



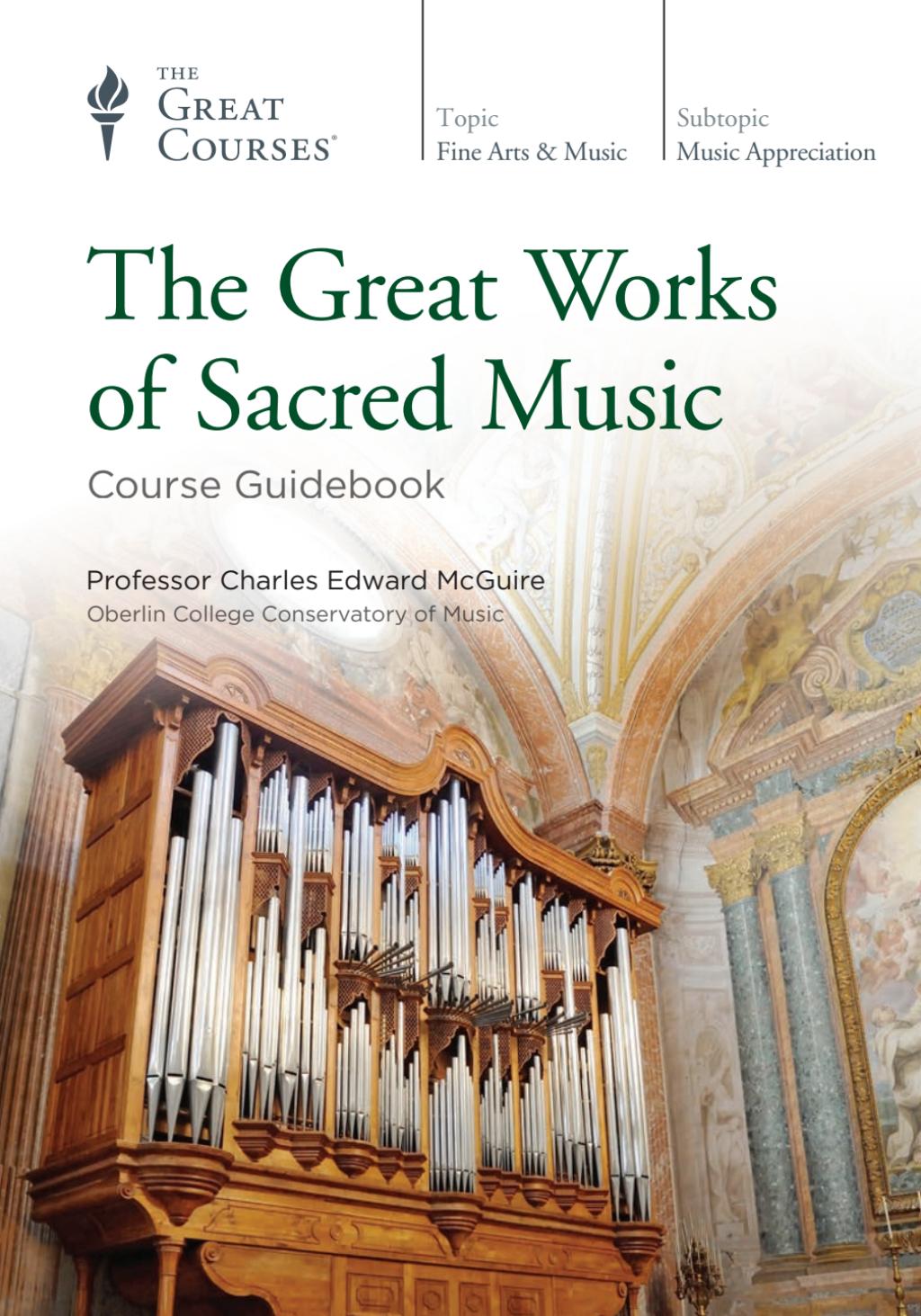
Topic
Fine Arts & Music

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Music Appreciation

The Great Works of Sacred Music

Course Guidebook

Professor Charles Edward McGuire
Oberlin College Conservatory of Music



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Dr. Charles Edward McGuire is Professor of Musicology at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, where he has taught since 2001. He spent his undergraduate years at Oberlin, where he earned a B.Mus. in Musicology from the conservatory and a B.A. from the college, with high honors in History. Dr. McGuire earned his A.M. and Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University, with a dissertation on narrative structures in the oratorios of British composer Edward Elgar.

Dr. McGuire has published extensively on British music, including studies of compositions by Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, as well as works on musical festivals, 19th-century opera divas, and the intersection of sight-singing methods and moral reform movements, particularly when used by 19th-century missionaries, temperance advocates, women's suffragists, and antislavery campaigners. His work spans musicology, narratology, social history, theology, and cinema and media studies. At Oberlin, Dr. McGuire teaches the introductory music history course that all conservatory students are required to take, as well as courses on 19th-century music, Beethoven, Mozart's operas, the symphony in the 19th century, music and narrative, film music history, music in London, and romanticism and medievalism in 19th-century London. He also has been a choral conductor and is a regular choral singer in ensembles, concentrating on repertoire from the medieval era to the late 20th century.

Dr. McGuire received a Teaching Excellence Award at Oberlin and was a three-time winner of a Certificate of Distinction in Teaching from Harvard University. He was a Fulbright Scholar to the University of York from 2012 to 2013 and is a Humanities Writ Large Visiting Faculty Fellow at Duke University for the 2015 to 2016 academic year. Dr. McGuire is the Principal Investigator for the Musical Festivals Database (www.musicalfestivals.org),

which has received grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Five Colleges of Ohio. Before arriving at Oberlin, he taught at Harvard University, Ball State University, the University of Maryland at College Park, and James Madison University.

Dr. McGuire is the author of the monographs *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-Fa Movement; Elgar's Oratorios: The Creation of an Epic Narrative*; and the *Historical Dictionary of English Music: ca. 1400–1958* (coauthored with Oberlin colleague Steven E. Plank). He has published essays in volumes on Elgar, Vaughan Williams, choral music, and 19th-century music, as well as in reference works, such as *Oxford Music Online*, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, and *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. Dr. McGuire has presented papers at numerous international musicological conferences and is a frequent invited speaker for panel discussions and preconcert talks. ■

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Disclaimer

To suit your lecturer's preference, in-studio performances may be slightly altered or sung in a different key from the historically accurate on-screen notation.

The Great Works of Sacred Music

Scope:

Some of the best music by the most renowned composers was inspired by religious devotion: to show the composer's own piety, to help a patron impress peers, or to remember loved ones. Sacred music often has been the source of great compositional innovation and even greater emotional expression. In this course, we will examine masterful musical settings used by composers in the Western classical tradition to elevate music to the sphere of Christian prayer, an elegant and transcendent devotional gift.

These lectures will span more than a thousand years of music history, examining both smaller works of personal devotion—such as chorales, hymns, and carols—as well as major public and concert genres, such as masses, oratorios, cantatas, and requiems.

We will begin with a consideration of what sacred music is, using the word “hallelujah” as our entrance into the discussion. Then, in the first part of the course, we will trace the history of sacred music from about 700 to 1636, spanning the earliest rituals of the medieval Roman Catholic Church to the first century of the Protestant Reformation. We will start with the great repertoire of Catholic chant and trace how composers like Hildegard of Bingen, Machaut, and Josquin all expanded from chant into the earliest sacred polyphony. We also will note the presence of human desires within sacred music, via the demands of noble and ecclesiastical patrons. We will finish this section by considering how the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation changed the definitions of music for both patrons and composers, such as Palestrina, Monteverdi, and Schütz. Most of these early sacred compositions now have become artifacts—pieces not heard in their original contexts and usually performed by only highly specialized ensembles. Yet they still are beautiful and have an amazing power to aid in contemplation of the infinite, even today.

In the second part of the course (examining works from about 1700 to about 1800), we will discover how sacred music turned from functional

compositions—that is, works for ritual devotion—to works for public exhibition at concerts. We will note the change in status of the musician from servant to artist, not necessarily dependent on a church or an individual patron. We still will see works that were composed for specific patrons, such as Bach's cantatas and Mozart's *Requiem*, but will note the increasing frequency of music composed to both be devotional and make money in the public sphere, such as Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation*. The beautiful and profound compositions explored within this section of the course no longer necessarily represent the most stylistically advanced techniques available within contemporary music; indeed, some were written by the composers to deliberately sound old and venerable, to reflect the august institutions and lofty sentiments for which they were composed.

Finally, we will examine the changes wrought on sacred music as society shifted from a predominantly religious one to something more secular between 1800 and 1900. We also will see how music could become increasingly personal, both by being sung in the home (hymns and carols) and by reflecting the temperament or beliefs of the composers. We will see examples of this in composers identifying with a character in an oratorio, as Beethoven did with Christ, or by altering the usual meaning of traditional texts with innovative settings, as Fauré did in his *Requiem*. We will see composers working to continually use sacred music to present an idea of the venerable and the modern but, above all, create something that would last beyond their own life. In the spirit of the times, 19th-century sacred music could be many things: monumental, intimate, or even a mixture of devotional and political, as we will discover in our final lecture on Christmas carols.

Whether composed for a specific ritual function, the desire of a patron, or the creative need of the composer, the sacred music of the past is a window to both devotional ideas and musical techniques and includes some of the most important (and most convincing) works heard in the concert hall today. ■

Hallelujah, Amen: The World of Sacred Music

Lecture 1

Sacred music is multivalent: It can be music written for a specific church service or ritual, but it also can be music that was meant to be a sort of edifying entertainment outside of a church or ritual setting. Within this diversity, there are threads that hold the tradition together. As you will learn in this lecture, composers have used the word “hallelujah” to great effect within sacred music. Because the word itself is so important in Christian worship, composers always have presented it in a special musical guise in their settings within the great works of sacred music.

What Is Sacred Music?

- Sacred music is an immense topic. Nearly every culture across the globe includes such music for their religious rituals. We can think about sacred music in several ways.
 - Sacred music can be works composed for a specific religious ritual—such as a funeral service or a wedding—to praise God in prayer. Bach’s Cantata no. 80, “Ein feste Burg,” is such a piece, meant originally for a Sunday service in the Lutheran Church.
 - Sacred music also can be music with a sacred text or theme—setting a prayer, a religious story, or the like—that was composed for the purposes of edifying entertainment, like an oratorio, such as George Frederick Handel’s *Messiah*.
 - Sacred music also can be some combination of both of these: It could be a piece that was written originally for a specific function but has come to be edifying entertainment. Mozart’s *Requiem* mass is an excellent example of this.

- Some sacred music is almost instantly recognizable, such as the famous “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s *Messiah*. But is this sacred music? We hear it probably in both a church and a concert hall. In the West, we tend to conflate differing types of music into the category of “sacred music,” and those types of music might not be played in their original contexts.
- Up until about 1750, sacred music was music that, while aesthetically gorgeous, was considered by its composers and their contemporaries to serve a specific function, usually one within a church service. In many cases, this functional music—as some musicologists call it—has become an artifact: music that is no longer heard in its original context.
- Thus, when we hear Mozart’s *Requiem*, it is usually in a concert hall, where we pay for tickets, rather than in a Catholic church, where it would be used to celebrate a life or mourn the death of an individual. This adoption of such sacred works into the concert repertoire is something that has been ongoing in Western societies since the late 18th century.
- After 1750, works with sacred texts might be considered either part of a ritual or edifying entertainment. Many works were composed for a concert hall instead of a church, or as part of a church service. These works were meant by their composers to be autonomous works of art and worthy of consideration on their own aesthetic terms.
- Of course, the borders between the two are sometimes pretty permeable: Oratorios were originally thought to be entertainment and were performed in concert halls. A good example of an oratorio is Handel’s *Messiah*, from which the “Hallelujah Chorus” comes. Its premiere was in a music hall in Dublin in 1742. About 17 years later, though, *Messiah* was regularly being performed in churches and chapels as well as concert halls. And by the end of the 19th century, oratorios like Handel’s *Messiah* became part of elaborate religious services in British cathedrals. Today, oratorios can be frequently heard, at least piecemeal, in churches.

- The scope of history that this course will cover, from about 700 to 1901, breaks down roughly into three developmental stages.
 - The ritual origins of sacred music date from about 700 to the 17th century. Sacred music has its origins in Catholic prayer services like the mass and the divine office. Sacred music in this early time was music that served a particular liturgical function within religious services, and we can see a definitive change of direction as a consequence of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation of the Christian churches.
 - Another interesting development in sacred music was the attribution of compositions to a particular composer. Many unnamed priests, nuns, monks, and other clergy composed sacred music, but that music was functional. As this music moved beyond church walls, between 1700 and 1800, and found itself appreciated in secular venues, focus turned to individual composers and their patrons.
 - Sacred music from 1800 to 1901 continues to be a bifurcated story: sacred music for sacred ritual and sacred music for the concert hall. In both cases, audiences and composers alike intended the works to be edifying as well as artistically satisfying. Many of the most-famous and best-loved compositions were based on sacred texts or sacred stories. Even the works meant originally by their composers to be functional or ritual works quickly moved into the concert hall and became autonomous works of art.

Hymns

- A hymn, in Christian practice, is usually a simple piece sung in a church service by the congregation. Hymns have been part of worship for centuries. In ancient Greece and Rome, the word “hymn,” from the Greek *humnos*, simply denoted a poem in praise of a god or hero.
- In the Christian Church at the beginning of the Middle Ages, this definition was kept more or less intact, but was used, for a time,

predominantly to distinguish new poetry in praise of God from a musical setting of a text from the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

- The music of hymns is usually strophic, meaning that a few lines of music repeat for different verses of the hymn. The verses are the hymn's text. Verses frequently have a rhyme scheme, and might even be metrical, with a specific number of syllables in each line, and sometimes particular accents.
- Hymns cut across many religious denominations. Many hymns are also interesting conglomerations: Frequently, the text might be much older than the tune, or vice versa, or one text might have many different tunes associated with it. Besides the composers and lyricists, the people who write the words, the hymns we sing today may have gone through many editorial hands to come to the form in which we know them.
- “Jesus Christ Is Risen Today,” sometimes called “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” is a popular Easter hymn. A number of tunes for this hymn have been written. This is the case with most sacred texts that have stayed popular.
- One tune was by the Welsh composer Robert Williams, who lived between 1782 and 1818. Williams sets off the word “alleluia” with more notes than any of the other words. This begins to show us how important this word is in Christian worship.
- The version of this hymn text that most people know best is the tune written by William Henry Monk, who lived between 1823 and 1889. Monk’s version features a text with four lines of seven syllables each, with a four-syllable tag at the end.
- When discussing text-setting styles, we call placing only one note per syllable a syllabic style of text setting. When we have many notes to a syllable—usually five or more—we call this a melismatic text setting. There is an intermediary style as well, when you have only two to four notes per syllable; we call this a neumatic text setting.



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Some sacred music is very recognizable, such as the song “Amazing Grace.”

- In this hymn, the first line of the verse is pretty simple in terms of harmony and note setting. The setting is mostly syllabic—one note per syllable. In the first seven-syllable line, it is only the last syllable of “to-day” that receives two notes.
- The simplicity of the seven-syllable line is counterpointed by the longer melismatic setting of the four-syllable tag “alleluia.” This line includes five notes for the first syllable, two each for the second and third, and one for the final syllable.
- Monk repeats the word “alleluia” four times as the conclusion for each line of the piece.

Hallelujahs

- “Hallelujah” is one of the most important words in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions. In its simplest meaning, it is derived from the Hebrew word *halleluyah*, which means “praise God.”

- In the Book of Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, the word *halleluyah* is superscribed over more than 20 psalms, and some assume that it was chanted or sung in response to those psalms in the Temple of Jerusalem.
- In early Christian traditions, the word “alleluia”—a Latinized form of the original Hebrew word—was sung regularly in ritual services already by the 8th century, although it may be older than that.
- Because of its meaning—“praise God”—composers have frequently set it off in a special way. They have done so throughout most of the history of sacred music in the West.
- We will address three settings of the word, each of which is a microcosm of the three stages in development of sacred music, from the 18th to the early 20th century: one in chant from the Middle Ages, one from George Frederic Handel’s famous 18th-century oratorio, *Messiah*; and one from Edward Elgar’s early 20th-century oratorio, *The Dream of Gerontius*.
- Putting these two compositions together in comparison with each other introduces the idea of musical texture, which can be thought of as akin to a texture you might feel (something is soft or rough) or taste (something is creamy or crunchy). In music, when we use the word “texture,” we ascribe auditory characteristics to it, just as we ascribe tactile characteristics to taste or touch. Auditory texture describes some of the component parts of the music itself.
- When a number of things are happening at once in the texture, we call it a polyphonic texture. There are many different types of sacred polyphony. When a number of voices are singing but there is only one melody occurring, for example, we refer to this as a monophonic texture. Most early sacred music in Western Christianity was monophonic, and this type of monophony, which we call chant, was a living tradition in the Catholic Church for more than a thousand years.

- The hallelujah “*Pascha nostrum*” from the Middle Ages is a chant from the Roman Catholic mass for Easter Sunday. Centered on the word “alleluia,” this chant proves that even at the beginning of Western sacred music history, the word was set apart and given special musical emphasis. This is something that has continued throughout music history.
- Handel’s “Hallelujah Chorus” from *Messiah* is very much still heard today, though not in the context of a religious service. It’s one of the most famous and instantly recognizable hallelujahs of today. You can hear it in concert halls, churches, and even films and on television in advertisements. The word “hallelujah” is the frame of the entire piece.
- In Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius*, “alleluia” is singled out, in terms of its texture; it sounds stunning in comparison to the rest of the text. He sets it off differently than the rest of the verse around it so that his listeners can hear how special it is.

Suggested Reading

Mellers, *Celestial Music?*

Troeger, *Music as Prayer.*

Suggested Listening

Paschale Mysterium, dir. Alessio Randon.

Questions to Consider

1. What is sacred music in the West, and how has its meaning changed?
2. How do composers mark the importance of the word “alleluia” within their compositions?

From Chant to Early Sacred Polyphony

Lecture 2

The story of music written for the Catholic mass is the story of how a set of ritual prayers was enshrined as an inviolable tradition. Early composers added to this tradition for special feasts and holidays. Such elaborations helped create the idea of polyphony—music that has more than one part or voice sounding simultaneously—in the West. The story begins with a monophonic style of music called chant, in which everyone sings or plays the same melody, and ends with polyphony. By the end of this lecture, you will be familiar with some early polyphonic music of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Polyphony

- Polyphony developed first within the Catholic Church in the 14th and 15th centuries, then in the 16th century when the Protestant Reformation began, and finally in the 17th century, when Protestants and Catholics vied with each other to create beautiful and complex works. Sacred music became not just a ritual action in the Catholic Church or in one of the newer Protestant churches, but also became a music of fashion.
- As secular patrons entered the historical picture, good music by good composers reflected the taste of the patrons who funded it. So there developed some tension between the traditional and the innovative. This meant that at times, textual clarity and consideration were sacrificed for artifice within sacred music.
- This developmental trajectory is an interesting one: Sacred music developed from something that was purely functional—to help project prayers, as well as slow them down for contemplation by those praying—to something with a great deal of aesthetic intent within its composition.

- Even though a great deal of music from the Middle Ages and Renaissance era is lost, there still is much that has been rediscovered. But this music is so far removed from our own time that there is a good deal we just do not know about it, including how it sounded when it was performed. Even so, one thing is perfectly clear: Sacred music, and the function of music within sacred rituals and even everyday life, was exceedingly important to the people who heard it in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Chant

- Chant is the basis of most sacred music from the 7th through the 15th centuries and was used in many churches even beyond. It can be deceptively simple, because all one needs to do to make a chant is to fit words of a prayer to a melody.
- In its simplest form, chant is simply a way of singing a Catholic prayer in an unaccompanied manner. Chant existed in the churches and institutions of Western Christianity from their inception. Initially, it was used to sing verses of the book of Psalms and other biblical texts. However, as Christianity grew in Europe from the 4th century forward, the number, types, and complexity of chants grew.
- Chant has a number of functions, both practical and aesthetic. It slows the text down so that you spend more time contemplating the words. Chant also helps the sound of the prayer carry farther into the church so that more can hear it.
- This was important because the Catholic Church quickly codified an idea of intercession for its congregation. That is, although the layperson could pray by him- or herself, certain ritual prayers could only be said or sung by those people who had taken religious vows—such as priests, monks, and nuns—and it was their prayers that were offered to intercede for the larger congregation.

- This is one of the reasons that the texts for chants remained in Latin—the language of the educated classes—instead of being sung in the vernacular, or the ordinary language of the community, when vernacular languages developed.
- A piece of chant could come in many forms. One of the other most frequently heard forms of chant is called responsorial chant. “Responsorial” refers to two elements of the chant.
 - In the responsorial form of chant, a cantor—a solo leader of the choir—intoned the first phrase of the refrain, and then the rest of a choir joins him or her to sing the remainder of the refrain.
 - There is repetition within it. Usually, the refrain is repeated. The refrain might come before and after a verse, or it might come between verses of the chant. The refrain usually would be sung by all of the soloists, and the verse usually would be sung by just the cantor.
- Besides the form of chant, we can also categorize a chant according to its ritual use. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, there were two major uses for chant within Catholic liturgy and rituals.
 - The most important ritual use, and the one that most people might have a chance of hearing, is within the mass. Saying and singing the mass involves a number of prayers that include the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, as well as a sermon. This ritual was sung every day at a consecrated, or blessed, altar. A priest also had to sing at least one mass every day.
 - The most elaborate ritual of the medieval Catholic Church was the divine office, or office hours, a series of prayer services that regulated the day for individuals who were ordained—those who had taken vows to pray, such as monks, nuns, and priests. Larger communities—such as monasteries, convents, collegiate churches, or cathedrals—said the office every day. Within it, there were eight daily services, and each included a number of chants and readings.



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Many old chant books were very small. They would not have been of much use in the dark churches and chapels of the Middle Ages. Instead, chant books may have been consulted by the cantor as a way of reminding himself of the chants before teaching or rehearsing them with the rest of his choir.

- Besides mass and the divine office, there were also other rituals, such as celebratory processions on important feast days. But these were occasional. The mass happened every day in every church, and the divine office was said every day in specific religious communities.
- Chant was heard in all of these rituals, and there was quite a lot of it, because for some parts of these rituals, both the text and the music changed every day. For most of the Middle Ages, the dozens of pieces of chant one would have to sing in a week would be memorized, not sung off of music notation.

The Politics of Chant

- Chant was the most common form of music in the early Catholic Church. Most individuals who were ordained (such as priests, bishops, and cardinals) or who had taken holy orders (such as

monks and nuns) sang it every day. This was not a choice; it was a duty. The ordinary individual, who had not taken holy orders, would not sing chant him- or herself but might hear parts of it when he or she attended mass or some other Catholic service.

