

A MOTHER'S LOVE

ARUN CHORAL SOCIETY sings 'STABAT MATER'

Composed by ANTONIN DVORAK



Why *should* you come to listen to Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater'? Could it be that you will experience the most incredible and uplifting feeling of hope which can on occasion be imbued in us through the medium of music? This is music which will give you tingles down your spine! And you will hear the music of a composer, who not only made use of the beautiful and sad melodies of his native country, but also its songs of heroism. The combination is perfect in representing the sadness of Mary

at the death of her Son but it also sings of her love.

The skill of Dvorak in his interweaving of the words and phrases used between soloists and choir is masterful. And the orchestra plays its part too, not only setting the scene with its atmospheric music, but also lovingly echoing the beautiful melodies sung by the singers. His music reaches new heights in the final movement when the choir and soloists sing a glorious fugue heralding the promise of paradise. And was it because of his love for birds, that Dvorak was able to compose such wonderful melodies for the woodwind section? One can almost hear the birds singing in reply to the humans' songs. This is a concert which you definitely should not miss!

STABAT MATER was a poem written in Latin during the C13th by an Italian Franciscan Friar called Jacopone do Todi. It was later set to music and sung as a Gregorian chant. The writer empathised with the grief which Mary, the mother of Jesus, must have experienced as she stood at the foot of the Cross. About how she must have suffered as she watched her Son dying in such a terrible and barbaric fashion. It invites us to empathise with her too and to reflect upon her unimaginable sorrow and suffering. Any death is unbearable, but surely the death of one's own child is *the* most painful loss one can suffer? By meditating on her pain and the pain of her Son, Christians hope to love Jesus even more fervently. They try to please Him by striving harder to carry out His teachings in their own lives.

But at his death, the hopes and joys of his whole life-time's teaching seemed to have been completely in vain. His followers were left in utter despair. But joy was restored when, after three days and nights, Jesus rose from the dead. He showed himself to his disciples and proved beyond doubt that he truly *was* the Son of God. He explained that because of his death, he showed that there is life after death and that Man can therefore have the hope that there is life beyond death. They and all the followers who lived their life according to God's will, would dwell with God in Heaven. It is this promise which is cause of great joy for the whole of Mankind. And it is why Easter is the most important and joyful celebration of the Christian Church.

During the six weeks before Easter (Lent) which represent the time leading up to and including the death of Christ, the verses of the long prayer of Stabat Mater were often sung in religious processions or when contemplating the scenes on the fourteen tableaux or pictures called 'The Stations of the Cross'. It is a time of sadness. Each tableau represents a stage in the trial of Jesus; his appalling torture and terrible journey whilst carrying the cross; his brutal crucifixion; his burial; and ultimately his glorious resurrection from the dead. In the Gospel of John, we are told that Jesus' suffering was observed and shared by his mother too. The contemplative prayer of Stabat Mater aims to help us recall the suffering of them both, and in so doing, draw closer to them.

MANY COMPOSERS have been inspired to set the deeply reflective and sad words of Stabat Mater to music. There have been at least 58 major works so far! Palestrina, in 1590 was one of the first and

James McMullan, one of the last in 2015. Antonin Dvorak was the 29th composer to attempt to write a major work to express the sadness of Stabat Mater. The result is a very beautiful and poignant piece of music and is his most popular choral work. Indeed, it is said that it is the one choral work which every choral singer should sing at least once in their lifetime!



ANTONIN LEOPOLD DVORAK (1841- 1904) was born in a small village just outside of Prague, Bohemia. Bohemia, which is now part of Czechia also known as the Czech Republic, was at that time part of the Austrian Empire. His father was an Innkeeper and butcher who played the zither. Both of his parents enjoyed playing music in their spare time. Dvorak, the eldest of thirteen children, showed he had musical talent from an early age and started to learn to play the violin when he was six. Recognising his musical potential, his parents sent him to live with his uncle in Prague where he was

able to become an organ scholar and study music.



Dvorak loved the folk music of Moravia and his native Bohemia, and he used the influence of these native Czech folk tunes in his music. If you already know and love the New World Symphony, you will immediately recognise the same sad and wistful, yearning melodies as you listen to his Stabat Mater. It is because he absolutely refused to give up using his native Czech music when composing, that we are now able to hear and come to love this most beautiful and inspiring music. The first setting of Stabat Mater was premiered in 1880 and later performed in

London in 1883. It was a huge success and guaranteed his future musical career.

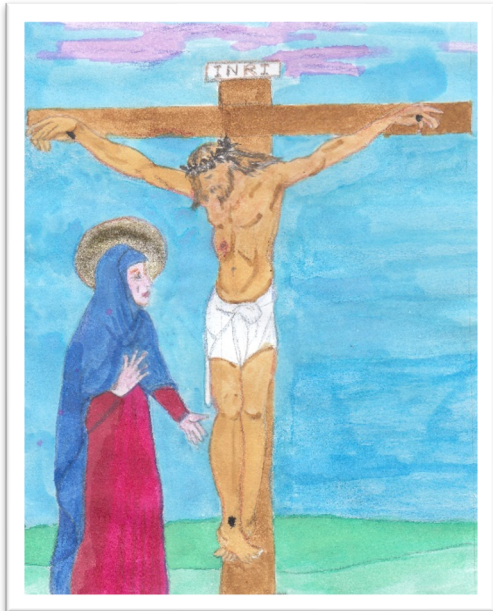
Dvorak was a very religious man, but he may also have had a particularly personal reason for composing the music to the Stabat Mater. He certainly began composing it after the death of his youngest child, Josefa in 1875. He then put it to one side and then took it up again after 1877 when he and his wife suffered yet another two tragic deaths of their children. Their two-year-old daughter, Ruzena died after accidentally drinking from a bottle of phosphorus which was kept for making matches. Then, only three months later, his son, Otaker, died from small-pox! In their grief, he and his wife almost certainly prayed to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. As one who had also suffered the loss of her child, it would have given them strength and some solace knowing that with help from her prayers, their children would safely be in paradise. What better tribute could Dvorak offer in return, than to compose some wonderful music in Mary's honour? And the result is a sensitive and gentle invocation of music infused with the most beautiful and passionate rhythms and melodies of his native country.

What follows is partly an interpretation of the music from my own imagination, setting it in a Bohemian village of yesteryear. It is an attempt to explain how deeply people have felt their faith throughout the ages. I hope you enjoy it and find it useful to think about the beliefs felt by generations of Christians, including Dvorak. It is what inspired him to write this beautiful music.

DVORAK'S STABAT MATER: The Overture

Setting the scene

Tentatively, a French horn and the violins begin playing and we are transported back to the Jerusalem of two thousand years ago. The music suggests mists gently swirling in the air and then slowly clearing. The orchestra then launches into a repetitive descending chromatic scale. It sounds much like the distant wailing cry of an Irish banshee, a portent of a scene of death and suffering. It is terrifying and gives us a sense of foreboding. Each instrument cries in sorrow. And a terrible scene *does* unfold itself before us. We notice the figure of a woman standing sorrowfully beneath three crosses bearing dead and dying men who are thieves.



