



J.S. Bach — *Mass in B Minor*

performed by John Eliot Gardiner, Archiv Production (the version to get)

pp 1-3: “Liner Notes” by Rev. Bill Haley

pp 4-9: Full Latin and English Text for the Mass

pp 10: The Nicene Creed

◆ #1—Kyrie Eleison

- Counterpoint is easy to see here... Kyrie Eleison
- As the piece moves on, it builds intensity, as if the cry for mercy is getting more and more desperate, “O God, have mercy... *have mercy!*”
- The basses in this piece, with the continuo, seem to lend a great gravitas to the prayer

◆ #2—Christe Eleison

- While the vocal interplay is gorgeous, don’t miss the cellos, violins, and harpsichord
- The soprano seems to carry the emphasis, and whereas the “Kyrie” is somber and pleading for grace, this is much more tender, a sweet plea for mercy... almost the difference between praying to the Almighty Father (Kyrie) and then to the Loving Saviour (Christe)

◆ #3—Kyrie Eleison

- All of this—the desperation and the submission—is summed up in this piece. It sounds more intense from the get go, more full.
- Hear the way the theme builds, and then diminishes, builds and then diminishes...
- Watch for the place in the music (about 2 ½ minutes in) where there is the cry “Kyrie! Lord” first by the altos, then sopranos, then tenors, then basses which is then repeated several times

◆ #4—Gloria

- To signify a major shift in textual emphasis, Bach throws everything at the listener (or to God!) right from the beginning... trumpets and timpani are introduced... Glory to God on High!!

◆ #5—Et in terra pax

- As soon as the notion of earth is introduced... what happens to the music? It slows in tempo and doesn’t nearly reach the heights of the musical scale... in other words, we’re no longer in heaven but on earth... the basses and cello return to prominence
- “Peace to men on earth of good will”... hear the lightness of the music, the gentleness at the introduction of this idea...
- Oh! Then it all builds again... back to the heavens... hear the trumpets and timpani come back...
- Then, in case we missed the point... all the voices sing the same notes for several measures... it closes with everything coming together

- ◆ #7—Gratias agimus
 - This piece simply continues to build... til again, everything comes to play. “Thy great glory”... *gloriam* gets much of the emphasis... watch for the introduction of the trumpets, and then the timpani.
 - ◆ #8—Domine Deus
 - A tender piece, a love song to God the Father and to God the Son. About two and a half minutes in, the soprano sings “Jesu Christe” and the tenor “Deus Pater” and their notes combine on altissime (most high) and omnipotence (almighty)... signifying the unity of the two... the tenor sings of the Father, the soprano of the Son... who is being sung about here? Well, God... in unity. They join in “Lamb of God, Son of the Father”
 - ◆ #9—Qui tollis peccata mundi
 - At the entrance of the concept of sin... what does the music do? It is dark, it is somber... it is sad
 - ◆ #12—Cum Sancto Spiritu
 - Lest we forget that there’s a third member of the Trinity... and that this is *all* about the glory of God!!
 - Listen for the trumpets playing triplets... the Trinity in song. Listen for the counterpoint
 - ◆ #13—Credo
 - Credo... I believe.
 - ◆ #16—Et incarnatus
 - The music descends... obviously symbolizing the descent of Jesus from heaven to earth. It deepens the further it goes.
 - The emphasis lies more on the incarnation than the means (the Virgin Mary), and the fact that Jesus was made man
 - ◆ #17—Crucifixus
 - A lament, again a descending scale begins the piece. Hear the long notes on “*Cru.....cifixus*”
 - This piece is in a minor key... until the last chord, quiet, gentle... and major! Good things are coming! We have descended into the darkness, but the light begins to break
 - “Bach makes the contrast between the crucifixion and resurrection so brilliant that at performances today the members of the audience gasp audibly.” Jaroslav Pelikan
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- ◆ #18—Et resurrexit
 - Christ is Risen!!
 - Bach throws all the voices and timpani at us... and then hear the ascension from the grave on “resurexit”... you can hear it in the voices and the violins, Christ raises higher and higher
 - At “ascended into heaven” we hear the trumpets enter
 - When “the Kingdom” is referenced, we get all the fanfare, the trumpets and the timpani again
 - Then, the piece builds and builds, as if the kingdom of God is coming in greater and greater power and glory

- ◆ #20—Confiteor
 - Listen for the theme, working almost like a creedal statement, not just a word, but the whole phrase... it begins clearly when the basses start about a minute and a half into it, then the tenors.