- The development of music notation in the West partially helped ensure that the monks, nuns, and priests sang the large chant repertoire accurately and uniformly. Medieval singers began to pull together a number of notation systems to make learning chant easier.
- First, the texts were gathered together into books, which were titled by function, such as a gradual for chants from the mass, a hymnary for texts of hymns, etc. Then, squiggly lines called neumes were placed over some of the texts, to remind the singer of the general contour of the chant. These did not have even approximate pitches at first. Staff lines were gradually added, making musical notation look much more like what we have today.
- The process occurred over several hundred years. This likely began before the 9th century, and by the 11th and 12th centuries, an idea of closer pitch identification had been established.
- The medieval monks, nuns, and priests were some of the most highly educated people in the medieval era. They usually were living in communities, at cathedrals and other large churches, in monasteries and convents, and after a time, at universities. In these places, they could easily communicate and collaborate with each other to compose new music and create new texts, usually to help make the service that much more spectacular.
- One way that a creative person in the Middle Ages could express his or her musical creativity would be to write music for the masses of new saints as they were canonized by the Catholic Church. Because new saints were being canonized frequently, this was a good opportunity.

- Another way was to create music on sacred themes that were outside of normal church services. These were works that were not meant to be heard in the mass or office, but as a sort of sacred and edifying entertainment for special occasions. The music used was very much like chant, with a relatively simple melody, to make sure the texts carried.
- A final way to be creative—and the one that became most important for the production of sacred music in the late medieval era—was to find some way to preserve the original chant but add to it in a way that made it seem more special or useful. This might mean the interpolation of new texts, or new music, or a combination of both, into the older chant.
- This is a characteristically medieval concept known as glossing. Although at first a simple technique to fit more monophonic music and texts into the mass, it soon became the generator of medieval polyphony: music that had more than one part sounded at the same time.

High Gloss: 12th-Century Parisian Organum

- The concept of glossing is relatively simple. We can think of glossing as adding commentary onto an original text. In medieval universities, such as that at Paris, this was a typical practice. One would take an original text (such as a passage from the Bible) and set it in the middle of a page. The modern writer—the glosser—would add his or her own interpretation onto this, first in the margins. By the 12th and 13th centuries, the new text, or gloss, frequently became much longer and more complicated than the original text.
- The technique leaves the original text present; the gloss is supposed to explain it and provide commentary on it but leave the original intact. Much the same thing happened with music, particularly works by two composers from the 12th and 13th centuries: Leonin and Perotin.

- Polyphony is a way to describe a composition that includes more than one part sounding simultaneously. Insofar as we can tell, it began to rise in Europe around the same time as notation did. At first, it was an improvised practice, discussed in numerous books on music. By the 12th century, we see examples of polyphony notated in several traditions.
- One of the greatest is that of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. The cathedral's high altar was consecrated in 1189. Around the same time, a specific type of polyphony formed in Paris that we now call “Notre Dame polyphony.” Two composers have been identified as practitioners of the style: Leonin and Perotin.
- The style that Leonin and Perotin composed had chant at its basis. The polyphony in this style is sometimes referred to as organum, which was used for particularly special occasions, such as masses celebrated on important days in the year of the Catholic Church. In pieces like these, the chant always exists as the lower line in this sort of polyphony, though that can sound kind of obscured at times.
- By adding new music and new text to the chants, Leonin and Perotin respected the inviolate tradition—the chant itself—but created something new and modern to carry and elaborate it: the Notre Dame–style polyphony.
- The use and practice of Notre Dame polyphony was highly proscribed and regulated. It was expensive and, consequently, tended to occur only in places that had great resources, such as Paris. Notre Dame polyphony did spread to other places, albeit slowly; most places in the 12th and 13th centuries stuck to monophonic chant for their sacred music.
- Notre Dame polyphony was also considered special and occurred on important Catholic feast days, such as Christmas and Easter. It occurred only in chants that had a differentiation between a solo/cantor and choir part, such as responsorial chants like the gradual

and the hallelujah. And only the parts of the chant that would have been sung by the soloists would be turned into polyphony; the choir parts were kept in monophonic chant.

Suggested Reading

Kelly, *Capturing Music*.

Yudkin, *Music in Medieval Europe*.

Suggested Listening

Leonin/Perotin, dir. Anthony Pitts.

Questions to Consider

1. How did medieval composers respect the traditions of sacred music and words while being creative with new compositions and musical styles?
2. How do chant and early polyphony sound? How does this difference affect your understanding of the texts being sung?

The Golden Age of Polyphony

Lecture 3

This lecture will continue to investigate how sacred music adapted into new styles and fashions, moving the discussion from the mass to the motet by investigating the transition from the music of the Middle Ages to the first half of the Renaissance. Through the examination of works by Machaut, Dufay, and Josquin, you will learn about the rise in prominence of the composer of sacred music, which occurred in part because of the rise in prominence of the idea of the patron.

Fashion and the Patron

- A patron was an important person in the social hierarchy, possibly a member of the nobility—such as a duke, prince, queen, or king—or an ecclesiastical authority, such as a bishop, cardinal, or pope. Throughout the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, such patrons hired composers to be part of their retinues.
- These new styles of sacred compositions were created by composers to both glorify God and exemplify the style and taste of these patrons. This created a cycle where new works of polyphonic sacred music could come in to and go out of fashion and thus require frequent new innovations.
- So, in the 14th and 15th centuries, styles of sacred music changed often to mollify the fashion of individual patrons, even if the genres composers wrote in were the same, such as the mass.
- We see an interesting development in this period. On one hand, there are composers like Machaut and Dufay, who care most about creating a work with the right technical sophistication (to be praised by the cultured and educated elite). On the other hand, there are composers like Josquin, who were most interested in making the text clear to the listener.

- In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, important individuals, such as members of the nobility who might be responsible for secular government or higher church officials, would have a group of people with them all the time, called a chapel. The presence of a chapel insured those around you that you were an important person.
- Eventually, the act of having a chapel became part of the way that a patron would show his or her cultural sophistication; having a chapel that included the best musicians—or at least musicians of renown—would reflect glory upon the patron.

Machaut and Dufay: The Cantus Firmus Mass

- Guillaume de Machaut, who lived from about 1300 to 1377, was one of the two most important composers, as well as one of the most famous poets, of the 14th century. He was born in the north of France, possibly near the city of Reims, and received training at a church in singing and composition early in his life. He was a priest. This, combined with his education, made him an excellent candidate for working in a chapel.
- His major patron was John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia. Machaut entered into the service of this nobleman around 1323 and became the King's secretary. He worked for him until about 1340. Around 1340, Machaut took a position at the cathedral of Reims—he was called a canon there—where he continued to compose and write poetry.
- Machaut enjoyed support from a number of other patrons for whom he composed music and poetry after this, including the Kings of Navarre and France and the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy. But these were not the same kinds of engagements. Machaut was not expected to live with these members of the nobility, nor was he expected to travel with them, as he was with John of Luxembourg.

- For Luxembourg and other patrons, Machaut composed a great deal of secular music as well as some sacred music. Particularly important is his mass cycle, *La Messe de Nostre Dame*. The Roman Catholic mass is a series of prayers that give instruction to the faithful as well as a reenactment of the Last Supper of Christ with the institution of the Eucharist.
- The mass is made up of the Ordinary and the Proper. The prayers of the Ordinary include the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. These have the same text every day, no matter when your mass is said or sung. The prayers of the Proper include the Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory, and Communion. These prayers have new texts assigned to them every day to follow the liturgical calendar. All of these prayers are included in mass every day, and they also would be sung as monophonic chants.
- Machaut set all of the prayers of the Ordinary and then arranged them into the first-known mass cycle. A mass cycle is a polyphonic setting of all of the prayers of the Ordinary, the unchanging texts of the mass.
- By the 15th century, setting polyphonic mass cycles of the Ordinary became the highest compositional attainment, and thousands of polyphonic settings of the mass cycle have been composed since.
- Each era has its own specific style for mass cycles. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the favored way was to set the cycle based on a cantus firmus, which means using a segment of chant or other preexisting melody as the basis for the composition.
- Both Machaut and Dufay used cantus firmi in their masses and placed them in a specific voice or set of voices, which makes them easy to find.
- Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame* was composed in the 1360s, when Machaut was living in Reims. By 1372, it became used as a weekly memorial mass for his brother. Then, when Machaut

died in 1377, he gave enough money to the cathedral that the mass continued to be sung there weekly for several decades.

- There are six movements in this mass: all five of the Ordinary as well as a short movement called the “Ite, missa est.” Each of these movements is set in four-voice polyphony and has a chant cantus firmus in the tenor voice. But unless you know the chant and where to listen for it, you wouldn’t necessarily know that it’s there.
- Machaut’s *Messe de Nostre Dame* is an excellent example of 14th-century sacred music. It is a bit removed from our time and tastes, because it is so intellectual. The setting over the tenor voice was a complicated puzzle meant to be savored by those in the know and not necessarily understood by all of contemporary society. It is a stunning display of technical virtuosity.
- The 15th-century composer Guillaume Dufay, who lived from around 1397 to 1474, also used a cantus firmus as the basis for many of his compositions. Dufay was born in present-day Brussels and was a choirboy at the cathedral in Cambrai. After his training, Dufay was ordained a priest.
- Most of his career was spent moving back and forth between France and Italy, where he worked for a variety of patrons, including Carlo Malatesta in Rimini and the court of Cardinal Louis Aleman in Bologna. Dufay worked, too, in the Papal Chapel on a few occasions as well as for the Duke of Savoy.
- Dufay was one of the most widely imitated composers of his day and—before Josquin—one of the most highly regarded. Like Machaut, Dufay wrote polyphonic mass cycles, such as the *Missa L’homme armé* (“Mass of the Armed Man”), which was composed by the 1450s or 1460s, probably about a century after Machaut composed his *Messe de Nostre Dame*.
- While Machaut’s *Messe de Nostre Dame* was heard predominantly in one place, Reims, until its eventual rediscovery by modern

scholars, Dufay's *Missa L'homme armé* was much more widely circulated in manuscript copies.

- Dufay's setting of this mass was part of a tradition of setting the tune "L'homme armé" in a mass cycle. Like the chant in the tenor voice in the music of Machaut, this is a monophonic source. But it is not chant: It is a secular song, in French and not Latin, with a text about an "armed man."
- By the 15th century, what you could use in a cantus firmus mass setting changed: Composers still did set chant but could also now set secular material, and they frequently did.
- Even though Dufay's *Missa L'homme armé* has the same number of voice parts singing as Machaut's—four voices—it is a little easier on modern ears. But still, this music obscures some of the text. Such music was heard predominantly by an elite who would have been more interested in the clever style of composition—here, using a well-known tune for the cantus firmus.
- The use of such a cantus firmus in the 15th century was still partially a game that the composer played to show how technically skilled he or she was. Machaut and Dufay were interested in the "puzzle" aspects of music: using elements that can be seen in the score but not necessarily heard.

Josquin, His Patrons, and the Word

- Josquin des Prez, who lived between 1450 and 1521, was a member of chapels in several countries throughout his life, because he was so sought after. An active composer at the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries, Josquin may have been the most famous musician of his day. He was praised by many for his compositions and creativity.
- Josquin's music was widely distributed, first in manuscript copies and then through numerous books of music. His music also lasted after his death. Josquin died in 1521, but his music continued to be

published up until the 1590s. Josquin's popularity was so great that he was also one of the most imitated or counterfeited composers.

- Josquin's career was like that of Machaut and Dufay. He was probably born around 1440 in the city of Saint-Quentin in a region known today as Picardy. He was likely trained as a choirboy in a church, which would give him skills in singing, composition, and languages.
- Josquin worked for a variety of secular patrons, including Rene, Duke of Anjou; King Louis XI of France; the Sforza family in Milan; and Duke Ercole I d'Este in Ferrara. He also worked for an ecclesiastical patron—the Pope—and served for a time in the Papal Chapel in Rome. Late in his life, he became the Provost of the collegiate church of Notre Dame in Condé-sur-l'Escaut.
- The composition “Ave Maria … Gratia plena,” likely written when Josquin was working for the Sforza family in Milan between approximately 1484 and 1489, remained extremely popular in the 16th century and is probably his best-known work today.
- This work is a motet, which developed as a new genre in the 13th century and was quite popular. We're not sure exactly what purpose the motet was intended for, but in general, it was a polyphonic work with a sacred text. In the 15th century, the motet came into prominence. The genre became a place where a composer would set sacred texts that were not necessarily from the mass.
- Motets would be composed for special occasions—such as the consecration of a new church—and performed at them, as well as for some Catholic liturgical situations. The text often would be associated with a holy day. If so, a motet based on such a text would usually be sung either during the mass, between the Credo and Sanctus prayers, or during Vespers in the divine office.
- The text for Josquin's “Ave Maria” is about the Blessed Virgin Mary and consists of an opening couplet, five four-line quatrains,

and a closing couplet plus the word “amen.” Josquin uses the music of his “Ave Maria” setting to enhance the rhetoric of the text, and he does this to great advantage. While the works of Machaut and Dunstable are beautiful, Josquin’s sensitive setting is exquisite and wholly convincing.

- Josquin became the most popular composer of his time because he created sacred music that set its texts with great—and touching—sensitivity. Listening to his music, one hears the words of prayers being magnified, which is, after all, the purpose of the great works of sacred music.

Suggested Reading

Fallows, *Dufay*.

_____, *Josquin*.

Leach, *Guillaume de Machaut*.

Suggested Listening

Le Messe de Nostre Dame, dir. Jeremy Summerly.

Missa L'Homme armé/Dufay, dir. Jeremy Summerly.

Missa L'Homme armé; Ave Maria; Absalon, fili mi/Josquin, dir. Jeremy Summerly.

Questions to Consider

1. What was the importance of the patron to a composer in the late medieval and early Renaissance eras?
2. Why might a composer use a cantus firmus?
3. How did Josquin make his text so clear? How does this compare to the text settings of Machaut and Dufay?

The Age of Reformation: Who Will Sing?

Lecture 4

In sacred music, making the religious text increasingly clear became one of the most important compositional requirements of the 16th century. This was not just a musical or artistic consideration for these composers. The issue of the laity being able to understand the religious text became a flashpoint for theological debates of the 16th century, which ushered in the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Works by three 16th-century composers—William Byrd, Martin Luther, and Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina—show us what compositional techniques they used to make the text clear and how this clear text helped express the theology behind their compositions.

Text Control: Byrd's “Haec Dies”

- Printed music was one of the most important technological advances for composition in the 16th century, and it had three significant consequences for sacred music. Before printing, if a composition was to be disseminated, or spread, from one place to another, it either had to be memorized or copied by hand. Copying music was a time-intensive process.
 - Printing provided a quicker spread of music to a wider audience than hand-copied manuscripts.
 - Printing allowed multiple musical styles to develop simultaneously in different geographic regions but also allowed for composers from far-flung places to learn each other's music and become inspired by it.
 - Printing in general, though not necessarily musical printing, also created an atmosphere ripe for religious revolution, which would have profound effects on music.

- A small motet by William Byrd entitled “Haec Dies” was printed in 1591 in a collection called *Cantiones sacrae II*. The text of this composition could be from one of two places in the Catholic liturgy: either the Gradual from the mass on Easter Sunday or as an antiphon for the Office of Vespers on Easter Sunday.
- The entire text is “Haec dies quam fecit Dominus exultemus et laetemur ea. Alleluia.” The translation of it is “This is the day the Lord Has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia.”
- Throughout this piece, Byrd took pains to keep this text exceedingly clear in presentation. Byrd changes his texture each time a new text phrase is sung, and he even breaks up the phrase of text into two distinct rhythmic units: the broader “exultemus” and the more dance-like “et laetemur.”
- Each of these segments includes a great deal of repetition. This, combined with the different techniques of compositionally setting the text, makes the piece extremely clear in the presentation of its words and, therefore, its meaning. Each time Byrd comes to a new phrase of text, he matches it with a differing style of music, and there are also pretty solid cadences, or pauses, between each of these new texts.
- This is not a work for a Catholic ritual, such as a mass or office, but one written and published in 1591, after England had undergone its own Protestant revolution. Insofar as we can tell—because singing in Latin was banned in English churches for a time after the English Reformation—Byrd’s “Haec dies” was not meant to be sung in churches there.
- While you can frequently hear this composition sung within churches today, at the time this work was published, it was meant to be a sort of edifying entertainment outside of a church. It was intended as a sort of chamber music for the discerning customer, or possibly music for a Catholic underground in Great Britain.

- Printing had made the production of music cheaper, so these pieces, once printed, could leave the church or chapel of the aristocrat or higher ecclesiastic, where they had been stuck in the 15th century, and be bought for and sung by amateurs. It is likely that these customers were pretty well off, likely even rich, compared to others in their own time. But you no longer had to be a member of the nobility or a higher ecclesiastical figure to have such music in your household.

Luther and the Protestant Reformation

- Even when influenced by political events and local secular rulers, the Catholic Church was the equivalent of a sacred music monopoly. If you were a composer writing sacred music in Europe, you did so using the genres and for the rituals of the Catholic Church.
- Of course, there were attempts at religious competition, but in an age when information could only spread slowly through word of mouth or manuscript copies, these attempts at different views of Christianity were quickly and efficiently put down as heresies.
- The Catholic Church retained its theological power. Alternate religious teachings were stopped, and the teachers were frequently put to death.
- With advances in printing because of the widespread use of the printing press in Europe around 1450, the dissemination of knowledge became much faster. It was more difficult for political and ecclesiastical authorities to suppress teachings that differed from those of the Catholic Church.
- Within music, the two most important reformations are Martin Luther's, which began in German-speaking lands in 1517, with an eventual spread to Scandinavian ones; and the creation of the Anglican Church of England in 1534.

- The Protestant Reformation eventually spread to most parts of northern and western Europe. But their music did not become as important to the history of sacred music as the music of the Lutheran Church and the Church of England.
- In the 16th century, Reformation fervor was strong. The immediate effects of these theological debates on music for those who became Protestants were great. Most Catholic rituals required intercession—via both prayer and music—from someone who had taken holy orders, such as a priest, monk, or nun. The singing of most formal prayers in the masses and offices was forbidden to the everyday layperson.
- On the contrary, most Protestant theologians championed what they defined as a more direct connection to God. The layperson's prayer had as much weight as that of the clergy, and the layperson was also encouraged to sing to God, with new genres of music specifically created for this, such as the Lutheran chorale and the English or German Psalter, which were meant for the congregation—not just the church choir—to sing.
- Even the language of ritual changed. Most Catholic prayers were in Latin. One of the most significant revolutions of the Protestant Reformation was translating many of the prayers of worship from Latin into the vernacular—that is, the commonly spoken language. Additionally, the Bible was translated from Latin into vernacular languages, meaning that those who could read now had greater direct access to it, and consequently, it became a more direct part of everyday life.
- With these revolutions—all of which aided the congregant's understanding of and participation in prayer—came a need for new genres of music that the congregations themselves could sing. In the Lutheran Church, one of the first genres of sacred music that was especially designed for the congregation was the chorale.

- A chorale is a simple song, usually in a strophic form, suitable for singing by the congregation. “Strophic” simply means that you have a number of verses, and while the text for every verse might change, the music that accompanies them—and the melodies the congregation might sing them to—would remain the same.
- Originally, chorales consisted of a metric, rhymed strophic poem sung in unison. One of the most famous chorales is “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,” or, in English, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The first surviving print of this chorale is from 1531, but it might have been written by Martin Luther between 1527 and 1528 and printed in other sources that are now lost.
- In addition to its simple rhyme scheme, the chorale itself is in a simple form with repeated melodies. The simple, strophic form, with internal repetition, was catchy and worked well with many chorales. Its rhymes and melody were easily learned and sung by an untrained congregation as well as a professional choir.
- Luther began writing his chorales between 1523 and 1524 with the aid of the composer and poet Johann Walter. Sometimes they wrote new tunes, and sometimes they adapted and recycled tunes from extant music, including chant. Such chorales are but one sign of the changes that Luther brought to the new Lutheran Church in the early 16th century.



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Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a musical liberal and reformer who was also the catalyst of the Protestant Reformation.

Palestrina and the Catholic Counter-Reformation

- With so much of Europe embroiled in the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church responded. At the Council of Trent, officials from the Catholic Church met to discuss the spread of Protestantism and to formulate an official response to it. The Council rejected most of the reforms that Luther proposed in 1517.
- The discussion of music took up only a small part of the Council's time, but the discussion was wide ranging, and a number of reforms were undertaken quickly.
 - Music in the liturgy was to be simplified, and the Council expressed a desire to make the liturgy uniform over all of the Catholic Church.
 - Some of the church officials at the Council voiced concern about the use of secular tunes, such as the 15th-century *cantus firmi*.
 - Officials discussed whether the church should abandon polyphony and return to having chant sung in church to present prayers.
- The Catholic Church made Counter-Reformation rules. The concrete effects for music in the Catholic Church were quick and clear.
 - Most Catholic churches and most higher church officials, such as bishops and cardinals, had elaborate and at times expensive musical establishments, called chapels. Such chapels might feature a choir including singing composers, an organist, and a handful of instrumentalists to help accompany the sacred music singing. One result was that these musical establishments were greatly reduced in size.
 - Sacred music in the Catholic mass would still be sung by choirs for the people, with a clergy interceding for them, but music would be chosen that would be more intelligible to the congregation. This was the case even if the words remained in Latin, a language that most of the Catholic congregation did not fully understand.

- Sacred music sung in the church would not contain any material that was considered “lascivious or impure.” In other words, secular cantus firmi would now be banned; however, sacred cantus firmi from chant and motets could still be used, and frequently were.
- The second rule from the Catholic Church—making the music more intelligible—codified and made popular the style of the composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, who lived from about 1525 to 1594. Palestrina was born in a small town near Rome and was trained as a choirboy at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. This training taught him how to sing both chant and polyphony, as well as how to compose both.
- Palestrina spent much of his life working for a number of ecclesiastical institutions and wrote predominantly sacred music. His output included more than 100 masses and 250 motets, many of which were printed and published, both in his life and just after his death.
- To make them sound “smooth,” Palestrina created in his compositions a series of specific compositional decisions, which were copied by Byrd and many others after Palestrina’s death. Palestrina’s compositional style had to do with technical aspects of the music that would remove jarring elements from it.
- One of the best examples of this smooth style is Palestrina’s *Pope Marcellus Mass*, published in 1567. To get away from the prohibition on secular cantus firmi, Palestrina did not use a cantus firmus in this mass at all. Instead, it is freely composed. In this mass, Palestrina still set all of the prayers from the Ordinary of the mass. The text of this mass is extremely easy to hear and understand.
- The Counter-Reformation successfully changed the aesthetics of Catholic sacred music and elevated Palestrina’s musical style into an ideal that would last for the next few centuries.

