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THE REQUIEM IN THE AGE OF CONFESSIONALISATION. A REVIEW OF THE BOOK OF REQUIEMS, VOL. 2

ABSTRACT *The Book of Requiems* (vol. 2), edited by David J. Burn and Antonio Chemotti, collects analytical musicological essays on Requiems composed between 1550 and 1650, drawing a comprehensive map of early modern polyphony for the liturgy of the dead, covering regions from Flanders to central Europe and from Italy to the Iberian Peninsula. This map facilitates the rediscovery of a significant portion of Catholic sacred music from the era of confessionalisation, including both celebrated masterpieces and lesser-known yet historically significant works of great beauty. Complementing this ideal map is a detailed catalogue of Requiems, which is a valuable and up-to-date research tool.

KEYWORDS Requiem, polyphonic chant, liturgy of the dead

ABSTRAKT *Requiem w epoce konfesjonalizacji. Recenzja „The Book of Requiems", t. 2*. Drugi tom *The Book of Requiems* pod redakcją Davida J. Burna i Antonia Chemottiego zawiera analityczne eseje muzykologiczne poświęcone requiem skomponowanym w l. 1550–1650. Publikacja kreśli obszerną mapę wczesnonowożytnej polifonii przeznaczonej do liturgii za zmarłych, obejmując regiony od Flandrii po Europę Środkową i od Italii po Półwysep Iberyjski. Umożliwia ona ponowne odkrycie znacznej części katolickiej muzyki sakralnej z czasów konfesjonalizacji, w tym zarówno wybitnych arcydzieł, jak i utworów mniej znanych, lecz istotnych historycznie i bardzo pięknych. Uzupełnieniem tej perfekcyjnie opracowanej mapy jest szczegółowy katalog mszy żałobnych, stanowiący cenne i zaktualizowane narzędzie badawcze.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE requiem, śpiew polifoniczny, liturgia za zmarłych

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Despite the significance that the Requiem has held from ancient times to the present in shaping the relationship between humanity and death, musicology has only recently begun to undertake comprehensive studies of the genre. Previously, scholarly attention was largely confined to detailed analyses of individual compositions, often focusing on a specific commemorative event, examining a composer's style, or celebrating a piece well known to the public. It is within this context of renewed interest that the book series *The Book of Requiems: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, conceived by Pieter Bergé, with David J. Burn, finds its place. The series has now reached an interesting second volume – edited by Burn himself, along with Antonio Chemotti – focused on the hundred-year period between 1550 and 1650.[1]

The opening volume in the series (1450–1550, edited by David J. Burn) examined the earliest *missae pro defunctis* in polyphony, composed between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – a period that marked the beginning of a practice which subsequently spread across Europe, adapting to various local traditions. Consequently, during the sixteenth century, the Requiem exhibited liturgical, ritual and textual variations. It was only with the Council of Trent (1545–63) that the Church of Rome took steps to standardize rites and texts, exerting greater control over local practices to reaffirm the core principles of Catholicism in response to Protestant doctrines. For this reason, in the first volume of the series, the study of the origins of the Requiem necessarily focused on analysing the relationship between text and music, which indissolubly connects the texts of the Requiem to the Gregorian chants used to accompany those verses. These chants, both cited and paraphrased, underpinned most of the polyphonic Requiem Masses composed in the sixteenth century.

The Requiem's establishment in the sixteenth century was fundamentally driven by the Council of Trent's mandate for liturgical uniformity. Pius V's Missal (1570) represented a culmination – albeit not a final one – of the Church of Rome's efforts to regulate the evolving forms of late medieval liturgy. This context clarifies the editors' choice to begin their investigation in the mid-sixteenth century, moving away from the conventional music historiography that commonly combines the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and defines the year 1600 as a boundary. As highlighted in the 'Introduction', the Council of Trent solidified the doctrinal divide between Catholics and Protestants, sparking an unprecedented interest in the Catholic Church's traditional music, particularly in the form of liturgical polyphony. While the Church of Rome aimed to create a universal sense of unity through the top-down implementation of liturgical and musical practices, the Reformation promoted a more

1 *The Book of Requiems. From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period,* eds. David J. Burn and Antonio Chemotti, vol. 2, *1550–1650*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2023, pp. 270. ISBN 9789462703711.

grassroots approach, advocating for unity based on local melodies, deeply embedded in everyday experiences, and using the vernacular to foster wider participation. The editors note that 'this confessional significance of the liturgy for the dead stimulated its ceremonial enrichment, in turn increasing the demand for polyphonic music tailored to the ritual' (p. 16).

