

Program Notes

Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839 – 1901)

A composer and organist, Josef Gabriel Rheinberger was born at Vaduz, in the Principality of Lichtenstein, Bavaria. At the age of seven, he was already serving as an organist in his parish church, and at the age of eight, he had composed a mass for three voices. He attended the conservatory at Munich from 1851 to 1854. In 1859, he was appointed professor of music theory and organ at the conservatory, a position that he held until a few months before his death. Besides his duties as a teacher, he was organist at the court Church of St. Michael, conductor of the Munich Oratorio Society, and instructor of the solo artists at the royal opera. Rheinberger's twenty organ sonatas are declared by *Grove's Dictionary* to be "undoubtedly the most valuable addition to organ music since the time of Mendelssohn. They are characterized by a happy blending of the modern romantic spirit with masterly counterpoint and dignified organ style".

Franz Joseph Haydn (born Rohrau, 31 March 1732; died Vienna, 31 May 1809)

Haydn was one of the most prominent composers of the Classical period, and is called by some the "Father of the Symphony" and "Father of the String Quartet". When he was eight, he was trained as a choirboy and taken into the choir at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, where he studied from 1740 to 1750. In 1759 he was appointed music director to Count Morzin; but Haydn soon began working as the Vice-Kapellmeister with one of the leading Hungarian families, the Esterházy. He became full Kapellmeister in 1766. In 1790, Nikolaus Esterházy died; Haydn (unlike most court musicians of that time) was retained by the Esterházy heir, but was free to live in Vienna and to travel (for the first time since his appointment in 1766). He was commissioned by the impresario and violinist J.P. Salomon to go to London to write an opera, symphonies and other works. He went to London twice, in 1791-2 and 1794-5. He composed his last 12 symphonies for performance in London, where they enjoyed great success. In 1796 Haydn returned to live in Vienna and began focusing on writing large sacred works for Orchestra and Choir. Haydn wrote his six major masses and two oratorios between 1796 and 1802, composing both the *Mass in Time of War* and the *Heiligmesse* in 1796 after he had returned from London the second time. The six major masses were all written for the Esterházy family. Haydn lived long enough to see three different men head the Esterházy family and estates. Haydn was a devout Catholic and it is rumored that while he was composing he kept a rosary with him for when he had difficulties.

Mass in Time of War

Missa in Tempore Belli (*Mass in Time of War*) was Haydn's own title on the autograph score for the ninth, and one of the most popular of his fourteen settings of the Order of the Mass. He composed it at Eisenstadt in August 1796, at the time of Austria's general mobilization, as Austria faced invasion of the French, led by Napoleon. Reflecting the troubled mood of this time, Haydn's potent integration of references to battle in the *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* is inspired. The Mass was first performed on December 26, 1796 in the Piaristen Church of Vienna.

The *Kyrie* opens like a symphony in sonata form, with a slow introduction before moving on to the main theme. The "Kyrie eleison" (Lord have Mercy) is given more importance - the "Christe eleison" occupies just four bars. The Gloria is a little choral symphony in the form Vivace-Adagio-Allegro (Fast-Slow-Fast). The Adagio movement is lyrical, and contains a beautiful cello and baritone duet beginning "Qui tollis peccata mundi". The baritone sings a descending line at the end of this section ending on octave A's, so that the final tonality is never resolved. The choir then bursts forth in a joyous Allegro section that doubles in speed halfway through. This is in contrast to the Adagio section. The *Gloria* ends with a long "Amen" section that sets up the tempo for the *Credo*. The *Credo* is divided into sections that generally reflect the text, but with Haydn's usual overriding sense of structure. At the opening, each voice part enters with a joyous and rhythmic theme, taking a different line of the text. The "Et in carnatus est" section (which is adagio) is introduced by the solo quartet and then the choir takes back the lead. When the "Et resurrexit" text enters, the tempo quickens and gives new life to the piece, just as the text indicates. The music conveys the joy Haydn felt in the resurrection of the Lord. The *Sanctus* opens slowly, but builds to a rather ominous forte on the text "Pleni sunt coeli" before moving to a brief, more genteel "Hosanna in excelsis." The *Benedictus* is set largely for the solo quartet, with the three lower voices accompanying the soprano with detached notes matching the pizzicato in the strings. The short nervous phrases paint a picture of the battles to come. There is a sense of foreboding and anxiety as the *Agnus Dei* opens in a minor key with the timpani sounding ominously underneath (hence the German nickname, Paukenmesse). All of a sudden the music brightens with trumpet fanfares and a quicker dance like tempo during the "Dona nobis pacem" as a celebration of peace.