Suggested Reading

Anttila, *Luther's Theology of Music*.

Suggested Listening

Cantiones sacrae/William Byrd, dir. Richard Marlow.

Choral Works/Palestrina, Allegri, dir. Jeremy Summerly.

Questions to Consider

1. What were the general effects of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation on sacred music and musicians?
2. What methods did Byrd, Luther, and Josquin use to make their texts clear when sung?

Sacred Music in a Secular World

Lecture 5

In this lecture, you will discover how patronage for sacred music evolved: While some composers continued to write for specific individuals—as the German Heinrich Schütz did—others composed for institutions, as Giovanni Gabrieli did. Some even composed sacred music for no specific organization or patron but simply to find a new job, as Claudio Monteverdi did. Against the backdrop of secular music that was increasingly more fashionable than sacred music, the composers Gabrieli, Schütz, and Monteverdi all mixed elements of the venerable sacred styles of the 16th century and the newer secular styles of madrigal and opera to negotiate a music that was at once both reverent and modern, frequently to please (or even attract) their patrons.

Styles of the 17th Century

- One of the major technical innovations to help promote clarity of text in music at the turn of the 17th century was the development of the basso continuo style.
- Basso continuo is a style of presenting music in a declamatory fashion. Its accompaniment usually consisted of an instrument that could play chords, such as an organ, a harpsichord, or a lute, and something that could play a sustained note, such as a cello or gamba. This would provide the harmonic skeleton, and over this, the singer's text could be presented, either in a declamatory or melodic fashion.
- The accompanists would read only two lines of music—a bass line and the singer's melody line—and they would improvise a full harmonic accompaniment out of these two lines. It was a sort of shorthand musical notation.
- The basso continuo was a new and radical innovation, and it became the backbone of the entire baroque era. As a musical-style era, the baroque lasted between about 1600 and 1750 and includes

a number of extremely important composers for music, including Claudio Monteverdi, Henry Purcell, Antonio Vivaldi, George Frederick Handel, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

- The development of basso continuo in secular music led to styles like opera, dramatic stories told through music and dance. A story could be easily told with a clear declamation of text. In sacred music, basso continuo became another textural tool the composer could use to differentiate text.
- Venice's cathedral, San Marco, established a huge musical force by the beginning of the 17th century that included voices and instruments. Up until the end of the 15th century, the musical establishment in Venice, and in churches like San Marco, was decent. It usually included a choir, organists, and several other instrumentalists.
- In 1568, San Marco gained a permanent body of instrumentalists that was attached to the church, numbering up to 14. There were



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An organ is a common instrument that has been used in churches throughout the ages.

usually about 30 singers on hand to perform sacred music there, too. In San Marco, having this number of personnel led to a tradition of presenting *cori spezzati* music.

- *Cori spezzati* means “spread choirs.” Today, we sometimes call this polychoral music, or music that includes a number of choirs, instead of just one. In the Catholic Church of the late 16th and early 17th century, this style was used primarily for the presentation of motets and antiphonal psalm singing.
- Vocal polychoral pieces were generally performed with no spatial separation of the performing forces, but with a division between a small number of soloists and the ripieno, the larger “accompanying” ensemble. But some of the most extravagant late 16th-century performances saw one group in each of the organ lofts, situated on either side of the altar, and a third group on a specially built temporary stage on the main floor of the church, not far from the main altar.
- Such may have occurred in the performance of Giovanni Gabrieli’s motet “In ecclesiis,” a typical example of the polychoral style. It is a motet that includes a mixture of four vocal soloists, a choir of four parts and seven instrumental parts, including an organ playing basso continuo. This motet consists of a soloist singing a verse drawn from one of the Psalms, followed by a choral interjection on the word “alleluia.”
- Adding vocal soloist music and instrumental accompaniment into the possibilities of sacred music provided composers with many more textures, the ability to make compositions longer, and even ways to heighten individual words.
- Monteverdi and Schütz did not always use the polychoral style in their works, but they used many elements of it and did expand their sacred compositions to include the presentation of solo vocal sections accompanied by instruments, particularly instruments playing a basso continuo.

- The use of instruments in sacred music in the early 17th century was not completely new, but there was, in fact, a major change. Iconographic evidence and documents from the early 17th century and before—such as paintings and illustrations from books—shows a number of instruments used in churches, including organ but also strings and some softer wind instruments, some of which might have simply been used to double the choirs.
- Because of the basso continuo, more instruments were heard in sacred music than ever before, and we now have examples of sacred compositions that could not be performed without them. A good example is Claudio Monteverdi's masterful setting of the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* from 1610.

Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*

- Claudio Monteverdi is one of the most famous composers of the early 17th century and was perhaps the most famous composer in Italy of his day. He was born in 1567 and began publishing music by 1582, at the age of 15. He worked in all of the fashionable secular genres of the time, such as madrigal, opera, and the like.
- Monteverdi received training at the cathedral in the Italian city of Cremona. He began working for the Gonzaga dukes of Mantua, who were prominent Italian patrons of music, in 1590. Monteverdi worked for the Gonzaga family for three decades in Mantua, where he composed one of the earliest famous operas, *L'Orfeo*. In Mantua, he also composed *Vespro della Beata Vergine*.
- By 1608, Monteverdi was not satisfied with working at Mantua; perhaps he knew that the Gonzaga dukes were also not happy with him. He began working on *Vespero della Beata Vergine* in 1608, and it was completed and published in 1610. It may have been an attempt to establish himself as a sacred music composer before attempting to apply for sacred positions.

- *Vespro della Beata Vergine* is both a masterpiece as well as a well-constructed compendium of all of the sacred music techniques of the early 17th century, from the most conservative to the most radical. When it was published in 1610, it may have been intended as a compendium for use by choirmasters of court chapels like Mantua and of large cathedral establishments like San Marco in Venice—those that had a permanent staff of both singers and instrumentalists on hand.
- *Vespro della Beata Vergine* included Vesper Psalms, motets, a setting of the Magnificat, and a mass for six voices—everything a Catholic Church would need to present on a feast day dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The publication is a functional music composition. The Vespers service from the liturgy of the Hours, sometimes referred to as the divine office, was the basis for the composition.
- It is the mixture of the old and the new that makes Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* so interesting. It's a mix of the different styles possible in vocal music of his time and included elements that were operatic and secular with Palestrina-like, old-fashioned ones. It's not the staid contemplation called for by the Council of Trent, but instead a fashion-forward style that would appeal to a secular patron.
- Although *Vespro della Beata Vergine* was composed before Monteverdi worked at San Marco, the piece uses some of the same polychoral techniques that Gabrieli used at that church. These techniques were also used by German composer Heinrich Schütz.

Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*

- While Monteverdi likely composed his *Vespro della Beata Vergine* as a sort of fishing expedition, to find a new noble or institutional patron who would appreciate his compositional gifts more than the Gonzaga dukes, Heinrich Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* was written for a specific, Lutheran patron.

- Schütz lived between 1585 and 1672. Much of his compositional life played out against the Thirty Years' War, a series of bloody battles between Catholic and Protestant courts in German-speaking lands and eventually encompassed most of the rest of western Europe (save the Italian city-states).
- We owe the existence of Schütz's music to a series of secular patrons who supported him. Schütz came from a family of innkeepers in a Saxon town. His beautiful singing voice was noticed by the Landgrave Moritz of Hesse—a member of the nobility—who became Schütz's patron and paid for Schütz's musical and university training when Schütz became an adolescent.
- In 1609, Moritz offered Schütz support, including a stipend, if he would go to Italy to study with Giovanni Gabrieli in Venice. Schütz stayed there until 1612 and even published a book of Italianate madrigals while in the city. Schütz also learned about Gabrieli's Venetian polychoral style.
- On his return to Saxony, Schütz worked for Moritz in his court for a year, before being poached by the Elector of Saxony to work at that nobleman's court in Dresden starting in 1614. Schütz spent the rest of his career—almost 60 years—working for that court, with one brief exception: Schütz went back to Venice for about a year in 1628 and became acquainted with Monteverdi's declamatory style.
- The *Musikalische Exequien* of 1636 was composed at the height of deprivations of the Thirty Years' War. The piece includes two choirs and soloists that were drawn from those choirs; however, due to the limitations of the war years, it is scored to be accompanied only by organ. Schütz composed parts for other instruments but set them *ad libitum*—they could be used if available, but they weren't necessary.
- The *Musikalische Exequien* was commissioned for the burial service of Prince Heinrich Posthumus von Reuss by his widow in 1635. Its text, and even the character of some of the music, had been planned

in some detail by the prince himself. Some of the Biblical verses Schütz set for it were also inscribed on Prince Posthumus's coffin.

- The *Musikalische Exequien* contains polychoral elements as well as wholly dramatic declamatory ones. Because it was written during the depravations of the Thirty Years' War, it does not contain the same sort of brilliant instrumental accompaniment as Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*. It made do with an organ to support the voices, but the solo writing for the organ is just as spectacular in its way as the accompaniment is in Monteverdi's composition.

Suggested Reading

Varwig, *Histories of Heinrich Schütz*.

Whenham, *Monteverdi*.

Suggested Listening

Musikalische Exequien/Heinrich Schütz, dir. Harry Christophers.

Sacred Symphonies/Gabrieli, dir. Jeffrey Skidmore.

Vespro della Beata Vergine/Monteverdi, dir. Martin Flämig.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the introduction of the basso continuo change the way sacred music sounded?
2. Which elements of Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* were a nod to the venerable, and which were innovative?
3. How do the treatments of Heaven and Earth differ in the compositions by Monteverdi and Schütz?

Man and Meaning: Bach's Cantatas

Lecture 6

Sacred music moved beyond church walls between 1700 and 1800. Composers of sacred music were originally anonymous clerics composing purely functional music. Beginning around the 18th century, however, composers of sacred music needed to make a living in the secular world, and this required not only writing beautiful music, but also making it clear who had composed it. The music, as a result, served two purposes: both praising God and ensuring that the middle class public remembered the music's creators.

Johann Sebastian Bach

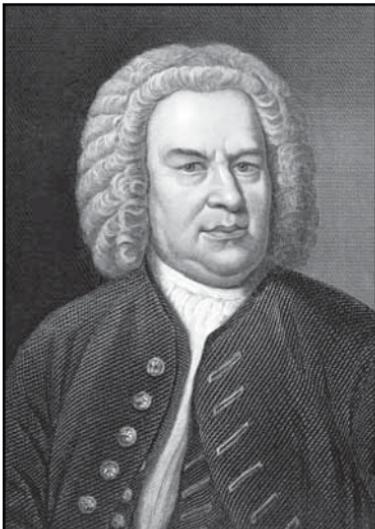
- Johann Sebastian Bach composed his Cantata no. 80, “Ein feste Burg ist Unser Gott,” because it was part of his job at a church in the city of Leipzig to do so. Bach and George Frederic Handel composed their works at a time in music history most refer to as the baroque era, which lasted from about 1600 to 1750.
- One of the hallmarks of this era was a mixing of melodic styles—solo voices singing, in various genres—as well as contrapuntal styles, where more than one voice would sing different melodic lines at the same time. Unlike a great deal of music of the Renaissance, however, in the baroque era, such music usually featured heavy instrumental accompaniments.
- With the possible exception of Handel, no other composer of sacred music is as famous in our world as Johann Sebastian Bach, who lived between 1685 and 1750. Bach composed hundreds of sacred works, many of which were performed in the Lutheran churches of the city of Leipzig during his life.
- The musical genres Bach composed in are many and varied, and they include large-scale Passions for Easter tide (such as the famous *St. Matthew Passion*), oratorios, cantatas, and motets. Although we

revere Bach's compositions today, his contemporaries valued not these wonderful works but, instead, his keyboard virtuosity.

- Bach's works were mostly unknown after his death, except for some of the keyboard music, such as the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. His sons and students performed some of his compositions in the last half of the 18th century, but the larger public never knew them.
- Connoisseurs discovered some of Bach's work at the end of the 18th century. One of these connoisseurs was a Viennese diplomat named Baron Gottfried van Swieten, who introduced the music of both Bach and Handel to Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Swieten's introduction of Bach to major composers stirred their imagination, and they used aspects of Bach's style particularly in their own sacred works.
- Because some composers knew about Bach, and valued his music, he was eventually revived to the public. This occurred through scholarly study, which included publications of both a biography of Bach and a published collection of his available music in a monumental "complete works" edition—as well as new performances of his music, such as that by Felix Mendelssohn, who re-premiered the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829.
- Cantata no. 80, "Ein feste Burg," was published for the first time in 1821, long after Bach's death in 1750, but became one of the major works that caused a revival of his music throughout the 19th century and allows us to know the wonders of Bach's music today.
- Bach was a canny composer. He showed even in his sacred music a wide knowledge of musical styles, both sacred and secular, available to him. As Cantata no. 80 ("Ein feste Burg") shows, Bach constructed his cantatas by combining the new Italian operatic styles of recitative and aria with the old—a chorale by Martin Luther as a cantus firmus—to create a pious and wonderful celebration of the founding of the Lutheran Church.

Bach as a Composer of Sacred Music

- In addition to the contrapuntal style, another sound that is associated with Bach is the chorale. Chorales are simple songs, usually sung in churches by the choir and congregation and sometimes by just the congregation. They are frequently in English, and we might even call a chorale a hymn. Most of the time, all four parts of a chorale line up into the same rhythm, though sometimes with a little variation in one part at a time.
- Chorales existed in the Lutheran Church from the 1520s onward. Martin Luther composed tunes for some, as did others. For the Lutheran composer, one way to remain attached to the tradition was to take the older chorale tunes and harmonize them—that is, setting a single, older tune with a few more parts.
- Throughout his life, Bach did just this, with many older tunes. He arranged them for organ and used them as exercises for his students to teach them about harmony. He also wrote four-part arrangements of them.
- One of the reasons chorales are so easy to sing is because they are usually strophic: They have multiple text verses, but the music remains the same for each one.
- The chorale is a traditional form of music, and perhaps Bach was so interested in it because he had such a traditional life and career.



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Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), a baroque-era composer, is one of the greatest composers of all time.

Bach was born into a musical family. He was a virtuosic keyboard player, and according to his son C. P. E. Bach, he had a number of other prodigious musical abilities.

- Like Monteverdi and Schütz, Bach's musical output depended on his patrons. Bach's first major post was as a court organist at Weimar, between 1708 and 1717, employed by the ruling duke. While there, he wrote a little sacred music, but mostly secular concertos and keyboard works.
- As the Kapellmeister, or music director, for Prince Leopold of Ahnhalt at Cöthen, where he worked from 1717 to 1723, he composed mostly music for solo instruments and for orchestra, including the famous *Brandenburg Concertos*.
- He occasionally composed sacred music at Weimar and Cöthen; however, Bach's decisive turn to sacred music came with his appointment as Kantor at the Thomaskirche (Saint Thomas's Church) in Leipzig, where he served from 1723 until his death.
- As Kantor at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Bach was responsible for organizing the performances of liturgical music each week in the churches of Saint Thomas and Saint Nicholas, the two principal Lutheran churches of Leipzig. The two churches were staffed entirely by the city.

The Cantata

- The cantata was the musical centerpiece of the Lutheran Sunday service. When Martin Luther broke with Catholicism in the 16th century, he initially kept many of the sung Catholic prayers, such as the Kyrie and Credo, within the new Lutheran services. Some of them were even still sung in Latin.
- But Lutheran services gradually changed: first with the addition of numerous chorales to be sung by the congregation, and then with the creation of the Hauptgottesdienst, the most important Sunday

service for Lutherans. By the 17th century, the Hauptgottesdienst also included the singing of a cantata: a multi-movement musical work on the same subject as the Bible readings and sermon of that day.

- The term “cantata” is a confusing one within music history, because it meant different things at different times. At its essence, it means simply a composition with at least one solo voice and instrumental accompaniment.
- In the 17th century, the term “cantata” evoked Italian chamber music, which consisted of secular, lyrical monologues with virtuosic work for one or a few singers. These would include some of the same styles of music as heard in contemporary opera.
- German composers discovered the cantata in the 17th century as well and began to adapt the cantata to liturgical use within the Protestant churches, typically Lutheran. Such compositions reached their zenith with composers in the 18th century, including Bach and numerous others.
- Librettos for Lutheran liturgical cantatas, starting in the 17th century, usually included a selection of biblical texts from the Book of Psalms or the four Gospels that would reflect the liturgical topic sermonized in that week.
- Along with these biblical texts, composers soon also started using Lutheran chorales as an organizing device for the cantata, setting verses of the chorale in different movements and frequently even in different styles. Sometimes, like in Renaissance music, this borrowing of older material to create the basis for a new, polyphonic work was called a *cantus firmus*, which translates as “fixed song.”
- At the end of the 17th century, a teacher, theologian, poet, and Lutheran pastor named Erdmann Neumeister began to publish a new type of Lutheran cantata text. Instead of drawing texts for the

cantata only from biblical verses and chorales, Neumeister added poetic paraphrases of the biblical texts, which reflected on them, frequently in somewhat emotional language. Neumeister began publishing liturgical-year “cycles” of cantata texts in 1695 and continued doing so until 1742. He created nine such cycles.

- In the 18th-century Lutheran service, the cantata may have been split into two parts, with one part performed just after the gospel reading and one just after the sermon. It was thought that the cantata would give the congregation time to meditate on both the scriptural lessons and sermon of that day, so that they could get the message of that Sunday’s Hauptgottesdienst more clearly.
- When Bach arrived in Leipzig in 1723 to take up the post of Kantor, a yearly liturgical cycle consisted of 58 cantatas: one for every Sunday, plus some for other important religious holidays, such as Christmas and Easter.
- One of Bach’s main jobs as Kantor was to make sure that the musicians at both of the Lutheran churches in Leipzig prepared a well-executed cantata every Sunday for the Hauptgottesdienst and on important feast days, as well. Between 1723 and 1729, he composed at least three complete cantata cycles, and possibly a fourth.
- After this, his cantata output fell off, and he turned to other projects, including the *Mass in B Minor*. He still composed a number of individual cantatas in the 1730s and 1740s. This may have been an attempt to complete a fourth or fifth cycle of them, or Bach may have been “filling out” other cycles.
- Bach’s cantatas for Leipzig blended elements of both the 17th-century chorale cantata, which used a cantus firmus and imitative contrapuntal structures, and the Neumeister type of cantata, which included more modern elements, such as recitatives and arias. Cantata no. 80, “Ein feste Burg,” is an example of this.

- “Ein feste Burg” is an eight-movement cantata that uses Luther’s chorale “Ein feste Burg” as a cantus firmus: The verses of the chorale and its music are spread over movements 1, 2, 5, and 8 of Bach’s cantata. Aside from the chorale text, Bach’s cantata also features new poetic texts by Salomo Franck, including two duets, recitatives, and an aria. Franck, who lived from 1659 to 1725, was a gifted poet at the court of Weimar.
- Bach was one of a few composers who merged the older, chorale-based form and the newer poetry. In doing so, he created a type of composition that was at once venerable and forward-looking. The newer elements in this cantata were the arias and recitatives. Each was a style of vocal music, meant for a soloist (or possibly a few soloists).
- Arias and recitatives were initially heard in the secular genre of opera. However, these styles quickly spread to many other vocal genres, including sacred ones like the cantata and oratorio. An aria can be thought of as being akin to a song. It has an accompaniment that supports the vocalist in such a way that you know the melody the vocal soloist sings is the most important part.
- In the 18th century, the aria might feature a great deal of repetition or words; would have a clear and distinct melody that you should be able to remember; and might have long, complicated melismas. The new, poetic texts by Franck allowed Bach to use the more modern styles of recitative and aria in Cantata no. 80. But there is plenty that is old and venerable in this work, as well.

Suggested Reading

Jones, *Bach's Choral Music*.

Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach*.

Suggested Listening

Cantatas BWV 80, BWV 147/Johann Sebastian Bach, dir. Mytas Antal.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the view of Bach's contemporaries regarding his importance as a composer differ from our view today?
2. How did Bach use a cantus firmus in his Cantata no. 80 ("Ein feste Burg")? What did he do in this cantata that was innovative?

Art for Art's Sake: Bach's *Mass in B Minor*

Lecture 7

Instead of examining functional music for church services, this lecture will explore a composition that Bach composed with no practical purpose in mind: his monumental *Mass in B Minor*. Within the *Mass in B Minor*, Bach recycled material he had written earlier through a compositional technique called parody. As you will discover in this lecture, the compilation of the *Mass in B Minor* seems to have been a conscious choice by Bach to preserve some of his best music within a classic genre.

Venerability and Stile Antico

- When Bach wanted to express a musical connection to the past in his cantatas, he had an easy option: use a chorale. Chorales linked the cantatas he wrote in the 18th century with the entire history of Lutheran music, because Martin Luther himself wrote a number of them, including, probably, “Ein feste Burg.”
- Obviously, because the *Mass in B Minor* is not a Lutheran genre, Bach could not use chorales. But he still could evoke a sense of history in this work. In Catholic sacred music of Bach’s time, there existed a style of composition that was specifically used to sound venerable and even a little old-fashioned: the stile antico.
- In general, stile antico means adopting a set of compositional characteristics from the past, a sort of musical connection—in the case of Bach, particularly to the music of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, who lived and composed in the second half of the 16th century.
- Palestrina’s music was known for its exquisitely crafted and smooth counterpoint. It seemed to follow rules that made it so. Many of the individual lines rise in a stepwise fashion. There are few large

leaps, and if one does occur, it is immediately followed by a small motion in the other direction. There are no dissonances or jarring moments on strong beats.

- In 1725, the music theorist Joseph Johann Fux published a book called *Gradus ad Parnassum*. This promoted Palestrina's style of counterpoint as the best style for sacred music. Bach owned a copy of this book. In fact, Bach copied by hand one of Palestrina's masses, the six-voice *Missa sine nomine*, using an anthology of music from the 16th century compiled by Ehrard Bodenschatz. Bach knew this style and its venerability well.
- In the 18th century, stile antico had several characteristics. These included measures with two main beats and an alla breve time signature, which is sometimes called “cut time.” Stile antico has slow-moving harmonic changes. Dissonance is highly controlled, and the melodic line of each voice is made as stepwise and smooth as possible. Just as in Palestrina’s music, there are few jumps in the melody. Bach used stile antico in the opening of the Credo in the *Mass in B Minor*.
- Within the *Mass in B Minor*, Bach was trying to be both ancient and modern at the same time, perhaps trying to create a masterwork with this piece.

Bach and the Catholic Mass

- During Bach’s time, many composers still wrote masses for regular use. The Catholic mass is a series of prayers. These prayers were frequently (but not always) accompanied by music, and the music was meant to emphasize the prayers.
- The mass includes proscribed sets of prayers, called the Ordinary and the Proper. Prayers of the Ordinary have the same text each time they are sung; prayers of the Proper have texts that change according to the liturgical calendar.

- Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, like most settings of the mass since the 14th century, sets the prayers of the Ordinary: the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. Bach would have been a little familiar with the Roman Catholic mass, because most of the regular Protestant services he composed music for still contained some vestiges of it.
- Although today we think of Martin Luther as one of the figures who turned Christian worship to the vernacular language, he actually advocated for keeping church services in a mixture of Latin and the vernacular. And Luther's original *Hauptgottesdienst*—the most important Sunday service for Lutherans, which he initially created in 1523—followed the basic outline of the Catholic mass.
- Bach's compositions in the genre of mass occurred in the last period of his life, when he was employed as the Kantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, from 1723 to 1750. Leipzig had an almost monolithic Lutheran tradition when Bach worked there. In contrast, the nearby city of Dresden was a mixed Catholic and Lutheran town.
- Most of the population was historically and staunchly Lutheran, but their leader, Elector of Saxony Friedrich August I, who ruled until 1733, and his son, the Elector Friedrich August II, both converted to Catholicism. As both Friedrich August I and Friedrich August II were Catholics, their court in Dresden required the regular saying of Catholic masses and regular performance of Catholic service music.

THE KYRIL ELEISON
*Then, joining his hands, he says after
 the server:*

P. Lord, have mercy.
 S. Lord, have mercy.
 P. Lord, have mercy.
 S. Christ, have mercy.
 P. Christ, have mercy.
 S. Christ, have mercy.
 P. Lord, have mercy.
 S. Lord, have mercy.
 P. Lord, have mercy.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS
sung during Lent, Advent a

© NoDerog/StockThinkstock

The Kyrie is part of the Ordinary of the mass.

- Bach essentially stopped composing cantatas and other church works for Leipzig in 1729. He continued to revive his own church music in Leipzig and produce music of other composers.
- Bach dedicated a pair of Catholic mass movements, a Kyrie and Gloria, to Friedrich August II in Dresden. His hope was for recognition from the man who at least nominally held authority over the Leipzig Town Council. If the elector truly liked the works Bach sent him, Bach might also receive some sort of regular employment, or even a title from Friedrich August II's court.
- Bach had to wait about three years for such recognition from Friedrich August II, but once he did, the recognition Bach received was impressive: In 1736, Friedrich August II bestowed onto Bach the title of “Electoral Saxon and Royal Polish Court Compositeur.”
- The title helped strengthen Bach’s position with the Leipzig church, school, and general civic bureaucracies there. The title also meant that Bach had additional duties. For the next few years, Bach wrote four Catholic masses for use in Friedrich August II’s court in Dresden.
- Because of his desire to impress the Leipzig Town Council, Bach became familiar with Catholic mass composition in the 1730s and 1740s. But the *Mass in B Minor* was not written—entirely, at least—for Friedrich August II and his Dresden court. Instead, the *Mass in B Minor* has an interesting and convoluted compositional history.
- Bach started working on the mass in 1724, soon after he started at Leipzig, and was working on it until about 1749, close to the end of his life. And many parts of the mass seemed to have different functions at one time or another.
- Leipzig’s Lutheran churches frequently used Latin-texted movements on special feast days. Bach composed the Sanctus from the *Mass*

in B Minor for one such day: Christmas of 1724. He composed the Kyrie and Gloria movements from the *Mass in B Minor* in 1733, for dedication to the Elector Friedrich August II of Saxony, when Bach was hoping for a title from Friedrich August II's court.

- As Bach aged, he withdrew from both his duties as Kantor at Leipzig and even from the directorship of the Collegium Musicum. He spent the last years of his life concentrating on his own projects but continued to work on parts of the *Mass in B Minor* at the same time.
- The Credo movement of the mass (the “*Symbolum Nicenum*”) was likely composed sometime between 1742 and 1745, but we do not know why. Insofar as we can tell, it was never sent to Friedrich August II. And Bach composed the rest of the *Mass in B Minor* between 1748 and 1749.
- Throughout his work on the mass, Bach took great care to recycle bits of earlier music from his cantatas, and he even recomposed some parts of the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Credo to fit a larger scheme and architecture.
- Thus, in one sense, Bach did compile the *Mass in B Minor*, because he recycled some material he had composed before, for other purposes. However, as that preexisting material was heavily reworked and reshaped to create a final version, Bach was, in a very real sense, recasting music he thought was excellent in order to preserve it. He was, in a way, making a compendium of his own style as a composer.

Bach's Sources and the Idea of Parody

- One way a composer might recycle music from another source is called a parody, which is when a composer uses preexisting musical material beyond a single melodic line—that is, from a polyphonic piece of music—as the basis for a new composition. When a composer uses his or her own music for such a parody, it might also be referred to as “self-borrowing.”

- Composers' use of this technique stretches back to the 14th century, but it was most frequently used in sacred music composition beginning in the late 15th century. In Bach's time, German composers frequently discussed the parody technique as useful for fitting new texts to older music. It still involved some work, however, as use of the technique implied that the new texts, and possibly changing the voicing or instrumentation that would perform them, could require a significant rewriting of the music.
- Self-borrowing parody seemed to be a common technique in Bach's time. Handel's *Messiah* and his other oratorios abound in such parodies. Bach often borrowed from his own works. For example, his Christmas Oratorio contains much recycled material from his Cantatas 213, 214, and 215.
- In the *Mass in B Minor*, Bach used parody a number of times. This is especially apparent in the Credo movement, but it is not alone in being recycled. In total, nine of the 23 sections of the *Mass in B Minor* contain some sort of parody. Other sections might, too, but we don't know. Not all of Bach's music survives, and there might be lost cantatas and other pieces that Bach composed before the *Mass in B Minor* and then recycled in a similar way.

Suggested Reading

Butt, *Bach*.

Stauffer, *Bach*.

Suggested Listening

Bach: Mass in B Minor, dir. Helmut Muller-Bruhl.

Questions to Consider

1. Why did Bach—a staunch Lutheran—compose a Catholic mass?
2. In what ways is the *Mass in B Minor* a compendium of Bach’s music?
3. What is the stile antico, and how is it important in the *Mass in B Minor*?

Handel's Great Oratorio: *Messiah*

Lecture 8

George Frederic Handel's *Messiah* was composed with a sacred story—the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—using materials available to him at the time, mostly from secular music, particularly the genre of opera. Intended as an entertainment, it was presented in a concert hall, not in a church. *Messiah* has had an interesting and incredible rise to be the centerpiece of sacred music, particularly in English- and German-speaking countries. In this lecture, you will discover how *Messiah* became one of the most important compositions in the Western canon.

Handel's *Messiah*

- George Frederic Handel's *Messiah* changed two things within the history of music.
 - It created a canon of music, a group of compositions that we return to frequently. Since the 1750s, *Messiah* has been part of the Western canon in English- and German-speaking places.
 - It began to break down the barriers between the church and the concert hall regarding sacred music. Although *Messiah* was initially meant to be an entertaining work, and not a religious ritual, it does have a sacred text.
- Handel's *Messiah* is an oratorio, which is a dramatic rendering of a religious story or text not meant to be part of a service or ritual. Most oratorios were written on stories from Old Testament texts.
- By the time of the 18th century, the audience expected that the text of the oratorio would be delivered by a combination of soloists and a choir, accompanied by a small orchestra. Usually, the soloists would be identified with specific characters.

- *Messiah* is unusual for an oratorio of this time in a number of ways.
 - It gives a much larger role to the chorus than works by previous composers.
 - It is an oratorio that is based on a New Testament story—the life of Christ—instead of an Old Testament one.
 - It does not tell a story per se; instead, it presents the events of Christ’s life via textual allusion.
- Although most people usually refer to the composition as “Handel’s *Messiah*,” it was really a collaboration between the composer Handel and his librettist: an English gentleman, scholar, and patron of arts and politics named Charles Jennens.

A Brief History of the Oratorio before Handel

- Most of today’s famous oratorios—including Handel’s *Messiah*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, and Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius*—were originally composed in the English language and premiered in English-speaking places. This is especially interesting given that the genre is of Italian origin and was imported to Great Britain by Handel nearly a century after its inception.
- In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, oratorio flourished in Italy, especially in Rome and Florence. Its development paralleled opera’s and included many of the same elements: solo singing of both melodically florid and more syllabic, declamatory styles; some choral singing; and instrumental accompaniments.
- The works that preceded oratorios were compositions with sacred texts—sometimes prayers, sometimes stories from the Old Testament—sung in dialogue between singers. This occurred outside of regular Catholic masses and was meant to be a sort of religious entertainment for people in the community. Such performances, even though considered entertainment, had a religious, didactic function: The oratorio would be split into two parts and include a sermon between each.

- By the end of the 17th century, oratorios were also performed in the homes and palaces of noblemen. Such oratorios were thought of as edifying entertainment. Early oratorios frequently featured solo singers and might be arranged as a dialogue on a story from an Old Testament subject with a narrator.
- Oratorios quickly spread by the end of the 17th century from Italy to Spain and Germany, but not to England or Ireland. Handel's oratorios were the first successful examples of the genre to be performed in the British Isles.

Handel and the Origin of *Messiah*

- Handel was the perfect evangelist for English oratorio. He was born in Halle, in part of what would later become Germany, and his musical talent was recognized early. Like most composers of his day, he aspired to write operas—the most fashionable genre of the day, valued and celebrated by the most powerful figures of the day.
- In the early 18th century, most places in Europe valued Italian-style opera over all others. Many non-Italian cities, such as London and Vienna, even had regular performances of opera in Italian.
- Following early jobs in Halle and Hamburg, Handel went to Italy for about four years, from 1706 to 1710. He was there nominally to learn the most fashionable techniques of Italian opera. He also was there because Italian training would be a great experience to help him find a permanent job.
- Handel learned a great deal about music while in Italy. He worked on sacred compositions for the Catholic Church, a number of operas, and some other secular works. These included two oratorios during his stay in Rome: one in 1707 and one in 1708. He set these partially because there was a papal ban on opera in Rome at the time. This was his first experience composing in the genre.
- After a brief return to the north, for jobs in Hanover and Düsseldorf, Handel went to London in 1711 and stayed there for the rest of his

career. Through the 1720s, Handel made most of his money and fame composing operas for London theaters.

- Because the audiences in London desired it, Handel composed mostly in a subgenre of opera called *opera seria*: works in Italian with plots based on Greek and Roman history or myth. Frequently, these had a happy ending, even if the source history or myth did not.
- One such opera was *Giulio Cesare*, a fictional retelling of the meeting of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra. Handel completed the opera for the King's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1724. Operas, typically, focused on the singers and their abilities more than on the story or anything else.
- Handel used many of the same operatic techniques, slightly varied, in his oratorios. In typical opera of the time, most of the musical heavy lifting would be done in pairs of movements—often run together—called recitatives and arias.
- A recitative would give you the plot of the story, sometimes in dialog, but also in monolog format. The music for it would be simple, accompanied usually by just a few instruments, such as a harpsichord to play chords and realize the harmonies and a cello to give a more sustained bass line. The melody articulated by the singer would also be simple, and even syllabic in its setting. In a recitative, you do not hear fancy ornaments or even much of a tune.
- To the London audience, although necessary, recitatives were not nearly as interesting as arias, which are the real songs from operas. With them, singers had a chance to shine. They were more melodic than the recitatives, usually had a larger accompaniment, repetition of words and notes, and even a melody you could hum.
- The form of the *da capo aria* depends on having two texts with two differing emotive meanings. The phrase “*da capo*”—Italian for “to the head”—also implies a bit of repetition within the piece. And even though these texts have two-part forms, such arias usually have a three-part musical form.

- In Handel's operas, the recitative movement frequently spilled right into the aria, almost without hesitation. That sort of recitative-aria pairing was the building block of most vocal music in the 18th century and was something that Handel would use, and alter for his own purposes, within *Messiah*.
- Handel composed such operas for London audiences throughout the 1710s and 1720s. But his audience began to lose interest in Handel's opera seria. So, Handel began to diversify, to look for another source of income. By the 1730s, he did so with oratorio.
- Oratorio offered some advantages to Handel. Because the oratorios were sung in English, he did not have to use expensive Italian opera star soloists. He could, if he wished, hire much cheaper native-English-speaking talent to do so.
- Opera was also a genre mostly associated with the aristocracy. The growing middle-class population of London thought as a genre that opera was decadent and corrupt. Oratorio thus became a way for Handel to expand to a new audience, because he could sell the biblical texts as morally edifying.
- Throughout the 1740s and into the 1750s, Handel increased the number of oratorios he would offer each year. Indeed, by this point, operas were no longer the major focus of his composition— oratorios were. By the 1750s, he even started offering a regular season of oratorios for his newly expanding audience. And he was highly successful doing so.

Jennens's Contribution

- Music makes up only half of an oratorio; the other half consists of the text. In the case of *Messiah*, that text was compiled by Charles Jennens, who lived between 1700 and 1773 and was an important theologian, a writer, and a patron of both the arts and politics.
- Jennens bought copies of many of Handel's published scores and traveled to London regularly to hear concerts. Besides *Messiah*,

Jennens wrote the librettos for two or three of Handel's other oratorios: *Saul*, *Belshazzar*, and possibly *Israel in Egypt*.

- The oratorio *Messiah* was initially Jennens's idea, and he gave Handel his own libretto for it by July 10, 1741. He hoped that *Messiah* would be premiered in London during Holy Week, the week before Easter, in 1742. It was, but not in London. Handel took *Messiah* to Dublin instead.
- Handel had had a disastrous opera season in London between 1740 and 1741. So, when he was invited to give a series of 12 concerts in Dublin on behalf of three charitable organizations in the 1741 to 1742 season, he decided to go. He composed *Messiah* before embarking on this trip—between August 22 and September 14, 1741—and took it with him.
- Jennens's contribution to *Messiah* can't be underestimated. While Handel in the 1730s was content to compose works with Old Testament stories—such as *Esther*, *Deborah*, *Athalia*, *Saul*, and *Israel in Egypt*—it took Jennens's imaginative libretto to move Handel's oratorio composition from excellent to extraordinary.
- *Messiah* contains a rich variety of vocal music to tell the story of Christ's life: recitatives, arias, and choruses. Although Jennens's libretto for *Messiah* defied expectations, its musical structures were normative for the day, just like the ones Handel and others used in Italianate opera. The recitative-aria pairing—“Behold, I tell you a mystery” and “The Trumpet Shall Sound”—exemplify this most readily.
- *Messiah* was meant to be entertaining, though edifying, and Handel consequently used much of the same musical language from contemporary opera. However, even though he was using standard musical language, Handel strove to make the music he used for the text as convincing and profound as possible.

Suggested Reading

Hicks, “Handel and the Idea of an Oratorio.”

Luckett, *Handel's Messiah*.

Suggested Listening

Messiah/George Frederic Handel, dir. Nicholas McGegan.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the canon of Western music, and how did *Messiah* help form it?
2. What elements from opera did Handel use in *Messiah*? How did this conform to his audience’s idea of entertainment?

Messiah: From Entertainment to Ritual

Lecture 9

In this lecture, you will analyze the interplay of text and music in *Messiah*, considering the sources Handel's librettist, Charles Jennens, drew from to complete the work. You will examine a few parts of the composition before learning about the history of the work after its Dublin premiere. *Messiah* became one of the most important compositions in the Western canon not because it was revolutionary, but because it was an excellent musical setting of fundamental texts from Christian belief that could be harnessed for both moral improvement and charity.

Charles Jennens's *Messiah* Text

- An oratorio in Handel's day was meant to be an edifying work of entertainment. Most of them, like Handel's oratorios of the 1730s, such as *Esther*, told a specific story based on an Old Testament text. *Messiah* is unusual as an oratorio. It is explicitly about the New Testament Christ, but it is not a story per se about Christ. Instead, it is more about humanity's redemption, told via Old Testament prophecies about Christ.
- At least half of *Messiah*'s success belongs to Handel's librettist for the work, Charles Jennens, who lived between 1700 and 1773 and was an important theologian, a writer, and a patron of the arts. He came from a well-off family and attended Balloil College at Oxford University. But he didn't graduate from Oxford University.
- His political beliefs as a Nonjuror meant that he thought the ruling kings of England, from the House of Hanover, were illegitimate. He was not allowed to take a degree, nor was he able to take on any political work. This left Jennens free to engage in more literary and theological pursuits, which he did throughout his life, including compiling texts for several of Handel's oratorios, including *Messiah*.

- For *Messiah*, Jennens's choice of texts reflected several ideas: his particular brand of Evangelical Christianity and his profound belief in the miracles of Christ, as described in the Bible. Jennens had a zealous, evangelizing belief in Christianity, and the libretto for *Messiah* is an expression of this.
- To create the text of *Messiah*, Jennens selected carefully from a number of sources, including different versions of the Bible and the Burial Service found in the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer.
- The majority of the texts within the oratorio come from the Old Testament. In their original contexts, they do not necessarily pertain to Christ. But through careful selection and elision—that is, the deletion of syllables or letters in words, to achieve a certain effect—Jennens created an extremely beautiful and abstract life of Christ within *Messiah*.
- Jennens's libretto for *Messiah* is divided into three parts.
 - The first part portrays the birth of Christ and his life on Earth.
 - The second is a setting of Christ's Passion, the events immediately leading up to his crucifixion, followed by his death.
 - The third part imagines both the resurrection of Christ and promise of salvation for believers.
- Jennens's text had a deep, personal meaning for him—strong enough to motivate him to include texts that displayed his own beliefs.
- Handel responded with musical setting that incorporated styles and forms that were familiar to his audience: recitatives, arias, and choruses, as well as musical techniques such as imitative counterpoint and fugue, that were heard mostly in contemporary sacred music.

The Interplay of Text and Music

- At all times, *Messiah* is incredibly evocative, even when sticking to the models his audience would find very familiar. The opening overture to the oratorio is an excellent example. Even for a composition meant to be of an entertaining—though edifying—nature, Handel was presenting a serious, contemplative side to his audience, in order to create the right mood immediately.
- But Handel could also write with a lighter touch. This he does a little later in the first part of *Messiah*, just before the angel announces the presence of Christ. The movement is called the “Pifa,” and Handel uses a number of musical tricks to make the movement sound rustic. These tricks include the dance-like time signature and melodies that the string parts play, as well as the long, held tones in the basses and cellos.
- The overall feeling of this movement is one of peace, and it sets up the idea of the shepherds being out in the country very well.
- In both of these cases, Handel was using typical musical practices to quickly convey information to his audiences—a particular mood, like the opening movement of *Messiah*, or even a location, like the countryside within the “Pifa” movement.
- This is called musical rhetoric, and Handel has done this successfully in these movements, without even having a text as a crutch to convey this. When it came to setting movements using Jennens’s text, Handel also included such tricks of musical rhetoric well, and just as evocatively.
- The initial audience for Handel’s *Messiah* was the same one for the operas he had successfully composed in the 1720s and 1730s in London. Opera focused on the soloist and everything that he or she could do vocally.

- Handel's major innovation in his English-language oratorios in general, and *Messiah* in particular, was to make the chorus an equal partner in the presentation of the drama. We can see this through a number of the musical trajectories he used, as well as the musical styles he chose.
- For solo singers in *Messiah*, there are two principal musical styles that Handel employs: arias and recitatives. Arias are melodic in nature. Operatic arias tend to have specific audible forms and present relatively short texts with a good deal of repetition within them. Texts are usually poetic, or at least lyric in nature, and might include some sense of contemplation. They also can give the soloist a chance to show off, by singing long and beautiful melismas.
- Recitatives in *Messiah*, as well as in contemporary operas by Handel and other composers, tend to do more yeoman work. Their texts are usually about plot points and give a sense of narrative to the work. So, the texts can be longer, and their settings tend to be more speechlike and declamatory. Instead of the beautiful, flowing melismas of the arias, recitatives set text syllabically—that is, one note per syllable of each word—and they do not have the same sort of melodic shape.
- *Messiah* uses two distinct types of recitative within it; the simpler form, *secco recitative*, is heard most frequently. This is the recitative style set for the vocal soloist with just a few instruments—usually a keyboard, such as a harpsichord, to play chords and give the recitative its harmonies, and a low string, such as a cello, to give a sustained note.
- If something special happened within a narrative that the composer wanted to emphasize, he or she could use another, fancier type of recitative called an accompanied recitative. These recitatives still deliver text in a workmanlike way but do so with more instrumental coloring.

- For Handel’s audience, the expected trajectory in opera was for a recitative—either a *secco* one or an accompanied one—to lead to an aria. The recitatives were necessary for the plot, but the real showstoppers were the arias, and recitatives always aimed toward them.
- Within his oratorios, Handel made the recitatives weightier in general, and he incorporated the chorus into this trajectory of recitative to aria, so that the entrance of the chorus became the end goal of that trajectory. In *Messiah*, Handel used several models that frequently deflected away from the aria as a center of importance.
- With his arrangement of accompaniment and setting, Handel takes Jennens’s text—which is annunciatory of the birth of Christ but isn’t specific—and places emphasis not on God and his glory, but instead on the “good will” to the human. In this way, Handel emphasizes a theological lesson.
- The second trajectory Handel uses throughout *Messiah* is to work from a recitative through an aria to culminate then in a chorus. The third part of *Messiah* is about the resurrection of Christ and the afterlife that Christians hope will come after death.



George Frederic Handel (1685–1759)
composed *Messiah*, one of the most well-known and beloved pieces of sacred music.

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- The texts of all three of these movements are about death and sin, which still existed in the world, according to Jennens, but could be mitigated and even vanquished through belief in Christ. The recitative is a relatively short *secco* one that spills right into a duet. Duets and arias are musically equivalent in these trajectories that Handel creates.
- These trajectories—from recitatives to choruses, sometimes through arias and duets—are just one way that Handel makes the choruses the goals for most parts of *Messiah*.
- Handel also used a chorus at the end of the oratorio to confirm that *Messiah* was indeed not just an entertainment, but serious and edifying, in much the same way that he used the instrumental opening movement to provide a mood of contemplation at the beginning of the work.
- To end *Messiah*, Handel resorts to the contrapuntal technique Johann Sebastian Bach used so frequently and well within his compositions. This gives *Messiah* the veneer of the sacred, even if the oratorio as a genre was thought of as a composition for entertainment in Handel and Jennens's time.
- *Messiah* was conceived of as an entertainment by Handel; however, Jennens held a serious regard for its sacred words. Handel responded by mixing sacred-sounding music with secular techniques borrowed from opera to create a work that he hoped would resound with his audience.

Messiah's Rise to Fame

- *Messiah's* rise to fame took longer than Handel thought it would, and it did not occur in the way Handel, nor anyone else, expected it to. *Messiah* premiered in Dublin, with its proceeds going to charity. It was received well by its audience.