Determining a clear discontinuity in the subsequent history of the Requiem is challenging. However, such a shift can be discerned in the latter half of the seventeenth century, when the genre began to be marked by the introduction of the *basso continuo*, supported by increasingly elaborate instrumental ensembles. Until then, the composition of Requiem Masses relied on a *cantus firmus* as the foundation for developing polyphonic textures. This approach maintained a strong link between musical practice and liturgical tradition through constant reference to church chant. In contrast, as this repertoire fell out of favour with contemporary tastes, it gradually became marginalized. This context underscores the editors' goal, amply achieved by the contributors to the second volume of *The Book of Requiems*, to revive interest in this once-dominant genre.

The Book of Requiems (1550–1650) thus presents itself to the reader as a comprehensive 'map of early modern polyphony for the liturgy of the dead' (p. 17), spanning from Flanders to Central Europe and from Italy to the Iberian Peninsula. This map facilitates the rediscovery of a significant portion of Catholic sacred music from the era of confessionalisation, including both celebrated masterpieces and lesser-known yet historically significant works. Complementing this ideal map is a detailed catalogue of Requiems composed between the inception of the genre up to *c*.1650, along with information on their primary sources and, where available, modern editions, serving as a valuable and up-to-date research tool. The catalogue considers both printed and manuscript sources, both complete and incomplete, and also includes settings preserved in sources copied after the mid-seventeenth century but probably composed before that date. Settings consisting of individual movements, as well as responsories and motets that were also intended to be performed during or after the Requiem Mass, are not included in the list. That exclusion is related to the editors' choice to focus on the Requiem rather than on the funeral rite and its various components; for this same reason, settings of the Office for the Dead are not presented in the catalogue.

The volume thoroughly analyses 17 Requiems, with each essay following a uniform structure. Contributions begin with a summary sheet that details the work's origins, primary sources, critical editions and selected bibliography. This is followed by a formal table of the Requiem. The main text is divided into sections devoted to the historical context, the form and style of the composition, and a detailed analysis of its individual sections. Although this structure may seem repetitive to some, it serves to provide consistency – wherever possible – to a volume that might other-

wise appear disorganized and arbitrarily arranged (given the challenge of selecting Requiems from the broad repertoire of the late sixteenth century). It also facilitates comparison between different Masses by addressing common questions across the studies. The evaluation is further facilitated by the editors' choice to concentrate on those geographical and devotional areas where the production of Requiems was most prominent; in fact, the analyses are focused on multiple Masses from Italy, Spain, Portugal and Northern Europe.

The journey proposed by the editors begins in the Flemish region with Stephen Rice's examination of Jacobus Clemens non Papa's *Missa pro defunctis*, highlighting the crucial role that Franco-Flemish composers played in the development of the Requiem genre. The dates of Clemens's birth and death remain largely speculative. His birth is inferred from the publication of his earliest chansons in the late 1530s, while his death is suggested by a manuscript annotation indicating that his final work was composed on 21 April 1555, and further supported by the publication of a memorial motet for him by Jacobus Vaet in 1558. Also, the date of Clemens's Requiem is unknown; only because his composing career was so short can it be dated with reasonable confidence to a 15-year period (*c*.1540–55), as Rice emphasizes (p. 22). The printed sources reviewed by Rise, both of them from the following century, reflect the lasting recognition of Clemens non Papa and his work: Michelangelo Serra, a priest and composer, included it in a collection of his own works published in 1608, while Pierre Phalèse included it in a 1625 collection, which primarily featured four-part choral compositions with *basso continuo* by Ludovico da Viadana. Following the tradition established in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Clemens non Papa composed settings for three sections of the *ordinarium missae* (Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) and several from the *proprium* (Introit, Tract, Offertory, Communion), omitting the Dies Irae. The plainchant melodies, familiar to contemporary worshippers, are approached in various ways, forming the basis of a composition that is distinguished by its expressive sweetness.

