

Mental Health Suite (2024)

AUTUMN MARIA REED N BORN IN 1992

Autumn Maria Reed, like many of America's most gifted young musicians, has developed her considerable talents into a varied career that includes composer, arranger, double bassist, percussionist, teacher, sound designer, and advocate for, in her words, "ending the stigma of mental illness." Reed was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1992 and educated at the Madison Area Technical College and Boston's Berklee College of Music, where she graduated *summa cum laude* with a degree in Interdisciplinary Music; she has also been mentored by Tony- and Grammy-nominated composer, orchestrator and music director Zane Mark, whose Broadway credits include *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* and *Boop! The Musical*. Reed was an awardee in the Ravinia Music Festival's 2024 Breaking Barriers Festival, where her *Robin's Eye View* was performed by the Chicago Philharmonic; she also won the 2022 Call for Scores Competition of the Women's Orchestra of Arizona with her *Yankadi*. Her music has been performed by Brazil's Orquestra Sinfônica Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro, Black String Triage Ensemble (with whom Reed plays cello and double bass), Music Theatre of Madison and Black Diaspora Symphony Orchestra, which was the subject of the 2023 PBS-distributed documentary *Black Strings*. Autumn Maria Reed's *Mental Health Suite* was a 2024 finalist in EarShot Call for Scores by Early Career Female Composers organized by the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra of Houston and the American Composers Orchestra of New York; it was premiered on June 7, 2024 by ROCO and conductor Mei-Ann Chen at the League of American Orchestras Conference in Houston. Of it, Reed wrote, "I composed the *Mental Health Suite* to reflect different diagnoses of acquired mental illnesses. The movements reflect the chronological symptoms of the various mental disorders. *The Persistent Past* represents the inevitable depression. *The Fearful Future* represents the frenetic energy of anxiety."

"I am ecstatic to share my composition, which honors various symptoms of acquired mental illness. I spent my early adulthood struggling, but I have found light, and I hope that others struggling will find their light as well."

Anchored (2025)

World Premiere

JOE JAXSON N BORN IN 2000

On the open sea, the ocean waves often get busy. To keep their vessel from going adrift, sailors lay anchors grounding them in place. In our lives, we sometimes experience seasons that put us in situations with the intent to set us adrift from our purpose. The maritime anchor has been symbolized as forming strong bonds that are deep and enduring. By discovering these anchors, we become tethered and remain unmoved in anticipation for life's raging tides.

Anchored is a cello concerto written for cellist Jalayne Mitchell of Seattle, WA. Co-commissioned by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, directed by Diane Wittry; and the Seattle Collaborative Orchestra, directed by Dr. Anna Edwards. The soul of this concert experience explores weathers of anxiety, fear, and chaos while searching and yearning for hope, peace, and fortitude. This concerto is serving as a vehicle for Jalayne to tell a story of how she found music and the cello to become her anchor in world full of uncertainty and adversity...but she could not and cannot do it alone. In her words, "it took determination, mentors, and a supporting community, that help her get to where she is today and for tomorrow."

"A path shaped by struggle, resilience, and the healing power of music." -Jalayne Mitchell

Joe Jaxson, whose *Overture for the 21st Century: Joy of the Soul* was premiered by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra in 2024, was born in New York City in 2000 and raised in a musical household in Staunton, Virginia, inheriting his love and familiarity with jazz, soul and R&B from his father and classical and gospel from his mother. Jaxson started composing in high school, winning honorable mention in 2017 for his brass quartet *Tranquil, Pulse, and Drive!* in the Young Composers Competition of John Madison University's 37th Contemporary Music Festival, and recognition for his wind ensemble piece *Fanfare and Celebration* at the following year's Virginia Music Educators Association's Composition Festival. Having already established a reputation at JMU, he studied composition there and also participated during those years in the Film Scoring Workshop at New York University and masterclasses and seminars at the SPLICE Institute at the University of Georgia ("dedicated to the performance, creation and development of music for performers and electronics") and the Wintergreen Music Festival in Virginia (where two of his works were premiered) before graduating in 2022. Jaxson is now a graduate fellowship student in composition at the University of Texas at Austin.