- In London, *Messiah* was initially less successful. Handel hoped that concerts of *Messiah* in London would earn him a handsome profit, but his attempts at it in the 1740s were not particularly successful. Possibly this was due to audience concern over its subject: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, even if abstractly told.
- There was a strange paradox at work in *Messiah*. On one hand, the genre, oratorio, was considered entertainment. On the other hand, the New Testament text, compiled as it was by a devout Jennens, was markedly religious, and about Christ.
- Handel produced his oratorios in the opera theaters of London, either Covent Garden or Haymarket. They were not thought suitable for performance in a church. Furthermore, some members of the public in Handel's day considered the theater to be a den of vice and the performers working in it to be particularly wicked.
- The common thread of these performances in the 1740s was that Handel was trying to use *Messiah* for profit. He produced the concerts at the London theaters himself and paid for the musicians. If there was money made on the concert, he succeeded; if not, he lost.
- For whatever reason, London audiences were happy to hear and pay for Handel's Old Testament works at the London theaters, but not *Messiah*. The oratorio eventually became a London success in the 1750s, when Handel stopped trying to make a personal profit from it and began using *Messiah* regularly instead for a yearly charity concert.
- Objections to both *Messiah* in particular and to oratorios in general continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, usually boiling down to two issues: the use of Biblical words for an “entertainment” and the purported immorality of the solo singers who performed oratorios when they were not singing opera. But such objections never detracted from *Messiah*'s continued rise.

- Less than a century after its first performance in Dublin, *Messiah* was a work that the audiences considered sacred and sublime and was the centerpiece of a concert tradition. *Messiah* is, in essence, the work that created the canon of Western classical music.

Suggested Reading

Kelly, *First Nights*.

Smith, *Charles Jennens*.

Suggested Listening

Messiah/George Frederic Handel, dir. Nicholas McGegan.

Questions to Consider

1. How did Jennens's politics and piety affect his compilation of *Messiah*'s text?
2. What elements of *Messiah* sound sacred and venerable?
3. Why did *Messiah* become so famous in Handel's time, and after?

Mozart's *Requiem*: Praise and Memory

Lecture 10

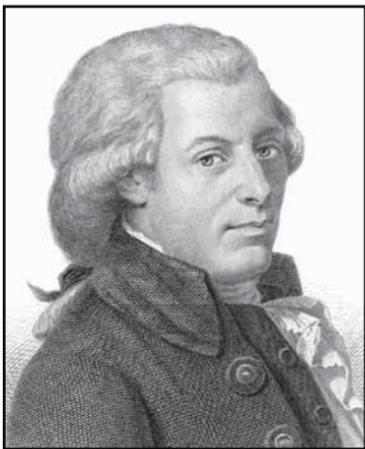
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem*, one of the last pieces Mozart composed, is a requiem mass. This was a special kind of votive service within the Catholic Church: It was sung or said to commemorate the dead, either at the funeral or on anniversaries. The *Requiem* mass included some of the same prayers as the regular Catholic mass, such as the ones set by Machaut, Palestrina, and Bach. When it was set polyphonically, it included settings of different movements from the normal mass. As you will learn in this lecture, the *Requiem* is an unusual piece that portrays the drama of life, grief, and the hope of the afterlife.

Mozart's *Requiem*

- Mozart's *Requiem* was a commissioned work. In the case of the *Requiem*, the commission was somewhat convoluted. The commissioner was the Austrian Count Franz von Walsegg. The count commissioned the *Requiem* as a mass for his wife, Anna, who died in February of 1791. As a member of the nobility, and a Catholic, commissioning such a mass was a normative way to mark the passing of a spouse.
- But Mozart's *Requiem* mass quickly outgrew the limited purpose von Walsegg devised for it. It became a very public composition. This was due in part to its general excellence as a masterwork. It also attracted the attention of the general public because Mozart died while composing it.
- It's not surprising that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed sacred music such as the *Requiem*. He was born Catholic and schooled well in the music of that tradition. But sacred music usually does not come to mind when we are thinking of his compositions. Many would more likely name one of his wonderful operas, such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, or his symphonies, such as Symphony no. 40 in G Minor, as typical Mozart pieces.

- Most of Mozart's early training was on the road. He was a virtuoso, and many of his early works were keyboard pieces meant to show off his abilities. These were secular pieces. However, by 1768, he was composing masses and, in the 1770s, various kinds of church sonatas in Salzburg for his patron at the time, the Archbishop Hieronymus von Colloredo.
- He left the service of the archbishop to become a freelance musician in Vienna. As a freelancer, he composed few sacred works, because no one requested or required him to do so.
- When he did compose works like the Mass in C Minor, K. 427, he did so for a specific purpose—in the case of the Mass in C Minor, as a thanksgiving offering for his marriage to his wife, Constanze. And the “Ave verum Corpus,” K. 618, was composed to give thanks for Constanze’s recovery from illness.
- Opera and instrumental music make up the bulk of Mozart’s works during his decade in Vienna; this is part of what makes the *Requiem* so special. As with Bach’s composition of his *Mass in B Minor*, Mozart wrote his *Requiem* at a point when he had discovered his own compositional voice. With the *Requiem*, he aspired to create a work that would fulfill a commission, express a personal piety, and—like Handel’s *Messiah*—be a work that would last beyond his own time.
- The year 1791 was an extremely interesting one for Mozart. After a period of compositional stagnation for part of 1790, where he didn’t write much of anything of significance, Mozart’s creative fires were rekindled for about 10 months before his death.
- Mozart received the commission for the *Requiem* early in the year but put it off for a time because he had too many other things going on. His projects at the time included his final opera seria, *La Clemenza di Tito*, which premiered in Prague on August 28 of 1791, and his great opera *Die Zauberflöte*, which premiered in Vienna on September 30.

- Performances of his music in Prague, which included this new opera as well as *Don Giovanni*, were praised, and the premiere of *Die Zauberflöte* in Vienna in the following month was extremely successful. There were 20 performances of the work in October of that year.
- Although he was perpetually in debt, his personal fortunes were getting much better. He was receiving regular pay as a chamber composer to the emperor. He also received payment with the success of *Die Zauberflöte* and the premiere of *La Clemenza di Tito*, in that year.
- And there were good prospects for money in the near future, because he had just been appointed assistant Hofkappellmeister at Saint Stephen's Cathedral. This began as an unpaid position, but it was assumed that Mozart would take the real position for a salary on the death of the current Hofkappellmeister. Even with such successes guiding him in 1791, Mozart welcomed the chance to take on a new commission.
- A great deal of what we think we know about the *Requiem* has been colored by one of Mozart's first biographers, Franz Xavier Niemetschek. Niemetschek's history of the composition gives it an almost cloak-and-dagger story, including that the commissioner of the *Requiem* was to remain unknown to Mozart, a mysterious messenger would occasionally show up at Mozart's door and inquire about the status of the work, and as Mozart came close to his own death, he bound up his thoughts into the composition, as if he thought he were composing a requiem mass for himself.



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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was one of the greatest composers of Western music.

- The facts of the commission, as we know them, are a little more prosaic. Count Franz von Walsegg, the commissioner of the *Requiem*, likely knew of Mozart because they both belonged to the same fraternal organization, the Freemasons.
- Von Walsegg evidently wanted the *Requiem*'s commission to be a secret because he wished to pass off the composition as his own. Mozart became one of a number of musicians who were used by Walsegg in this way. Walsegg obtained scores from composers following a successful commission and then copied them out in his own hand to make it look as if he had composed them himself.
- Von Walsegg was also a generous patron: Mozart received a substantial payment in advance when he promised to compose the *Requiem*, and Constanze Mozart received further payment when the work was presented to von Walsegg after Mozart's death.
- Von Walsegg presented the *Requiem* at a concert to memorialize Anna, his wife, on February 14, 1794, the third anniversary of her death. Prior to that, the work already had received a sort of premiere—at a benefit concert for Constanze Mozart and her son, organized by Baron Gottfried van Swieten—in January of 1793.
- The *Requiem* was published in 1799 under Mozart's name. Von Walsegg was mortified and thought of suing but was convinced not to do so.
- A question regarding this work is how much of it is, in fact, by Mozart. He left it incomplete at his death. Some parts, such as the “*Requiem aeternam*” movement, were complete and scored in Mozart's handwriting; others were left with just vocal parts and the accompanying score presented in shorthand. Still other movements have only sketches in Mozart's hand.
- After Mozart's death, Constanze Mozart approached several musicians in the hopes that they might complete the *Requiem*—so that she could receive the rest of the commission from von Walsegg.

Eventually, Franz Xavier Süssmayr agreed to do so. Earlier in 1791, Süssmayr had assisted Mozart in copying out some of the parts for both *Zauberflöte* and *La Clemenza di Tito*.

- In the two centuries since the work was first performed, others have poured over Mozart’s original scoring and sketches for the *Requiem* and proposed alternate versions of the score, but Süssmayr’s version remains the one that is best known.

Musical Elements

- The *Requiem* differs from other masses discussed so far, such as Bach’s *Mass in B Minor*, as well as the works of Machaut, Palestrina, and Josquin.
- The prayers of the Ordinary—the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei—could have differing musical settings, but their texts were always the same. On the other hand, prayers of the Proper normally differ, depending on either the date or a mass’s purpose. When the prayers of the mass Proper were set as chants, they also had different music.
- It is the use of these texts, set in polyphonic formats, that is the biggest difference between Mozart’s *Requiem* and the other masses discussed so far. Mozart’s *Requiem* does not include polyphonic settings of all of the movements of the Ordinary, as Bach’s *Mass in B Minor* did, but only the Kyrie, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei. The other polyphonic movements set in the *Requiem*—the Introit, Sequence, Offertorium, and Communion—are from the Proper.
- Although there was an established custom for which movements of a regular mass could be set in polyphony, there was no set custom for a requiem mass. So, different requiem masses frequently set different texts.
- The text of the *Requiem* is ambiguous in its mood. The first and last pairs of lines speak of “eternal rest” and “perpetual light” (the

joyous possibility of heaven). Other lines, however, in the middle of the text speak of the inevitability of death. Mozart uses a trick that many other composers use: changing the instrumental and vocal texture each time he comes to a new idea within the text.

- Mozart presents such an ambiguous text by emphasizing the human suffering that the text implies. He uses compositional tropes, or musical themes, to reinforce the emotions of grief. He also provides a number of comforting moments, such as the opening of the Communion prayer from the Proper, “Lux aeterna.”

Reception History

- Mozart’s *Requiem* was supposed to be a private expression of grief for the Count von Walsegg’s wife, played on the anniversary her death, to a large, but private, congregation in 1794. But because of Mozart’s own untimely death, von Walsegg’s plans could not come to fruition.
- The Viennese patron Baron Gottfried von Swieten, who had helped Mozart in his Vienna years at various times, arranged a performance of the *Requiem* for the benefit of Mozart’s widow, Constanze, and the rest of Mozart’s surviving family in 1793. This meant that throughout Vienna, the composition already was known as at least nominally by Mozart.
- When the score to the *Requiem* was published in 1799, it was done under Mozart’s name only, not von Walsegg’s. Von Walsegg would become part of the legend of Mozart’s last years: The mysterious manner of the composition’s origins would haunt the biography of Mozart and make for a wonderfully romantic tale. And this kept the work alive in the mind of the public.
- Mozart’s *Requiem* became the work to play when there was a need to express public grief, such as when a mass was said in memory of the composer Franz Joseph Haydn in 1809 and at the funeral of Polish composer Frederic Chopin in 1849.

- Mozart's *Requiem* has marked important moments in history, such as the 1964 funeral of President John F. Kennedy and a national memorial service in 1970 for the victims of the Kent State shootings.
- This piece, which was meant to be a typical 18th-century expression of musical patronage, became a very public presentation as it entered into the canon of the great works of sacred music.

Suggested Reading

Schroeder, *Experiencing Mozart*.

Wolff, *Mozart at the Gateway to His Fortune*.

Suggested Listening

Coronation Mass, Ave verum Corpus, Exsultate, Jubilate/Mozart. dir. Andrew Nethsinga.

Requiem/Mozart, dir. George Guest.

Questions to Consider

1. How can classical “balance” be heard in the “Ave verum corpus?”
2. Does Mozart’s use of stile antico in the *Requiem* make the work sound venerable? What within his style makes the music sound dramatic at the same time?
3. How did Niemetschek’s discussion of the *Requiem* and its commission help give rise to the “Mozart myth” of the composer’s last years?

Haydn's *The Creation*

Lecture 11

In this lecture, you will learn about Franz Joseph Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* (*Die Schöpfung* in Haydn's native German), first performed in Vienna in 1798. In many ways, this work contains a mixture of the possibilities created by Handel in his *Messiah* and Mozart in his *Requiem*, but Haydn put his own personal stamp on it. By using richly evocative musical rhetoric mixed with older, popular Handelian choral styles, Haydn and his patron, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, created a masterpiece that would enter the burgeoning canon of classical music and remain it in long after the composer's death.

Haydn's *The Creation*

- An oratorio is a composition that uses vocal soloists, a chorus, and an orchestra to convey a sacred story in both an entertaining and edifying manner. Handel's *Messiah* was meant to be a public entertainment, but a somewhat ephemeral one.
- Handel could assume that the work would be produced during his own lifetime—particularly when he was able to put on such performances—but he also assumed that it would disappear from regularly performed works once he died.
- However, because Handel caught the right historic moment, *Messiah* became one of the foundational works in the canon of Western music—compositions that have remained in our repertoire, pieces that we revere still today even though they may be centuries old.
- Haydn had the good fortune to have seen the popularity of Handel's *Messiah* in Great Britain and the beginning of popularity of Mozart's *Requiem* in Austria. When he composed *The Creation*, Haydn wanted to harness the power of both these earlier compositions and self-consciously wrote a work that would easily compare to both of them and stand by them within this newly forming canon.

- Like operas, many oratorios of the 18th century began with instrumental movements called overtures, which were intended to set the first mood of the composition. The opening of Handel's *Messiah* demonstrates this pretty well: It gives you a sense of the seriousness of the dramatic journey you are about to take, through the life of Christ, from the prophecy of his birth to his death and resurrection.
- In the growing concert culture at the end of the 18th century, the more dramatic overtures from Handel's oratorios—such as that from *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*—were also frequently heard in concerts as standalone pieces.
- Haydn therefore knew that if he composed an opening to *The Creation* that was both dramatic and set the right tone, it would do both the composition and his reputation as a composer a great service. Played with the full oratorio, it would be a wonderful way to set the right mood and get his audience into the proper frame of mind for the edifying entertainment he set before them.
- Thus, the first sound you hear in Haydn's *The Creation* is a simple instrumental movement with a great deal of power: "The Representation of Chaos." This paints a picture of the universe before God begins the creation of the world. Haydn used all of the musical elements at his disposal to create a highly dramatic, even emotional opening movement that masterfully sets up a dramatic retelling of the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis.



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Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
was one of the most influential
developers of the classical style
of music.

- Because the growing middle-class audience loved the effects Haydn produced, *The Creation* did indeed become popular and an important part of the choral music and musical canon. The work was a sign of how important the middle-class audience had become.
- Haydn—who had a long and storied career working for noble patrons in the Austro-Hungarian Empire—turned to the oratorio to cater to this new audience. That is certainly what happened with this work, but it is not the whole story.
- Like Mozart’s *Requiem*, the instigation of *The Creation* came from a private patron: Baron Gottfried van Swieten. But unlike Mozart’s Count von Walsegg, Baron van Swieten had no intention of hiding or keeping the work to himself. Instead, he just wanted to hear it first, and then let it become a masterwork in the public realm, in the company of Handel’s *Messiah* and Mozart’s *Requiem*.
- Thus, in his great oratorio *The Creation*, Haydn successfully negotiated the desires of noble patrons of the 18th century to create a work that reminded them of the music of Handel while embracing the growing middle-class audience.
- Haydn did this through creating an oratorio dominated by choral movements and occasional contrapuntal styles (a nod to the venerable), but also by creating effective and evocative instrumental accompaniments (a precursor to romantic musical styles).

Compositional Context for *The Creation*

- Most of us probably think of Haydn primarily as an instrumental composer. Aside from *The Creation*, most of his works that are in the canon today are string quartets and symphonies. But more than half of his output was vocal music, including secular songs and operas, and sacred vocal music, such as masses and motets. But *The Creation* differs—even from most of Haydn’s other vocal music.

- Most of Haydn's career was spent in the service of the Esterhazy family, a line of Austrian princes. For them, Haydn frequently wrote operas, masses, motets, and other pieces of vocal music, all at their command. Haydn's own musical inspiration certainly entered into these compositions, but they also were composed out of a sense of duty to the patron's needs.
- By 1790, Haydn was effectively retired from the Esterhazy family's service. He was an older man by then, nearing the age of 60, and he began to take commissions only when he wanted to do so, instead of being at the beck and call of a patron.
- Haydn spent most of the next decade either in the city of Vienna or on trips elsewhere, where he was feted as one of the most famous composers of his day. He took two trips to London between 1791 and 1795, where an impresario—that is, an organizer of events, and sometimes the financial backer of those events—Johann Peter Salomon, organized concerts of his music and commissions for various compositions, including some of his most famous symphonies, such as the “Surprise” and “Drumroll.”
- Impetus for *The Creation* came from these London trips. When Haydn returned to Vienna in 1795, a number of circumstances pulled together that made the composition of *The Creation* possible: a noble patron and two Viennese institutions.
- The patron was Baron Gottfried van Swieten, who lived between 1733 and 1803. Van Swieten is undeniably a nexus figure in the history of music in Vienna at the end of the 18th century. He was a member of the Austro-Hungarian imperial administration, having been a diplomat serving in Brussels, Paris, London, and Berlin.
- A keen amateur musician, he was always looking to hear music, and he particularly enjoyed “antique music” (defined, at the time, to be anything more than 20 years old). So, in London he heard the music of Handel, and in Berlin he collected the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

- When he returned to Vienna permanently in 1777, van Swieten was made the imperial librarian. This job was partly a sinecure—that is, a job requiring little actual work but conferring either considerable status or financial benefit. As such, it gave him a great deal of time to pursue his own musical interests.
- His importance in music in general is immense. In addition to holding regular Sunday concerts in his home to have friends play through the music of both Handel and Bach, he also invited many composers to them, including Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. These three all quite likely had their first exposure to both Bach and Handel at van Swieten's concerts.
- In fact, Van Swieten translated the libretto for *The Creation* from English to German, and as a member of the nobility with tastes in music, he also had a hand in supporting two Viennese institutions that were integral to the completion of *The Creation*: the Tonkünstler-Societät and the Gesellschaft der Associierten.
- Through these two Viennese organizations, van Swieten was able to promote Haydn's oratorio. But he also had a great deal to do with the composition of the work. Van Swieten took a very active role in shaping *The Creation* and its release to the public. He carefully translated the original text and rearranged parts of it to make a more convincing drama.
- Haydn likely began composing the work by the end of 1796, and he worked on the oratorio throughout 1797. The care and industry he gave to *The Creation* is evident in the fact that he spent more time working on it than any other composition during his life.
- By early 1798, the Gesellschaft der Associierten was paying for the parts to be prepared, some of which were revised up until March. The Gesellschaft seemed to understand how important this work was: They paid for multiple rehearsals of it, including some that were open to the public.

- The Gesellschaft got what it paid for: the performance of the work, on April 30, 1798, at the Schwarzenberg Palace, was exceedingly successful. It was so successful that the Gesellschaft repeated private performances of *The Creation* on May 7 and 10, 1798, and even held additional ones on March 2 and 4, 1799, at the Schwarzenberg Palace—all before the March 19, 1799, public premiere at the Burgtheater in Vienna.

The Aftermath of *The Creation*

- *The Creation* was immediately popular. Once released to the public, *The Creation* quickly became a classic in both German- and English-speaking lands. By the end of 1799, it had been heard in Vienna, France, London, Berlin, and Prague.
- In the years that followed, it was increasingly performed alongside Handel's oratorios, particularly in German-speaking areas. In Austria, it acquired the same sort of stature as the *Messiah* itself. Haydn conducted yearly concerts of it until 1808, with the proceeds from the concerts going to charity.
- Success with *The Creation* was so quick, and so strong, that by the spring of 1800, Haydn and van Swieten planned a second oratorio, *The Seasons*, to capitalize on this fame. This second work was completed by 1801 but never became as successful as *The Creation*.

Suggested Reading

Stapert, *Playing before the Lord*.

Temperley, *Haydn*.

Suggested Listening

Haydn: *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)*, dir. Andreas Spering.

Questions to Consider

1. How was Haydn's *The Creation* a response to Handel's *Messiah*? Why would van Swieten and others want Haydn to compose it?
2. How did *The Creation* become a classic so quickly? What within the work made it so convincing?

God, Man, Music, and Beethoven

Lecture 12

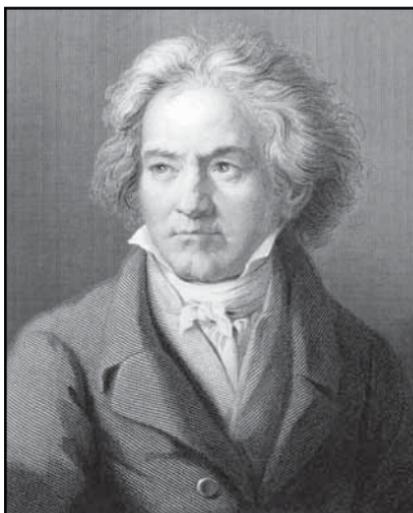
In this lecture, you will learn about two works by Ludwig van Beethoven: one that was meant for the concert hall, the relatively little-known oratorio *Christus am Ölberg* (“Christ on the Mount of Olives” in English); and the much better-known *Missa solemnis*. These two compositions show that as composers of the 18th century used sacred ritual texts and edifying stories with sacred themes to inspire them, Beethoven presaged the new ideas of the 19th century into his sacred music, by striving to create something much more monumental—and personal—in the few sacred works he chose to set.

Beethoven's Compositional Context

- Beethoven is one of the most famous composers in the Western world, but not necessarily for his sacred music. We tend to know his symphonies, piano sonatas, and string quartets—mostly his instrumental works.
- The 18th-century system of church or aristocratic patronage that provided composers like Handel, Mozart, and Haydn with their training—and even some of their employment—was waning. It still existed when Beethoven was young. Beethoven's father was a singer in the Aristocratic Court at Bonn, and the younger Beethoven received lessons there.
- Eventually, those 18th-century systems of patronage would fail entirely. Beethoven lived most of his life in a kind of nether zone, where a composer could earn money from a combination of more limited aristocratic patronage and from selling music directly to the public, either through concertizing or publishing.
- The limited patronage was responsible for sending Beethoven from Bonn to Vienna. Having exhausted the training available to him in Bonn, a small group of aristocratic patrons sent Beethoven to

Vienna to study with Haydn. Beethoven continued such networks of patronage in Vienna as well.

