Beethoven
Missa Solemnis

18 – 21 Mar
Sydney Town Hall
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### MARCH

**Elisabeth Leonskaja in Recital**  
*The Late Beethoven Sonatas*

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**Italian Opera Gala**  
*Stars of the European Opera*

Including scenes and arias from:
- Rossini *The Barber of Seville*
- Bellini *The Capulets and the Montagues*
- Puccini *La Bohème*
- Verdi *Rigoletto*
- Mozart *Cosi fan tutte*

Donald Runnicles conductor  
Siobhan Stagg soprano  
Vasilisa Berzhanskaia mezzo-soprano  
Samuel Sakker tenor  
Derek Welton bass

**Barber and Poulenc**

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Joshua Batty flute  
Diana Doherty oboe  
Shefali Pryor oboe  
Alexandre Oguey cor anglais  
James Burke clarinet  
Todd Gibson-Cornish bassoon  
Ben Jacks horn

**APRIL**

**Handel and Telemann**  
*Fountains and Fireworks*

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**Beethoven and Brahms**  
*Towering Romantics*

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### Concert Diary

**Government Partner**

**Presenting Partners**

**Principal Partner**

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Welcome to the Abercrombie & Kent Masters Series.

Welcome to tonight’s performance of Missa solemnis. Beethoven’s ‘Solemn Mass’ is vast in scope and emotional power, one of the pinnacles of the classical repertoire.

In the 250th anniversary year of Beethoven's birth, it’s only fitting to celebrate a masterpiece among masterpieces, described by the composer himself as his greatest work.

Beethoven was an inveterate hiker and nature-lover, most at peace himself when surrounded by his beloved countryside. ‘Surely, woods, trees and rocks produce the echo man desires to hear,’ he wrote. At Abercrombie & Kent, we love to celebrate these unique wonders of nature closer to home.

So why not take a Beethoven-inspired walking tour in the Barossa, explore the incomparable Kimberley coastline, or tour New Zealand’s pristine South Island in true Abercrombie & Kent style.

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Sujata Raman
Regional Managing Director
Australia & Asia Pacific
Abercrombie & Kent
2020 CONCERT SEASON

MASTER SERIES
WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH, 8PM
FRIDAY 20 MARCH, 8PM
SATURDAY 21 MARCH, 8PM
SYDNEY TOWN HALL

Beethoven Missa Solemnis
Music of Inspiration

Donald Runnicles conductor
Siobhan Stagg soprano
Vasilisa Berzhanskaya mezzo-soprano
Samuel Sakker tenor
Derek Welton bass-baritone
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)
Mass in D, Missa solemnis

Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus – Benedictus
Agnus Dei

There will be a 20-minute pre-concert talk by Dr David Larkin in the front stalls beginning at 7pm.

The concert will be performed without interval and conclude at approximately 9.30pm.
Donald Runnicles *conductor*
PRINCIPAL GUEST CONDUCTOR, SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Donald Runnicles is the General Music Director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Music Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival, as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. In 2019 Runnicles also took up post as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s first-ever Principal Guest Conductor. He additionally holds the title of Conductor Emeritus of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, having served as Chief Conductor from 2009-2016. Runnicles enjoys close relationships with many of the leading opera companies and orchestras, and is especially celebrated for his interpretations of Romantic and post-Romantic symphonic and opera repertoire.

In the 2019-20 season, Runnicles returns to the Toronto Symphony and make his debut with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, in addition to his regular concerts with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra. At the Deutsche Oper, highlights of Runnicles’ season include the premiere of *Das Rheingold* as part of an ambitious new Ring Cycle extending through 2021, as well as a new production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, which continues Runnicles’ Britten cycle at the house. He also conducts seven revival titles and brings the company to the Edinburgh Festival in a performance of *Manon Lescaut*.


Mr. Runnicles’ extensive discography includes complete recordings of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Britten’s *Billy Budd*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, and Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 Gramophone prize for Best Vocal Recording, and his recording of Janáček’s *Jenůfa* with the Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin was nominated for a 2016 GRAMMY award for Best Opera Recording. Most recently, he released a recording of Aribert Reimann’s new opera *L’invisible*.