The central cross bears the body of the woman's dying son. But he is *not* a thief; he is entirely *innocent*! We timidly tiptoe nearer, reluctant to intrude on the grief of this woman and the few people standing with her beneath the central cross. We realise with dismay, that the older woman is no other than the gentle Mary. That same young woman, who thirty years before, had travelled on the back of a donkey to Bethlehem and there given birth to a baby boy in a stable. Now that sweet baby has grown to manhood and is hanging on a cross, enduring the worst death possible! Such a tragedy! Little wonder that Mary looks so distraught and sorrowing

But this woman is the sweetest-natured and holiest woman in human history. She has been specially chosen by God and now we hear the light and the love of her nature shining through the playing of a beautiful melody. Even in the darkest parts of the piece, we hear her notes of hope and love struggling through and gradually gaining ascendancy over the darkness.

The orchestra intensifies its playing to a crescendo; it plays ascending chords which reach higher and higher until they reach what we are sure will eventually be a triumphal victory. But at the last moment a jarring, strident diminished chord dashes our hopes! It is a chord which signals the utter desolation of this moment! It seems there will be no happy outcome. Indeed, how could there be, after the loss of the life of such a Man? This was a Man whose life was full of promise. He was a Man who had shown a wisdom beyond his years and who had given such hope, peace and healing to the sick and despairing. Our hopes are dashed and we are left in despair. But then we are given hope as the orchestra plays a repeated melody which then leads into the beautiful, uplifting melody which is present throughout the piece and which represents Mary's love.



Part I: Stabat Mater : Choir and Quartet



Looking back through the mists of time, we see a religious procession about to take place in a village in Bohemia. It is the last Friday of Lent. Every Friday for the last four weeks, the congregation of this village church have prayed before each stage of Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion. Today is Good Friday, the Friday before Easter Sunday. It is the day traditionally set aside to commemorate the death of Jesus on the Cross. They are to process to the distant hill on which there is a holy shrine to Jesus and his blessed

Mother. They form up in two lines and are dressed in their best folk costumes for this special occasion. The more important village-elders will head the front of the procession, followed by the younger men and women, the children and musicians of the village. A strong young man will stand in front of all and carry a large wooden cross. He will lead the procession to the first station of the cross which shows Jesus' sham trial and condemnation to death.

But first they stand in the church and pray before their holy painting of the Stabat Mater Dolorosa. Quietly, and timidly so as not to intrude on the pain of the grieving mother, the younger men start to sing very softly and haltingly:



“Stabat- Mater- Dolorosa, juxta crucem lacrimosa, juxta crucem lacrimosa, dum pendebat, Filius

‘Grieving Mother Standing, by the cross weeping, by the cross weeping while her Son was hanging there’

The women and older men who are basses in unison softly echo the same words. Many of the women recognise the pain of the suffering Mary and sing them with great feeling and gently sing:

‘Stabat Mater Dolorosa’ ‘Grieving Mother Standing’

With great passion and singing in harmony, the whole choir then sings the last words in dramatic harmony:

‘Juxta crucem lacrimosa dum pendebat Filius’ ‘By the cross weeping On which hung Her Son’

A beautiful wistful melody is played by the orchestra with bassoon, oboe and flutes dominating.

The sopranos then introduce the beautiful melody which engenders the love which radiates from Mary:

‘Stabat Mater dolorosa, juxta crucem lacrimosa’ ‘Sorrowful Mother standing by the cross weeping’

The string section of the orchestra play a mystical ascending scale and then the tenors start the line again and are joined by the alto and bass voices who begin to drag the melody down into the depths.

‘Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa’

But as the soprano voices join in again, they counteract the mood with a wonderful rising scale. It is the more optimistic melody representing Mary's love. Gradually, one by one the other voices join in with the mood of the sopranos who are singing with emotion high above them.

'Stabat Mater, Stabat mater dolorosa, stabat mater dolorosa Juxta crucem I-----acrimo--sa

The choir and orchestra take the melody higher and higher but as they approach the zenith, they recall that Christ will die on the cross, their joy is crushed and their hopeful singing ends on a terrible discordant note.

Dismayed by their recollection, the choir repeats softly and with great pathos:

'Dum pendebat Dum pendebat Filius' 'On which hung On which hung Her Son'

The sopranos start to sing the sad banshee-like melody again but turn it into a more hopeful mood by finishing their line with a bright D note followed by a D sharp.

' Stabat Mater Dolorosa'

Starting with the alto voices, the other voices join in with:

'Stabat Mater dolorosa, juxta crucem dolorosa'

The Sopranos join in again and passionately sing Mary's melody of love, their voices floating high above the others and gently float gradually downwards:

' Juxta crucem la-----cri-mo-----sa ' By the Cross weeping

The tenors sing the banshee-like cry of foreboding and sing: ***'Stabat mater dolorosa'***

As they reach the end of the line, the sopranos imitate the tenors by singing the same high descending

notes an octave higher, giving all a feeling of absolute despair and grief whilst the altos counter-sing ***'Stabat Mater dolorosa'*** and the men take their turn at singing the more hopeful-sounding rising scale.

The whole choir sings in unison the line: ***'Sta-----bat ma-----ter doloro-----sa'*** and quickly

'Juxta crucem lacrimosa pendebat Filius' 'Weeping next to the cross where Her Son hung'

As they finish, the bold young man unexpectedly and confidently raises his tenor voice above the chorus. His voice imitates the banshee-like shriek which the people sang earlier.

'A mother stood grief-stricken by the cross weeping while Her Son was hanging there'

'Stabat Mater dolorosa Juxta crucem lacrimosa Dum pendebat Filius'

Realising that his voice is a little too harsh and prompted by sweet harmonious playing from a clarinet duet, he softens it to sing a much gentler melody about Mary. His is a simple melody, but very beautiful. He is accompanied by flutes and clarinets playing in beautiful harmony and he sings it with much emotion. The soul of the gentle and loving Mary has indeed been pierced by the sword of grief and she is in great pain.

'As she shared in his sorrow and grieved, a sword pierced her grieving heart'

'Cujus animam gementem Contristatam et dolentem Pertransivit gladius'

Fervently, the young man repeats the same line again raising his voice high in a show of emotion.

'Cujus animam gementem Contristatam et dolentem per transivit gladius'



The people of the village are gradually processing past the 2nd Station of the Cross which shows Jesus being made to carry the cross on which he is to die. Each one of them is filled with sorrow that Jesus was forced to die in that way. How was it, that the gentle Jesus who did no harm to anyone was treated like this? It is indeed a great failing in Man that he can allow the innocent to die. As they pass the third Station of the Cross which shows Jesus falling beneath the weight of the heavy Cross, a young woman lifts her beautiful soprano voice to join in the sad refrain. She is passionately moved and sings her verse of the Stabat Mater with heartfelt sorrow.