- But instead of being beholden to a single patron or employer, Beethoven frequently received help, such as money, meals, and sometimes even lodging, from several patrons at once. Beethoven made a comfortable living in Vienna this way, for most of his life. *Missa solemnis* was commissioned by this loose network of patrons.
- But Beethoven aspired to more than just a comfortable living: He also wanted fame. So, early in his career, he began to court the growing public audience in Vienna. For this audience, starting at the beginning of the 19th century, Beethoven would produce regular “Academies,” which were public concerts, given by Beethoven for his own benefit.
- In this way, Beethoven became his own impresario, or producer: If the concert made any money, he would benefit from it; if it lost money, he would be liable. *Christus am Ölberge* was composed for such a benefit concert in 1803; parts of *Missa solemnis* were first heard this way in 1824.
- This is the sociohistorical context in which Beethoven was working: The world of the composer was changing and shifting, but it meant that there were many opportunities for the individual who had the personality and perspicacity to try different paths.



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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) dominated the period between the classical and romantic eras.

- Within this context, we can see that Beethoven's composition of sacred music was somewhat limited. He was writing mostly for a loose collection of aristocratic patrons or for public Academies, and neither audience requested that much sacred music from him. Besides *Christus* and the *Missa solemnis*, there is the *Mass in C* and the *Drei Equale for Trombones*. But these pale in numerical comparison—and even in the popular imagination—to Beethoven's instrumental works.

Christus am Ölberge

- Even though Beethoven did not compose many sacred works, those he did finish are all interesting and emotionally powerful. *Christus am Ölberge* is one such composition. This work, like Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation*, is an oratorio: a work using vocal soloists, a chorus, and an orchestra to convey a sacred story in both an entertaining and edifying manner.
- *Christus* takes place on the Mount of Olives—sometimes called the Garden of Gethsemane—where Christ meditated before he was arrested and crucified. He went to this Mount of Olives after the Last Supper. During Beethoven's oratorio, Christ talks with an angel; as they converse, Christ is convinced that he needs to be sacrificed for the sake of mankind.
- For the most part, *Christus* is not so much centered on the specific events in Christ's life, but on Christ's feelings before the crucifixion. Indeed, the only moment of “action” in the composition occurs when the soldiers come to arrest Christ.
- To emphasize the amount of contemplation that occurs within this work, *Christus* ends with a celebratory chorus that sits far outside the narrative itself: a “Hallelujah”-type chorus that reminds the audience that the events of Christ's suffering were both necessary for the redemption of man, but that these events occurred in the distant past.

- Beethoven began composing *Christus am Ölberge* in 1802. His teacher, Haydn, was still alive at this time, and Beethoven must have been at least partly inspired by how successful Haydn's *The Creation* had become after its premiere, several years earlier.
- *Christus* is not a piece we know well today, but in its time, it was one of Beethoven's most popular and famous pieces. It was performed four times in Vienna alone within the first two years of its composition. And in a reverse of what is true today, in Beethoven's lifetime and even shortly thereafter, it was much more popular with audiences than his *Missa solemnis*.
- When he began composing *Christus*, Beethoven was already going deaf. Around this time, the autumn of 1802, Beethoven wrote what was supposed to be a letter to his brothers about his deafness, but it was never sent. This letter, called the "Heiligenstadt Testament" in biographies of the composer, speaks of both his fear and suffering upon learning of his growing deafness.
- We know that Beethoven composed *Christus* before he wrote the "Heiligenstadt Testament," but we also know that when Beethoven revised the oratorio in 1804, he made the work even more emotionally poignant by emphasizing the sufferings of Christ.
- *Christus* premiered on April 5, 1803, at an Academy that Beethoven organized himself. This concert also included performances of Beethoven's Symphony no. 2 and his Third Piano Concerto. But judging by the press reports, which spend most of their time discussing *Christus*, it was the oratorio that the audience and the critics thought to be the most important part of the concert.
- We are going to examine two elements from this work: the final chorus, which shows Beethoven attempting, like Haydn, to attach himself to the musical tradition of Handel's oratorios to appeal to popularity, and an interior accompanied recitative, to show

Beethoven's poignant sense of Christ's suffering, perhaps identified with his own because of his growing deafness.

- Beethoven used dramatic musical language to emphasize the suffering of Christ, at a time when he was also suffering, from the knowledge of his oncoming deafness. *Christus am Ölberge* uses this highly personal drama very well and evocatively.
- Beethoven has succeeded to a large extent within this composition, partially because of the orchestration, partially because he reached to express Christ's feelings of suffering realistically, and partially because he included elements of popular past styles—particularly those of Handel—within it. And Beethoven succeeded, at least in his own time: *Christus* was a popular work in Vienna.

Missa solemnis

- Beethoven composed *Christus am Ölberge* at a time when he was attempting to make a name for himself. *Missa solemnis* came from a much later period in his life, when he had already achieved fame and, because of his deafness, had begun to withdraw from the public.
- The composition of *Missa solemnis* was initially commissioned by one of Beethoven's regular noble patrons, Archduke Rudolph, a composer and an excellent amateur pianist. He was one of Beethoven's most generous patrons.
- Rudolph was the youngest son of the Austrian emperor, and in 1809, with two other patrons—Prince Kinsky and Prince Lobkowitz—promised Beethoven an annual annuity so that he could stay in Vienna and compose. At the time, Beethoven was considering moving elsewhere. Beethoven had a high regard for Rudolph and dedicated a number of works to him, including the fourth and fifth piano concertos as well as the *Missa solemnis*.
- Rudolph commissioned the work in 1819, on the expectation that he would be elevated (or promoted) to the position of Archbishop of

Olmütz. Rudolph assumed Beethoven's mass would be performed then and provide a bit of cultural celebration, along with the ecclesiastical and political celebration of his becoming archbishop.

- Rudolph was elevated to archbishop in September of that year, but Beethoven was not ready with the *Missa solemnis*. In fact, it would be another four years before Beethoven's new mass premiered. One reason that Beethoven missed the commission date is because he composed *Missa solemnis* in fits and starts. At the time, Beethoven was working on multiple projects, including the *Diabelli Variations* and the Ninth Symphony.
- When the *Missa solemnis* finally premiered on April 7, 1824, it was done so in St. Petersburg, where it was performed not in a church, but at a concert—a charity concert to raise money for widows and orphans. When parts of it were heard in Vienna a little less than a month later, on May 7, 1824, it was on an Academy that featured the premiere of Symphony no. 9 in D Minor.
- And in the concert hall *Missa solemnis* has stayed. The composition—gigantic as it is—has never really been used as a mass. The orchestral and choral forces required for a performance of it are just too large.
- Even the name is a bit of a mystery. Normally, when a composer sets a “*Missa solemnis*,” such as those by Michael Haydn (brother of the more famous Joseph Haydn), he or she sets all parts of the mass: the Ordinary (prayers with fixed texts that reoccur every day) and the Proper (prayers with new texts for every day of the liturgical year). Here, Beethoven just sets the prayers of the Ordinary: the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei.
- Perhaps the name Beethoven ascribed to the work—a solemn mass—has more to do with the grand nature of the project. This grandiosity comes in two areas: both its length (80 minutes in

performance) and in the sense that it, like Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, is a compilation of ideas and ideals created after years of study.

- In his last years, Beethoven began to copy out the work of Renaissance theorists like Glarean and Zarlino and composers available in anthologies, including Palestrina and William Byrd. This gave him a sense of Renaissance sound. Beethoven used both stile antico and this Renaissance sound, along with typical musical rhetoric, for maximum dramatic impact.
- In the *Missa solemnis*, Beethoven wished to compose something new and different: He used the older, venerable styles, but he did so to be dramatic. In the process, he left a highly personal stamp on the mass.
- And this was not necessarily appreciated in his time, or even shortly thereafter. Nineteenth-century criticism was often harsh. But such criticism was short-lived. By the end of the 19th century, it was being performed regularly. Today, it is thought of as part of a triumvirate of what many consider the greatest sacred compositions of the West: Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*.

Suggested Reading

Drabkin, *Beethoven*.

Lockwood, *Beethoven*.

Suggested Listening

Christus am Ölberge/Ludwig van Beethoven, dir. Helmuth Rilling.

Missa solemnis, op. 123/Ludwig van Beethoven, dir. Kenneth Schermerhorn.

Questions to Consider

1. Which of Beethoven's two works—*Christus am Ölberge* and the *Missa solemnis*—was written for a popular audience, and which was written for a more intellectual one? What elements from the composition help show this?
2. Which elements from Beethoven's own life are reflected in *Christus*?
3. How does Beethoven use the stile antico within *Christus am Ölberge*, and how does he move beyond it?

Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

Lecture 13

In this lecture, you will investigate Felix Mendelssohn's great oratorio, *Elijah*, which succeeded in Great Britain and other English-speaking countries because it was the right piece at the right time: an oratorio written by a prominent composer who was willing to write within the somewhat-conservative strictures of the mid-19th-century oratorio that was popular in Great Britain at the time. *Elijah* became a compendium of what the oratorio was, balanced against what it could be, and the audiences loved it. It became a hit immediately, and it has never left the canon since its premiere at Birmingham in 1846.

Mendelssohn's *Elijah*

- *Elijah*, which premiered in 1846, quickly entered the canon of Western music and became a work that the middle-class audience embraced heartily and heard repeatedly. Like Haydn's *The Creation* and Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, *Elijah* debuted in a concert hall.
- *Elijah* is an oratorio that is entirely part of the romantic era of music history. Romanticism in music means many things, but in essence includes increased meaning for the music itself, an acceptance of the idea that music without lyrics could be both edifying and convey information; attempts by the composer to imbue their works with aspects of their own personality; and a sense that some of their works—because a canon of music now existed—had to be of a particularly excellent quality if they were to compete with the works from the past that the middle-class audience so revered.
- For Mendelssohn, when composing *Elijah*, this meant reminding his audience of a musical tradition. Mendelssohn invoked this via a self-conscious reference to the past, by using the musical styles of Johann Sebastian Bach, particularly the chorale, but also with the evocative orchestration of Beethoven, through specific musical rhetoric to convey information quickly and efficiently to his audience.

- But Mendelssohn did not intend to compose a merely derivative work. He also wanted to impress his audiences with his knowledge of newer stylistic elements. And within *Elijah*, there are two, which both happen to be additional tenets of romanticism.
- One was the wish of composers to make long works, even ones with multiple movements, more unified. Mendelssohn does this within *Elijah* by repeating musical themes throughout the work. Through their repetition, the themes become a sort of musical rhetoric in and of themselves, because they continue to accrete meaning throughout the oratorio.
- The other was to modify or even eliminate some elements of tradition, particularly when called for by the text. And this is precisely what Mendelssohn does at the opening of *Elijah*.
- All of the oratorios that have been discussed—Handel’s *Messiah*, Haydn’s *The Creation*, and Beethoven’s *Christus*—opened with an instrumental movement. Sometimes this was called a symphony, an overture, or an *introduzione*, but all were used as to get the audience settled and signal to them what their opening mood should be. Mendelssohn announces that *Elijah* will break from this past by having the character Elijah make an opening declamation in the recitative style.
- In dramatic music up through the middle of the 19th century, the composer has several styles of text setting to choose from. He or she might set texts that are more lyrical or poetic with a melody and possibly an aurally discernable form—those were called arias. Texts that are more about plot are usually set as recitatives, which usually have the soloist singing the text in a very plain fashion: with frequently no more than one note per syllable and with a reserved melodic contour.
- After starting the oratorio in an untraditional way, with the recitative, Mendelssohn returns to one aspect of tradition: The texture that crawls up through the strings—from the cellos and basses through

the viola, the second violin, and finally the first violin—is a type of imitative counterpoint called a fugue.

- Opening the work in *medias res* is certainly dramatic and would be a surprise to the audience (at least the first time they heard it). It would give them a sense of the drama that was unfolding. Moving to a fugue just after the recitative allowed Mendelssohn to place this work within a growing historical tradition of music written by German-speaking composers.



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Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) followed classical paradigms while introducing aspects of romanticism.

Mendelssohn’s Life, Sacred Music, and the Musical Festival

- Felix Mendelssohn had many advantages that served him well in his quest to become an important musician in the first half of the 19th century. He came from a distinguished family. His grandfather was Moses Mendelssohn, an important academic philosopher; his philosophies eventually led to the foundation of Zionism as a political and religious ideal.
- Mendelssohn’s father was a well-off banker who wished to give his children every possible educational advantage. For a young Felix Mendelssohn, this included attendance at the Berlin Singakademie, a prominent musical society in that city, and having regular lessons from excellent music teachers, including Friederich Zelter.
- At the Mendelssohns’ house, there was always a great deal of music heard, much of it performed by Felix and his sister Fanny.

Frequently, it was music that they themselves wrote. Even as a youth, Felix Mendelssohn was a prodigious composer. By the age of 26, he had composed operas, string quartets, symphonies, and numerous works for voice and piano as well as piano solo.

- Mendelssohn's discovery of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach was part of this systematic education. His teacher, Zelter, made Mendelssohn do a thorough study of Bach's chorales, and part of his early compositional training was learning to write harmonies in Bach's style to old chorale melodies.
- When he became a professional musician, Mendelssohn tried to teach this personal knowledge of Bach to the public. As a conductor, he presented the first performance after Bach's time of the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829. Many composers knew Bach's music, but members of the public were not readily exposed to it. This event was the kickoff for the rest of the century's public Bach revival.
- Mendelssohn came from a prominent Jewish family; however, his whole immediate family converted to Lutheranism when he was seven years old, in 1816. From this point forward, he began to compose smaller pieces for various denominations of Christianity: Lutherans, Catholics, and even members of the Church of England, in many different genres, such as motets, chorale harmonizations, and anthems.
- Like many contemporary composers, Mendelssohn was a practical musician. Besides composing, he also taught, performed (primarily on the piano or organ), and conducted. For a time, he was the conductor of an annual German music festival—the Lower Rhine Musical Festival—that rotated between four cities.
- A music festival was a regular gathering of vocal soloists, a large chorus, and an accompanying orchestra. Such festivals originated at the end of the 17th century in Great Britain and were widely copied in German-speaking lands by the end of the 18th century. They

tended to present a great deal of sacred music in their repertoires, and the fame of works like Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation* depended on them.

- Musical festivals were both artistic and social endeavors. Frequently, they raised funds for local causes. The Birmingham Festival, founded in 1784, raised money for a local hospital. Such festivals continued to grow at the end of the 18th century, and they became incredibly important venues for the production of music.
- They had large audiences, including many members of the growing middle class. They performed works like oratorios with huge forces, sometimes in a truly spectacular fashion, and the festival might be the only time the audience could hear such works within a local area.
- The musical festival also showed how concert life was changing. For a long time, the oratorios of Handel—*Messiah*, especially, but also selections of his other works—were the mainstay of festival repertoire.
- When German festivals began in the late 18th century, Haydn's oratorios were added. In the first few decades of the 19th century, a number of composers, including Ludwig van Beethoven, wrote oratorios to try to break into this repertoire, but with limited success.
- The Lower Rhine Festival, which rotated annually between the cities of Düsseldorf, Aachen, Wuppertal, and Cologne, began in 1817. Mendelssohn started conducting it in 1833 and did so for several years. This was the site of the premiere of his first oratorio, *St. Paul*, in 1836. *St. Paul* was wildly successful and was quickly heard throughout the world after its premiere.
- *St. Paul* set the New Testament account of the conversion of Paul to Christianity. Mendelssohn composed a deliberate mixture of some elements from the music of Handel, such as powerful choruses, and some from Bach, including a number of fugal choruses and chorales.

- One of the early performances of *St. Paul* in Great Britain occurred at the Birmingham Musical Festival of 1837. The success of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* in Birmingham led festival officials to seek out Mendelssohn to specifically commission a new oratorio from him, one that would be premiered in Birmingham at a future festival. That oratorio was *Elijah*. And from the time of its premiere in 1846, it has always had a place in the sacred music canon, particularly in English-speaking countries.

***Elijah*: Its History and Elements**

- Mendelssohn had already begun to think about *Elijah* long before the Birmingham commission came to him. His great success with *St. Paul* in 1836 caused the composer to think about other oratorios. He began asking his friend, Karl Klingemann, for a new libretto on either the subject of Saint Peter or Elijah by 1837.
- Klingemann worked on the libretto over that summer but decided that he could not continue with it, so additional work on it was undertaken by Mendelssohn's friend Julius Schubring of Dessau. Schubring had worked with Mendelssohn on the text to *St. Paul* and redrafted and modified *Elijah* substantially.
- With a decent libretto in hand, Mendelssohn set the work on *Elijah* aside from 1839 to 1845 while he worked on other compositional projects, including *Lobgesang*, his Symphony in A Major, and the Violin Concerto in E Minor.
- Mendelssohn received the official commission for *Elijah* from the Committee of the Birmingham Musical Festival sometime after June 22, 1845. He returned to the *Elijah* libretto and made significant text alterations to it on his own. These he discussed with Schubring, and together they came up with another draft of the text by early 1846.
- Mendelssohn worked on it over the next few months, before sending it to Great Britain for the premiere performance at the Birmingham Musical Festival, which took place on August 26,

1846. This concert was well received at the time and caused a furor within British musical circles. Additional performances of *Elijah* were scheduled in Great Britain for the next year, including one in London, which was given on August 26, 1847. For this concert, Mendelssohn made a number of changes to the work, and this is the form in which we know it today.

- *Elijah* was also the last composition Mendelssohn prepared for publication. The published score came out just two weeks after his death in November of 1847.
- The oratorio itself is drawn from the Bible. In creating the libretto, Mendelssohn, Klingemann, and Schubring paraphrased parts of both the Old and New Testaments to create the language they wanted. The story comes from the first book of Kings, chapters 17 and 18, for the first part of the oratorio, and 1 Kings, chapter 19, and 2 Kings, chapters 1 and 2, for the second part. Each part of *Elijah* includes a number of episodes that culminate either with miracles or pronouncements by the prophet.
- As an oratorio, *Elijah* contains many of the same music elements that are used in *Messiah*, *The Creation*, and *Christus am Ölberge*. There are older styles, such as fugues and chorales. There are also a number of recitatives and arias within it, as well as choruses.

Suggested Reading

Eatock, *Mendelssohn and Victorian England*.

Krummacher, “Art—History—Religion.”

Suggested Listening

Elijah/Felix Mendelssohn, dir. Richard Hickox.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Mendelssohn nod to oratorio and sacred music tradition within *Elijah*? In what ways does he depart from it?
2. What elements of musical rhetoric does Mendelssohn use to make *Elijah* dramatic and convincing?

Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*

Lecture 14

In this lecture, you will learn about an exquisite oratorio by the British composer Edward Elgar: *The Dream of Gerontius*. Today, Elgar is perhaps most famous in North America for the trio section of his *Pomp and Circumstance* March no. 1, which is played at many graduations. While perhaps infamous for this tune, Elgar has many other brilliant compositions to his name, including *The Dream of Gerontius*, and was one of the most famous living composers in his day.

Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*

- Elgar's *Gerontius* was a very popular and critically acclaimed work in Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Canada, and the United States in the first two decades of the 20th century. But since the end of World War I, it has only really remained popular in Great Britain. While it is thoroughly enmeshed in the canon there, it is only heard rarely in other countries. *Gerontius* is a fantastic composition that is underrated in the United States, by both critics and audience.
- Because he was a composer alive at the beginning of the 20th century, Elgar had an excellent view of the history of sacred music. Elgar knew intimately much of the same canon that is being discussed, because in the Great Britain of his time, he could regularly hear performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.
- The contemporary music books he read had already begun to note how the oratorios of all of these composers were successful partly because each of them was an interesting mix of more conservative musical styles. These were most particularly the imitative counterpoint of Handel and Johann Sebastian Bach and the contemporary dramatic vocal style of their times.

- Elgar composed *Gerontius* between 1899 and 1900. By this point, dramatic vocal styles had undergone an amazing shift. While Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, and even Mendelssohn could compose oratorios knowing that there was a melodic and secular operatic style to which their sacred music might be compared, by the second half of the 19th century, opera was undergoing a number of revolutions. In the hands of the composer Richard Wagner, it became much more continuous.
- Individual sections, such as arias, recitatives, and choruses, were done away with, particularly in Wagner's later works, for a musical texture that was much more fluid. Wagner's orchestra, too, was not just mere accompaniment; instead, it was an equal character to those represented by the singers.
- At times, Wagner's orchestra could deliver information that added greatly to what the singing characters might be stating at the moment, or even present alternate or contrary information. This orchestra-as-character was a dramatic departure from the norm.
- In addition to knowing the oratorios of Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn, Elgar also was an ardent Wagnerian in his early career. He heard Wagner's operas in performance at theaters in London, journeyed to Germany to hear them, and owned and studied a number of scores of Wagner's music. *Gerontius* is a mixture of oratorio's venerable past with Wagner's so-called music of the future.



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The works of Edward Elgar (1857–1934) triggered a renaissance of English music.

The Oratorio from Mendelssohn to Elgar

- By the time Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* premiered at the 1846 Birmingham Triennial Musical Festival, sacred music was heard just as frequently in the concert hall as it was in church. And the performance of oratorios, in particular, became so ubiquitous in Great Britain that some music critics, such as George Bernard Shaw referred to them as “popular music.”
- Musical festivals—regular gatherings of vocal soloists with a large chorus and an accompanying orchestra—originated at the end of the 17th century in Great Britain and were widely copied in German-speaking lands by the end of the 18th century. In the 19th century, such festivals also spread to Canada and the United States. These festivals tended to present a great deal of sacred music in their repertoires, including oratorios.
- Most British festivals were organized with a charitable purpose in mind. The one at Birmingham, where Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* premiered, raised money for a local hospital. Others used any profits accrued to help the poor or indigent, or even to rebuild old, sacred buildings.
- In the second half of the 19th century, Great Britain went a little crazy with its festivals. Many were founded between the premieres of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* in 1846 and Elgar’s *Gerontius* in 1900. Some were created to be completely spectacular events, such as the Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace, in the suburbs of London. Begun in 1857 and held about every three years until 1926, these festivals would present concerts of *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt* and selections from Handel’s other works.
- They would frequently feature some of the biggest operatic stars of the day singing the vocal solos, joined by choirs of almost 3,000 and accompanied by an orchestra that might feature as many as 500 instrumentalists. Not all British festivals were like this. Most had modestly sized accompanying orchestras about 100 members strong and choruses numbering anywhere between 200 and 500 singers.

