

Program Notes on the Music of *Ancient Prayers for Our Time, June 2017*

Mass No. 2 in G major, D. 167, Franz Schubert, 1815

Schubert's popular second Mass (of six), commonly referred to as *Schubert's Mass in G*, was composed in 1815, the year after his first, more elaborate, Mass was performed in his own parish. This second Mass was intended to be simpler than the first and was originally scored for string orchestra and organ, with soprano, tenor and baritone soloists and choir. Additional parts, dated after the full score, were discovered in the 1980s, including trumpet and tympani. Additionally, due to the popularity of the work, Schubert's brother Ferdinand also wrote parts for woodwinds, brass and tympani.

Raised in the Church as a choir boy, Schubert composed sacred music throughout his entire life. In his Masses, he took liberty with the texts. In the case of the Mass in G, interestingly, he omitted some of the statements of the Creed which were added at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 381 AD ("I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church/And I expect the resurrection").

Schubert's original forces suggest he intended a devotional interpretation rather than an intensely romantic one. Today we perform it with strings only and strive to present a devotional performance.

Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost, Philip W. J. Stopford, 2016

This *a cappella* double choir piece adds a new color and sonority to this program and honors the holy day of Pentecost, celebrated by the church last weekend. Written by English Composer Philip W. J. Stopford (currently Director of Music at Christ Church in Bronxville, NY), *Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost* and his many other choral works are built on Stopford's own experience in liturgical music.

The overlap of the two choirs in this piece harkens to the speaking of tongues on the day of Pentecost: "Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim." (Acts 2: 3-4)

The text, by English Anglican Bishop Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885), alludes to the fruits of the Spirit ("the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Gal 5: 22-23), but dwells on the three Christian virtues of faith, hope and love, extolling the virtue of love.

Pentecost also calls to mind the Great Commission of Jesus: "Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations," (Matt. 28:19) which was fully undertaken by the disciples at the coming of the Holy Spirit, and is a mandate for all Christians.

Caritas Chamber Chorale presents *Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost* at the offering to acknowledge that the Adorno Fathers live out the Great Commission daily by sharing the Good News and serving the needs of the people of the African Mission with great love.

Sunrise Mass, Ola Gjeilo, premiered in 2008, first published in the US in 2010

Ola Gjeilo (pronounced Yay-lo) was born in Norway. He moved to New York in 2001 to study at Juilliard and continues to live and work there as a full-time composer. He is also an accomplished pianist, where his main passion is improvisation. He grew up listening to classical, jazz, pop and folk music, ultimately developing a compositional style utilizing thick harmonies and rich textures and drawing on the musical traditions of film scores.

Most of Gjeilo's choral music is based on sacred texts, sometimes titled in unrelated ways. Caritas has previously performed his *Prelude* on the Trinitarian hymn *Exultate Jubilate* and his *Ubi Caritas*.

Of the *Sunrise Mass*, he writes:

"The reason I used English titles, seemingly unrelated to the (mostly) Latin texts, for the movements in this setting of the Mass has mainly to do with the initial idea behind Sunrise Mass. I wanted the musical development of the work to evolve from the most transparent and spacey, to something completely earthy and grounded; from nebulous and pristine to more emotional and dramatic, and eventually warm and solid – as a metaphor for human development from child to adult, or as a spiritual journey.

I always want there to be a positive evolution in artistic expressions; to move everything forward, to transcend conflict and dissonance, by going through it, not avoiding it. Ideally, it has the capacity to help bring us deeper into ourselves rather than the other way. I really do think that's the main point of art, and I hope with all my heart that a sliver of that sentiment comes out in this piece, somehow."