

## Vesperae solennes de Confessore, K 339

The vast majority of Mozart's sacred compositions were products of his years at the court of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, where his father was Vice-Kapellmeister and where he himself served as leader of the orchestra from the age of 13, and later briefly as organist. Church music was thus a major part of his professional life in his native city, and while he was there he composed a total of 16 Masses and 30 or so other miscellaneous sacred compositions. His departure for Vienna in 1781, however, threw the emphasis squarely on to secular genres such as opera, the piano concerto and chamber music, and in the 10 years he spent in the Imperial capital before he died he attempted only two major sacred works – the Mass in C minor and the Requiem – neither of which he completed.

The setting of the five Vespers psalms and a concluding Magnificat for an unnamed saint's day (and therefore an unknown date of first performance) is Mozart's last church music for Salzburg, composed in 1780. In keeping with the Salzburg court's Enlightenment-inspired directives concerning the streamlining of Catholic church music – a frequent source of frustration for Mozart – the 'Solemn Vespers' is a concise work for four-part choir, a quartet of vocal soloists and a modest-sized orchestra, in which none of the movements lasts more than five minutes, and vocal display is not allowed to distract from clear and lyrical conveyance of the Latin text. Although the six sections of the Vespers would not have been heard next to each other in their original liturgical context, Mozart shapes his sequence carefully; in the first psalm, 'Dixit Dominus', he summons a festive trumpet-and-drum feel, typically Austrian in its declamatory choral-writing with busy orchestral accompaniment. The lilting triple-time metre has room for a darkening of mood at the brief vision of the Last Judgement, but the sun soon reappears, and the four vocal soloists make their first appearance with a gentle initiation of the closing refrain passage known as the doxology at 'Gloria patri'. 'Confitebor' continues in a similar vein, though without the trumpets and drums and with more substantial and intricate contributions from the soloists and a contrastingly grander entrance into the doxology.

A more urgent tone is struck by 'Beatus vir', where there is another step up in the soloists' contribution, especially that of the solo soprano, who revels in a sudden operatic treatment of the word 'exaltabitur'.

'Laudate pueri' brings the greatest change of mood so far, its stern counterpoint paying court to the learned 'old style' of church polyphony, though with an injection of 18th-century forward energy and a characteristic Mozartian expressive touch in some breathless 'amen's.

Even more classically Mozartian is 'Laudate Dominum', a radiant, floated operatic melody for solo soprano with loving support from the chorus.

The trumpets and drums then return for the 'Magnificat', a conclusion to the work whose grandeur is heightened by some muscular and vital counterpoint.

## **i. Dixit (Psalm 109)**

**Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis  
donec ponam inimicos tuos, scabellum pedum tuorum.  
Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion:  
dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.  
Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae  
in splendoribus sanctorum: ex utero ante luciferum genui te.  
Juravit Dominus, et non poenitebit eum:  
Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum  
ordinem Melchisedech.  
Dominus a dextris tuis, confregit in die irae suae reges.  
Judicabit in nationibus,  
implebit ruinas:  
conquassabit capita in terra multorum.  
De torrente in via bibet:  
propterea exaltabit caput.  
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio,  
et nunc, et semper,  
et in saecula saeculorum.  
Amen.**

*The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand  
until I make thine enemies thy footstool.  
The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:  
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.  
Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power  
in the beauties of holiness: from the womb of the morning.  
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.  
The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,  
thou art a priest for ever  
after the order of Melchizedek.  
The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.  
He shall judge among the heathen,  
he shall fill the places with the dead bodies;  
he shall wound the heads over many countries.  
He shall drink of the brook in the way:  
therefore shall he lift up the head.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning  
is now and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.*

## ii. Confitebor

**Confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meo:  
in consilio justorum, et congregatione.**

**Magna opera Domini:**

**exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus.**

**Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus:  
et justitia ejus manet in saeculum saeculi.**

**Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum,  
misericors et miserator et justus: escam dedit timentibus se.**

**Memor erit in saeculum testamenti sui.**

**Virtutem operum suorum annuntiabit populo suo,**

**Ut det illis hereditatem gentium.**

**Opera manuum ejus veritas et judicium.**

**Fidelia omnia mandata ejus:  
confirmata in saeculum saeculi,  
facta in veritate et aequitate.**

**Redemptionem misit Dominus populo suo: mandavit in aeternum testamentum suum.**

**Sanctum et terribile nomen ejus.**

**Initium sapientiae timor Domini.**

**Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus eum:  
laudatio ejus manet in saeculum saeculi.**

**Gloria Patri ...**

*I will praise the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*

*The works of the Lord are great:*

*sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

*His work is honourable and glorious:*

*and his righteousness endureth for ever.*

*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:*

*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.*

*He hath given meat unto them that fear him.*

*He will be ever mindful of his covenant.*

*He hath shewed his people the power of his works,*

*That he may give them the heritage of the heathen.*

*The works of his hands are verity and judgement.*

*All his commandments are sure: they stand fast for ever and ever,  
and are done in truth and uprightness.*