'O how sad and sore afflicted' ***'O quam tristis et afflicta'***

The listening procession passionately agree and together repeat her line

in a whisper:

'O quam tristis et afflicta'

A pair of oboes echo their line and the young woman sings:

'Was that Mother highly Blest' 'Fuit illa benedicta'

Her line is gently echoed again by the procession:

'Was that Mother highly blest' 'Fuit illa benedicta'

Her line is gently echoed by the oboe and orchestra.

The young woman finishes with: ***'Mater Unigenite'***

An oboe and cellos, wishing to emphasise the poignant

moment echo her sad refrain.



As they sadly process past the Fourth Station of the Cross, they notice how Jesus is met by His beloved Mother. She suffers the sorrow of seeing him being treated so very badly by his captors. Every blow felt by Her Son, Jesus, is a blow felt by Her too. At this solemn moment, the mournful bass voice of the elder-man of the village booms out.

'How she did mourn and lament' 'That Loving Mother, while she saw' ['The torment of Her Son']

'Quae maerebat et dolebat' 'Pia Mater dum videbat' ['Nati poenas incliti']

Sounding like choirs of angels, the young soprano, elder-woman and the rest of the women sing in glorious full-voiced harmonies repeating: ***'O how sorrowful and afflicted was that mother of the only one'***

'O quam-----tri---stis et---- afflic--ta, fu-it illa benedicta, mater u---ni---ge----ni--ti'

while the bass sings: 'Et tremebat cum videbat nati poenas incliti'

and tenor sings : 'O quam tristis et afflicta benedicta mater, ma-ter—u- ni- ge----n--iti

The four soloists and procession now sing together in harmony, cleverly interweaving the words of their verses and becoming more and more passionate.

An echo effect is achieved when the basses sing the line:

'Quae maerebat et dolebat', and the tenors carry on the same line:

'Quae maerebat et dolebat' and are then joined by all of the women

'Quae maerebat et dole----ba----t'

And back to basses:

'Quae maerebat et dolebat'

Choir sings: pi-----a-----mater-----dum vide-----bat nati poenas incliti

and finally the tenor soloist until they finish with: **'dum videbat nati poenas incliti'**

Together the Soprano, Alto and Tenor chorus and the alto soloist start the line:

'Quae maerebat et dolebat pia mater, dum videbat quae maerebat et dolebat pia mater et dolebat'

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'Quae!' The soprano soloist's voice suddenly soars high above all the others as she continues the line in a gorgeous duet with the alto soloist **'maerebat et dolebat, pia mater videbat nati poenas incliti'** whilst in the background the choir quietly take turns to bounce the line: **'Quae maerebat et dolebat'** from one to another, finally finishing with **'pia mater and dum videbat nati poenas'** And all the voices sing together **'nati poenas incliti'** at the end of which, the tenor sings **'Quae maerebat et dolebat'**

The choir finishes quietly with: **'et tremebat cum videbat nati poenas incliti'** as the soloists join in on the word 'nati' and finish with: **'nati poenas, nati poenas, poenas incliti'**

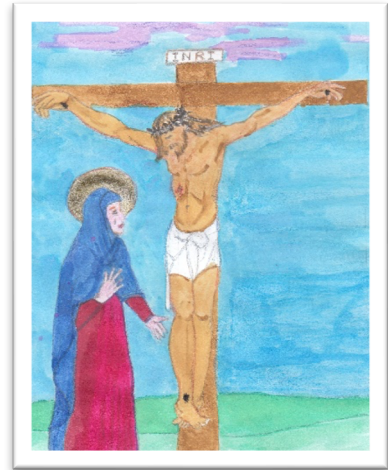
The orchestra play a melody which plunges us down into the depths of despair. Two bassoons play a duet and are joined by flutes, oboes and bassoon which lighten the mood by playing a beautiful melody.

286 The tenors in the chorus now return to the original sad melody used in the first verse:

'Stabat Mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa' the basses, then the altos and finally the sopranos join in with a more optimistic rising melody with: **'Stabat mater, stabat mater dolorosa'**

Accompanying them, the rest of the choir sing the words of the line in a series of running notes which climb higher and higher and start to give us a wonderful feeling of hope. Suddenly the sopranos dominate again with a very high, **Sta-----bat mater dolorosa juxta crucem la-----cri-----mo--sa'** But at the zenith the crushing discord is heard and hope is crushed once again.

The choir sings sadly in unison: **'dum pendebat'** and then **'dum pendebat filius'** again with a clever echo effect. The sopranos start the final section with the now familiar descending sad melody but relieve it with a sweet 'D' note followed by an even more hopeful D sharp: **'Stabat mater dolorosa'** and are joined by first the altos, then the basses and then the tenors singing sad melodies. The sopranos join in again singing Mary's melody of love and holiness: **'juxta crucem lacrimosa'**.



The tenors sing insistently: **'Stabat mater dolorosa'** and the sopranos join in with a descending: **'juxta crucem lacrimosa'** which the altos counterbalance with a rising scale which eventually falls back again. The tenors then sing: **'Quae'** The others answer with their own **'Quae'** And all finish by duetting the last part of the line; **'Maerebat et dolebat'** The choir then repeats the line again very quickly and passionately: **'Quae maerebat et dolebat pia mater dum videbat,'**



Before they can finish the line the young man's voice rises high above them and sings: **'Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa dum pendebat, Filius'** whilst the choir quietly sing: **'nati' 'poenas' 'incli'**. The other soloists now join in and sing: **'Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa'**

The tenor sings: **'Quae maerebat'** And the soprano, alto and bass answer: **'Juxta crucem'**

The young tenor sings: **'Et dolebat'** And the others answer: **'lacrimosa'** The tenor sings:

'Dum videbat' And the other three sing: **'Dum pendebat Filius'** whilst the young tenor finishes the line and sings: **'Pia mater, nati poenas incliti'**



A French horn plays a lovely melody and all the men in the choir sing in harmony: **'Quae maerebat'** and the sopranos and altos join-in and they

all sing: **'Et dolebat'**.

The soloists join with the choir and now sing triumphantly, trying to give comfort to the sorrowing mother **'Et tremebat cum videbat nati'** But there is no comforting her! How could there be? Her son is dying in the most terrible manner possible and she is inconsolable. Sorrowfully they sing quietly: **'Poenas; poenas incliti'**. A high note played by the flutes brings this long movement to an end.



Part II: Quis est Homo The Soloists



The elder-woman of the village feels such pity for Jesus and his poor mother who witnessed the terrible torture of her Son. The sanctity of this holy moment is reflected by the beautiful playing of a **cor-anglais**. Its mournful melody is in turn sensitively echoed by the woodwind players and strings. With heartfelt emotion showing in her serene mature voice, she begins to sing a haunting melody. It exactly suits the mood of the solemn procession as it plods slowly towards the distant shrine on the hill. Their slow dignified pace seems to imitate the struggle Jesus Christ must have experienced as he staggered beneath the weight of the heavy Cross.