Donald Runnicles was born and raised in Edinburgh. He was appointed OBE in 2004, and holds honorary degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.
Siobhan Stagg soprano

Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg was a member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2013-2019, where her roles included Pamina Die Zauberflöte, Sophie Der Rosenkavalier, Gilda Rigoletto, Micaëla Carmen, Adele Die Fledermaus, Zerlina Don Giovanni, Musetta La bohème, Marguerite de Valois Les Huguenots and Waldvogel and Woglinde in The Ring Cycle conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Elsewhere, she has sung the title role in Cendrillon for the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Pamina for the Royal Opera; Sophie Der Rosenkavalier for the Opernhaus Zurich; Mélisande for Victorian Opera; Gilda, and Cordelia in Aribert Reimann’s Lear for the Hamburgische Staatsoper; Morgana Alcina and Marzelline Fidelio for the Grand Théâtre de Genève.

Highlights in Siobhan’s 2019-20 season include Mélisande for the Opera di Dijon; Tytania A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Pamina for the Deutsche Oper Berlin; Giulietta Il giorno del regno for Garsington Opera and staged performances of Mozart’s Requiem at the Adelaide Festival. On the concert platform she sings Strauss’ Vier letzte Lieder (Kristiansand Symfoniorkester/Stutzmann & Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Davis); Beethoven’s Missa solemnis (Sydney Symphony Orchestra/Runnicles & Filarmonica del Teatro Comunale di Bologna/Fisch) and his Symphony No. 9 (Bamberger Symphoniker/Fisch).

Highlights on the concert platform include Brahms’ Ein Deutsches Requiem (Berliner Philharmoniker/Thielemann) and Zemlinsky’s Lyric Symphony at the BBC Proms (BBC Symphony Orchestra/Young).

Vasilisa Berzhanskaya mezzo-soprano

Vasilisa Berzhanskaya was a member of the Youth Opera Program at the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia from 2015 to 2017. In 2016 she was a member at the Rossini Opera Academy and in 2017 was a soloist at the Deutsche Oper Berlin and participated in the Salzburg Festival’s Young Artists Program. In the 2017-18 season, Vasilisa sang Angelina’s role in Rossini’s La Cenerentola at Theater Basel and debuted as Rosina in Rossini’s Il barbiere di Siviglia performed at Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Mikhailovsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. Vasilisa debuted as Siebel in Faust and sang the role of Marchesa Melibea in Rossini’s Il viaggio a Reims.

In the 2018-19 season at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vasilisa debuted as Fenena in Nabucco and as Olga in Eugene Onegin. She also debuted as Vagaus in Vivaldi’s Juditha Triumphans at the Dutch National Opera and as Aristea in L’Olimpiade in Basel and Amsterdam. At the Teatro dell’Opera di Roma, Vasilisa debuted as Angelina in La Cenerentola by Rossini and at the Salzburg Opera Festival 2019 she sang Diana’s role in Orphée aux enfers by Offenbach.

Vasilisa has worked with a number of conductors including Andrea Marcon, Donald Runnicles, Mariss Jansons, Giacomo Sagripanti, Giampaolo Bisanti, Dmitri Jurowski, Vladimir Jurowski, Alexander Vedernikov, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Enrique Mazzola and Stefano Montanari.

Future engagements include Il barbiere di Siviglia and Nabucco in Berlin, Roberto Devereux in Palermo, L’Italiana in Algeri in Verona.
Derek Welton bass-baritone

Now firmly established as a Wagnerian name to note, Derek Welton made his first foray into this repertoire as Donner Das Rheingold under Richard Farnes at Opera North in 2011. He subsequently appeared as Klingsor Parsifal at the Beijing Music Festival before joining an all-star cast at Semperoper Dresden for his first Heerrufer Lohengrin, conducted by Christian Thielemann and subsequently released on DVD. Welton debuted at the 2017 Bayreuth Festival as Klingsor under Hartmut Haenchen and was highly acclaimed for his first Wotan Das Rheingold at Deutsche Oper Berlin in the final presentation of the historic Götz Friedrich production.