- There were a number of festivals produced in cities—such as those in Birmingham, Leeds, and Norwich—but a number of others that occurred in cathedrals, such as that of the Three Choirs, which revolved yearly between the cathedrals of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford.
- Because concerts of oratorios at such festivals were meant to be “edifying entertainment,” the rules for performance of oratorios were pretty strict. Most performances discouraged or simply banned applause at performances of oratorios, due to the solemnity of the subject—be they at secular halls or within churches and cathedrals.
- Around this time, the press began to refer to oratorio performances in churches and cathedrals as “services” and the audience assembled as a “congregation,” and admonished church officials if they were absent from an oratorio performance or they did not show up wearing their religious vestments.
- In addition to the musical festivals, oratorios in the second half of the 19th century had yet another potential venue for performance: amateur choral societies. When these formed, as they did throughout Great Britain, German-speaking areas, and North America, they usually scheduled several performances a year, including at least one of *Messiah* and perhaps another of a different oratorio.
- Thus, there were many venues for the performance and production of oratorios at the end of the 19th century. For a composer like Elgar, composing an oratorio was the best way of gaining publicity and fame. Premieres of oratorios would feature reviews by all of the contemporary major newspapers and music magazines.
- If successful, an oratorio might even make a composer a great deal of money, because he could earn royalties off of copies of the scores published for use by musical festivals and choral societies.
- Indeed, festivals and choral societies in Great Britain alone commissioned hundreds of oratorios between the premiere of

Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* in 1846 and Elgar’s *Gerontius* in 1900. Most of these never made it into the cannon. Instead, the “classic repertoire” of Handel, Haydn, and Mendelssohn remained popular and dominated discussions about oratorios, with occasional incursions of composers like Elgar.

- So, North America, Europe, and especially Great Britain had a large infrastructure where oratorios could be performed within either entertainment or church ritual contexts. Their promoters assumed them to be of a piece with ideas of established religion.
- They were big stories about big subjects and broadly didactic, because they taught ideas of a general moral code through their texts. Nineteenth-century society assumed that the music helped convey this message better.
- As a composer, Edward Elgar was steeped both in the traditions of musical festivals and sacred music. Elgar came from a musical family. His father was a music shop owner, piano tuner, and local violinist and organist in the provincial English city of Worcester.
- Elgar learned most of his early craft through practical experience: reading the musical scores in his father’s shop, playing violin in local ensembles, and working as the organist for a time at a local Roman Catholic Church, Saint George’s in Worcester.
- Elgar also learned some of his craft from musical festivals themselves. The city of Worcester was host to the Three Choirs festival every three years, and Elgar regularly played violin in its orchestra when the festival was produced in that town. He also played in the orchestra for the Birmingham Triennial Festival.

Text and Context

- Elgar was born a Catholic. Great Britain, during Elgar’s life, was a country whose majority was Protestant. As a child, Elgar faced some pretty nasty anti-Catholic prejudice. But that did

not deter him. When commissioned to compose an oratorio by the Birmingham Festival Committee, Elgar chose his text—*The Dream of Gerontius*—from a poem of the same name by one of the most infamous British converts to Catholicism, Cardinal John Henry Newman.

- Newman lived between 1801 and 1890 and came from a well-off family. He spent a great deal of his early life searching for religion: He was an Evangelical Calvinistic Christian in his teens. After his education at Oxford University, he was ordained as an Anglican priest, in 1824. Following his ordination, he quickly became involved with the Oxford movement.
- The Oxford movement wanted to reenergize the Church of England by looking back to medieval Roman Catholicism for ritual that might have meaning to the congregation. Initially, the leaders of this movement—including Newman—were not seeking or supporting Catholic dogma per se.
- Elements of a tradition of historical and mystical Catholicism became a theme throughout most of the rest of Newman's life, and he went from the Oxford movement of the 1830s to his own conversion to Catholicism in 1845.
- Newman wrote the poem *The Dream of Gerontius* in 1865. He did so partly as a personal expression to allay fears and doubts about death and partly to nominally commemorate the 1853 death of Father John Joseph Gordon, a close friend.
- The text of Newman's poem—and, by extension, Elgar's oratorio—is extremely Catholic in nature, referring to religious elements most specifically not accepted by many Protestants of Elgar's time, such as the veneration of Mary, the mother of Christ; Catholic sainthood; and even the concept of Purgatory. Newman's text steeped all these within a sort of literary mysticism that many in Elgar's time thought to be extremely decadent.

- There were strong reactions to the poem. On one hand, it was highly successful: There were 27 editions of it printed before Newman’s death in 1890. And in spite of the Catholic text and dogma expressed within it, some Protestants began to read it. General Charles Gordon, hero of British imperial expansion, read and annotated a copy of the poem before his death at Khartoom in 1886. This was widely reported in the contemporary press. On the other hand, negative reactions to *Gerontius* also existed. So, setting this text was not without its risks for Elgar.
- We know that the poem was special to the composer. Elgar gave a copy of it to his future wife Alice in 1887, when they were courting. He and Alice were also given another copy of it in 1888 by the priest who married them. So, the work also had a personal resonance with Elgar; thus, in spite of its potential controversial aspects, it was only natural that he might choose to set it.
- Newman’s poem has some elusive elements. It is not set in a particular time, but we might imagine—because of references to assistants and priests within its texts—that it takes place in the Middle Ages. Newman’s research into Catholic history while a member of the Oxford movement in the 1830s seems to support this.
- *Gerontius* is divided into two sections. Part I is devoted to the last hours on Earth of an old man, named Gerontius. The poem describes his suffering, prayers for mercy, and, finally, death. Part II relates the journey of Gerontius’s soul through heaven to judgment.
- Rather than a strongly narrated story, Newman simply has Gerontius describe what he sees, hears, and feels. In part II of the poem, especially, these descriptions become a set of tableaux, or scenes that vividly introduce Newman’s interpretation of the celestial architecture of Heaven.

- Elgar followed suit in his musical setting when he turned Newman's poem into his own oratorio. When faced with setting this work, Elgar decided to mix elements of the new—Wagnerian sounds and styles—with some older elements—ones that would make the work seem that much more comfortable to his audience.

Suggested Reading

Hodgkins, *The Best of Me*.

Jensen, “Eschatological Aspects in Music.”

Suggested Listening

The Dream of Gerontius, op. 38/Edward Elgar, dir. Richard Hickox.

Questions to Consider

1. How did Elgar construct *Gerontius* to be a “combination of Handel and Wagner”?
2. What did 19th-century musical festivals do to the popularity of the oratorio in general?
3. How did Elgar use musical rhetoric and verisimilitude to help make *Gerontius* effective?

Sacred Music in the Late 19th Century

Lecture 15

In this lecture, you will learn about the sacred music of three prominent composers—Johannes Brahms, Gabriel Fauré, and Giuseppe Verdi—from the end of the 19th century. You will examine Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (*A German Requiem*), Fauré's *Requiem*, and Verdi's *Quattro pezzi sacri* (*Four Sacred Pieces*), all of which are based on traditional texts and older musical styles. You will discover how pieces by these three composers are at once personal expressions of individual faith as well as attempts to create a permanent musical monument.

Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*

- Johannes Brahms was a virtuosic pianist and great composer of instrumental music. But he also was known in his time for his production of choral music, both sacred and secular.
- Brahms honed his choral skills (and studied this style) starting in primarily the late 1850s, when he was a choral conductor in the cities of Detmold and Hamburg. He later would conduct choirs in Vienna, as well: the Vienna Singakademie in the 1860s and the Musikverein of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in the 1870s.
- Choral conducting brought many advantages to Brahms. He was able to try out his own compositions with his choirs, and he began to systematically explore the choral literature of earlier centuries, including the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Isaac, Palestrina, and William Byrd.
- Furthermore, his choral music includes some of the most complex pieces he ever wrote. *A German Requiem* is a great example of this: It is both the largest composition Brahms ever composed and the work with which Brahms announced himself as a major force on the German music scene.

- The final, seven-movement version of *A German Requiem* (the version performed today) was premiered in Leipzig on February 18, 1869. Brahms composed the work between 1865 and 1868. It is thought to have been inspired by the death of Brahms's mother in 1865 and, possibly, even lingering feelings over the death of Robert Schumann, who died in 1856.
- In the Catholic tradition, a requiem mass is one that is said at the funeral of an individual or on the anniversary of that individual's death. When set by a composer, it usually contains some of the same texts as a normal mass for a Catholic service, such as the Kyrie, the Sanctus, and the Agnus Dei.
- But it also contains a few prayers that were specific for the mass for the dead, including the "Requiem aeternam," the "Dies Irae," the "Lux aeterna," and the "Libera me." Some of these were meant to be texts of consolation, and some of them were meant to be texts to help send the soul of the deceased onward to God.
- Brahms used the term "requiem" in his title and used texts of consolation, and he all but ignored the centuries-old Catholic tradition in the piece. This is most apparent in his text. It is taken from various parts of the Bible that Brahms chose himself, using 17 separate passages from the New and Old Testaments.
- As a whole, *A German Requiem* is monumental: It takes more than 70 minutes in performance, and it contains some extremely difficult writing for both the chorus and soloists. It has many ways of expressing its seriousness, and all of them do so in a 19th-century context: his mixture of old and new, use of musical rhetoric, and even creation of a text that is parallel to the liturgy without being liturgical in and of itself.
- Brahms makes clear throughout *A German Requiem* that he is creating a composition that has his own individual perspective, because he chose the texts he set. He also included a mixture of a modern stylistic outlook as important for communicating

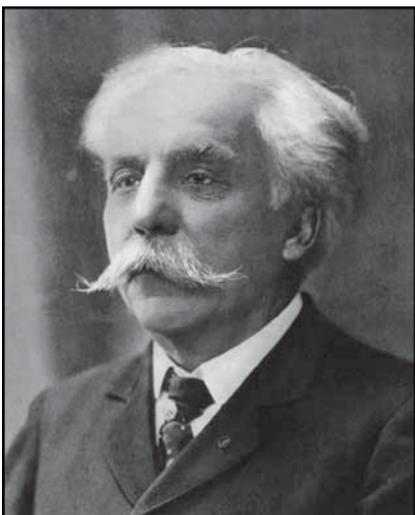
the mood and message as the vocal texts. Yet Brahms remained attached to tradition via Renaissance-style choral writing and stile antico fugues.

- Instead of composing within a Catholic or Protestant liturgical form, Brahms chose to go his own way and create what he thought of as a “human” requiem: one in the vernacular language and one that mixed elements of sacred (fugues and chorales) and secular (marches).
- This was a piece by which Brahms meant to announce his presence to the world, and he did so by creating something sacred and wholly monumental, for the concert hall.

Fauré’s *Requiem*

- Gabriel Fauré achieved something similar to Brahms’s in his *Requiem*, but did so through very different means: by presenting a requiem within its traditional place—the Catholic Church—and turning it, as the critic Émile Vuillermoz stated, “a look toward heaven and not toward hell.”
- Much of Fauré’s life revolved around church music, even if he did not compose that much of it. A good deal of his early employment was as an organist in a number of churches, culminating in a long association with the Madeline in Paris.
- He deputized there for a number of years, before being appointed its organist in 1895. In the next year, he also was appointed professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire, but he kept both posts for some time.
- Fauré composed a number of sacred works, mostly pieces for the Catholic Church. Almost all of these are also single-movement works for chorus. His *Requiem* is one of only two sacred works with multiple movements that Fauré composed.

- His *Requiem* is an unconventional composition, both in terms of the texts it sets and the anti-monumental style of its origins—which counters almost all of the other compositions from the 19th century that have been addressed in this course. Its theology, too, is unconventional.
- Fauré began composing it in 1885 “for the pleasure of it.” He had no particular reason to do so, but his parents had both died in the previous two years, so responses to death may have been on his mind. Unlike the works by Brahms and Verdi, its premiere was a quiet affair.
- But it was not announced as a premiere *per se*. Instead, Fauré simply used it as the music to accompany the requiem mass for a famous architect named Lesoufaché on January 16, 1888. And Fauré used it for several years almost exclusively as funeral service music at the Madeline.
- In his time as a musician and organist at the Madeline, Fauré wanted to present music he thought would be “worthy of the church.” He sought, as René Paroissin notes, to create a religious music that had a “style [that was] sincere, a style of calm nobility and confident renunciation, a style animated by hope and clarity, if not by a more formal faith.”



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The music of Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) impacted the path of modern French music.

- These elements can be heard in Fauré’s *Requiem*, which—because of Fauré’s choice of texts—becomes a personal symbol of his own faith, one that was predicated on tenderness and compassion. That ideal obviously had strong appeal in his time, evidenced by the popularity of the composition when it was finally published. In fact, it was the most popular Fauré had written, and it remains one of his best known today.
- What Fauré’s has accomplished in this piece is to take a traditional text and make it incredibly personal. His version of the Catholic requiem mass includes settings of prayers few made before him and even edited texts.
- His musical style avoids the typical elements discussed throughout this course in sacred music: There is no returning to older ideas to create a link to the venerable traditions of sacred music. Instead, he uses a calm vocal technique and reserved accompaniments to create a sense of peace and balance. This is not a Brahms-like monument for the concert hall; it is a quiet expression of individual wonder.

Verdi’s *Quattro pezzi sacri*

- While Brahms created his own texts and mixed old and new styles to create comfort and a sense of venerability, Fauré edited texts of the requiem service but avoided the old and the monumental. Giuseppe Verdi’s *Quattro pezzi sacri* (*Four Sacred Pieces*) charts a course somewhere in the middle of these two pieces.
- Verdi didn’t edit his texts but, like Fauré, chose ones that were not traditionally set in a polyphonic manner in the 19th century. Verdi can be compared to Brahms, in that he used a mixture of old and new musical styles to create a musical monument. Like that of both Brahms and Fauré, this work is personal; however, unlike both of them, it is somewhat pessimistic.

- Aside from his operas, Verdi composed more music for the Catholic Church than any other type, though the amount was a distant second to his work in opera. Composition of the music for the church is split between works composed in his youth—including quite a few pieces when he was studying to be a composer—and the last three decades of his life, with works like the *Messa da Requiem* of 1874.
- Most of these sacred works were meant for the concert hall, not the church. It was music that held onto certain religious texts and traditions but was meant for the secular world. His *Requiem* is a good example of this: After its premiere in the Cathedral of San Marco in Venice, its next three performances were at the opera house of La Scala, in Milan.
- Verdi composed his *Four Sacred Pieces* between 1889 and 1897; they were published in 1898 and were almost the last music he wrote before his death in 1901. Although they are performed today as a group, Verdi never meant them to be a set or to be performed together. In fact, he thought that one of the movements, the “Ave Maria,” was a contrapuntal challenge and should not be performed at all. Composing it, he thought, would be an amusing and entertaining exercise.
- The “Ave Maria” was a Catholic hymn text. In one of its original chant versions, it was ubiquitously heard throughout Europe from the medieval period forward, and many composers made polyphonic versions of it. Verdi used the text but avoided the traditional chant melody in the version he began composing in 1889.
- Yet the work is based on a preexistent melody: one by a professor at the Bologna Conservatory, Aldofo Crescentini. He published it in a magazine in 1888 as an “enigmatic scale,” one that had no real melodic use. Verdi saw the magazine and decided to see if he could use it to create a composition from it. He set the hymn as a four-part a cappella chorus (no instrumental accompaniment).

- The enigmatic scale is passed around to all four of the choral parts at one time or another: from the bass to the alto and then from the tenor to the soprano. Each time the enigmatic scale travels to another voice, Verdi starts a new section of the piece. Except for the scale itself, there is no repetition within it.
- The third long section of the work is typical: It includes the tenor singing the enigmatic cantus firmus scale, as well as staggered entries.
- The last movement of the *Four Sacred Pieces*, the “Te Deum,” is quite different. Verdi composed this movement between 1895 and 1897, and it was supposedly his favorite of the group. The composition contains a number of interesting anachronisms as well as a mixture of styles drawn from both the ancient and modern.

Suggested Reading

Caballero, “Fauré’s Religion.”

Marvin, “Verdi’s Non-Operatic Works.”

Musgrave, *Brahms*.

Suggested Listening

Ein deutsches Requiem/Johannes Brahms, dir. Richard Hickox.

Requiem etc./Fauré, dir. Yan Pascal Tortelier.

Requiem, Quattro pezzi sacri/Verdi, dir. Pier Giorgio Morandi.

Questions to Consider

1. How does Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* differ from other requiems you have learned about in this course? How might it be—as Brahms believed—a “human” requiem?
2. Brahms presents his *Requiem* deliberately as a musical monument. How does Fauré’s *Requiem* compare? Which of the two is the more intimate, personal work?
3. What from Verdi’s *Quattro pezzi sacri* reflects the venerable, and what reflects the modern? And what does the ending of the “Te Deum” do to the sense of monumentality of the work?

Come, All Ye Faithful: Music of Christmas

Lecture 16

This lecture discusses on a range of music, from that sung almost exclusively by professionals to works sung by regular folk. Using sacred music from one season—Christmas—you will examine music that was, and in many cases is, heard in both churches and concert halls during the season, such as the motets of Victoria and the oratorios of Handel. You also will learn about music that is meant to be sung either in church or at the hearthside by individuals: the Christmas hymn and the Christmas carol.

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

- When we think of hymns, we generally think of songs that are simple enough and melodic enough that a congregation—not a trained choir—can sing them. Throughout most of the history of sacred music in the West, this meant either a single melody or an arrangement of four-part harmony for it.
- The text to “O Come All Ye Faithful” was originally written in Latin, by John Francis Wade. It begins with the words “Adeste fideles.” Wade was an English Catholic living in France, after he fled England for political reasons. He was a Jacobite who believed that the House of Stuart should be reinstated in England, when, instead, it was replaced after the Glorious Revolution by the House of Hannover.
- Wade likely wrote “Adeste fideles” sometime between 1740 and 1743. The hymn was published in London in 1782 and performed at the Catholic Portuguese Chapel there in 1787.
- Frederick Oakley made an English translation of the hymn in 1841. Oakley was an Anglican clergyman who later converted to Catholicism. The music to “O Come, All Ye Faithful” is simple. It is a strophic setting of several verses, so all of the verses of the lyrics

are sung to the same tune. And the lyrics repeat the line “O come let us adore him,” as a refrain at the end of each verse, cementing the praise given by this little composition.

- This instantly recognizable holiday favorite has become a standard of the Western Christmas tradition due in no small part to its versatility—the key to which is its direct, memorable simplicity.
- The cheerfully rousing melody, with its satisfying cadences, is relatively easy to arrange and sing in any venue: be it in a church congregation, out caroling in the neighborhood with a group of friends, or beside a glowing Yule log with family.

Christmas for the Patron and the Audience

- Tomas Luis de Victoria was perhaps the best-known Spanish composer of his day. He studied in Rome, possibly with the slightly more famous Palestrina. He certainly studied Palestrina’s sacred music, as he knew Palestrina’s style quite well.
- Working as he did at the end of the 16th century, he had the option, like Monteverdi, of working for secular patrons. Instead, he dedicated most of his life to composing and singing for the Catholic Church, and he wrote his music very much in the same sort of clear style as Palestrina had.
- Victoria had his first training in music as a choirboy at Avila Cathedral in Spain. In the mid-1560s, he was sent to Rome, funded by a grant from King Philip II of Spain, to study at the German Jesuit College, with the hope that he would eventually become a priest. He stayed there in the early 1570s, when the college was reorganized, and became its maestro di cappella—thus, he was in charge of music at an ecclesiastical institution.
- Later, he would become chaplain to Spanish royalty, serving a Spanish dowager queen at a convent where she retired. But at the time that he composed his great Christmas motet, “O magnum mysterium,” he was still working for various religious institutions.

- “O magnum mysterium” is a motet, which is a polyphonic composition with a sacred text. Motets were used sometimes in Catholic services. The motet “O magnum mysterium” was a special piece for the liturgy of the office on Christmas Day, during the office service called the nocturne. This motet would have replaced one of the responsorial chants normally sung in that service.
- The text of Victoria’s motet is split: The first part describes how Christ was born in a humble manger and calls the birth a “wonderful sacrament.” The second part of the text praises the Virgin Mary, noting that her “womb was worthy” to bear Christ. The motet ends with a long exclamation on the word “alleluia.”
- The music of this motet has the same sort of textual clarity of other contrapuntal music of the 16th century, by composers such as Josquin and Palestrina. There is a great deal of imitation; however, every time a new line of text is heard, Victoria set it with a new texture.
- Victoria’s motet was so popular that, later, he used it as the cantus firmus (using preexisting musical materials) for a Christmas Day mass. This Christmas mass was called *Missa O magnum mysterium*—because it is clear that Victoria based the new work on the older motet.
- One composition that began as a work meant for professionals to sing but has become one that is performed by a mixture of professionals and amateurs is Handel’s *Messiah*. Traditions around this oratorio have evolved to the assumed sense that different parts of it are appropriate for different seasons.
- Handel’s *Messiah* is roughly the story of Christ’s time on Earth, from his birth, throughout his life, to his death and resurrection. So, there is a section in this oratorio about the Christmas story.
- Frequently, Handel’s *Messiah* is broken up into a “Christmas” *Messiah* and an “Easter” *Messiah*. The “Hallelujah Chorus” is an excellent example of the Easter part of the work. The chorus “For

unto us a Child is Born” is an excellent example of the Christmas part, as well as something written for an educated audience of the 18th century.

- Handel’s chorus and Victoria’s motet show us aspects of Christmas music meant for ritual (Victoria) versus edifying entertainment (Handel). These entertaining and ritual aspects of sacred Christmas music continued into the 19th century, but were soon joined by music with a focus on more personal devotion and edifying entertainment: the Christmas carol.

The Christmas Carol and the Christmas Hymn

- The Christmas carol is one of the major genres of sacred music that have been sung by both professionals and amateurs alike. One of the greatest experts on the Christmas carol, William Studwell, defines a Christmas carol as “a song used to celebrate Christmas and its adjacent events (including Advent, the New Year, Epiphany, and to some extent the winter season).” He estimates that there are at least 10,000 carols in existence but that the average person tends to know only about 40.
- Carols can have anonymous origins, or folk origins, and they tend—with a few exceptions—to have been written by “forgotten” artists and composers. We know that carols have existed in the Western tradition from the Middle Ages onward. In general, they were first like hymns: strophic settings of poems of uniform stanzas—poems that would have the same number of lines and similar syllabic schemes within those lines.
- Initially, carols, in the 12th century or so—were a popular courtly dance. They were not just for Christmas; other seasons had them as well, including Easter. Carols, like chant, started out as a monophonic repertory in the Middle Ages. By the 15th century, we begin to see polyphonic examples.
- In general, the popularity of carols waxed and waned over the millennia. They were quite popular in the 15th century, for



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During Christmastime, carolers travel from house to house, singing joyful songs to their neighbors.

example, but began to be less so in the 17th century. In England, Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans banned both the celebration of Christmas and the singing of carols for a time.