'What man would not weep,

'Quis est homo, qui non fleret, quis est homo qui non fleret

Matrem Christi si videret in tanto supplicio?' If he saw the Mother in such torment?'

As they pass the 6th Station of the Cross on which Veronica is shown wiping the face of Jesus, they contemplate the scene for a moment.

The young tenor thinks about his verse 'Quis non posset' which he will sing with the elder-woman who will cleverly interweave her verse of '**Quis est homo**'. 'Who could not share in the sorrow, were he to contemplate, the Mother of Christ grieving for her Son'

He sings:

'Quis non posset' 'contristari', quis non posset contristari Christi matrem

She sings: **'Quis est homo' 'qui non fleret' 'matrem Christi si--vi--de----ret**

Contemplari do-----len-----tem cum Filio?'

'Si-vi-der—ret, in tanto sup— pli---ci---o'

The orchestra play a short emotional interlude and the **four soloists** and procession now sing together in harmony, cleverly interweaving the words of their verses and becoming more and more passionate:

The elder-man then starts to sing the elder-woman's verse of '**Quis est homo**' as the elder-woman and young man swop and sing a duet of their two verses in reply.

'Quis est homo' qui non fleret quis est homo, qui non fleret, matrem

Christi, si videret in tanto sup-----plic-io?'

Alto: **'Quis non posset con-tris--tari matrem Christi Matrem Christi**
sivideret in tanto supplicio'

Tenor: **'Quis est homo' qui non fleret Christi matrem Christi matrem**

Contempari dolentem cum Filio?'

They are now passing the 7th Station of the Cross. They see the picture of Jesus falling for the second time. He is so very weak from the beatings he has received along the way. The young woman is so moved by the image that she raises her passionate soprano voice and sings too.

'Quis non posset contristari, quis posset contristari Christi matrem contemplari'

Quis est homo quis non fleret matrem Christi si videret

<i>Quis</i>	<i>non pos</i>	<i>set</i>	<i>quis non posset contristari</i>	<i>Christi matrem</i>
<i>Quis</i>	<i>non ho</i>	<i>mo qui</i>	<i>non fle</i>	<i>ret matrem Christi si vi de ret</i>

'Christi matrem'

'Christi matrem'

'Chris-----ti ma-----trem

Bass: ***'matrem Christi'***

Alto: *matrem Christi* *ma-----trem Christi*

Tenor: *Chris-----ti matrem contemplari* *do-len-tem*

~

Con-tem-plari do-lentem cum Fi-li-o?

Si-vi-de-----ret in-tan-to sup-li-ci-o

Fi-li-o?

The mood suddenly changes and the orchestra play an ominous tune to represent the terrible scene as Mary sees her poor Son scourged with whips.

The procession reaches the 8th Station of the Cross which shows the women of Jerusalem weeping with pity at the treatment of Jesus. He tells them not to weep for Him but to instead weep for their children.

Passionately, the young woman sings and bass sing about these terrible moments of excessive cruelty and injustice.

'For the sins of her race She sees Jesus in torment And subjected to scourges'

'Pro peccatis suae gentis Vidit Jesum in tormentis Et flagellis subditum'

Bass: ***'Pro peccatis suae gentis Vidit Jesum in tormentis***

In duet, the young woman and elder woman sing:

'Pro peccatis suae gentis' vi-----dit Jesum in tormentis vi-----dit

'Pro peccatis suae gentis' vi-----dit Jesum in tormentis

'Jesum, vi—dit Jesum in tormentis' 'vidit Jesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum

vi—dit Jesum in tormentis' 'vidit Jesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum

The tenor and bass duet:

'Vidit suum dulcem natum' mo---ri-en-do des-o-la-tum deum emisit Spiritum

Bass **Vi-----dit suum natum mo-----riendo desolatum**

'She sees her dear son Dying in anguish As his life-spirit is released to God'

Suddenly the high beautiful voice of the young woman sings a very long and soaring pure high **'Pro'** G-note above them and reminds them of this terrible moment.

'For the sins of her nation, she saw Jesus in agony'

'Pro----- peccatis suae gentis Vidit Jesum subditum.'

The elder-woman also repeats her line

'She saw her son subjected to whips and insults'

'Vidit Jesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum'

and the two men join in and sing a duet of

(She saw her sweet child die desolate in his dying moments)

'Vidit Jesum dulcem natum moriendo desolatum'.

It is a very dramatic moment and the rest of the villagers listen in awe.



The elder-woman returns to her original verse: *'Who is the man who would not weep?' 'Quis es Homo, qui non fleret, quis et homo, qui non fleret'* The elder-man echoes her line and his bass voice duets with the tenor voice of the young man and they sing *'Quis est homo, qui non fleret'* and the soprano sings: **Quis est homo qui non fleret, matrem Christi si videret, quis est homo. Qui non fleret, matrem Christi si videret in tanto supplicio?**

Her lovely soprano voice floats above all of them. They finish with a repeated *'Mother of Christ'* **'Matrem Christi, Matrem Christi, Matrem Christi'** and end the line in exquisite unison:

'If he saw the Mother of Christ in such torment' **'Matrem Christi si videret in tanto supplici'.**

The elder-man sings the next grim line on his own.

'For the sins of her nation she saw Jesus in agony and subjected to whips'

'Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Jesum in tormentis et flagellis, et flagel-----lis subditum'

The other three sing the same line in harmony:

'Pro peccatis suae gentis vidit Jesum in tormentis et flagellis subditum'

The flutes shriek at this highly-charges moment. In unison, the four singers then sing the saddest line of all, the words punctuated by chords played on brass and woodwind.



'Vidit suum- dulcem natum-moriendo- desolatum- dum emisit-spiritum'

(She saw her sweet child desolate in His dying moments and watched as his spirit slipped away)

As the precious life of Jesus ebbs away, the double bass players dominate as they play a repeated threatening and ominous melody. At last, a high note played on a French horn and strings seems to represent the moment that the soul of Mary's precious Son is at last released from its terrible suffering.

Part III: EJA MATER ('Alas, Mother') Chorus

After such a moving re-enactment of Jesus' last hours, the villagers are in no doubt about why they are taking part in this procession. The double bass players start playing a slow repetitive four-note suggesting the hard and difficult death-walk that was taken by Jesus. As the men pass the 9th Station, their faces turn to look at the picture that shows Christ falling for the third time. The basses start to sing with a softness which belies their natural strength: ***'Eja Mater, fons amoris'*** and in wonderful harmony the same line is softly echoed by the rest of the choir. The melody is one of their favourites. It is music which seems to represent the heroism and resilience of their people and it gradually becomes more and more passionate.