- ◆ #21—Et expecto
 - As soon as we start talking about the dead, the mood completely changes... reverent, quiet, and dark, and mournful. This sounds like a funeral dirge.
 - BUT... there is resurrection!! Hear the dead arising out of the grave and into eternal life. All the trumpets and timpani again are thrown at us to say, “Heaven! Glory!”
 - The Amens ascend and ascend, go higher and higher

- ◆ #22—Sanctus
 - Bach is here explicitly trying to mimic the sounds of heaven, voices upon voices upon voices singing “Holy, Holy, Holy” over and over, interwoven, in perfect harmony and yet distinct.
 - “The symbol that pervades the piece is the number three, a symbol of course, of the Trinity. From the continuously rolling triplets to the overall structure, there is little in the piece that doesn’t come in threes. There are three trumpets, three oboes, three upper string parts, and a six part choir that is divided into three upper and three lower voices. There are three threefold shouts of ‘Sanctus.’ Indeed the whole piece consists of three large, three part sections.” (Calvin Stapert, *My Only Comfort*)
 - There is no better way to describe the basses on “Lord God of hosts” except forceful, strong, bold, undeniable. The punctuations of the trumpet and timpani don’t let us forget it.
 - “Heaven and earth” - the sounds begin light, and airy, ethereal. The voices and instruments flutter like angels, but the majesty is not forgotten.
 - The main word emphasized is, of course, “Glory.”

- ◆ #23—Hosanna
 - Are we done yet? Are we done praising God? Hardly. There is always more of him to celebrate and extol and worship.

- ◆ #27—Dona nobis pacem
 - The Mass in B-Minor ends with a plea for mercy and peace. Not unexpectedly, it starts off relatively softly, then builds to a crescendo.
 - “O Lord, the great God, whom we have been seeing, affirming, and worshipping... have mercy on us and grant us your peace.”

Kyrie

1. Coro

Kyrie eleison.

2. Duetto (Soprano/Mezzosoprano)

Christe eleison.

3. Coro

Kyrie eleison.

1. Chorus

Lord have mercy.

2. Duet (Soprano/Mezzo-soprano)

Christ have mercy.

3. Chorus

Lord have mercy.

Gloria

4. Coro

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

5. Coro

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

4. Chorus

Glory be to God on high.

5. Chorus

And on earth, peace to men of good will.

6. Aria (Soprano)

Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te.

6. Aria (Soprano)

We praise you; we bless you; we adore you; we glorify you.

7. Coro

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

7. Chorus

We give you thanks for your great glory.

8. Duetto (Soprano/Tenor)

Domine Deus, rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe, altissime. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

8. Duet (Soprano/Tenor)

Lord God, heavenly King, God the almighty Father. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Most High Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

9. Coro

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

9. Chorus

You who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. You who take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.

10. Aria (Alto)

Qui sedes ad dextram Patris, miserere nobis.

10. Aria (Alto)

You who sit at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

11. Aria (Basso)

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.

11. Aria (Bass)

For you alone are the Holy One. You alone are the Lord. You, Jesus Christ, alone are the Most High.

12. Coro

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

12. Chorus

With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Credo (that is, the Nicene Creed)**13. Coro**

Credo in unum Deum.

13. Chorus

I believe in one God.

14. Coro

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorum coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

14. Chorus

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

15. Duetto (Soprano/Mezzosoprano)

Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum do Deo vero, genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri, per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.

16. Coro

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sanctu ex Maria virgine et homo factus est.

17. Coro

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est.

18. Coro

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas. Et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris, et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus regni non erit finis.

15. Duet (Soprano/Mezzosoprano)

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.

16. Chorus

And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man.

17. Chorus

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

18. Chorus

And on the third day he rose again according to the scriptures. And ascended into heaven. And sits at the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

19. Aria (Basso)

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filioque procedit; qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur; qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.

19. Aria (Bass)

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

20. Coro

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.

20. Chorus

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

21. Coro

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

21. Chorus

And I await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sanctus**22. Coro**

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria ejus.

22. Chorus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei Et Dona Nobis Pacem

23. Coro

Osanna in excelsis.

23. Chorus

Hosanna in the highest.

24. Aria (Tenore)

Benedictus, qui venit in nomine Domini.

24. Aria (Tenor)

Blessed be he that comes in the name of the Lord.

25. Coro

Osanna in excelsis.

25. Chorus

Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei

26. Aria (Alto)

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

26. Aria (Alto)

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

27. Coro

Dona nobis pacem.

27. Chorus

Give us peace.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forever and ever.
Amen.