The other Franco-Flemish composers featured in the volume are Philippe de Monte (1521–1603), Jacobus de Kerle (1531/32–91) and Orlando di Lasso (1530/32–94). Their Requiems are examined by Katelijne Schiltz, Christian Thomas Leitmeir and Franz Körndle (with Körndle analysing two of Orlando di Lasso's Masses for four and six voices). These compositions date from the final decades of the sixteenth century – a period marked by a profound shift in the widespread perception of death, particularly in Northern Europe. During this time, Catherine de' Medici, regent of France, issued the Edict of Saint-Germain (1562), granting the Huguenots freedom of worship to implement a policy of tolerance towards Calvinism. This measure proved ineffective, as it incited a severe backlash from the Catholic faction led by the Guise family. On 1 March 1562, this faction carried out a massacre of over 30 Huguenots in Vassy. Ten years later, on the night of 23–24 August 1572, Catholics in France

killed thousands of Huguenots: between those two dates, the French Wars of Religion erupted, devastating the last decades of the sixteenth century and profoundly altering the common perception of death. In the mid-1560s, another notable 'massacre' took place, this time in the realm of painting: Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Massacre of the Innocents*. This painting portrays, against the backdrop of a pristine, snow-covered Flemish village, the arrival of soldiers – a group of inhumanly armoured knights positioned at the centre of the scene – and the ensuing slaughter carried out by their foot soldiers, amidst the dismay and horror of the villagers. This work, along with *The Last Judgment* (1558), *Mad Meg* (post-1560) and *The Triumph of Death* (*c*.1562), is part of a series in which Bruegel explores the theme of death with a novel sensitivity: death emerges as a force overwhelming and violently crushing the world of the living. This example is among several signs of a broader trend – widespread across the arts and driven by the Counter-Reformation – that saw a dramatic shift in how people engaged with the concept of death towards the end of the sixteenth century. It is precisely in this context that the Requiem begins to merge the medieval spirit of the Dies Irae ('Quantus tremor est futurus / Quando judex est venturus / Cuncta stricte discussurus') with the hope symbolized by the concept of purgatory, which the requiem articulates in its opening lines, 'Requiem aeternam / Dona eis Domine'.

Signs of the evolving relationship with the liturgy for the dead that took shape across various parts of Europe towards the end of the sixteenth century, albeit with differing timelines, can be observed in the Requiems of Philippe de Monte, Jacobus de Kerle and Orlando di Lasso. Monte's Requiem retains a traditional structure and does not include the Dies Irae; it was likely composed between 1576 and 1585, during his tenure at the imperial chapel in Vienna and Prague, serving emperors Maximilian II and later Rudolf II. The former maintained a neutral stance on religious matters and allowed the spread of Lutheranism in northern Germany, while the latter, despite implementing the Tridentine reform in the Habsburg domains, did little to enforce it and, in 1609, granted religious freedom to the Bohemian Protestants through the 'Letter of Majesty'. In contrast, Jacobus de Kerle composed his *Missa pro defunctis* while in Italy, at the Cathedral of Orvieto, where he established himself as a leading proponent of reformed music. The inclusion of the sequence in his composition, which was officially prescribed in the post-Tridentine liturgy by the 1570 Missal, appears to reflect a Roman influence rather than a northern European one. Similarly, Orlando di Lasso's five-part Requiem, likely composed before 1580 for the court of Munich, includes a version of the Dies Irae at the end of its manuscript source (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Mus. Ms. 2750). The first verse of the sequence is provided with musical notation, and the remainder of the text is written line by line beneath the music: 'The setting was probably added', writes Franz Körndle, 'to the earlier cycle after the accession of Wilhelm V to the dukedom in 1579, when the Bavarian court liturgy was reformed according to the Roman-Tridentine rite' (p. 132).

A key region for the dissemination of the Requiem during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the Catholic Iberian Peninsula, where Franco-Flemish polyphonic models were widely circulated throughout the sixteenth century. Eleanor Russell's research into manuscript Tarazona Ms. 5, preserved at the Tarazona Cathedral Archive, has demonstrated that Franco-Flemish Masses began to spread to Spain in the early decades of the sixteenth century.[2] The manuscript indeed contains the *Missa in agendis mortuorum* by Juan García de Basurto (a composer active in the early decades of the sixteenth century in Tarazona, Valladolid and Madrid) – a sort of anthology that, in addition to works by Basurto and other Spanish composers, includes copies of parts from the Requiems of Ockeghem (the responsory *Sicut cervus*) and Brumel (*Lux aeterna*). Therefore, a substantial part of *The Book of Requiems* is rightfully devoted to the Requiems of Spanish composers, highlighting an exceptional tradition. The essays by Alison Sanders McFarland, Owen Rees and Antonio Chemotti specifically address the Requiems of Cristóbal de Morales (*c*.1500–53), Francisco Guerrero (1527/28–99), Tomás Luis de Victoria (*c*.1548–1611) and Mateo Romero (1575/76–1647).

