

# Motus Missæ

North Carolina Master Chorale  
Alfred E. Sturgis, Music Director

Symphony Orchestra

Sunday, April 8 at 3pm  
Meymandi Concert Hall | Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts

## Program

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Kyrie (from <i>Mass in C minor</i> )	W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)
Gloria (from <i>Missa Solemnis</i> )	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Credo (from <i>Mass in B minor</i> ) Credo in unum Deum Patrem omnipotentem Et exspecto resurrectionem	J.S. Bach (1685-1750)
Sanctus (from Requiem)	Maurice Durufle (1902-1986)
Agnus Dei (from Mass)	Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

## INTERMISSION

Te Deum	Karl Jenkins (b. 1944)
“Hallelujah” from <i>Christ on the Mount of Olives</i>	Beethoven

## NOTES

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The Mass is the most important ceremony in the Roman Catholic Church. It is the time each day when the congregation joins to receive Holy Communion and through it, personal purification from sin. As such, it can be a simple service, including both spoken and chanted elements, or an elaborate musical celebration, composed for a special feast day. Portions of the Mass, called the Proper, change daily to coordinate with the feast and the readings from the Gospels. Five sections, however, called the Ordinary (*Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*), are part of all Masses and generally the ones receiving the musical focus.

Musical settings of the Ordinary began with medieval chant, but by the twelfth century, the beginnings of notated polyphony, composers took up the new style for the most important feasts, such as Christmas and Easter in the most important

cathedrals. From then on, settings of the Ordinary became both the musical focus of the liturgy and a symbol of the power and status of the cathedrals and court chapels in which they were performed. By the Renaissance, the great composers, among them Josquin Desprez, Johannes Ockeghem and Guillaume Dufay, were constantly crafting new and ingenious ways of presenting the sacred texts, in the process inventing new compositional styles: more complex counterpoint and settings based on folk tunes and popular chansons – analogous to the guitar Masses of the twentieth century.

The situation became so fraught with the clash of musical and political egos, as well as the threat of the Reformation, that the Church tried to institute an official musical style at the Council of Trent in 1562-3. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina became the poster child of Catholic liturgical music with restrained

counterpoint sung a cappella. Palestrina's Masses still dominate the repertory of the Sistine Chapel.

Western music, however, is characterized by a constant drive for novelty. By the end of the seventeenth century, cathedrals and, especially, aristocratic courts (both Catholic and Protestant), were once again in competition for the most splendid liturgical services. The Mass began slipping into the realm of holy entertainment. There appeared two types of Masses: the *Missa brevis* (short Mass), during which the music proceeded in a straightforward, no-nonsense manner without repetition or extended musical elaboration (There were even Masses in which the individual vocal parts sang different texts in order to shorten the text-heavy *Gloria* and *Credo*.) In the *Missa solemnis* (Solemn Mass), no holds were barred. Resembling the sacred cantatas of the Protestants, a *Missa solemnis* even expanded the *Gloria* and *Credo* into subsections with extra resources, including soloists and orchestra. The Mass was quickly morphing into pure entertainment, although performed in a church or chapel. Not only were feasts and saints' days celebrated with music, but also birthdays and other celebrations for aristocratic patrons. By the nineteenth century, Masses began to be performed as concert pieces, in other words, a musical genre in its own right.

From a purely musical point of view, these later Mass settings can be regarded as the liturgical equivalent of opera. Composers carefully devised music to express each line of text, although certain passages bore the signs of centuries of tradition: for example, the slow, hushed "*Et incarnatus est*," (He was made flesh) in the *Credo*, the "*Cum Sancto Spiritu*" (with the Holy Spirit) fugues at the end of the *Gloria* and the "*Hosanna in excelsis*," in the *Sanctus*. With the ever-growing emphasis on musical structure and expression, no wonder composers began composing Masses for their own sake, without any particular liturgical context in mind.

This brings us to this evening's program, which illustrates a series of a great musical setting for each section of the Ordinary, as well as their places in the history of the genre.

### **Kyrie** **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

Although Mozart composed 17 Masses (the majority *missae breves*), the C-Minor Mass ("the

Great") was his most ambitious. Like the *Requiem*, however, he never finished it (although for different reasons). He composed it on "commission" from his new wife, Constanze, for a trip to Salzburg where he was going to introduce her to his father. Leopold was not happy with the union even though his new daughter-in-law sang the "*Et incarnatus est*." There is still speculation regarding why the C-Minor Mass remained unfinished, whether Mozart inserted movements from other Masses to provide a complete Mass, or even whether it was anything more than an ad hoc performance by his former colleagues in the court of Count Archbishop Hieronymus Colloredo.

### **Gloria** **Ludwig van Beethoven**

The *Missa Solemnis* is both a monumental public work and an intimately personal one. Beethoven composed it for the elevation to the cardinalship of Archduke Rudolph, who was both one of the most powerful dignitaries in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as the composer's student and long-time friend.