'Alas, Mother, fountain of love
'Eja Mater, fons amoris

Make me feel the force of your grief
Me sentire vim doloris

That I may mourn with thee'
Fac, ut tecum lugeam'

The basses sing: ***'Eia Mater' 'fons amoris' 'Eia mater fons amoris***
and the others reply: ***'Eia Mater' Fons amoris 'fons amoris'***

'Me sentire' 'vim doloris' 'fac ut tecum lugeam, fac ut te cum l-u-g-e--a-----m
'Me sentire' 'vim doloris' 'facut tecum lugeam fac ut tecum lugeam

(A) 'Eia mater fons amoris' (SA) 'Eia mater, fons amoris' 'me sentire'
(T) 'Eia mater fons amoris' 'me sentire' 'vim doloris'

(AT) 'vim doloris' 'FAC!' 'FAC' 'FAC!' 'ut tecum lugeam'
(B) ' 'Eia mater' 'fons amoris' 'me sentire vim doloris ut tecum lugeam'

The most beautiful of heroic melodies is then sung by the sopranos underpinned with wonderful harmonies from the whole choir!

'Eia mater, fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris, vim doloris fac ut tecum lugeam, fac ut tecum lugeam, lugeam'

The orchestra then brings us back down from this very passionate melody with a return to the strong thrusting beat representing a trudging, slow walking pace. Each voice group starting with the bass, sings the line: (B) ***'Fac ut tecum lugeam,***

(T) ***Fac ut tecum lugeam,***

(A) ***Fac ut tecum lugeam'***

(S) ***'Fac ut tecum lugeam'***

ALL: 'FAC!' 'FAC!' 'FAC!' ut tecum lugeam.'

A couple of loud piercing peeps from the woodwind brings this section to a full-stop. And then the original strong beat begins again and the basses start to sing the same verse again. Their line is echoed by the others singing very softly.

'Eia mater' 'fons amoris' 'Eia mater' 'fons amoris' 'me sentire' 'vim doloris'
'Eia mater' 'fons amoris' 'fons am----- oris' 'me sentire'

'fac ut tecum lugeam fac ut te—cum-----lu----ge-am
'vim doloris' 'fac, ut tecum lu-----ge-am, ut tecum--lu----ge--am

The altos lead the next time around with ***'Eia Mater, fons amoris'*** and the tenors echo their line and then the Sopranos and altos sing the same line again in sweet harmony. The tenors sing ***'me sentire vim doloris'*** and the whole of the choir emphasise this hope with three very loud blasts of ***'Fac!' 'Fac!' 'Fac!'*** and becoming gradually quieter as they sing ***'ut tecum lugeam'***.

It leads into the beautiful heroic melody which the whole choir sings in harmony at first passionately but then gradually more and more quietly until it almost fades away as they march on past the tenth cross:

'Eia mater , fons amoris me sentire, vim doloris , vim doloris fac ut tecum lugeam fac ut, tecum lugeam, lugeam—lugeam-- lugeam'



Part IV: FAC UT ARDEAT: Bass Solo and SANCTA MATER: Chorus



The elder-man of the village and the orchestra linger by the 10th Station of the Cross which shows Jesus suffering the further indignity of being stripped. He dwells on the thought that Jesus suffered all this for the love of him. How could he *not* love Jesus, after Jesus has made this supreme sacrifice? He is inspired to sing another of their heroic Bohemian melodies. As his is an important pronouncement, the brass players herald his lines by playing a short rich chord as introduction. With great dignity and feeling he sings:

'Make my heart burn' 'Fac ut ardeat cor meum'.

The clarinet-player echoes his poignant tune and is in turn echoed by the flutes, oboe and bassoon. The music is very beautiful and gives everyone a vision of a lonely wide-open country, full of lakes and wild water birds. But just as everyone is happily dreaming about being in that wild and beautiful place, we are startled by another blast from the brass and the elder man sings again:

'With love of Christ the Lord' 'In Amando Christum, Deum'

And the flutes again echo his melody and the clarinet and strings lovingly carry on the echo.

'That I may please him' 'Ut sibi complaceam. Ut sibi complaceam'

The mood changes and the music with it and the old man is accompanied by a clarinet.

'Make my heart burn with love of Christ our Lord So that I may please them'

'Fac ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum ut sibi complaceam'

While he has lingered longer by the 10th Station, praying and reflecting on his own deep thoughts, the procession of his fellow -villagers has already passed on by. He now hears the distant sound of angelic voices accompanied by a church organ.



'Sancta Mater, istud agas Crucifixis fige plagas

'Holy Mother, pierce me through In my heart each wound renew

The elder-man is very moved and has tears in his eyes. The singing is so beautiful. He realises that the procession must be passing the tableau of the 11th Station which shows poor Jesus being nailed to the cross. His Holy Mother was standing very near and witnessing every terrible moment; she is suffering too.

'Cordi meo, cordi meo valide, cordi meo valide' 'Drive strongly into my heart' The brass players sound another chord

'Let my heart burn with love of Christ our Lord so that I may please him.'

'Fac ut ardeat cor meum' woodwind echo his sad melody and the brass blast out another chord.

'In Amando Christum Deum' Again the orchestra plays a melody reflecting the beautiful, lonely land and his love for Christ.

'Ut sibi complaceam, in Amando in Christum Deum'

and very quietly ***'ut sibi in complaceam'***.

Finally, he sings as an aside a long and thoughtful; ***'Compla-----ce--am'***.

'Sancta Mater, istud agas, crucifixis fige plagas'

The angelic voices of the women and now also the men, come floating back to him.

They are standing at the 12th Station and the image of poor Jesus being nailed to the cross makes their hearts swell with love for Jesus who died on the Cross and they sing with even greater passion and elder As the villagers sing with more and more fervency, they break into parts and sing the same lines.

'Holy Mother do just that, let the blows of the crucified one, drive strongly into my heart'

'Sancta Mater, Sancta Mater istud agas, crucifixi fige plagas'

The musicians play a variation on their beautiful melody and then the elder man kneels and listens whilst the others sing: ***'Cordi meo, cordi meo valide'***

The tenors start their line: ***'Sancta mater istud agas'***

The singers sing in harmony: ***'Sancta mater istud agas'***, the sopranos join in ***'Sancta mater istud agas'***

'crucifixi fige plagas cordi meo valide' The woodwind players finish off the singers' beautiful singing with a sad melody.

The elder-man sings very softly but with great emotion.

'Let my heart burn with love of Christ our Lord so that I may please Him'

'Fac ut ardeat cor meum; in Amando Christum Deum ut sibi complaceam'

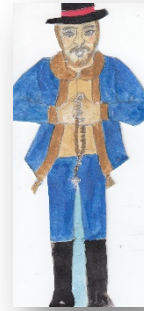
The orchestra plays with an increasing sense of urgency.

'So that I may please Him' ***'Ut sibi complaceam, complaceam'***

'Let my heart burn with love of Christ our Lord so that I may please Him'

The orchestra lovingly plays the lovely melody one more time.

'Fac ut ardeat cor meum In Amando Christum Deum ut sibi complaceam'



Accompanied by beautiful woodwind playing, the elder man sings:

'So that I may please Him.' ***'Ut sibi complaceam'***.

The elder-man finishes his verse with such softness that his voice can hardly be heard and then sets off slowly to rejoin the others in the procession.