Cristóbal de Morales's five-part Requiem was printed in Rome (Dorico, 1544), in a collection of Masses dedicated to his patron, Pope Paul III. This publication occurred at a time when the composer had likely already left Italy and returned to Spain, where he worked first in Toledo, then in Marchena, and later in Málaga. A four-part Requiem is attributed to the latter phase of his career. In both compositions, the principal melodies are assigned to a single voice, clearly distinguished from the others. Overall, the 'Spanish' Requiem features more polyphonic sections compared to the 'Roman' Requiem, but lacks the kaleidoscopic movement of the principal voice that characterizes the latter. The presence of a set of versified sections (*Pie Jesu*) from the Dies Irae in the latter can be related to its 'Roman' origins.

Francisco Guerrero spent almost his entire career in the service of Seville cathedral. His four-part Requiem was published in 1566 as part of his *Liber primus missarum* (Paris, du Chemin), although the composition itself dates back to the 1550s. Grayson Wagstaff has suggested that the funeral rites for Charles V, held at Seville cathedral in December 1558, may have provided the occasion for either the composing or a performance of this work.[3] The Mass incorporates texts and chants that were in use at Seville cathedral prior to the adoption of the new Roman form of the *Missa pro defunctis* in 1575, situating itself within an Andalusian funerary tradition to which other composers, such as Pedro de Escobar, Juan Vásquez and Cristóbal de Morales,

2 Eleanor Russell, 'The *Missa in agendis mortuorum* of Juan García de Basurto', *Tijdschrift van de Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 29 (1979) no. 1, pp. 1–37.

3 Grayson Wagstaff, *Music for the Dead: Polyphonic Settings of the Officium and Missa pro defunctis by Spanish and Latin American Composers before 1630*, University of Texas at Austin 1995 (PhD dissertation), p. 538.

also contributed. In 1582, Guerrero republished the Requiem in his *Missarum liber secundus* (Rome, Zanetto). This version, which later gained wide circulation, even in the 'New World', retains certain melodies from the Iberian tradition but also reflects the changes mandated by the Tridentine liturgical reform: the Gradual *Dicit Dominus* is omitted, the Tract *Sicut cervus* is replaced by *Absolve Domine*, and the Communion *Lux aeterna* by *Requiem aeternam*.

Like Morales, Tomás Luis de Victoria also divided his life between Italy and Spain. He studied in Italy at the Jesuit Collegium Germanicum in the 1560s, and was later active in the Spanish churches of Santa Maria di Monserrato and San Giacomo. It was during this period that he composed his four-part Requiem. In Spain, he served for many years as maestro di cappella to Empress Maria of Austria, for whose funeral rites (the empress died on 26 February 1603) he composed an *Officium defunctorum* that includes a six-part Requiem. Of the two Masses for the Dead, the latter (published in 1605; Madrid, Flamenco) has become by far the more famous in modern times. However, it seems that its circulation in the seventeenth century was modest, in contrast to the four-voice Requiem (reprinted in 1592; Rome, Coattino), which may have been favoured due to its 'Roman' origins and the relatively modest vocal forces it required. Victoria retained only a brief section from his earlier Requiem in the music for Maria of Austria's funeral, specifically the three-part setting of the verse 'Tremens factus sum ego', part of the responsory *Libera me Domine*. References to the Roman tradition were also preserved in the melodic incipits of various sections, which were blended with elements reflecting Spanish practice. As Owen Rees has noted, despite its title *Officium defunctorum*, the 1605 collection curiously includes only one piece for the Office of the Dead a four-part *Taedet animam meam*, the second lesson of Matins (p. 108). The collection also features a six-part motet, *Versa est in luctum*, the same text that Alonso Lobo set to music in 1598 for the funeral of Philip II, King of Spain.