The 2019-20 season opened with concert performances of Bluebeard's Castle at the Enescu Festival under the baton of Christian Mandeal, and further includes his role debut as Orest Elektra at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia under Marc Albrecht and Wotan in Deutsche Oper Berlin’s new production of Das Rheingold directed by Stefan Herheim, and conducted by Donald Runnicles. Concert highlights include Act II of Fidelio with the Hallé Orchestra, Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Malmö Symphony Orchestra and Missa solemnis with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

A native of Australia, Derek is a graduate of the University of Melbourne and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and is a member of the ensemble of Deutsche Oper Berlin.

Samuel Sakker tenor

Winner of the Wagner Society Singing Competition, Samuel Sakker has performed leading roles with opera companies and orchestras internationally.

Sakker opens the 2019-20 season in Australia as Pollione Norma (Melbourne Opera); further engagements this season include his role debut as Des Grieux Manon Lescaut [The Grange Festival]; Florestan Fidelio [Lyric Opera Ireland]; Ulrik in William Alwyn’s Miss Julie [BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chandos], and Sergeant Thibault Margot le Rouge [Opera Holland Park]. In the 2020-21 season he makes his role and company debut as Laca Jenůfa at Opéra de Montréal.

A former Royal Opera House company principal, recent highlights include Erik Der Fliegende Holländer [Opéra du Rennes; Opéra Angers-Nantes; Nederlandse Reisopera; Cape Town Opera]; Don José Carmen [Danish National Opera]; Federico L’arlesiana [Opera Holland Park]; Laertes in the Australian premiere of Brett Dean’s Hamlet [Adelaide Festival]; Tikhon and Boris Katya Kabanova [Scottish Opera]; David Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg [State Opera of South Australia]; Alfredo La traviata [Royal Opera House; New Zealand Opera; Melbourne Opera]; Cavaradossi Tosca [English Touring Opera]; and roles for Opera Australia, West Australian Opera and Opera Queensland.

On the concert platform he has appeared as the title role in Lili Boulanger’s Faust et Hélène [Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Symphony Orchestra]; title role in Liszt’s opera Sardanapalo [Souni dal Golfo Festival, Italy]; tenor soloist in A Child of our Time [Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra]; Das Lied von der Erde [Stadtttheater Klagenfurt; Royal Ballet; English National Ballet]; Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony [Royal Philharmonic Orchestra]; and Verdi’s Messa da Requiem [Anghiari Festival, Italy].
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Brett Weymark Artistic and Music Director
Claire Howard Race Assistant Chorus Master and Principal Rehearsal Pianist
Sarah Penicka-Smith & David Anthony Taylor Rehearsal Conductors
Ben Burton, Tim Cunniffe, Alan Hicks Rehearsal Pianists

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia’s finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House. Led by Music Director Brett Weymark since 2003, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises of three auditioned and three community choirs that perform a range of repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. It presents its own annual season and collaborates with leading conductors, soloists and orchestras in Australia and overseas. In 2002, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler’s Eighth Symphony under Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010.

The choirs perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra’s subscription series every year as they have done for over 80 years. In 2020, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs celebrate a centenary of singing with a commissioning project which includes 100 minutes of new Australian music featuring composers Brett Dean, Elena Kats-Chernin and Deborah Cheetham. The Choirs will also embark on a European tour and will celebrate their Centenary with a Gala dinner at the Sydney Opera House and an exhibition of memorabilia. Their own concerts this year include Considering Matthew Shepard, St John Passion Re-imagined, Elijah, A Centenary Celebration, Verdi Requiem, Transcendence and Carols at the Coliseum. They will also present the PopUp Sing singing workshops at Riverside Theatre.
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