*He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever:  
Holy and reverent is his name.*

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:*

*A good understanding have all they that do his commandments:  
his praise endureth for ever.*

*Glory be to the Father ...*

### iii. Beatus vir

**Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum:**

**in mandatis ejus volet nimis.**

**Potens in terra erit semen ejus: generatio rectorum benedicitur.**

**Gloria et divitiae in domo ejus:**

**et justitia ejus manet in saeculum saeculi.**

**Exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis:**

**misericors, et miserator, et justus.**

**Jucundus homo qui miseretur et commodat, disponet sermones suos in judicio.**

**Quia in aeternum non commovetibus.**

**In memoria aeterna erit justus:**

**ab auditione mala non timebit.**

**Paratum cor ejus sperare in Domino,**

**non commovebitur donec despiciat inimicos suos.**

**Dispersit dedit pauperibus:**

**justitia ejus manet in saeculum saeculi.**

**Cornu ejus exaltabitur in gloria.**

**Peccator videbit, et irascetur,**

**dentibus suis fremet et tabescet:**

**desiderium peccatorum peribit.**

**Gloria Patri ...**

*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord,*

*that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

*His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

*Wealth and riches shall be in his house.*

*And his righteousness endureth for ever.*

*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness:*

*he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness.*

*A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.*

*Surely he shall not be moved for ever.*

*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*

*His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*

*he shall not be afraid until he see his desire upon his enemies.*

*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;*

*his righteousness endureth for ever;*

*his horn shall be exalted with honour.*

*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved;*

*he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away:*

*the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

*Glory be to the Father ...*

#### iv. Laudate pueri

Laudate pueri Dominum,  
laudate nomen Domini.  
Sit nomen Domini benedictum,  
ex hoc nunc, et usque in saeculum.  
A solis ortu usque ad occasum,  
laudabile nomen Domini.  
Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus,  
et super coelos gloria ejus.  
Qui sicut Dominus Deus noster,  
qui in altis habitat, et humilia  
respicit in coelo et in terra?  
Suscitans a terra inopem,  
et de stercore erigens pauperem.  
Ut collocet eum cum principibus,  
cum principibus populi sui.  
Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo,  
matrem filiorum laetantem.  
Gloria Patri ...

*Praise, O ye servants of the Lord,  
praise the name of the Lord.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
from this time forth and forever more.  
From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,  
the Lord's name is to be praised.  
The Lord is high above all nations,  
and his glory above the heavens.  
Who is like unto the Lord our God,  
who dwelleth on high, yet humbleth  
himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?  
He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,  
and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;  
that he may set him with princes,  
even with the princes of his people.  
He maketh the barren woman to keep house,  
and to be a joyful mother of children.  
Glory be to the Father ...*

## **v. Laudate Dominum**

**Laudate Dominum omnes gentes:**

**laudate eum omnes populi.**

**Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus:**

**et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.**

**Gloria Patri ...**

*O praise the Lord all ye nations:*

*praise Him, all ye people.*

*For his merciful kindness is great toward us:*

*and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.*

*Glory be to the Father ...*

## **vi. Magnificat**

**Magnificat anima mea Dominum.**

**Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.**

**Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:**

**ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.**

**Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,**

**et sanctum nomen ejus.**

**Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies**

**timentibus eum.**

**Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:**

**dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.**

**Deposuit potentes de sede,**

**et exaltavit humiles.**

**Esurientes implevit bonis:**

**et divites dimisit inanes.**

**Suscepit Israel puerum suum,**

**recordatus misericordia suae.**

**Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,**

**Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.**

**Gloria Patri ...**

*My soul doth magnify the Lord,*

*and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

*For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:*

*for behold from henceforth all generations shall call*

*me blessed.*

*For he that is mighty hath magnified me:  
and holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is on them that fear him,  
from generation unto generation.*

*He hath shewed strength with his arm:  
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their  
hearts.*

*He hath put down the mighty from their seats  
and exalted them of low degree.*

*He hath filled the hungry with good things:  
and the rich he hath sent empty away.*

*He hath holpen his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy.*

*As he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his seed for ever.*

*Glory be to the Father ...*

## **Mass in C major "Coronation", K 317**

Not composed for, but performed at Coronation of Francis I in Prague, 1792 and probably Leopold II, 1791.

Of the sacred works that Mozart composed in Salzburg none is as well known or as popular as the Mass in C K. 317. In 1779 Mozart returned from his disastrous trip to Paris and, partly out of material necessity and also to please his father, he took up a position in the Archbishop's service in Salzburg. He was to "unbegrudgingly and with great diligence discharge his duties both in the cathedral and at court and in the chapel house, and as occasion presents, to provide the court and church with new compositions of his own creation". At the first opportunity Mozart fulfilled this demand, composing the mass for the Easter Day service on 4th April 1779.

