

Music at A&P

Good Friday Choral Service: April 14 at 7:30 p.m.



The central ritual of our life as a Christian community is the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Instituted by Christ during His last supper with the disciples, since the earliest days of the Church it has been the ultimate symbolic reminder that Jesus lived, died and rose again to redeem us all from sin.

It is therefore not surprising that the text of the Last Supper, expanded and enriched over the centuries, grew into the liturgy of the Mass, the so-called "Ordinary"--meaning the essential elements that are repeated every time the Lord's Supper is celebrated. These include the Kyrie ("Lord, have mercy - Christ, have mercy - Lord, have mercy"), the Gloria ("Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace..."), the Credo ("I believe in God the Father..."), the Sanctus and Benedictus ("Holy, holy, holy..." and "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord..."), and the Agnus Dei ("Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world...") Together, these five elements offer a comprehensive journey through our relationship to God's redemption: a confession of our sin and need; praise of God through a narrative of God's acts; a statement of belief; praise of God and His messengers; and a prayer for mercy and peace to Christ, at the moment of His ultimate sacrifice.

The Protestant tradition, taken over from ancient church practice, is to read or sing the Passion story--the account of Christ's Crucifixion--on Good Friday. Here at St. Andrew and St. Paul we have often sung the two famous Passion settings by J.S. Bach (St. Matthew and St. John) on that day. However, this year we are taking a different course and presenting two settings of the Mass: one is a conventional Ordinary, and the other is a Requiem, or Mass for the Dead. Both are late works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: the *Requiem*, KV 626, and the *Great Mass in C minor*, KV 427, and were left incomplete at Mozart's death in 1791, though the *Mass in C minor* was written much earlier, in 1782. KV 427 is missing the latter parts of the Credo, and the Agnus Dei altogether. Why Mozart left such a mighty work incomplete is a mystery, though there is well-founded speculation that he may have spliced in movements from his earlier Mass settings for the first performances.

The *Requiem* is quite a different story. Since its composition and the composer's untimely death, rumours have surrounded the work. Certain facts however seem clear:

1. The work was commissioned anonymously, through intermediaries, by Count Franz von Walsegg early in 1791 to commemorate his wife's death. Von Walsegg was in the habit of commissioning works from famous composers, and then passing them off as his own!;

2. The *Requiem* was completed after Mozart's death (on December 5, 1791) by Franz Ignaz Süssmayr, following both fragmentary indications from Mozart and Süssmayr's own musical imagination;
3. Mozart's widow Constanza had to hide Süssmayr's involvement in order to collect the final commission payment from von Walsegg, and also to protect the work's value for later publication; and
4. Süssmayr was no Mozart; his completion has some obvious shortcomings that musicologists and composers have been trying to ameliorate ever since!

This year, we will perform a completion of the Requiem made by the American musicologist Robert Levin, who has dedicated much of his life's work to studying uncompleted works of the Classical and Baroque eras. Levin's completion differs from Süssmayr's most significantly at two important moments: he adds a fugue (based on sketch by Mozart) at the end of the Sequence, after the Lacrymosa; and he modifies the Benedictus so that its concluding "Hosanna" reappears in the correct key, rather than the unusually transposed key of Süssmayr's version.

Our Choir will be joined by Ensemble Caprice, one of Montreal's outstanding period-instrument orchestras. We will perform at a pitch slightly lower than the modern standard (a=430 Hz rather than a=440), a convention when playing historical Classical instruments. Soloists are all current members of the choir, with the exception of tenor soloist Antonio Figueroa, who is an alumnus of the choir; Jean-Sébastien Vallée conducts.

As at all of our choral services, there is no charge for admission but a freewill donation is requested. Your offerings help support our church's musical ministry, which enriches our own worship life but also enriches the broader spiritual and cultural life of Montreal, Quebec and Canada.

Another CD is on its way!

On February 9, 10 and 11, the choir, Conductor, Director of Music/Organist, and producer Robert Rowat spent nine intense hours together, recording the choir's next CD! Entitled "Lux", it is a collection of carols, anthems and organ music for Christmas. We are a church that celebrates a lot of Christmas, with the Church School Pageant, CBC Sing-In, Carols by Candlelight as well as the Christmas Eve services, thus it seemed appropriate to commit that practice to disc. A pre-release version will be available D.V. in late June, with the official launch planned for the autumn. Plan your Christmas shopping accordingly, and share the A&P Choir's Christmas joy with your friends and family!

-Jonathan Oldengarm, Director of Music