**SOPRANO**
Shelley Andrews
Eva Berger
Georgina Bitcon
Anne Blake
Simone Brereton
Natalie Brown
Nat Crane
Pam Cunningham
Rouna Daley
Susan Farrell
Rebecca Fitzpatrick
Rebecca Gladys-Lee
Anamaria Gomez
Natalie Gooneratne
Judith Gorry
Barbara Guzman Galeb
Kellie Hewitt-Taylor
Jamie Hunter
Sue Justice
Timothea Lau
Jessica Lee
Yvette Leonard
Elena Lucio Bello
Sarah McGarry
Georgia Moore
Sarah Moore
Linda Peach
Marina Amelie Pelizzaro
Jane Prosser
Jolanda Rotteveel
Allison Rowlands
Meg Shaw
Kelly Ann Smith
Katherine Thompson
Jessica Veliscek Carolan
Laura Wade
Joanna Warren
Sara Watts
Genni Wetherell

**ALTO**
Leonie Armitage
Meaghan Backhouse
Debra Baker
Gillian Behrens
Elizabeth Birrell
Katie Blake
Anne Cooke
Julie Dowsley
Helen Esmond
Susan Gandy
Jennifer Gillman
Mariam Harp Rodriguez
Jenny Harry
Kathryn Harwood
Margaret Hofman
Lindy Jefferson
Tracey Jordan
Georgia Luikens
Atalya Masi
Hannah Mason
Donna McIntosh
Janice McKeand
Tijana Miljovska
Jess Moore
Penelope Morris
Marj O’Callaghan
Dympna Paterson
Georgia Rivers
Virginia Rowlands
Johanna Segall
Jan Shaw
Megan Solomon
Robyn Tupman
Marianna Wong
Nikki Woolley
Noriko Yamanaka

**TENOR**
Daniel Comarmond
Spencer Darby
Malcolm Day
Robert Elliott
John Fitzgerald Sice
Blake Garner
Denys Gillespie
Tony Green
Tom Hallworth
Nick Hazell
Jude Holdsworth
Vincent Hurley
Boghos Keleshian
Michael Kertesz
James Lane
Joao Lourenco
Peter Macqueen
Jason McFarland
Dimitry Moraitis
Joshua Oxley
George Panaretos
Ethan Taylor
Robert Thomson
Nicholas Tong
George Watkins
Will Willitts
Isaac Wong
Mark Wong
Alexander Young

**BASS**
Philip Barton
Jeremy Boulton
Peter Callaghan
Edwin Carter
Gordon Cheng
Andy Clare
Julian Coghlan
Daryl Colquhoun
Paul Couvret
Philip Crenigan
Robert Cunningham
James Devenish
Vincent Farrell
Tom Forrester-Paton
Robert Green
Derek Hodgkins
David Jacobs
Paul Jeloudev
Ciaran Joyce
Bruce Lane
Mark McGoldrick
Philip Murray
Brendan Nicholson
Peter Poole
David Pratt
Allan Redpath
Robert Sherrington
Andrew Skinner
Antony Strong
Peter Templeton
Ben Waters
Nick Whiley
Arthur Winckler
David Wood
Jonathan Wood
ABOUT THE MUSIC

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Mass in D, Op.123 Missa solemnis

Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus – Benedictus
Agnus Dei

Beethoven worked on his Mass in D for over four years, from 1819 to 1823. The result is a masterpiece in his late style, his most substantial contribution to choral music, and perhaps even his most considerable single achievement. Beethoven once called this Mass ‘my greatest work’. It is difficult to sing and play, and the choral writing is especially demanding in its extremes of range and test of the choir’s stamina. These difficulties make it almost impossible to achieve in performance what Beethoven imagined in his mind’s ear – evidently he wanted the sense of difficulty to be part of the effect of the music.

Beethoven’s intentions are also difficult to ascertain. At first sight this ‘Mass for a Solemn Occasion’ seems much too long for church use. But the composer did have a church ceremony in mind – the installation of his pupil, patron and friend Archduke Rudolph as Archbishop of Ollmütz. (The music was far from ready on time.) The first performance of the Missa solemnis was organised by another amateur musician and patron of Beethoven, Prince Nikolas Galitzin, in St Petersburg on 7 April 1824. The first performance in Vienna was exactly a month later, on 7 May, not in a church, but in the same concert at the Court Theatre which included the premiere of the Ninth Symphony. Because of time limits, only the Kyrie, Credo and Agnus Dei were performed, and to German texts, since permission had not come from the church to perform the Latin texts outside the liturgy.