The last example illustrating the significance of funeral liturgy in early modern Spain, is the Requiem Mass by Mateo Romero, maestro of the Royal Chapel, as analysed by Antonio Chemotti. The widespread dissemination of Romero's compositions attests to his renown beyond Spain's borders; the Duke of Braganza (who became King John IV of Portugal in 1640) was among his admirers: in the inventory of the rich musical library of Lisbon, many works by Romero are recorded, among them a Mass 'De Requiem, a 8' (*Primeira parte do Index da Livraria de Musica,* Lisbon: Paulo Craesbeeck, 1649). The Requiem, long believed to be lost, was rediscovered in 1995 when a series of manuscript parts for a Mass attributed to 'El Capitán' (the nickname associated with Romero) was found in the Burgos cathedral archive (Burgos, Archivo de la Catedral, Sign. 55/13). As Chemotti observes, 'The possibility of a misattribution cannot be ruled out; the Mass could also be at least in part a collation of movements from different composers. However, the coincidence

between the "a 8" indication in the Lisbon inventory and the vocal forces required in the Burgos manuscript supports Romero's authorship'. Furthermore, regarding the late date of the sole surviving source, he emphasizes that this should 'not necessarily cast suspicion on the work's authenticity. Cases of musical antiquarianism are not unusual in Spain: many other compositions of Romero remained in the repertoire of Spanish churches long after their composer's death' (pp. 181–182). The Mass is written for double choir, situating it within the polychoral tradition that flourished in Spain from the late sixteenth century through the seventeenth. Its simplicity and austerity, as Chemotti notes, should not lead to a simplistic evolutionary view that ascribes the work to the early part of Romero's career, but are more likely linked to the liturgical context of its performance.

Romero's case exemplifies the extensive exchanges between Spain and Portugal that facilitated the dissemination of Requiem compositions on Portuguese territory. With regard to the latter, this volume specifically focuses on the Masses by Duarte Lobo (*c*.1565–1646), Manuel Cardoso (*c*.1566–1650) and Filipe de Magalhães (*c*.1565–1652), as analysed by Owen Rees and Bernadette Nelson. Lobo included a version of the *Missa pro defunctis* at the end of both of his Mass books, published by the prestigious Plantin-Moretus press in Antwerp: the eight-part Mass appeared in the *Liber missarum* (1621) and the six-part Mass in the *Liber II missarum* (1639). As Owen Rees points out, placing a Requiem as the final Mass in a printed collection was a common practice among Iberian composers; similar examples can be found in the collections of Cardoso, Esquivel, Guerrero, Magalhães, Morales, Rimonte and Victoria (p. 161). The two Lisbon institutions where Lobo worked from the 1590s onwards – the Royal Hospital of Todos-os-Santos and the Cathedral – suggest that his Requiems likely accompanied the funeral ceremonies of high-ranking members of the royal family (which at that time was represented by the Spanish Habsburgs). Of particular note is the six-part Requiem, distinguished by its inclusion of Dies Irae. That makes this Mass exceptional, as no other Portuguese Requiem from the sixteenth or seventeenth century includes a setting of the sequence (though Lobo's version omits the central section devoted to the merciful Jesus), a feature that was also rarely set to music by contemporary Spanish composers.

Manuel Cardoso spent almost the entirety of career at the Convento do Carmo in Lisbon, during the period of Spanish rule (from 1580 to 1640, three kings of Castile – Philip II, Philip III and Philip IV – were also kings of Portugal); this era also witnessed a considerable influx of Spanish musicians into Portugal, some of whom were appointed to significant positions within the Royal Chapel. Cardoso's works are preserved in five choral books, printed in Lisbon by Craesbeeck between 1613 and 1648. A representative portion of his output consists of music for the dead: responsories, motets, lessons for Matins and two Requiems – one for four parts and one for six. Both volumes containing the Requiems were dedicated to his patron and friend,

John IV of Portugal; however, the publication dates of these volumes (1625 and 1648) do not necessarily reflect the composition dates of the two Masses, which were likely written earlier and possibly revised subsequently. Bernadette Nelson highlights that Cardoso's Masses were influenced by traditions established on the Iberian Peninsula from at least the late fifteenth century, within the contexts of royal chapels and major ecclesiastical institutions. Specifically, the predominant practice involved simple harmonizations of the chant in the style of *fabordão*, where 'the chant was traditionally placed in the highest sounding voice, with some phrases demonstrating dependence on parallel movement in sixths between the superius and tenor' (p. 204). The traces of this tradition 'can be seen especially in some settings of the three main items of the Requiem Mass ordinary (Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei – particularly the latter two) and in the psalm verse of the introit ("Te decet hymnus") of a large number of settings composed generally throughout Europe in the sixteenth century' (p. 204).