Beethoven provides new music for each phrase of text but without distinctly separated arias or solo ensembles. Instead, a solo quartet joins the chorus as a unified ensemble. Nevertheless, each phrase is set to new music, reflecting the meaning and changing mood of the text. It begins with a joyous, excited chorus, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, dominated by a sweeping upward motive in the orchestra. Beginning with the *Gratias agimus tibi* (We give you thanks) until the final fugue, the soloists initiate a call-and-response pattern with choral affirmation. Two massive choruses bracket the movement, the initial *Gloria in excelsis* acclamation and a fugue on *In gloria Dei Patris* (To the glory of God the father). There has been a long tradition of setting the words, "*Qui tollis peccata mundi*" (who takes away the sins of the world) in a more hushed tone, changing from exuberant major mode to a more subdued minor. Beethoven follows this tradition as well, switching from D major to D minor.

### **Credo** **Johann Sebastian Bach**

The history and controversy surrounding Bach's Mass in B Minor is beyond the scope of these notes. He assembled and reworked the Mass as a whole primarily from preexisting works for both Catholic and Protestant services. Bach seems to have wanted to create, as a magnum opus, a compendium of the

best of his liturgical music in all styles, from austere Renaissance polyphony, to the most intricate imitative counterpoint, to arias and solo ensembles. In keeping with new Baroque practice, he divided the long movements into subsections, alternating solo and choral forces, mirroring the structure of the cantatas. In a sense, the B-Minor Mass was more a personal testament rather than a liturgical service. It exemplifies the status of the Mass as a genre beyond a church context.

The first and last parts of the *Credo* on this program encapsulate the religious essence of the Creed: "I believe in one all-powerful God...and await resurrection in the life to come."

The opening is in strict "Palestrina" counterpoint, based on the Gregorian chant that frequently opens the polyphonic *Credo*. The subsequent lines, "*Patrem omnipotentem*" (all-powerful Father) are livelier. The conclusion, of course, is a joyous fugue on the words "*Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum.*" (I await the resurrection of the dead)

Bach was fascinated by numerical symbolism (His title for the *Credo* was "*Symbolum Nicenum* (literally, the Nicæan symbolism.), and the number of repetitions of the phrase "*Credo in unum Deum,*" can be parsed according to Hebrew numerology (*gematria*) and iterations of the number three, signifying the Trinity).

### **Sanctus** **Maurice Duruflé**

Duruflé's *Requiem*, composed in 1947, combines ancient tradition with a modern touch. Commissioned by a publisher, rather than the Church, it represents an example of how the Mass began to take on a life of its own beyond the liturgy. Nonetheless, Duruflé, a virtuoso organist associated with the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont in Paris, built his work on a Gregorian melody associated with each movement.

### **Agnus Dei** **Igor Stravinsky**

Igor Stravinsky told biographer Robert Kraft: "My Mass was partly provoked by some Masses of Mozart that I found at a secondhand store in Los Angeles in 1942 or 1943. As I played through these rococo-operatic sweets-of-sin, I knew I had to write a Mass of my own, but a real one."

Although Stravinsky was Russian Orthodox, his own liturgy utilizes strictly a cappella music with a

prescribed range of harmonies and syllabic vocal prosody.

"I wanted my Mass to be used liturgically, an outright impossibility as far as the Russian Church was concerned, as Orthodox tradition proscribes musical instruments in its services - and as I can endure unaccompanied singing in only the most harmonically primitive music."

The five movements utilize several different styles in an arch-like structure. In the *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei*, the chorus employs a simple, declamatory style, punctuated by instrumental interludes. The *Gloria* and *Sanctus* incorporate soloists in a distinctly different style. The Mass belongs to Stravinsky's neoclassical period and makes use a variety of melodic modes and harmonic. The *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei* employ the greatest use of Western tonal harmony.

### **Te Deum** **Karl Jenkins**

Welsh composer Karl Jenkins has made his way from rock musician to a top-of-the-charts contemporary classical composer while picking up a knighthood on the way. While he has composed works in several genres, including music to accompany television commercials, his specialty is choral music that is particularly adapted to a more popular approach to both classical and liturgical music. Much of Jenkins' music centers on the theme of Peace, including his *magnum opus*,

In this mixed-Mass program it is worth noting that one of Jenkins most important works is *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace*, an anti-war, ecumenical setting of the Ordinary of the Mass with interpolated secular English texts and even the Muslim Call to Prayer. "The Armed Man" (*L'homme armé*) was a fifteenth-century popular song, so ubiquitous that many composers of the period (Josquin Despres, Johannes Ockeghem and Guillaume Dufay, to name a few) used the tune as a *cantus firmus* in their settings of the Mass.

The *Te Deum* is a hymn of thanksgiving that is sung daily in Roman Catholic monasteries and convents as part of the Holy Office, and has been retained in the Anglican liturgy. It appears in public for celebrations and was set to music by numerous composers. Puccini even incorporated it into Act 1 of *Tosca*. While the congregation celebrates Napoleon's victory at Marengo, the villain Scarpia intones a

counterpoint fantasizing on how he's going to make love to Tosca that evening, even if he has to force her.

Jenkins' setting is scored for SATB chorus, two trumpets, percussion and strings. Jenkins retains the traditional division of the text into five short sections played without pause but varying greatly in mood to reflect the meaning of each verse of the hymn. The sections alternate between major and minor, as well as in tempo and orchestration. The opening, *Te*

*Deum laudamus* (We Praise You, Lord) is a joyous, thumping, fanfare-like refrain between quieter passages. Jenkins repeats it at the end of the piece. By contrast the lines, "*Miserere nobis*" (Have mercy on us) is a somber *Largo*.

Program notes by:  
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