Although Beethoven’s interpretation of the text of the mass is highly personal and subjective, the Missa solemnis is in some ways more fitting as a liturgical setting than his earlier and more conventional Mass in C (1807). In that work Beethoven, working to a commission from Prince Esterhazy, consciously copies much of the approach of Haydn’s last masses. He seems to have trouble adjusting his symphonic predispositions to the formal aspects of Viennese church style, whereas Haydn had largely avoided the problem by making his principle of composition frankly musical.

Yet Beethoven felt and said, about the Mass in C, that he had achieved something special: ‘I believe I have treated the text as it has seldom been treated.’ In planning his new Mass, he went even further towards seeking out the text’s inner meaning. He had the Latin translated into German so that nothing would escape his attention. Beethoven wanted the music of his Mass to show an understanding of the ideas behind particular words, and the overall mood and purpose of each section. He also studied ancient plainchant and the music and treatises of the old composers of polyphonic sacred music. At the same time he adopted a symphonic style, making full use of
orchestral resources, and firmly knitting each section of the mass into architectural unity.

Personal and visionary, this is the work of a man out of touch with organised religion, but profoundly aware of divine reality, which he interprets in the sense of late 18th century enlightened Catholicism. The scholar Warren Kirkendale wrote in 1971 that it is now clear that Beethoven, isolated by his deafness, retreated into speculation on theology and the liturgy. In his Mass in D he wanted to say the last word on the subject.

By necessity the Mass in D is a concert work, but it evokes an ecclesiastical atmosphere, or at any rate a religious one. Beethoven’s musical affirmation of faith in this Mass has helped people with little sympathy for institutionalised Christianity to worship with him.

In the detailed notes which follow, I have drawn heavily on Donald Tovey’s illuminating analysis of the *Missa solemnis* in his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, to which the reader in search of a fuller discussion is enthusiastically directed.

**Kyrie**

At once Beethoven’s unified treatment of each section of the mass becomes obvious, as opposed to the sectional divisions adopted by Baroque and early Classical composers. He presents the *Kyrie* as a threefold prayer. Beethoven added to the tempo directions the words ‘Mit Andacht’ (with devotion), and ‘From the heart – may it reach the heart.’ The orchestral opening anticipates the entry of the words to the same music, and illustrates the close relation of Beethoven’s musical concepts to their meaning: the forthright chords setting the word ‘Kyrie’ (Lord) are followed by the pleading of helpless man, in the woodwind phrases. When the voices enter, soloists and choir answer each other in echo, or as an antiphony of priest and people. At ‘Christe eleison’ the music becomes more animated and, in 3/2 time, a fugue begins which pays conscious tribute to the style of Palestrina, on a theme flowing in crotchets punctuated with cries of ‘Christe!’ This dies away in a minor chord which becomes part of the original major opening chord of the *Kyrie*. The recapitulation brings no striking modifications of the material. So far there is much beautiful choral and orchestral writing, but little indication of the extremes to come.

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*Assai sostenuto (Mit Andacht)*

**Kyrie eleison!**

*Andante assai ben marcato*

**Christe eleison!**

*Tempo I*

**Kyrie eleison!**

Lord have mercy!

Christ have mercy!

Lord have mercy!
Gloria

Chorus and orchestra burst out with an upward scale in strongly marked rhythm, in all the voice parts in succession, breaking into cries of ‘Gloria!’ This is worked out to a climax, and is the motif binding the whole movement together. In an arresting dramatic contrast, the basses intone ‘et in terra pax’ on one note, and the choir takes up the theme of peace in expressive harmonies. Energetic declamation alternates with quieter passages, with a sudden drop to low quietness marking the priest’s inclination of the head at the words ‘adoramus te’.