Part V: TUI NATI VULNERATI Choir

The solemn singing of the bass voice of the elder man and their long meditation at the 12th Station which shows Jesus dying upon the cross, has meant that the younger people of the village are ready for some release. It is a beautiful spring- day. And they are still young and full of the zest for life! The musicians strike up a joyful, dignified dance tune. It is one of their favourite Bohemian dances where the music changes part-way through to a different rhythm. The musicians play the introduction and the men basses in the procession start singing their verse to the joyful swirling melody. The altos join in, then the tenors and sopranos and suddenly the procession is all swirling bodies as they gaily dance and sing:

'Let me share with Thee his pain Who for all my sins was slain Who for me in torment died'

'Tui nati vulnerati Tam dignati, tam dignati, tam dignati, pro me pati

'Tui nati vulnerate Tam dignati, tam dignati pro me pati poenas mecum divide

'Tui nati vulnerate Tam dignati, tam dignati pro me pati poenas mecum divide

The orchestra play with gracious solemnity.



The singers loudly sing ***'Poenas! Poenas!*** in unison and then split to sing in harmony:

'Poenas mecum divide, Poenas mecum divide' *'Who for me in torment died'*

The altos finish the line with a satisfying tail which lasts until the last word of the sopranos.

The sopranos sing the same line in harmony ***'Poenas mecum, poenas mecum divide'*** and the men join in at the last word and sing in a swirling harmony: ***'poenas mecum, poenas mecum di—vi---de'***

The orchestra expertly brings this section at an end. The altos start the next section. Their new melody is now a heroic one of bravery and steadfastness in the face of adversity

The Altos then break into a spirited and lively dance and the others copy them:

'Tui nati vulnerati'

(T) ***'Tui nati vulnerati***

(B) ***Tui nati vulnerati***

(A) ***'Tui nati vulnerate, tam dignati pro me pati poenas mecum divide'*** The sopranos sing above all like bubbles bouncing on top: ***'Poe-----nas-----***

'Poe-----nas-----me -----cum-----di-----vi-de' Then everybody joins together and sings:



'Poenas mecum divide poenas me-----cum divide. Poe-----nas' And the men singing alone: ***'Poenas mecum divide'***

The orchestra expertly brings this lively section to an end and returns to the more staid and dignified melody. Each section starts the next line at different times. First the basses sing ***'Tui nati vulnerate, tam dignati pro me pati'*** followed by the altos, then the tenors and finally the sopranos. The effect is enchanting.

The orchestra imitate the singers' line and then in unison the singers sing:

'Poenas! Poenas ! Poenas mecum divide, poenas mecum divide' The altos echo: ***'poenas mecum divide'*** and all the way through the next line which is sung by the sopranos alone who sing in duet: ***'Poenas mecum, poenas mecum divide'*** Basses and tenors start on the last word and echo their harmony and sing: ***'Poenas mecum, poenas mecum divide'*** with the altos finally finishing their line on the same word.

It is a joyful song full of light and hope and makes a very welcome change from the more serious verses.

Part VI : FAC ME VERE TECUM FLERE Tenor Solo with Male Chorus



With their hearts beating fast, it is time to calm themselves and return to a more dignified procession, particularly as the elder man of the village has nearly caught up with them! They have reached the 13th Station where Jesus is laid in the arms of His sacred Mother. The fervent young man is very moved by the scene. He is inspired to sing a very gentle verse of devotion to Her. Each time the verse is repeated

by the rest of the men. In all, the verse is sung six times.

'Let me truly weep with you Grieve with you for him, crucified For as long as I live'
'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

The rest of the men are inspired to echo his melody, singing it with exquisite gentleness and beautiful harmonies.

'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

The young man then sings a slight variation on the original melody and the men repeat his variation, singing with the same exquisite harmonies.

'Fac me verum tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

'Fac me verum tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

The young man returns to the original melody and when he is finished, the rest of the men again repeat his gentle melody in gorgeous running notes.

'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere Crucifixo condolere Donec ego vixero'

As they pass the Station of the 14th and last Station of the Cross where Christ is laid in the Sepulchre, the young man is filled with an even more heroic and fervent desire to try to follow the way of Jesus, and he now changes his melody to a more heroic song of bravado.

'I long to stand by the cross with You'. 'Juxta crucem tecum stare'

The men answer fiercely singing, (*We desire to be close to You*) **'Te libenter sociare.'**

He sings, **'In planctu desidero'** and the men fervently reply:

'In planctu desidero' *'And to unite myself with you in your lamentation'*

The young man increases the emotion of the moment and sings even more heroically **'In planctu desidero'** and all sing **'In planctu desidero, In planctu desidero'** together. It is then the orchestra's turn to play and they expertly lead the young man back to his original gentler melody.

'Let me truly weep with you' **'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere'**

'Let me grieve with You. For Him crucified' **'Crucifixo condolere'**

'For as long as I live' **'Donec ego vixero'**

The rest of the men then fervently and loudly in gorgeous harmonies echo his lines.

'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere'

The young man answers: **'crucifixo, condolere donec ego vixero'**

And in harmony the men answer fiercely: **'crucifixo, condolere, donec ego vixero'**

Together they all sing in wonderful harmony and with the tenors singing gorgeous running notes:

'Fac me vere tecum flere, tecum flere'

The young man sings : **'crucifixi condolere, donec e---go vix---ero Jux--ta crucem tecum stare'**

Below the others sing: **'cru---ci---fix---o-----con-do—le-re donec ego vixero te libenter sociare'** The tenor sings and the men echo him:

'In planctu' 'In planctu' 'desidero' 'desidero' 'In planctu desidero' 'in plantu desidero, in planctu,

in plantu, in planc-----tu desidero

'In planc-----tu desidero'

The orchestra play an exciting war-like rhythm to finish which gradually trails away as the men march on to re-join the women.



Part VII: VIRGO VIRGINUM Chorus



The next verse allows the people to use a style of singing they love. With enthusiasm, the people will loudly echo the word **'amara'** at the end of some lines. It is a style of dramatic statement which they love to make. The mood of the procession changes and as introduction, the musicians play a series of grand chords. The angelic voices of the women take their turn again and together with the men sing a lovely hymn to Mary, imploring her help in allowing them to feel empathy with Her. The men and women process and sing together producing rich and warm harmonies:

'Foremost of virgins' ***'Virgo virginum praeclara Virgo virginum praeclara'***

'Be not harsh to me now' ***'Mihi jam non sis amara, mihi jam non sis amara'***

'Make me weep with thee' ***'Fac me tecum plangere'***

The string-players play a dignified interlude and the choir start singing the same verse very quietly. This verse also gives the singers a chance to emphasise the word 'amara' by echoing it very loudly.

'Virgo virginum praeclara, Virgo virginum, praeclara'

The sopranos sing: ***'mihi jam non sis amara'***

The rest echo: ***' mihi jam non sis AMARA!'***



'mihi jam non sis amara'

'mihi jam non sis AMARA!'