On the open sea, the ocean waves often get busy. To keep their vessel from going adrift, sailors lay anchors grounding them in place. In our lives, we sometimes experience seasons that put us in situations with the intent to set us adrift from our purpose. The maritime anchor has been symbolized as forming strong bonds that are deep and enduring. By discovering these anchors, we become tethered and remain unmoved in anticipation for life's raging tides.

Anchored is a cello concerto written for cellist Jalayne Mitchell of Seattle, WA. Co-commissioned by the Allentown Symphony Orchestra, directed by Diane Wittry; and the Seattle Collaborative Orchestra, directed by Dr. Anna Edwards. The soul of this concert experience explores weathers of anxiety, fear, and chaos while searching and yearning for hope, peace, and fortitude. This concerto is serving as a vehicle for Jalayne to tell a story of how she found music and the cello to become her anchor in world full of uncertainty and adversity...but she could not and cannot do it alone. In her words, "it took determination, mentors, and a supporting community, that help her get to where she is today and for tomorrow."

"A path shaped by struggle, resilience, and the healing power of music." -Jalayne Mitchell

Requiem Mass in D minor, K. 626 (1791)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART N 1756-1791

In early July 1791, while he was busy composing *The Magic Flute*, Mozart received a letter testifying to the glories of his music and alerting him that he would be having a visitor with a proposal on the following day. The letter was unsigned. The visitor, "an unknown, grey stranger," according to Mozart, appeared on schedule and said that he represented the writer of the letter, who wanted to commission a new piece — a Requiem Mass — but added the curious provision that Mozart not try to discover the patron's identity. Despite the somewhat foreboding mystery surrounding this venture, Mozart was in serious financial straits just then and the money offered was generous, so he accepted the commission and promised to begin as soon as possible. *The Magic Flute*, however, was pressing, and he also received at the same time another commission, one too important to ignore, for an opera to celebrate the September coronation in Prague of Emperor Leopold as King of Bohemia — *La Clemenza di Tito*, based on one of Metastasio's old librettos — that demanded immediate attention. As if those duties were not enough to fill his thoughts, Mozart's wife, Constanze, was due to deliver another baby at the end of the month. She had been in the local spa town of Baden since the beginning of June, trying to preserve what little health she had left after nine years of almost constant pregnancy since her marriage to Wolfgang in 1782, and Mozart went to bring her back to the city and to her doctors in mid-July. Just as he was entering the carriage for the trip, the "unknown, grey stranger" approached him, inquired about the progress of the Requiem, was told that it was going well, and left, apparently satisfied. On July 25th, Constanze gave birth to Franz Xaver Wolfgang, who became a composer and music teacher.

Mozart worked on the Requiem as time allowed. From mid-August until mid-September, he, Constanze and his pupil Franz Süssmayr, who composed the recitatives for *Tito*, were in Prague for the opera's premiere. When they returned to Vienna, Schikaneder pressed Mozart to put the final touches on *The Magic Flute*, which was first staged on September 30th. Mozart's health had deteriorated alarmingly by October — he complained of swelling limbs, feverishness, pains in his joints and severe headaches. On November 17th, with the Requiem far from finished, he took to his bed and was treated by Dr. Thomas Closset, one of Vienna's best physicians, with the prescribed remedy for what was diagnosed as "miliary fever" (perhaps rheumatic fever or uraemia, though the evidence is inconclusive) — cold compresses and unremitting bleeding. Mozart became obsessed with the Requiem, referring to it as his "swan-song," convinced that he was writing the music for his own funeral: "I cannot remove from my mind the image of the stranger. I see him continually. He begs me, exhorts me, and then commands me to work. I continue, because composition fatigues me less than rest. Moreover, I have nothing more to fear. I know from what I feel that the hour is striking; I am on the point of death; I have finished before I could enjoy my talent.... I thus must finish my funeral song, which I must not leave incomplete."