A brief slower section begun by the solo tenor at ‘Gratias agimus tibi’ leads towards a tremendous climax on ‘Pater omnipotens’, where the trombones are used for the first time. Suddenly the clarinets are discovered leading calmly down from the summit at ‘Filius Patris’.

The Qui tollis which they introduce takes the form of another threefold prayer, moving through a succession of keys, rising in intensity to the great cry to the divine majesty ‘Qui sedes...’, followed by a complete contrast of ‘awestruck prostration’ (Tovey). As the prayer resumes, with panting string figures, Beethoven takes a liberty with the text, heightening the urgency by introducing the ejaculation ‘ah!’ before ‘Miserere’.

‘Quoniam...’, introduced by a kind of fanfare, is one of those taxing shouts for the choir in this Mass setting. The last word, ‘sanctus’ is almost whispered, subito piano; the feeling of expectation is resolved, after a huge swelling, by the basses entering fortissimo with the broadly striding theme of a fugue: ‘In Gloria Dei Patris.’ First the choir develops this on a vast scale, with instruments doubling in the 18th-century church style, then the soloists take it up, bringing a contrast of texture, while choral tenors and basses quietly state the words ‘cum sancto spiritu’ as a cantus firmus. This is a passage of rapid modulation and extraordinary compression, in which listeners almost lose their tonal bearings. The movement becomes hectic – the chorus whisper ‘Cum sancto spiritu’ then burst out in rhythmic unison with the fugue theme. The opening ‘Gloria!’ motif returns in a presto coda, and the last word is a ‘Gloria!’ almost shouted by the choir after the end of the orchestral chord.

Allegro vivace
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Glory to God in the highest
et in terra pax and on earth peace
hominibus bonae voluntatis.
to people of good will.
Laudamus te, We praise you,
benedicimus te, we bless you,
adoramus te, we worship you,
glorificamus te. we glorify you.

Meno allegro
Gratias agimus tibi We give you thanks
propter magnam gloriam tuam, for your great glory.

Credo

One remarkable aspect of the Mass in D is how Beethoven unifies his setting of the very long text of the Creed. Some doctrines are presented in music very concise by comparison with the methods of Baroque composers, but so striking that it is completely effective. Once again the unifying device is the opening, a motto of great power and possibilities. Much is made of the contrast between the majesty of the creator and the mystery and awe of his creation. The words ‘of one substance with the Father’ are treated contrapuntally, this relatively technical doctrinal idea seeming to call for a learned musical style.

The mystery of God’s coming to humankind is introduced by a move into the flatter and darker tonality of D flat. The tempo suddenly drops to Adagio, and the tenor voice, dramatically repeating the word ‘et’, describes the mystery in the Dorian mode. The modes were associated in the 18th century with the supernatural; Beethoven makes them expressive and perhaps symbolic, here and in many passages in the late string quartets (he was rediscovering the riches of the old polyphonic music). Strangely and beautifully a flute hovers over the orchestra, ‘like the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove’ (Tovey). When the flute was used at all in late 18th-century masses, it was usually at this point, as in Joseph Haydn’s Creation Mass.

Awe intensifies as the chorus recite in monotone and free speech

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Tempo I
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
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,
ah miserere nobis.

Allegro maestoso
Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
quoniam tu solus Dominus,
quoniam tu solus altissimus,
Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu

Allegro, ma non troppo e ben marcato – Poco piu allegro
in gloria Dei Patris, amen,
in the glory of God the Father, amen,

Presto
gloria in excelsis Deo,
glory to God in the highest,
glory.
rhythm the words ‘Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine’. Then the music moves into triple time and D major for the tenor soloist excitedly to announce ‘and was made man’, interrupted by the searing pain of Beethoven’s Cruciﬁxus: not the formal mourning of Bach’s setting, but stabbing off-beat accents and double dotted rhythms. The words ‘he suffered’ are rocked on grief-laden semitone intervals for the violins.