The sopranos accompanied by beautiful harmonies from the rest of the voices, dramatically and loudly sing: ***'Fac me tecum plangere'***, repeating it very softly: ***'fac me tecum plangere'*** And finally loudly again but gradually fading: ***'fac me tecum, fac me tecum, fac me tecum plan-----ge-re'***

'Make me weep with you, make me with you, make me with you, make me weep with you'

The string-players in the orchestra then play a series of dignified chords returning the choir to the melody of the first verse and they sing very gently with gorgeous harmonies:

'Virgo virginum, praeclara, Virgo virginum, virgo virginum prae-----clara'

'Mihi jam non sis amara'

The tenors loudly sing: ***'Virgo'*** And the rest of the choir softly repeats: ***'Virgo'*** while the tenors quietly sing: ***'Virgo'***. The whole of the choir join in on a very long and beautiful: ***'Virginum prae-----clara.*** In sudden contrast, they sing very softly: ***'Mihi jam non sis amara.'***



Loudly and singing alone Sopranos sing rain-drop notes: ***'Fac me tecum'*** And then the others join in too and the whole choir sing their own rain-drop notes on the words: ***'Fac me tecum plangere'***

Tenors alone then start singing the rain-drop notes ***'Fac me tecum'*** the sopranos carry on dropping raindrop notes on: ***'Fac me tecum'*** and finally all the various voices produce wonderful harmonies and

sing: ***'Fac me tecum fac me tecum plangere'*** and finish with delightful drifting-down thistledown notes on: ***'mihi jam non sis amara, fac me tecum p-l-a-n-gere'***

Dramatic full bodied strings play grandiose chords followed by beautiful woodwind and the choir singing in harmony and very quietly : ***'fac me tecum plangere'*** Delightfully as beautiful as is the Virgin Mary, herself!



Part VIII FAC UT PORTEM : Tenor and Soprano Duet

While they wait for the elder-man to catch up with the group, the woodwind players start to play a lovely rustic tune. The bassoons start by playing a lively plodding rhythm and the oboe joins in with a lovely weaving in-and-out melody. The two most religious young people have found themselves together and they realise that they share a similar fervent love for Jesus and his Mother. The young soprano starts singing fervently:



'Make me a bearer of the death of Christ, let me share in his sufferings and receive the blows'

1. *'Fac ut portem Christi Mortem, Christi mortem, passionis fac consortem, pla-----gas re---colere'*

The young man then gently joins in and starts to repeat her line in agreement, but before he can finish the first line, the young woman threads the same line between his and they sing a lovely, harmonious duet together:

2. *'Fac ut portem Christi mortem'*

'FAC UT PORTEM CHRISTI MORTEM'

'Fac ut portem Christi mortem'

'FAC UT PORTEM CHRISTI MORTEM, CHRISTI MORTEM, PASSIONIS, FAC CONSORTEM PLAGAS RECOLERE'

'Christi mortem, passionis consortem pla-----gas recolere'

They somehow manage to cleverly finish their lines together. The effect is enchanting.

The young woman starts the line of the next verse: 64

3. *'FAC UT PORTEM CHRISTI MORTEM, FAC, UT PORTEM CHRISTI MOR--TEM PASSI-O-NIS*

'Fac---ut portem, Chris-----ti mortem fac---ut por-tem Chris-ti mortem

'FAC CON-SORTEM' ET PLA-----GAS re-----co---le-----re'

Passio-----nis Fac-----con sor pla-----gas re-----co---le-----re'

The woodwind play a short but lovely melody

'Let me be wounded by the lashes Intoxicated by the Cross Through love of your son'.

The soprano starts the next verse and the tenor interweaves his verse with hers:

'Fac me plagis vul -ne-ra-ri, vul-----nerari, cruce hac inebriari in-ebriari

'Fac me plagis vul-ne---ra-----ri vul---ne-ra---ri cru-ce

'ob---- a---- mo----- rem Fi -----li-i Fac ut portem, Christi mor- tem'

'hac in ebri---a---ri, ob amorem, ob amorem Fi-----li-l pas-

'pas—si- o---nis fac consortem, et plagas recole-----re

'si-o-----nis fac con-----sor-----tem et pla-gas re—co—le-----re

'Let me share in His suffering and receive His blows'

Everyone is enchanted by their singing. They sing very well as a pair and their beautiful singing has contributed much to the village's joy in their pilgrimage.



Part IX: Inflammatus et accensus: Alto solo



Meanwhile the elder-woman has realised that if she doesn't keep walking steadily, she will never keep up with the younger ones, especially when they start to climb the hill. And she desperately wants to be with everyone when they reach the top where the shrine is waiting. The wood-wind players give her encouragement by playing a lively trotting rhythm to keep her going. She trots along in time with the bassoon and sings an ardent, brisk verse to the Virgin Mary:

'Inflamed and set on fire May I be defended by you Virgin On the day of Judgement'

'Inflammatu s et accensu s Per te Virgo Sim defensio In die iudicii'

'Inflammatu s et accensu s per te, Virgo sim defensu s in die iudicii'

The orchestra continues playing its jaunty tune. Suddenly she finds she is out of breath and needs to slow down. She will never be able to keep this pace up. She starts to dawdle and sings another verse very laconically but still with the same fervour that she has felt throughout.

'Flaming and torched, may I be protected by You Virgin on the Day Of Judgement'

'Inflammatu s et accensu s, per te, Virgo, sim defensu s in die iudicii'

She is a little perturbed when she thinks she hears the faint sound of brass mournfully suggesting the Last Day of Judgment. Perhaps that day is nearer than she realises! For extra protection she sings the same line again.

'Inflammatu s et accensu s. Per te Virgo. Sim defensu s in die iudicii'

A more threatening melody is heard from the brass again and so for good measure, she sings an even more powerful line, this time invoking the name of Jesus

'Let me be guarded by the cross, defended by the death of Christ, fostered by grace'

'Fac me cruce custodiri, morte Christi praemunire, confoveri, confoveri, gratia, confoveri, confoveri, gratia'

Having regained her breath and thinking that her time on Earth is probably shorter than the others, she decides she must pick up her pace again and trots along singing the first verse again.

'Let me be guarded by the cross, defended by the death of Christ, fostered by grace'

'Fac me cruce custodiri, morte Christi praemunire, confoveri, confoveri confoveri gratia'

And more quietly:

'Fac me cruce, custodiri, morte Christi praemunire, confoveri confoveri gratia, confoveri gratia'

Then higher **'Confoveri gratia'**

And with a final flourish boldly sings:

'Fac me cruce custodiri, morte Christi praemunire confoveri, confoveri, confoveri, gra-----tia'



The whole procession has now caught up with the elder-woman and they ready themselves to climb the hill. The elder-man stands beside her and gives her a nod of comfort. His splendid bass voice and her lovely alto voice will begin their final heartfelt supplication. They choose to sing it with the same slow plodding melody which the elder woman used at the beginning of their procession.

