

Mozart 'Requiem' concert revives musical question mark

Fans of the Peter Shaffer Broadway hit and subsequent movie version of *Amadeus* won't want to miss the Perinton Community Chorus and Orchestra's performance of Mozart's *Requiem* on Sunday, March 15, at 4 p.m. at Assumption Church in Fairport.

Up until the hour of his death in December, 1791, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart worked feverishly to complete the *Requiem*, tormented with the belief that he was writing his own funeral Mass. In the Shaffer play, Mozart was visited during the weeks before his death by a ghostly figure cloaked in gray, requesting that he write a Requiem Mass.

The envious court composer Antonio Salieri — cast as the play's villain because he

perceived Mozart's divinely inspired music to be the instrument of some type of heavenly retribution for Salieri's own mediocrity — donned a gray cloak himself and appeared at Mozart's door for seven nights, demanding the oratorio's score, which wasn't finished by the time of Mozart's early death. According to the Shaffer version, a vengeful Salieri poisoned Mozart to death, half-crazed by the younger man's irreverent genius.

Although Mozart's pupil Sussmayr is believed to have completed the work, most Mozart scholars agree today that Mozart indicated explicitly what he wanted, and that the music bears the unmistakable stamp of his genius. Whether or not the Salieri legend

has any basis in historical fact is a matter of such controversy that Sister Virginia Hogan, conductor of the Perinton Community Chorus and Orchestra, believes it is best left to the conjecture of musicologists.

"I think we can say pretty accurately that Mozart did write the *Requiem* for himself, knowing he was going to die, that someone did approach him in some kind of costume and that Mozart considered it some type of otherworldly figure and was frightened by it," Sister Hogan observes, adding that former New York Herald Tribune music critic Paul Henry Lang has written that Mozart regarded the *Requiem* as a prayer for the repose of his own soul.

The evidence of the music itself seems to indicate that, even if Mozart didn't finish the Mass himself, the imprint of his brilliance is certainly audible in the score. The last movement, according to Sister Hogan, repeats elements of the *Requiem* (echoed in the *Lux aeterna* section of the oratorio) and the *Kyrie* from the oratorio's opening movements.

Whether the fateful apparition in gray was a feverish vision of Mozart's dead father Leopold, of the statue in *Don Giovanni*, or of Salieri in disguise, no one will ever know. Yet the *Requiem* itself dispels any thought of controversy or irresolution.

As you listen to soprano Barbara Staropoli, mezzo Kristina Smith, tenor Thaxter Cunio and bass Allan Mosher perform as quartet soloists in this Sunday's performance, consider Mozart's sentiments on the inspirational potential of music, expressed to Baron Van Swieten in Act Two of *Amadeus*: "A quartet becoming a quintet becoming a sextet. On and on, wider and wider — all sounds multiplying and rising together — and then together making a sound entirely new! ... I bet you that's how God hears the world."

For ticket information, call the PCCO business office at 223-9006.

Counterbudget

Continued from facing page

raise by closing tax loopholes, as well as by re-allocating part of a tax windfall currently designated for businesses and corporations. The expected windfall was produced by federal tax reform, which affected the state tax system. Counterbudget's drafters propose that this money might be rechanneled to the poor

through both social programs and tax relief.

"We seem to be rushing headlong to cut taxes without thinking very much about the ramifications of that," Sykes said. "That's money that is finally being recaptured in the tax system from folks who haven't been paying their fair share of taxes."

Counterbudget '88 also opposes a proposed cap on state expenditures. "What we think that does is force (the governor) to be unable to make necessary recommendations for ex-

penditures we think are necessary," Sykes said.

SENSES representatives urged people who attended the briefings to contact their state representatives, who are currently considering the governor's proposed budget.

"One thing we're here to urge you to do is to not be disenfranchised from this process during the next month," Sykes cautioned his Rochester audience. "Whatever parts of this you may agree with, let your representatives know."

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