The air of expectation in the drawn-out dying away of ‘and was buried’ recalls the same passage in Bach’s Mass in B Minor, but what comes next is quite unlike Bach: Et resurrexit is shout of amazement, only six bars long, for the chorus, completely unaccompanied. It is as though the singers had just witnessed the rising from the dead. After the conventional symbolism for the ascension in mounting scales, a solo trombone heralds the day of judgement. (The last trump is a trombone in German.)

The next six clauses of the Creed, so difficult to set because they do not lend themselves to illustration, are dealt with in a recapitulation of the opening of the Credo. The ﬁnal, huge double fugue on the words ‘Et vitam venturi saeculi, amen’ begins quietly with the muted support of an orchestra without violins. The ﬁrst subject is in sustained repeated notes, while the second sets the word ‘amen’ to a more sinuous theme. Then comes the notorious entry for the sopranos articulating the syllables on a high B flat, which Beethoven refused to change in rehearsals for the ﬁrst Vienna performance. A diminution of the theme and a change of tempo lead to what Tovey (in a note published in 1937) described as ‘perhaps the most difﬁcult choral passage ever written’, with all the parts singing runs at high speed – this eventually broadens with immense effect to a majestic Grave, and the coda is dominated by gently rising scales, as though Beethoven was trying to suggest the human spirit ascending to heaven.

Allegro ma non troppo

I believe in one God
the all-powerful Father,
the maker of heaven and earth,
of all things, visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord
Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God
born of the Father
before all ages,
God from God,
light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father,
through whom all things were made,
who for us humans
and for our salvation
came down from heaven.

Credo in unum Deum
the all-powerful Father,

factorem coeli et terrae,
of all things, visible and invisible.

Credo in unum Dominum
Jesus Christ,

Filium Dei unigenitum
the only-begotten Son of God
et ex Patre natum
born of the Father
ante omnia saecula,
before all ages,
Deum de Deo,
God from God,
lumen de lumine,
light from light,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
true God from true God,
genitum, not factum,
begotten, not made,
consubstantialem Patri,
of one substance with the Father,
per quem omnia facta sunt,
through whom all things were made,
qui propter nos homines
who for us humans
et propter nostram salutem
came down from heaven.
descendit de coelis.

Adagio

And was made flesh
by the Holy Spirit
from the virgin Mary.

Et incarnatus est
de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria virgine,
Sanctus – Benedictus

The quiet and slow Sanctus strikes a note of hushed prayer. Beethoven provides a devout and Catholic accompaniment to the most awe-inspiring moments of the Mass. Kirkendale suggests that the final measures of the orchestral introduction, for horns, trumpets and trombones, refer to the Book of Isaiah, where the Sanctus is the music of the angels hovering over the temple of Jerusalem, and the trumpets are the instruments of the angels and of the priests. Beethoven’s Sanctus is sung by the quartet of soloists, and puzzlingly Beethoven also intended the soloists to sing the Pleni sunt coeli and Osanna, striving to make themselves heard above the full orchestra. (This is made clear by the autograph score.) Conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt believed Beethoven’s conception can be effective if the soloists sing as amazed observers.

After these two short fugal episodes Beethoven greatly expands the scale of his conception. The elevation of the Host is accompanied by instrumental music called Präludium, somewhat in the manner of organ music, and scored for woodwind with lower strings. Out of this solemn atmosphere emerge a pair of high flutes and a solo violin,
floating down from the heights; the choral basses intone the words of the Benedictus. This is the wonderful beginning of what Tovey describes as ‘a kind of aria-concerto of violin, voices and orchestra’, a complete symphonic movement in itself. The text of the second Osanna is incorporated, and the whole maintains a mood of effortless serenity and bliss.

Adagio (Mit Andacht)
Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Holy! Holy! Holy is the Lord God of Hosts.

Allegro pesante
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
osanna in excelsis.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, hosanna in the highest.

Presto
Osanna in excelsis.
Hosanna in the highest.

Präludium (Sostenuto ma non troppo)
Andante molto cantabile e non troppo mosso
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Osanna in excelsis!
Hosanna in the highest!

