BERLIOZ  REQUIEM  
GRANDE MESSE DES MORTS

Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France
Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra
Chœur de Radio France
Maîtrise Notre-Dame de Paris
Conducted by Gustavo Dudamel
Cathedral of Notre Dame Paris
“If I was threatened with the destruction of all my works but one, I would save the Requiem,” wrote Berlioz shortly before his death. Berlioz composed it in 1837, a few years after what has surely remained his most popular work ever since its successful premiere, the Symphonie fantastique.

The Berlioz Requiem requires an orchestra of immense size: a principal orchestra of 108 strings, woodwind and brass, no less than 16 kettledrums and a battery of percussion instruments is augmented by four remote bands of trumpets, trombones and tubas. The choir consists of at least 200 singers. This sacred choral work is one of the boldest and most complex creations of music history, a vision of judgement, and Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris provides the ideal spatial and acoustic conditions for its performance.

Under Gustavo Dudamel’s direction, it was revealed as “a Requiem of the highest calibre” (El Pais). Both orchestras – “his” Simon Bolívar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France that supplemented it – and the two choirs “set the vault and columns of Notre-Dame de Paris vibrating” (Toute la Culture). Gustavo Dudamel dedicated the concert to the memory of Maestro Claudio Abbado, who died a few days prior to the performance.