

Music Notes for April 27th

Prelude: W. A. Mozart: Andante in F, KV 6

Introit: W. A. Mozart: *Ave Maria* canon à3

Anthem: W. A. Mozart: *Sancta Maria, mater Dei* KV 273

Offertory: Leopold Mozart: Allegro in C

Response: W. A. Mozart: *Alleluia*

Postlude: W. A. Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*: I. Allegro KV 525

With the exception of the offertory music, which was written by his father, all of the music in this morning's service is by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, possibly the most famous and most recognized name of the Classical period. I doubt that anyone will fail to recognize the postlude after the opening bars. I have found an organ arrangement of Mozart's most famous orchestral work, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (A little night-music), a serenade likely intended for outdoor performance by a string ensemble. The first movement remains one of the best examples of classic proportion and form as well as precision.

Mozart wrote a wealth of sacred music, and the *Sancta Maria, mater Dei* is one of his middle works from Salzburg. The title comes from the middle of the prayer *Ave Maria*, and the text does not appear to have been used by any other composer. It has been suggested that the Latin may be by St. Thomas Aquinas, but this is far from certain. Listen to how carefully Mozart sets the text, with subtle differences in each part.

Holy Mary, mother of God,
to whom I owe everything,
but from this hour solely
I dedicate myself to your service,
you I choose as protector, and salvation.

Your honor and worship
will always be dear to my heart,
which I will never forsake,
neither by myself or others in my place
will I allow you to be harmed by word or deed.

Holy Mary, receive me with grace
fallen at your feet, in life protect me,
and at the moment of death defend me.

The piece is bright, as is much of the text. Darkness only really comes in on the words *de morte*, (of death) but is quickly dispelled by *defende* (defend me).

The canon, or more informally "round," was frequently a composing exercise, a bit of a warm-up if you will, especially for composers like Mozart who wrote extremely complex and demanding fugues. The introit is a three-part canon on only two words: *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary), and could be sung by as few as three singers, and it doesn't really matter what voice part they are. Each voice sings exactly the same thing and repeats until all voices have entered. Where to end is an editorial decision, but should be when all the parts come to a cadence together. The *Alleluia* is a short choral composition of only twenty bars that likely comes from a larger work which has since been lost.

Lastly, the prelude comes from a notebook that Mozart kept when he was nine years old. It is a simple piece that was later developed into his first sonata for violin and keyboard.

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