Agnus Dei
Beethoven considered B minor, the key in which the Agnus Dei begins, an extremely ‘dark’ key. The sombre character of the music is intensified by the deep bass voice stating the broad melody. The theme is laid out in three stages, the soloists and the chorus answering each other. Then, in a quiet modulation ‘like the approaching dawn’, ‘dona nobis pacem’ enters softly to a new theme. This section is entitled ‘prayer for inward and outward peace’.

The rest of the movement is cast in a rondo form – the first musical paragraph a calm pair of subjects for a double fugue, which eventually comes to resolution in a soul-easing phrase where the four choral parts are rhythmically at one, and the orchestral support suddenly disappears. A short fugue-like passage leads to an exchange between upper and lower voices, with delicate staccato scales in the orchestra; then a mysterious drum pattern announces ‘sounds as of distant war’: quiet fanfares for trumpets and drums, disrupting the outward peace. The plea for peace is resumed more passionately, the soloists breaking into recitative. The Dona nobis pacem resumes, and leads this time to a fugue for orchestra, presto, of a strange, quirky texture familiar from some of the fugal passages in the late string quartets and piano sonatas. After a rough and almost wild climax the trumpets and drums reappear with terrible power, while the choir shout ‘Agnus Dei, Agnus Dei’, very fast. The themes of peace are heard again, though there will still be faint echoes of the strife – broken rhythms on the drums. The chorus repeats the final cadences, and rising and falling scales appear in the orchestra as in the ‘et vitam venturi saeculi’ of the Creed. The chorus gives the whole ‘dona nobis pacem’ phrase forte e ben marcato, then the orchestra brings the work to an affirmative close, briefly but jubilantly.
Adagio
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Allegretto vivace [Bitte um innern und äussern Frieden]
Dona nobis pacem.

Allegro assai – Recitativo [timidamente]
Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Tempo I – Presto – Tempo I
Dona nobis pacem.
Agnus Dei,
dona nobis pacem.

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

Grant us peace.

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

Grant us peace.

Lamb of God,
grant us peace.

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To accompany its four soloists and choir, the Missa solemnis requires an orchestra with pairs of flutes, oboes and clarinets, 3 bassoons [2 doubling contrabassoon], 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, organ and strings.

The Sydney Symphony first performed excerpts in April 1949 with Eugene Goossens, and give its first complete performance in May 1970 with conductor Moshe Atzmon, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and soloists Mary O’Brien, Lauris Elms, Raymond McDonald and William Coombes. The Orchestra’s most recent performances were in October 2015, under David Robertson, with soloists Susanna Phillips, Olesya Petrova, Stuart Skelton and Shenyang, and the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.
Founded in 1932 by the ABC, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world’s finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world’s great cities.

In 2020, as the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall undergoes renovations as part of the Sydney Opera House Renewal program, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra returns to their original home, the Sydney Town Hall – one of the best acoustic venues in the heart of the city. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

Well on its way to becoming the premier orchestra of the Asia Pacific region, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has toured China on five occasions, and in 2014 won the arts category in the Australian Government’s inaugural Australia-China Achievement Awards, recognising groundbreaking work in nurturing the cultural and artistic relationship between the two nations.

The Orchestra’s first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. The Orchestra’s history also boasts collaborations with legendary figures such as George Szell, Sir Thomas Beecham, Otto Klemperer and Igor Stravinsky.

The Sydney Symphony’s award-winning Learning and Engagement program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, developing audiences and engaging the participation of young people. The Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and commissions. Recent premieres have included major works by Ross Edwards, Lee Bracegirdle, Gordon Kerry, Mary Finsterer, Nigel Westlake, Paul Stanhope and Georges Lentz, and recordings of music by Brett Dean have been released on both the BIS and SSO Live labels.

Other releases on the SSO Live label, established in 2006, include performances conducted by Alexander Lazarev, Sir Charles Mackerras and David Robertson, as well as the complete Mahler symphonies conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy.
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in memory of Rodney Rosenblum
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Associate Principal Flute
Robert & Janet Constable Chair
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Stuart Challender, Sydney Symphony Orchestra Chief Conductor and Artistic Director 1987–1991

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