The musical style of the piece corresponds to the hybrid form that was preferred by the Archbishop: its use of wind instruments suggests a "Solemn Mass", and its length suggests a "Short Mass". Mozart himself described his task in a letter: "Our church music is very different to that of Italy, all the more so since a mass with all its movements, even for the most solemn occasions when the sovereign himself reads the mass [e.g. Easter Day], must not last more than 3 quarters of an hour. One needs a special training for this kind type of composition, and it must also be a mass with all instruments - war trumpets, tympani etc." It therefore had to be a grand ceremonial setting, but the mass also needed to have a compact structure. Mozart therefore omits formal closing fugues for the Gloria and Credo, the Credo with its problematic, vast text is in a tight rondo form, and the Dona nobis pacem recalls the music of the Kyrie.

Even as early as the 19th Century the mass was already popularly referred to as the "Coronation Mass". The nickname grew out of the misguided belief that Mozart had written the mass for Salzburg's annual celebration of the anniversary of the crowning of the Shrine of the Virgin. The more likely explanation is that it was one of the works that was performed during the coronation festivities in Prague, either as early as August 1791 for Leopold II, or certainly for Leopold's successor Francis I in August 1792. (There is a set of parts dating from 1792, and the same parts were probably used the year before.) It seems that Mozart must have seen the chance to be represented at the coronation festivities in 1791, not only with *La clemenza di Tito*, but also with a mass composition: he wrote from Prague requesting that the parts for his old Mass in C be sent to him there. He was held in very high regard in Prague: *The Marriage of Figaro* had been a smash hit there, and they had commissioned *Don Giovanni*. It seems likely therefore that the city would have taken on the mass as its own, and the nickname would have grown from there.

Certainly the music itself is celebratory in nature, and would have fitted a coronation or Easter Day service perfectly. The soloists are continually employed either as a quartet, in pairs or in solo lines that contrast with the larger forces of the choir. The most stunning examples are the central hushed section of the Credo, and later when the Hosanna section of the Benedictus is well under way, the quartet begins the piece again, seemingly in the wrong place! Perhaps the most obvious reason for the mass's popularity in Prague in 1791/2 was the uncanny similarity between the soprano solo *Agnus Dei* and the Countess's aria *Dove sono* from *Figaro* which had been so successful there in the 1780's.

### **i. Kyrie**

**Kyrie eleison,  
Christe eleison,  
Kyrie eleison.**

*Lord, have mercy,  
Christ, have mercy,  
Lord, have mercy.*

### **ii. Gloria**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.**

**Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.**

**Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.**

**Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.**

**Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.**

**Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe.**

**Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.**

**Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.**

**Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.**



**Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus.  
Tu solus Altissimus, Iesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.**

*Glory be to God on high,  
and on earth peace, good will towards men.  
We praise thee, we bless thee,  
we worship thee, we glorify thee,  
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory,  
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.  
For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord;  
thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,  
art most high in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.*

### **iii. Credo**

**Credo in unum Deum.  
Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem caeli et terrae,  
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.  
Et in unum Dominum  
Jesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum,  
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero.  
Genitum, non factum,  
consubstantialem Patri:  
per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines  
et propter nostram salutem  
descendit de caelis.**

**Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria Virgine:  
Et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato:  
passus, et sepultus est.**

**Et resurrexit tertia die,  
secundum scripturas.  
Et ascendit in caelum:  
sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
Et iterum venturus est  
cum gloria iudicare vivos et mortuos:  
Cujus regni non erit finis.  
Et in Spiritum sanctum Dominum,  
et vivificantem:  
Qui ex Patre, Filioque procedit.  
Qui cum Patre, et Filio simul adoratur,  
et conglorificatur:  
Qui locutus est per Prophetas.**

**Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.  
Confiteor unum baptisma  
in remissionem peccatorum.  
Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum  
Et vitam venturi saeculi.  
Amen.**

*I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord,  
Jesus Christ,  
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.*

*And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary:  
And was made man.  
And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate:  
suffered, and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again  
according to the scriptures.*

*And ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father  
And He shall come again  
with glory to judge the living and the dead:  
His kingdom shall have no end.*

*And in the Holy Ghost, Lord  
and giver of life:  
Who proceedeth from the Father and Son.  
Who with the Father and Son  
together is worshipped and glorified:  
Who spake by the Prophets.  
And in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
I acknowledge one baptism  
for the remission of sins.  
And I look for the resurrection of the dead  
And the life of the world to come.  
Amen.*

#### **iv. Sanctus**

**Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.**

*Holy, holy, holy  
Lord God of Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

#### **v. Benedictus**

**Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.**

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest*

#### **vi. Agnus Dei**

**Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.**

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