

REQUIEM

COMPOSER: Gabriel Faure 1845 -1924

NATIONALITY: French

Faure was born in the French town of Pamiers nestled in the Ariège region of the beautiful Pyrenean mountains. He studied classical and religious music from the age of ten and began his career as an organist in the Rennes district of Brittany. In 1870 he moved to Paris where his work as an organist and choirmaster was interrupted by a call to defend his country in the Franco-Prussian War. His commitment to composing and teaching finally led him to the post of Director of the Paris Conservatoire in 1905. His output included over 100 songs, keyboard music, many orchestral works and choral compositions including this memorable Requiem.

THE MUSIC:

Faure completed this Requiem Mass in 1887 following the death of his parents. The first performance was given at St. Madeleine's Church, Paris, in 1888. The seven movements for soprano, baritone, chorus, organ and orchestra has become one of the most popular Requiems in the classical music repertoire. The work embraces a mood of simple serenity coupled with a spiritual deepness that cannot fail to touch all who hear part or all of this monumental work.

LISTENING PLAN:

INTROIT

Requiem aeternam (Lord grant them eternal rest)

One long chord diminishes to allow the mixed chorus to enter reverently. The prayer becomes more impassioned before dying away gently as the male chorus delivers a lilting melody at an increased tempo. The organ intercedes abruptly and the female chorus introduces a third musical idea. The full chorus requests eternal rest with impressive power before melting into one of the most beautiful settings of **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy upon us)**.

OFFERTORIUM

A moving introduction evolves and subsides to reveal a haunting **Domine Jesu Christe (Lord Jesus Christ)**. The unaccompanied male chorus echo female voices before they intertwine. The organ supports with waves of grief as the voices weave together.

The solo baritone enters with **Rex Gloriam (King of Glory)** against an agitated accompaniment. The organ continues in a hymn-like style before the chorus returns in solemn mood. A heavenly "Amen" brings the movement to a close.

SANCTUS (Holy Holy Holy)

Female voices float in with a continuous harp accompaniment and are answered by male voices as Faure adds to the texture a decorating melody. The tension rises as the Hosanna rings out majestically. The accompaniment flutters to a peaceful close.

