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## Ensemble Concerts: Concert Choir; Civic Chorale; Symphony Orchestra; October 30, 2011

Karyl K. Carlson Conductor

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Illinois State University  
College of Fine Arts  
School of Music

Illinois State University

Concert Choir, Civic Chorale,  
Symphony Orchestra

*Stabat Mater Op. 58*

Antonín Dvořák

Karyl K. Carlson, *Conductor*

Michelle Vought, *Soprano*

Debra Austin, *Mezzo Soprano*

Tod Kowallis, *Tenor*

John Koch, *Baritone*

Center for the Performing Arts  
October 30, 2011  
Sunday Afternoon  
3:00 p.m.

This is the forty-first program of the 2011-2012 season.

# Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Stabat Mater Op. 58

Antonín Dvořák  
(1841-1904)

Quartetto, Coro. Andante con moto  
*Stabat Mater dolorosa*

Quartetto. Andante sostenuto  
*Quis est homo, qui non fletet*

Coro. Andante con moto  
*Eja, Mater, fons amoris*

Basso solo, Coro. Largo  
*Fac, ut ardeat cor meum*

Coro. Andante con moto, quasi allegretto  
*Tui nati vulnerati*

Tenore solo, Coro. Andante con moto  
*Fac me vere tecum flere*

Coro. Largo  
*Virgo virginum praeclara*

Duo. Larghetto  
*Fac, ut portem Christi mortem*

Alto solo. Andante maestoso  
*Inflammatum et accensum*

Quartetto, Coro. Andante con moto  
*Quando corpus morietur*

## Program Notes

Dvořák's first work on a spiritual theme, the *Stabat Mater Op 58*, changed music history as he united the old and the new world and his music acted as a go-between for the two sides of the big pond.

So it warrants a detailed look on this important day. For Dvořák, the *Stabat Mater* was a work brought about by personal tragedy of almost incomprehensible proportions. He lost all three of his then living children. In 1875, his young daughter *Josefa* died at only two days of age. The grieving father began work on the *Stabat Mater*, as a means of coping with his beloved child's death. It was to become a work of mourning and a work of healing, for the *Stabat Mater* is based on an ancient Roman Catholic poem, in Latin, that tells of the Virgin Mary's grief over the crucifixion of Jesus as she is standing under his cross.

In mid-1876, Dvořák lay aside his work on this piece and then, tragically, on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 1877, he lost yet another child when 11 month old *Ruzena* (Rose) accidentally drank a phosphorus solution and died. Overwhelmed by this new loss, Dvořák once more sought solace in the Virgin Mary and took up work on his *Stabat Mater* once more. Less than one month later, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, his 3-year old son *Otakar* died of smallpox, leaving Dvořák and his wife completely childless. They subsequently had other children but at the time, their grief must have been overwhelming. The composer's only means of emotional survival was by burying himself in his *Stabat Mater*, completing it on November 13<sup>th</sup> of that year.

It is a profoundly moving work, perhaps more so than any other of the same name, for it is saturated by the composer's grief although the grief never overwhelms the piece but rather remains an ever-present background note. Especially haunting is the five-minute Wagnerian orchestral intro. The piece opens quietly on a single note that soon cumulates into a falling melody filled with tragedy.

The *Stabat Mater*, a 13<sup>th</sup> Century devotional poem, is generally attributed to the Franciscan monk Jacopone da Todi (1228-1306) although some controversy persists over his authorship. It consists of 10 verses at 6 lines each with 8-8-7-8-8-7 syllables per line. The rhyme scheme is AAB CCB and from verse 5 a to the end the poem changes view point from third into first person as it turns into a prayer to Mary, for her to reunite the writer with Christ. The first person prayer closes with the text "*when my body dies, grant that my soul be given the glory of paradise.*" The natural conclusion in

setting such a poem to music would be to turn its 10 verses into 10 movements. Dvořák did nothing of the sort. Instead, he combined and divided the verses as he moves from grief to acceptance and, finally, to jubilation over the received grace of God. He retained the basic idea of 10 movements but their length varies. Instead of allocating one movement to one verse, he used two full verses for the lengthy opening movement but then, there are times when he uses all of 3 lines to make up an entire movement (for example movements 5 and 7). Movement 4 to 9 portrays the prayer of the wayward Christian caught in his grief and hence the soloists feature prominently.