Mozart managed to finish only the Requiem and Kyrie sections of the work, but sketched the voice parts and the bass and gave indications for scoring for the Dies irae through the Hostias. On December 4th, he scrawled a few measures of the Lacrymosa, and then asked three friends who had come to be with him to sing what he had just written. He tried to carry the alto part, but broke into tears as soon as they had begun, and collapsed. A priest was called to administer extreme unction; at midnight Mozart bid his family farewell and turned toward the wall; at five minutes to one on the morning of December 5, 1791, he died, six weeks shy of his 36th birthday. He never knew for whom he had written the Requiem.

Constanze, worried that she might lose the commission fee, asked Joseph Eybler, a student of Haydn and a friend of her late husband, to complete the score. He filled in the instrumentation that Mozart had indicated for the middle movements of the piece, but became stuck where the music broke off in the Lacrymosa. Franz Süssmayr, to whom Mozart had given detailed instructions about finishing the work, took up the task, revising Eybler's orchestration and supplying music for the last three movements. Süssmayr recopied the score so that the manuscript would show one rather than three hands, and it was collected by the stranger, who paid the remaining commission fee.

(The version of the Requiem being heard at this concert is the revision by the Bavarian scholar Franz Beyer, who attempted in the 1970s to bring the orchestration of the work into closer accordance with the instrumental style seen in Mozart's other late liturgical compositions and in the finished Introit than did Süssmayr's completion.)

The person who commissioned Mozart's Requiem was Count Franz von Walsegg, a nobleman of musical aspirations who had the odious habit of anonymously ordering music from established composers and then passing it off as his own. This Requiem was to commemorate Walsegg's wife, Anna, who died on February 14, 1791. The "grey stranger" was Walsegg's valet, Anton Leitgeb, the son of the mayor of Vienna. Even after Mozart's death, Walsegg went ahead with a performance of the Requiem, which was given at the Neukloster in the suburb of Wiener-Neustadt on December 14, 1793; the title page bore the legend, *Requiem composto del Conte Walsegg*. A few years later, when Constanze was trying to have her late husband's works published, she implored Walsegg to disclose the Requiem's true author. He did, and the score was first issued in 1802 by Breitkopf und Härtel.

Buried away in Otto Erich Deutsch's Documentary Biography of Mozart is a fascinating but little-known tidbit of information that may (or may not) have been a factor in Walsegg's commission. One of Mozart's brothers in Freemasonry was Michael Puchberg, who earned many fond footnotes in the composer's biography for his generous financial support to the composer (Mozart euphemistically called these emoluments "loans") during Wolfgang's last years. Puchberg lived and managed a textile firm at Hoher Markt 522. This address, it seems, just happened to be located in the Viennese house of Franz von Walsegg, and it is certainly not impossible that Puchberg encouraged Walsegg, in his curious way, to help Mozart in his time of distress.

It is difficult, and perhaps not even advisable, to dissociate Mozart's Requiem from the circumstances of its composition — the work bears the ineradicable stamp of otherworldliness. In its sublimities and its sulfur, it appealed mightily to the Romantic sensibility of the 19th century, and continues to have a hold on the imagination of listeners matched by that of few other musical compositions. (Perhaps it is significant that the Requiem is performed annually in Vienna for the Feast of All Saints, the day after Halloween.) Manifold beauties of varied and moving expression abound throughout the Requiem: the ethereal strains of the Recordare; the vehemence of the Confutatis; the bitter plangency of the Lacrymosa; the old-fashioned, Bachian profundity of the fugal Kyrie; the feigned joy, so quickly terminated, of the Hosanna. The words of Lili Kraus, the Hungarian pianist closely associated throughout her career with the music of Mozart, apply with special poignancy to the wondrous Requiem: "There is no feeling — human or cosmic, no depth, no height the human spirit can reach — that is not contained in his music."

©2025 Dr. Richard E. Rodda