- By the 19th century, however, popular interest in hymns meant that Christmas carols were reestablished in the repertoire, and scholars went looking for older carols, too. In fact, we can say that the genre of the carol, like many other types of older sacred music, was “rescued” by antiquarians (amateur researchers) in the beginning of the 19th century.
- The 19th century became an incredible time for the production of Christmas carols. The same middle-class audience that composers from Beethoven to Verdi wrote for also played and sang a great deal of music in their homes.
- Being musical was more than just a hobby in the 19th century. If you were a member of the middle class or above, being able to play piano or some other instrument and sing a little was one of

the “accomplishments” you might display to show others that you were cultured and sophisticated. If you were of marriageable age, it would show that you were worth a second look; this is a prominent theme in some of the novels of Jane Austen and many others.

- Music sung or performed by the entire family was frequently thought to encourage domestic harmony—particularly if the words to the music were sacred. Consequently, the production of hymns and Christmas carols in the 19th century had a church market but also a much larger home market.
- Of course, the tradition of going Christmas caroling—gathering a group of friends together to sing—also gained a great deal of strength in the Victorian era, as did most things involving Christmas.
- “Rediscovering” old carols became one model for their production in the 19th century, but there were others as well.
 - One way was to find an old text and fit new music to it to make a Christmas carol.
 - Another way was to find an old, preexisting piece of music and fitting a carol text to it.
 - A third way was to write new music and new text in the traditional style of a Christmas carol.
- One of the most beloved Christmas carols—“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!”—shows how the old and new can be merged: in this case, an older poem with newer music. An example of a Christmas carol that features both new words and new music is “Silent Night,” or, in its original German, “Stille Nacht.”

Suggested Reading

Clancy, *Sacred Christmas Music*.

Studwell, *An Easy Guide to Christmas Carols*.

Suggested Listening

Christmas Carols, dir. Donald Hunt.

A Christmas Fantasy, dir. Keith Rhodes and Roy Newsome.

Masses/Victoria, dir. Jeremy Sumnerly.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the styles of sacred music change over the centuries between 700 and 1901?
2. How does sacred music that is meant for personal consumption or to be sung by the congregation differ from sacred music that is meant to be sung by a professional choir?
3. How and why were so many Christmas carols composed in the 19th century?

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Dürr, Alfred. *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach: With Their Librettos in German-English Parallel Text*. Revised and translated by Richard P. Jones. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. A work-by-work discussion of all of Bach's cantatas, including their libretti, context, and musical analysis.

Eatock, Colin. *Mendelssohn and Victorian England*. Farnham, Surrey, UK; and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. A wide-ranging examination of Mendelssohn's many travels in Great Britain and their impact on his reception and popularity there, including a long discussion of *Elijah*.

Fallows, David. *Dufay*. London: J. M. Dent, 1982. While somewhat dated, this book is still the most comprehensive biography of the important Renaissance sacred music composer.

_____. *Josquin*. Turnhout, Antwerp, Belgium: Brepols, 2009. A comprehensive discussion of what we know—and what we don't know—about the most important composer from the golden age of polyphony.

Hicks, Anthony. "Handel and the Idea of an Oratorio." In *The Cambridge Companion to Handel*, edited by Donald Burrows, 145–163. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. A brief, accessible survey of Handel's compositions in the oratorio genre.

Hiley, David. *Western Plainchant: A Handbook*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. When published, Hiley's book provided the most up-to-date bibliographic discussion of chant in the Western Christian traditions. While dense and technical, it is an amazing resource and still the most comprehensive one in English.

Hodgkins, Geoffrey, ed. *The Best of Me: A Gerontius Centenary Companion*. Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 1999. This book contains essays on *Gerontius*'s libretto, an analysis of its music, and a number of contextual discussions regarding both how the work came to be and how it became one of Elgar's best-known and beloved compositions.

Jensen, Eva Marie. "Eschatological Aspects in Music: *The Dream of Gerontius* by Edward Elgar." In *Voicing the Ineffable: Musical Representations of Religious Experience*, edited by Sigrid Bruhn, 133–156. Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002. This essay includes a quick discussion of the religious influences surrounding Elgar's oratorio and a good synopsis of the work.

Jones, Gordon. *Bach's Choral Music: A Listener's Guide*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2009. A book-and-CD combination aimed at introducing the general listener to the vocal music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Keefe, Simon P. *Mozart's Requiem: Reception, Work, Completion*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. A thorough investigation of the compositional context and reception of Mozart's *Requiem*, including a long discussion of the myths that surrounded it after the composer's death.

Kelly, Thomas Forrest. *Capturing Music: The Story of Notation*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2015. A short, entertaining, and highly lucid account of the invention and development of musical notation in the Middle Ages.

_____. "George Frederick Handel, *Messiah*: Tuesday, April 13, 1742, 12 Noon." In *First Nights: Five Musical Premieres*, 60–107. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. The chapter on *Messiah* in Kelly's book is an informative and engaging discussion of the general history of its first performance and is perhaps one of the best general and most accessible synopses of the philosophical and theological interpretations of the oratorio.

Krummacher, Friedhelm. "Art—History—Religion: On Mendelssohn's Oratorios *St. Paul* and *Elijah*." In *The Mendelssohn Companion*, edited by Douglas Seaton, 299–394. Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press, 2001. An analytical discussion of Mendelssohn's oratorios, with translations of relevant contemporary documents provided.

Leach, Elizabeth Eva. *Guillaume de Machaut: Secretary, Poet, Musician*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011. The most recent and comprehensive biography of the medieval composer Machaut published in English; Leach's monograph discusses Machaut both in his own time and his reception over the last two centuries.

Lockwood, Lewis. *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003. A fantastic and accessible biography of Beethoven, including lucid discussions of all the composer's music.

———. *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505: The Creation of a Musical Center in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. A discussion of one of the most important Renaissance courts for music, where Josquin served for some time.

Luckett, Richard. *Handel's Messiah: A Celebration*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1992. While more than two decades old, it remains the most complete and accessible discussion of *Messiah* for the general reader available.

MacIntyre, Bruce C. *Haydn: The Creation*. New York: Schimer Books; London: Prentice Hall International, 1998. A monograph-length discussion of Haydn's oratorio, including an analysis of the work and discussion of contemporary criticism.

Marvin, Roberta Montemorra. "Verdi's Non-Operatic Works." In *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, edited by Scott L. Balthazar, 169–184. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Marvin's short article details aspects of Verdi's sacred music in the only systematic treatment of his sacred oeuvre in English.

McKinnon, James W., and Christian Thodberg. "Alleluia" in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. 2014. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40711>. A short discussion of the history of the alleluia chant in the context of the Western and Eastern liturgies.

Melamed, Daniel R. "The Evolution of 'Und wenn ie Welt voll Teufel wär' BWV 80/5." In *The Century of Bach and Mozart: Perspectives on Historiography, Composition, Theory, and Performance*, edited by Sean Gallagher and Thomas Forrest Kelly, 189–205. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Department of Music, 2008. This article includes a brief discussion of Bach's Cantata no. 80, including how amalgamations of additions from various scores from after Bach's death gave us the version of the work we know best today.

Mellers, Wilfrid. *Celestial Music? Some Masterpieces of European Religious Music*. Suffolk, UK, and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2002.

A philosophical and historical discussion of the aesthetics and theology of sacred music in the Christian West from the Middle Ages to today.

Musgrave, Michael. *Brahms: A German Requiem*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. A short introduction to the text and music of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, including a discussion of its reception.

Schroeder, David. *Experiencing Mozart: A Listener's Companion*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2013. A clear and accessible biography of Mozart and his music, aimed at the musical novice.

Smith, Ruth. *Charles Jennens: The Man behind Handel's Messiah*. London: Handel House, 2012. This wonderfully rich book details the relationship between Handel and Jennens, as well as explores the contemporary political, religious, and artistic debates surrounding both men and their work.

Stapert, Calvin. *Playing before the Lord: The Life and Work of Joseph Haydn*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014. A short, accessible biography of Haydn, written to forward the theory that Haydn composed most of his music as a way of expressing his Catholic faith.

Stauffer, George B. *Bach: The Mass in B Minor (The Great Catholic Mass)*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997. A wide-ranging discussion of Bach's mass, with an analysis of each movement and a discussion of contemporary mass composition.

Studwell, William E. *An Easy Guide to Christmas Carols: Their Past, Present, and Future*. Kingsville, TX: The Lyre of Orpheus Press, 2006. One of the most accessible and comprehensive discussions of Christmas carols published in the English language.

Temperley, Nicholas. *Haydn: The Creation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. A well-written and still-timely handbook on Haydn's composition that is meant to introduce the reader to the work, its context and analysis, and its critical reception.

Terry, Joe E. "Music in the Educational Philosophy of Martin Luther." In the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Winter, 1973): 355–365. A somewhat-dated but useful article that includes translations of Luther's discussion of music and its use in education and theology.

Todd, R. Larry. "On Mendelssohn's Sacred Music, Real and Imaginary." In *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn*, edited by Peter Mercer-Taylor, 167–188. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. A brief discussion of all of the sacred music—Catholic, Protestant, and oratorios—composed by Mendelssohn.

Troeger, Thomas H. *Music as Prayer: The Theology and Practice of Church Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. A holistic philosophical and aesthetic argument about the place of music within worship; this is not a historical discussion per se, but more of an introduction to some of the issues of performing sacred music today.

Varwig, Bettina. *Histories of Heinrich Schütz*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. A biography of the composer that also situates him within the contemporary context of the Thirty Years' War, the reception of classical mythology, and Lutheran eschatology.

Whigham, John. *Monteverdi: Vespers (1610)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. A short and technical discussion and analysis of Monteverdi's work, with useful contextual information accessible to all readers.

Weiss, Piero, and Richard Taruskin, eds. *Music in the Western World: A History of Documents*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Schirmer, 2008. This volume presents a history of music through contemporary documents and includes discussion of many of the composers discussed throughout this course.

Wolff, Christoph. *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2000. Perhaps the best and most comprehensive biography of Bach in English, accessible to both the novice and the musical enthusiast.

———. *Mozart at the Gateway to His Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788–1791*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012. A fantastic, thorough, and provocative account of Mozart’s last three years—including the composition of the *Requiem*—that documents how most of what we think we know about the end of Mozart’s life is actually either exaggerated or a myth.

———. “The Reformation Cantata ‘Ein Feste Burg.’” In *Bach: Essays on His Life and Music*, 152–161. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991. A technical and focused discussion of the composition and changes to Bach’s cantata.

Yudkin, Jeremy. *Music in Medieval Europe*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989. One of the most accessible and wide-ranging histories of Western music in the Middle Ages in print.

———. *The Music Treatise of Anonymous IV: A New Translation*. Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany: Hänsler-Verlag, 1985. While dense and academic, this treatise includes the only major contemporary discussion of Leonin and Perotin as composers.

Discography

Note: As of the time of publication, all of these performances were available via streaming, NAXOS, and/or the specific label.

Bach: Mass in B Minor. Cologne Chamber Orchestra; Dresden Chamber Choir, dir. Helmut Muller-Bruhl. NAXOS 8.557448-49, 2005 (streaming).

Cantatas BWV 80, BWV 147/Johann Sebastian Bach. Hungarian Radio Chorus; Failoni Chamber Orchestra, dir. Mytas Antal. NAXOS 8.550642, 1992 (compact disc).

Cantiones sacrae/William Byrd. Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge; dir. Richard Marlow. Chandos 0733, 2007 (streaming).

Coronation Mass, Ave verum Corpus, Exsultate, Jubilate/Mozart. Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge; St. John's Sinfonia, dir. Andrew Nethsinga. Chandos CHAN0786, 2012 (streaming).

Choral Works/Palestrina, Allegri. Oxford Camerata; Schola Cantorum of Oxford, dir. Jeremy Summerly. NAXOS 8.553238, 2004 (streaming).

Christmas Carols. Worcester Cathedral Choir, dir. Donald Hunt. NAXOS, 8.550589, 1993 (streaming).

A Christmas Fantasy. Huddersfield Choral Society, dir. Keith Rhodes; John Foster Black Dyke Mills Band, dir. Roy Newsome. Chandos, CHAN 4541, 1995 (streaming).

Christus am Ölberge/Ludwig van Beethoven. Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart; Bach-Colleum Stuttgart, dir. Helmuth Rilling. Hänsler Classic CD98.422, 2004 (streaming).

The Dream of Gerontius, op. 38/Edward Elgar. London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, dir. Richard Hickox. Chandos CHAN8641-42, 1988 (compact disc).

Ein deutsches Requiem/Johannes Brahms. London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, dir. Richard Hickox. Chandos CHAN 8942, 1991 (streaming).

Elijah/Felix Mendelssohn. London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, dir. Richard Hickox. CHAN 8774-74, 1989 (compact disc).

Haydn: Die Schöpfung (The Creation). Cappella Augustina; VokalEnsemble Cologne, dir. Andreas Spering. NAXOS 8.557380-81, 2005 (streaming).

Le Messe de Nostre Dame. Oxford Camerata, dir. Jeremy Summerly. NAXOS 8.553833, 1996 (compact disc).

Leonin/Perotin: Sacred Music from Notre Dame Cathedral. Tonus Peregrinus, dir. Anthony Pitts. NAXOS 8.557340, 2005 (compact disc).

Masses/Victoria. Oxford Camerata, dir. Jeremy Summerly. NAXOS 8.550575, 2004 (streaming).

Messiah/George Frederic Handel. U.C. Berkeley Chamber Chorus; Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, dir. Nicholas McGegan. Harmonia Mundi France HMU907050.52, 1991 (compact disc).

Missa L'Homme armé/Dufay. Oxford Camerata, dir. Jeremy Summerly. NAXOS 8.553087, 2014 (streaming).

Missa L'Homme armé; Ave Maria; Absalon, fili mi/Josquin. Oxford Camerata, dir. Jeremy Summerly. NAXOS 8.553428, 2014 (streaming).

Missa solemnis, op. 123/Ludwig van Beethoven. Nashville Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, dir. Kenneth Schermerhorn. NAXOS 8.557060, 2004 (streaming).

Musikalische Exequien/Heinrich Schütz. The Sixteen; Symphony of Harmony and Invention, dir. Harry Christophers. Coro 16036, 2008 (compact disc).

Paschale Mysterium: Gregorian Chant for Easter. Aurora Surgit, dir. Alessio Randon. NAXOS 8.553697, 1996 (compact disc).

Requiem/Mozart. Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge; English Chamber Orchestra, dir. George Guest. Chandos CHAN10208X, 2004 (streaming).

Requiem etc./Fauré. City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus, BBC Philharmonic, dir. Yan Pascal Tortelier. CHAN 10113, 2003 (streaming).

Requiem, Quattro pezzi sacri/Verdi. Hungarian State Opera Choir and Orchestra, dir. Pier Giorgio Morandi. NAXOS 8.550944-45, 1997 (streaming).

Sacred Symphonies/Gabrieli. Ex Cathedra; His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, dir. Jeffrey Skidmore. HYPERION CDA67957, 2012 (compact disc).

Vespro della Beata Vergine/Monteverdi. Dresdner Kreuzchor, dir. Martin Flämig. Berlin Classics 0092042BC, 1996 (compact disc).

Music Credits

Anonymous. “Pascha nostrum,” Alleluia. Performed by Alessio Randon and Aurora Surgit. 8.553697. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Anonymous. “Factum est salutare.” Performed by Tonus Peregrinus. 8.557340. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Anonymous. “Haec Dies,” Gradual. Performed by Alessio Randon and Aurora Surgit. 8.553697. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Anonymous. “Viderunt omnes,” Gradual. Performed by Tonus Peregrinus. 8.557340. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Bach, Johann Sebastian. Cantata no. 120. Performed by Hana Blažíková, Robin Blaze, Satoshi Mizukoshi, Peter Kooij, Bach Collegium Japan, and Masaaki Suzuki, conductor. BIS SACD-1881. Courtesy of BIS Records AB.

Bach, Johann Sebastian. Cantata no. 80. Performed by Ingrid Kertesi, Judit Nemeth, Jozsef Mukk, István Gáti, Hungarian Radio Chorus, Failoni Chamber Orchestra, Budapest, and Mátyás Antál, Conductor. 8.550642. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Bach, Johann Sebastian. *Mass in B Minor*. Performed by Sunhae Im, Marianne Beate Kielland, Ann Hallenberg, Markus Schäfer, Hanno Müller-Brachmann, Dresden Chamber Choir, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, and Helmut Müller-Brühl, Conductor. 8.557448-49. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Christus am Ölberge*. Performed by Das Neue Orchestre, Chorus Musicus de Cologne, and Christoph Spering, Conductor. NAÏVE V5155. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Missa solemnis*. Performed by Lori Phillips, Robynne Redmon, James Taylor, Jay Baylon, Nashville Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and Kenneth Schermerhorn, Conductor. 8.557060. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Brahms, Johannes. *Ein deutsches Requiem*. Performed by David Wilson-Johnson, Felicity Lott, London Symphony Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, and Richard Hickox, Conductor. CHAN 8942. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Byrd, William. "Haec Dies." Performed by The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge; Richard Marlow, Director. CHAN 0733. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Carissimi, Giacomo. *Historia di Jephte*. Performed by Consortium Carissimi. 8.557390. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Croo, Robert/Traditional. "The Coventry Carol." Performed by Raymond Johnston, Robert Stringer, Worcester Cathedral Choir, and Donald Hunt, Conductor. 8.550589. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Dufay, Guillaume. "L'homme armé." Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.553087. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Dufay, Guillaume. *Missa L'homme arme*, Kyrie. Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.553087. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Elgar, Edward. *Pomp and Circumstance* March no. 1. Performed by Adrian Leaper conducting the Czech-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra. 8.554161. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Elgar, Edward. *The Dream of Gerontius*. Performed by Arthur Davies, Felicity Palmer, Gwynne Howell, Roderick Elms, London Symphony Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, and Richard Hickox, Conductor. CHAN 8641(2). Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Elgar, Edward. *The Dream of Gerontius*. Performed by William Kendall, Sarah Fryer, Matthew Best, Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, Waynflete Singers, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and conducted by David Hill. 8.553885-86. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Fauré, Gabriel. *Requiem*. Performed by Libby Crabtree, James Rutherford, Jonathan Scott, City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus, BBC Philharmonic, and Yan Pascal Tortelier, Conductor. CHAN 10113. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Giovanni. “In ecclesiis,” C78. Excerpt performed by Ex Cathedra, His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts and Concerto Palatino conducted by Jeffrey Skidmore. CDA67957. Courtesy of Hyperion Records Ltd, London (www.hyperion-records.co.uk).

Handel, George Frideric. *Giulio Cesare*. Performed by Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Karina Gauvin, Romina Bassi, Emöke Baráth, Il Complesso Barocco, and Alan Curtis. NAÏVE OP30536. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Handel, George Frideric. *Messiah*. Performed by Jaroslav Kreek conducting the Capella Istropolitana and the Bratislava City Chorus. 8.550317. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Handel, George Frideric. *Messiah*. Performed by The Scholars Baroque Ensemble. 8.550667-68. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Handel, George Frideric. “Zadok the Priest.” Performed by Tallis Chamber Choir, Royal Academy Consort, and Jeremy Summerly, Conductor. 8.557003. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Haydn, Franz Joseph. *Die Schöpfung*. Performed by Sunahe Im, Jan Kobow, Hanno Müller-Brachmann, Christine Wehler, VokalEnsemble Köln, Capella Augustina, and Andreas Spering, Conductor. 8.557380-81. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Hildegard of Bingen. “Ordo virtutum,” Procession. Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.550998. Courtesy of Naxos of America NAXOS.

Josquin des Prez. “Ave Maria.” Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.553428. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Léonin. Gradual, “Viderunt omnes.” Performed by Tonus Peregrinus. 8.557340. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Léonin. “Viderunt omnes.” Performed by Tonus Peregrinus. 8.557340. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Machaut, Guillaume de. *La Messe de Nostre Dame*, Kyrie. Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.553833. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Mendelssohn, Felix, and William Hayman Cummings. “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” Performed by The Choir of York Minster and Francis Jackson, Director. CHAN 6520. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Mendelssohn, Felix. *Elijah*. Performed by Willard White, Rosalind Plowright, Linda Finnie, Arthur Davies, London Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Chorus, and Richard Hickox, Conductor. CHAN 8774(2). Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Mohr, Franz Xaver and Mohr, Joseph. “Silent Night.” Performed by The Choir of York Minster and Francis Jackson, Director. CHAN 6520. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Monteverdi, Claudio. *L’Orfeo*. Performed by Alessandro Carmignani, Marinella Pennicchi, Rosita Frisani, Patrizia Vaccari, Carlo Lepore, Gastone Sarti, Giovanni Pentasuglia, and the Capella Musicale di San Petronio di Bologna; Sergio Vartolo, Conductor. 8.554094-95. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Monteverdi, Claudio. *Vespro della Beata Virgini*. Dominae ad adiuvandum. Performed by The Scholars Baroque Ensemble. 8.550662-63. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. “Ave verum Corpus.” Performed by John Challenger, Choir of St. John’s College, Cambridge, St. John’s Sinfonia, and Andrew Nethsingha. CHAN 0786. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. *Requiem* Mass. Performed by Yvonne Kenny, Sarah Walker, William Kendall, David Wilson-Johnson, Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, English Chamber Orchestra, Philip Kenyon, and George Guest, Conductor. CHAN 10208 X. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da. *Sicut cervus*, Motet. Performed by Sergio Vartolo conducting the San Petronio Cappella Musicale Soloists. 8.553314. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Palestrina, Giovanni Pierluigi da. *Pope Marcellus Mass*, Gloria. Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.553238. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Pérotin. “Viderunt omnes.” Performed by Tonus Peregrinus. 8.557340. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Schütz, Heinrich. *Musikalische Exequien*. Performed by Veronika Winter, Bettina Pahn, Henning Voss, Jan Kobow, Henning Kaiser, Ralf Grobe, Ulrich Maier, Alsfelder Vokalensemble, Himlische Cantorey, Barockorchester I Febiarmonici, Wolfgang Helbich, and Beate Rollecke. 8.555705. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Verdi, Giuseppe. *Quattro pezzi sacri*. Ave Maria. Performed by Hungarian State Opera Choir; Anikó Katona, Chorus Master; Pier Giorgio Morandi, Conductor. 8.550944-45. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Victoria, Tomás Luis de Victoria. *Missa O magnum mysterium*. Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.550575. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Victoria, Tomás Luis de Victoria. “O magnum mysterium.” Performed by Oxford Camerata; Jeremy Summerly, Director. 8.550575. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

Wade, John Francis, William Thomas Brooke, and Frederick Oakeley. “O Come All Ye Faithful.” Performed by The Choir of York Minster and Francis Jackson, Director. CHAN 6520. Courtesy of Chandos Records Ltd.

Wagner, Richard. *Tristan und Isolde*. Performed by Margaret Jane Wray, John Horton Murray, Nancy Maultsby, Russian State Symphony Orchestra, John McGlinn, Conductor. 8.555789. Courtesy of Naxos of America.

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