Dvořák's is the largest *Stabat Mater* imaginable and is full of repetitions of sentence or even entire stanzas, as though the composer were trying to make us focus not on the text and his composing skills, as is usually the case with a *Stabat Mater*, but to make us understand and re-feel his basic moods during his personal journey from grief to acceptance and, ultimately, to his unshaken faith.

The prominent chorus reflects the choral tradition of Dvořák's homeland but we also find in this compelling, intricate work the influence of Wagner that hits us head on in the opening movement. One must not forget that Dvořák actually met Wagner and played under him when the German, during a journey to Dvořák's Czech homeland, made use of the provisional Theatre orchestra that Dvořák played in during that time. There is a series of bare intervals of rising octaves followed by a chromatic descent, reflecting, respectively, the image of Mary looking up to her son on the cross and then, the son looking down on his mother. Next, Dvořák does something unusual as though to hint at the unusual grief experience that he went through — after all, most ordinary people would find it a great tragedy to be struck with the death of one child and only very few lose all three of their children within such a short time period. An usual amount of grief warrants an unusual musical pendant: the descending chromatic scale climaxes neither on a major nor minor chord but on the most dissonant of tonal sonorities, a diminished chord, as though expressing the composer's feeling of being completely torn apart by his grief. In other words, following the descending chromatic notes, the music builds again with short ascending phrases and then comes a crushing diminished chord and this is a thinly veiled cry of despair. Then the Opening Chorus comes in, singing its first line, "*Stabat Mater Dolorosa*".

## Concert Choir

Karyl K. Carlson, *conductor*

Rachel Smith, *pianist*

Brian Albertsen  
Jaise Allen  
Caitlin Arnony  
Tom Bailey  
Ashley Bartholomew  
Mitch Belusko  
Lauren Bernacki  
Lydia Brinkmeier  
Brandon Bull  
Danna Cory  
Adam Drake  
Mitchell Evans  
Sarah Fallon  
Kelly Ferguson  
Ashley Foreman  
Isaac Funk  
Kellie Gregory  
Mark Grizzard  
Courtney Hargreaves  
Nathan Henry  
Jenelle Hicks  
Robbie Holden  
Andy Hudson  
Jeff Kalina  
Ben Kelly  
Spencer Kibbler  
David Koch

Matt Koehlinger  
Yvette Kovalevsky  
Emily Kuchenbrod  
Jacob Lambert  
Leighton Luksander  
Ryan Martinez  
Rebecca Meyer  
Ryan Murphy  
Aaron Obrero  
Brandon Olson  
John Papandrea  
Hyejin Park  
Kirsten Pasia  
John Ramseyer  
Veronica (Roni) Raufer  
Adam Rodgers  
Robbie Romanowski  
Emma Roseland  
K-Rae Shaulis  
Angie Sylvester  
Kristyn Sz wajka  
Grace Urrutia  
Nathan Van Dam  
Aundrea Wells  
Jeff Wright  
Meagan Zahora

## Translations

*Stabat Mater dolorosa iuxta crucem lacrimosa dum pendebat Filius*  
The grieving Mother stood weeping beside the cross where her Son  
was hanging

*Cuius animam gementem contristatam et dolentem pertransivit gladius*  
Through her weeping soul, compassionate and grieving, a sword  
passed.

*O quam tristis et afflicta fuit illa benedicta Mater Unigeniti*  
O how sad and afflicted was that blessed Mother of the Only-  
begotten!

*Quae moerebat et dolebat et tremebat cum videbat nati poenas incliti*  
Who mourned and grieved and trembled looking at the torment of  
her glorious Child

*Quis est homo qui non fleret Matri Christi si videret in tanto supplicio?*  
Who is the person who would not weep seeing the Mother of Christ  
in such agony?

*Quis non posset contristari Matrem Christi contemplari dolentem cum filio?*  
Who would not be able to feel compassion on beholding Christ's  
Mother suffering with her Son?

*Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Iesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum*  
For the sins of his people she saw Jesus in torment and subjected to  
the scourge.

*Vidit suum dulcem natum moriendo desolatum dum emisit spiritum*  
She saw her sweet offspring dying, forsaken, while He gave up his  
spirit

*Eia Mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris fac ut tecum lugeam*  
O Mother, fountain of love, make me feel the power of sorrow, that I  
may grieve with you

*Fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum ut sibi complaceam*  
Grant that my heart may burn in the love of Christ my Lord, that I  
may greatly please Him