

W.A. Mozart, *Mass No. 15 in C ("Coronation")*, K. 317



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (27 January 1756 – 5 December 1791), was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical era. He composed over six hundred works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, *concertante*, chamber, piano, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most enduringly popular of classical composers. Mozart showed prodigious ability from his earliest childhood in Salzburg. Already competent on keyboard and violin, he composed from the age of five and performed before European royalty. At 17, he was engaged as a court musician in Salzburg, but grew restless and travelled in search of a better position, always

composing abundantly. While visiting Vienna in 1781, he was dismissed from his Salzburg position. He chose to stay in the capital, where he achieved fame but little financial security. During his final years in Vienna, he composed many of his best-known symphonies, concertos, and operas, and portions of the Requiem, which was largely unfinished at the time of Mozart's death. The circumstances of his early death have been much mythologized. He was survived by his wife Constanze and two sons. Mozart learned voraciously from others, and developed a brilliance and maturity of style that encompassed the light and graceful along with the dark and passionate. His influence on subsequent Western art music is profound. Beethoven wrote his own early compositions in the shadow of Mozart, of whom Joseph Haydn wrote that "posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years."

The *Krönungsmesse* (German for "Coronation Mass") is one of the most popular of Mozart's 17 extant settings of the Ordinary Mass. This setting, like the majority of Mozart's mass settings, is a *Missa brevis* (short mass) as opposed to the more formal *Missae solemnes* (High mass, that includes fanfares, pageantry and the use of trumpets and trombones).

This Mass was completed on March 23, 1779 in Salzburg. It may have been intended to be used for the crowning of an image of the Virgin in the Church of Maria-Plain situated outside the walls of the city (hence the nickname). Mozart had just returned to Salzburg, after 18 months of fruitless job hunting in Paris and Mannheim, in January 1779. His father Leopold promptly got him a job as court organist and composer in the Salzburg Cathedral, and the organ features prominently in this work. It was almost certainly premiered on Easter Sunday April 4, 1779 in the Salzburg Cathedral. Contrary to a common misunderstanding it was not performed at any of the coronations in Prague in 1790 and 1792.

The Mass consists in 6 parts:

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Credo
4. Sanctus
5. Benedictus
6. Agnus Dei

The work is scored for SATB soloists and chorus, 2 violins, "Bassi", 2 oboes, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, 3 trombones (which reinforce the alto, tenor and bass) and organ. Notable is the lack of violas, typical of music written for Salzburg, and the vague name "basses" for the stave shared by organ, bassoon (specified only in the Credo), Cello and Double bass. Among the original parts is one for "Violone", a slippery term sometimes implying a 16' bass but also used for the 8' Bass violin.

The Kyrie, Gloria and Credo all begin emphatically in C-major with an almost military rhythm. The soloists contrast with the larger forces of the choir, often as a quartet. Of note in this regard are the central *Adagio* section of the Credo at *Et incarnatus est*, and the surprise of the Benedictus after the chorus has already declaimed the Hosanna. These musical breaks mimic what is occurring in the Mass at these points, and serve to link the music to the proper forum for which it was intended: the traditional Roman Catholic Mass. Rubrics require the congregation to change from a standing position to a kneeling position at the 'incarnatus' out of respect for the Incarnation of Christ: hence the musical break. Similarly, only the first verse of the 'Sanctus' is sung before the Consecration, the 'Benedictus' verse is required to be sung afterward, according to the rubrics of the Mass. This required rubrical division often results in the verses appearing in music as two separate movements, although they are thematically joined. In the Credo, Mozart introduces the trombones for the Crucifixus and using a chromatic fourth in the bass. The soprano solo of the Agnus Dei exhibits melodic similarities to and may foreshadow "Dove sono", the Countess' main aria from *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Kyrie

*Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.*

Kyrie

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

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 coelestis, Deus
pater omnipotens.*

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on
earth peace to men of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we
worship you, we glorify you.
We give thanks to you for your great
glory.
O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the
Father Almighty.

*Domine fili unigenite Jesu 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, Jesu
Christe, cum sancto Spiritu in
gloria Dei patris. Amen.*

Credo

*Credo in unum Deum, patrem
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et
terra, visibilium omnia et invisibilium.
Et in unum Dominum Jesu 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,
consubstantiali 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, cuius
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.*

O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

You who take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.

You who take away the sins of the
world, hear our prayer.

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

For you alone are holy, you alone are
Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in
the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Credo

I believe in one God, the Father
Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible,
and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the
only-begotten Son of God, born of the
Father before all worlds:

God from God, light from light, true
God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one substance
with the Father, by whom all things
were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
descended from heaven and became
flesh of the Holy Spirit, born of the
Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

He was crucified for us, suffered under
Pontius Pilate and was buried;
and he rose again on the third day,
in accordance with the scriptures,
and ascended to heaven, and sits at the
right hand of the Father.

And he will return again in glory to
judge the living and the dead, and his
kingdom will know no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, Lord
and Giver of Life, who proceeds from
the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and Son together is
worshipped and glorified, and who
spoke through the Prophets.

*Et unam sanctam catholicam et
apostolicam ecclesiam.*

*Confiteor unum baptismum in
remissionem peccatorum,
et exspecto resurrectionem
mortuorum, et vitam venturi
saeculi, Amen.*

Sanctus

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus
Deus Sabaoth.

Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

Benedictus

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine
Domini.*

Osanna in excelsis.

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.*

And I believe in one Holy Catholic and
Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the
remission of sins.

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

Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of
Hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus

Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei

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

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

O Lamb of God, who take away the sins
of the world, grant us peace.