10-30-2011

Student Ensemble: Concert Choir, Civic Chorale, Symphony Orchestra

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.
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 fleret

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 praeclica

Duo. Larghetto
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem

Alto solo. Andante maestoso
Inflammatus et accensus

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 13th, 1877, he lost yet another child when 11 month old Růžena (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 8th, 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 13th 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 13th 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 Arony
Tom Bailey
Ashley Bartholomew
Mitch Belusko
Lauren Bernacki
Lydia Brinkmeier
Brandon Bull
Danna Cory
Adam Drake
Mitchell Evans
Sarah Fallon
Kelly Ferguson
Ashley Foreman
Adam 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 Szwajka
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 afflictata fuit illa benedicta Mater Unigeniti
O how sad and afflicted was that blessed Mother of the Only-begotten!

Quae moererebat et dolerebat 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 dolentum 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