An additional element that completes the 'map of early modern polyphony for the liturgy for the dead' outlined by *The Book of Requiems: From the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* is the five-part *Missa pro defunctis* by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525/26–1594), as analysed by Christian Thomas Leitmeir. The origins and intended use of this Requiem remain unknown; it was absent from Palestrina's original *Liber primus missarum* (Rome: Dorico, 1554), as well as from subsequent reprints (Rome: Dorico heirs, 1572; Brescia: Bozzola, 1581), and appeared only as an addition in the 1591 edition (Rome: Gardano, 1591). In contrast to contemporary practices in Italy, this Requiem is notably shorter. Palestrina composed three sections of the *ordinarium missae* (Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) and only one section of the *proprium*: the Offertory. The Introit and Communio, both invoking the plea for intercession 'Requiem aeternam dona eis', are notably missing. Leitmeir argues that 'it is implausible to assume that Palestrina did set the Introit and that the setting is now lost: if he had composed it, it would certainly be included in the manuscript choirbook Cappella Giulia XI.15 and the printed edition of 1591, both produced under his nose, if not under his supervision' (pp. 146–147). The omission of these sections remains a mystery, especially given that the texture of the three sections of the *ordinarium missae* is rich with melodic material derived from liturgical chants, while the Offertory is written in the style of a freely composed motet with minimal reference to the cantus firmus – characteristics typical of many other compositions by Palestrina and his contemporaries.

The volume concludes in the mid-seventeenth century, when the radical stylistic changes that had already impacted other spheres of musical production (since around 1600) began to influence the history of the Requiem. These transformations led to the gradual decline of traditional plainchant as a fundamental starting point, and in the retention of a polyphonic texture. Over time, within the context of funeral liturgy, music began to assume a more decorative function: the increasing use of opposing polychoral forces, for example, resulted in dynamic and timbral shifts characterized

by more expressive and contrasting sound levels. These techniques were subsequently embraced in the *concertante* style of writing, which employs contrasts of choral and soloistic passages. In particular, the Dies Irae section, with its extended text rich in emotional expression (anguish, faith, fear, hope, terror), lent itself to more descriptive and dramatic treatments. Some composers set the sequence in a series of short sections that included various vocal combinations, such as solos, duets and choral sections, while others chose to break down the various verses into more manageable units with shifting emotional content. The chronological boundary set by the editors may also prompt broader reflection on the evolving relationship between humanity and death: during the seventeenth century, the opulent death of prominent figures became a ritual model increasingly adopted elsewhere. Clerics, merchants, notables, prelates and members of charitable confraternities also experienced a 'beautiful' death, celebrated and narrated in less elaborate but still resplendent ceremonies. Funeral rites evolved towards an ideal of public visibility, presenting one's death as a tragic and exemplary spectacle before the community, where both ordinary and distinguished individuals could see themselves reflected. In this context, the restrained and somewhat aloof idiom of Renaissance liturgical music eventually gave way to a style of church music that proved to be more dramatic and emotionally intimate.

In conclusion, the contributions included in *The Book of Requiems* (1550–1650) offer several notable advantages: they provide a comprehensive overview of Requiem production during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through clear and detailed analyses. These contributions engage fully with the results of recent musicological research and present intriguing critical readings (or re-readings) of both well-known and lesser-known works. The analytical approach that guides the entire series remains highly productive in the study of Requiem history. It allows for an examination of the distinctive features of the Masses, considering their evolution over time and across regions, while also identifying commonalities, connections, borrowings and their absences. Nevertheless, there is a sense that the volume, through the lens of the Requiem, could have provided a broader perspective on the complex evolution of the relationship between humanity and death. While individual contributions reference material, social and mental history, these aspects appear to be somewhat peripheral. The introduction to the volume might have played a more integrative role by linking these references to reflections on the relationship between the Requiem and the history of death. However, it should be noted that overinterpreting the analytical contributions of various scholars could have risked imposing abstract unifying categories that oversimplify the subject. Overall, the volume is likely to be a valuable resource for musicologists, performers and historians of mentalities alike. It serves as a reminder that reconstructing the history of funeral rites and the Requiem is one way to explore the relationship between humanity and death, capturing the profound and poetic strength of this bond.

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