sketches was always questioned until 1960 when one of them turned up in the German State Library in Berlin (after lying hidden for years in Augsburg, Germany – hometown of Mozart’s father, Leopold).

THE TIMELINE

February 14, 1791 – Countess Anna von Walsegg dies at her home, near Vienna. She is the wife of the minor Austrian landowner and industrialist (and music-lover) Count Franz von Walsegg. The Count wants a statue built and a requiem composed in her honor.

Spring and Summer, 1791 - The statue of the Countess is built, and that summer Walsegg sends an envoy to commission Mozart to compose a requiem (for annual performances every February 14). Walsegg all the while intends to pass the composition off as his own (as he had done with many other works he had acquired).

Summer and Fall, 1791 – Mozart works on and off on the *Requiem*.

December 5, 1791 – Mozart dies, with the work unfinished.

December 1791 to February 1792 – Constanze, in need of money, has Süssmayr complete the work and forge Mozart’s signature with a date of 1792 on it. She has two copies made and delivers one to the “mysterious commissioner” (Walsegg) and another copy (unbeknownst to the Count) to the music firm in Leipzig for publication.

January 2, 1793 – Constanze, with the help of Baron van Swieten, arranges a benefit performance for herself on this date in Vienna.

December 14, 1793 – Count Walsegg, having received the commission, copies out the whole of it in his own hand, claims it as his own composition and conducts a performance of it in the Parish Church of Neustadt on this date.

November 11, 1827 – The Count dies, leaving everything to his sister. She sells all his music to her steward; he keeps it in the castle with the manorial secretary who dies in 1838. The original *Requiem* copy (sent from Constanze) is discovered in the castle: it contains the first two movements in Mozart’s hand – the rest copied out and completed by Süssmayr.

1960 – The sole surviving page of Mozart’s compositional sketches for the *Requiem* is discovered in Berlin. It shows a working out of the “Rex tremendae” movement, as well as a fugue (unused by Süssmayr) on the word “Amen.” This fugue was intended to follow the “Lacrimosa” movement and was based on an inversion of the 5-note “requiem” motif that opens (and unifies) the entire work.

THE SCORE

Here is an engraved example of what Mozart left of the last page of the "Confutatis" movement:

32

ci - - - - nis: ge - re cu - - - ram,
ci - - - - nis: ge - re cu - - - ram,
ci - - - - nis: ge - re cu - - - ram,
ci - - - - nis: ge - - - - re cu - - - - ram,

18 8 7 12 16 17 16 14

36

ge - re cu - ram me - i fi - - - - nis.
ge - re cu - ram me - i fi - - - - nis.
ge - re cu - ram me - i fi - - - - nis.
cu - - - - ram me - - - - i fi - - - - nis.

17 16 18 17 16 14

Segue