'When the body dies Grant my soul May enter the glory of paradise'

'Quando corpus morietur Fac ut animae donetur Paradisi gloria'

The pace of the song seems to exactly mirror the struggle that Jesus must have had to carry the heavy Cross. The effort that they will have to make to climb up the hill, seems appropriate to the struggle which He went through. In unison the young Soprano

and Tenor start the line again whilst the elder bass and alto-voice of the elder woman cleverly echo their words interweaving them in between and singing them as ascending running notes:

'Quando corpus morietur, fac ut animae donetur paradisi gloria'

As they end their line, the sopranos of the chorus sing the same line with similar running notes, the tenors echo them whilst the basses and the altos sing a plodding rhythm.

'Quando corpus morietur fac ut animae donetur'

'Quando corpus morietur'

Altos and Sopranos next sing a see-saw rhythm alternating singing the running notes on:

'Quando corpus morietur, fac ut animae donetur'

Now sopranos and altos alternate but sing running notes that reach higher each time giving the impression that they are climbing the hill,

'Paradisi gloria, paradisi gloria, paradisi gloria, paradisi gloria, paradisi gloria, Paradisi gloria'

Finally they sing longer notes as they emphasise:

'Paradisiglo-----ri-a-----'

The going uphill to the shrine has been hard, especially for the older ones. But all are full of determination. They sing with passion. And gradually, step by step, as they go up the hill, their voices grow in strength.

The young woman and the village elder now sing alone '*Quando corpus morietur*' but then are joined by the elder-woman and the young man as they each interweave their own melodies; they sing on '*fac ut animae donetur paradisi gloria*' their voices ascending higher and higher until finally, with relief, they reach the shrine on top of the hill as the young woman reaches the last word:

'pa-----ra-----di-----si-----glo-----ria'

And the whole village sings gloriously as one, the last phrase of the hope of life after death which was won for us by Christ.

'PA-RA-DI-SI GLORIA!'



PA-RADISI GLORIA!

And it is as if a flood-gate is opened and we are carried forward on a torrent of praise which will engulf the whole world. The tenors and altos begin to sing a series of glorious intertwining and cascading 'AMENS', the Hebrew word meaning 'It is true'. And now Dvorak presents us with his masterful exam **fugue**. He composes a short melody which encompasses the word '**Amen**'

The tenors sing their short Amen melody and immediately the sopranos take it up and copy them. The tenors take it back again and as they finish,

the sopranos sing the melody again but with a change of note at the end. The other voices join in, sometimes singing a similar melody and sometimes singing a variation. The basses and altos play a mainly magnificent supporting role intertwined with moments when the soloists sing their own 'Amen' followed by the other voices. The sound created is glorious and you will find yourself transported:

The image is a hand-drawn musical score for a choir and soloists, centered around a cross with a figure of Jesus. The score is written on a grid of pink horizontal lines. The central vertical axis is a brown cross with a figure of Jesus in a blue and white robe, surrounded by a halo of red stars. A yellow beam of light shines down from the top of the cross. The score is divided into several sections, each with a different color background (pink, purple, green). The parts are labeled: SOP (Soprano), TEN (Tenor), ALTO (Alto), SOLOISTS, and TENOR/BASS. The lyrics are 'A-MEN' and 'MEN'. The notes are represented by colored dots (red, blue, green) connected by lines, indicating pitch and rhythm. The score is written in a simple, hand-drawn style.

A

It is as if the sun comes out from behind the clouds and shines upon us and we see the whole of paradise laid out before us. The choir are now inspired to sing to the heavens in thankfulness to God, that Jesus Christ, Son of God gave up his life and died on the Cross for us and all of Mankind. By His

selfless action, He showed that death is not the end for we humans. He gave them the one thing that humans lacked- hope. He promised that there would be a victory over death and that they would be with Him and God the Father in Heaven.

The people in the procession sing with such fervour and faith that it is as if all the angels in heaven and all of creation join in as well! It is impossible to tell which is which, where one ends, and another starts. It is sheer brilliance! And all are carried away with the glory of this sound. It seems as if it will never have an end but at last the people sing as one, this their final request:

‘Quando corpus morietur Fac ut animae Donetur paradisi, paradisi gloria’

‘When my body has died, let it be that the glory of paradise is granted to my soul’

It is a spine-tingling moment. And finally, they sing a succession of ‘Amen’s’, starting with the highest voices and ending with the lowest which seem to fade away as they make their way back down the hill.

Amen... Amen... Amen... Amen...Amen... Amen... Amen

A French horn and the brass sounds one last short descending melody and then all the voices of the people swell and sing as one, the final triumphant **AMEN** with such fervour that the sound reaches back up the hill to the shrine. The beautiful sound wraps around the shrine in a cloak of holiness and spreads across the whole of Earth.

The strings are almost the last sounds to be heard. Their notes reach higher and higher towards the heavens and when we hear the last high note of a French horn and flute, we know that finally, the souls of the Dvorak children along with the souls of all other deceased people have reached the safety of their celestial home with God.



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Sussex 4th March 2024



Programme for Antonin Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater'



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POSTSCRIPT

An innocent man was tried, found guilty and died in the most cruel and degrading way. This would have seemed to be the end of the story of this kind, gentle man whose only crime was to preach forgiveness and brotherly love. The disciples and followers of Jesus were frightened, depressed and in despair. This wonderful man who had healed the sick and preached the Word of God was now dead. It appeared to be the end of everything.

But this seeming disaster was turned to triumph. For after three days of being entombed, Christ's body mysteriously disappeared from the cave in which it had been placed. This was physically impossible because not only had a very heavy boulder been rolled in front of the entrance but two Roman soldiers had been left to guard it.

But this was not all! A few days later Jesus Christ started to appear to his disciples and after the initial shock and disbelief, they realised that this was no normal Man but really *was* the Son of God. He truly had been sent to show Man the error of his ways and the way in which God wishes us to treat each other. Gradually the disciples began to realise this was exactly what Jesus had prophesied. He had told them that he would return from the dead and this was a sign of the promise that he made to all those who believed in Him and followed his teachings (which were ultimately from God). If they lived a good life, they would also be with Him in Heaven.

The disciples suddenly had no more doubts and were filled with joy. They now knew that they must go out and continue the work that Jesus had started and for which Jesus had been training them. They must spread the good news that there is salvation for all peoples as long as they are willing to hear and live their lives according to His teaching. The promise he made to his disciples thankfully also applies to us who hear this message and believe. If we truly love him, and follow out his words in our daily lives, we will be worthy of his promise and hope to be with Him (and God) in paradise after our death. The celebration of his triumph over death is always on Easter Sunday which is why it is *the* most important festival for Christians. Music composed for Easter day is always triumphal and full of hope and joy. Easter eggs are given as a sign of our new life; won for us by our dear Lord, Jesus Christ.

And in times of sorrow and grief, Mary, Our Lady will always offer comfort to those who go to her to ask for help.

Remember O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that any who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother! To thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petition, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. AMEN

