



audite

Gregor Joseph

Vol. 3

WERNER

Masses and Motets

Harer · Bierwirth · Hunger · Flaig
Voktett Hannover

la festa musicale
Lajos Rovatkay

GREGOR JOSEPH WERNER (1693-1766)

MISSA „Sunt bona mixta malis” III/19

Kyrie

I. Kyrie 3:48

Gloria

II. Gloria 0:54
 III. Laudamus te 1:07
 IV. Gratias agimus tibi 0:57
 V. Domine Deus 1:55
 VI. Qui tollis peccata mundi 1:34
 VII. Quoniam tu solus 1:10
 VIII. Cum Sancto Spiritu 1:25

Credo

IX. Credo 1:36
 X. Et incarnatus est 1:58
 XI. Et resurrexit 1:02
 XII. Et in Spiritum Sanctum 1:51
 XIII. Et vitam 1:30

Sanctus

XIV. Sanctus 1:02
 XV. Pleni sunt coeli 1:20
 XVI. Osanna in excelsis 0:53

Benedictus

XVII. Benedictus 0:56
 XVIII. Osanna in excelsis (ut sopra) 0:53

Agnus Dei

XIX. Agnus Dei 2:06
 XX. Dona nobis pacem 1:41

Motetto „Alma redemptoris mater” III/160 2:18

Motetto „Ave Regina coelorum” 3:25

Sonata prima

I. Largo 1:12
 II. Allegro 1:52
 III. Largo 0:58
 IV. Allegro 1:31

Motetto „Sub tuum praesidium” III/249 2:02

Motetto „Regina coeli” III/189 1:58

MISSA SOLEMNIS „Post nubila Phoebus”

Kyrie

I. Kyrie eleison 1:57
 II. Christe eleison 1:50
 III. Kyrie eleison 0:57

Gloria

IV. Gloria 0:39
 V. Laudamus te 1:21
 VI. Domine Deus 1:15
 VII. Qui tollis peccata mundi 1:45
 VIII. Quoniam tu solus 1:36
 IX. Cum Sancto Spiritu 0:47

Credo

X. Credo in unum Deum 2:50
 XI. Et incarnatus est 1:16
 XII. Crucifixus 1:01
 XIII. Et resurrexit 1:24
 XIV. Et in Spiritum Sanctum 1:50
 XV. Et vitam 0:52

Sanctus

XVI. Sanctus 0:57
 XVII. Pleni sunt coeli 0:37
 XVIII. Osanna in excelsis 0:49

Benedictus

XIX. Benedictus 0:45
 XX. Osanna in excelsis (ut sopra) 0:52

Agnus Dei

XXI. Agnus Dei 1:59
 XXII. Dona nobis pacem 1:32

Sopran Magdalene Harer
Alt Anne Bierwirth
Tenor Tobias Hunger
Bassbariton Markus Flaig

Voktett Hannover

Sopran I Esther Tschimpke
Sopran II Felicia Nölke
Alt I Lea Wolpert
Alt II Ida Barleben
Tenor I Steffen Kruse
Tenor II Justus Barleben
Bass I Sebastian Knappe
Bass II Steffen Schulte

la festa musicale

Violine I Anne Marie Harer
 Alexandra Wiedner
 Veronica Böhm
Violine II Henriette Otto-Dierßen
 Jörn-Sebastian Kuhlmann
 Karoline Stemberg
Violoncello Christoph Harer
Kontrabass Niklas Sprenger
Truhenorgel Daniel Trumbull

leader / conductor Lajos Rovatkay

The third volume in this series documenting the œuvre of Gregor Joseph Werner reveals the enormous stylistic radius and expressive diversity of this now obscure composer. Of especial significance are the two masses recorded here, which hail from a surviving body of around seventy mass settings by Werner whose musical richness results from the tradition of the genre.

The increasingly rich musical vocabulary of baroque sacred music with Latin texts written during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was by no means the result of counter-reformation zeal alone. The solemn settings of the unchanging parts of the mass text (*ordinarium missae*) brought together everything that music had to offer for the glory of God, also in the sense of divine totality. This led to the creation of true musical *Gesamtkunstwerke*, especially in the ceremonial genre of the *missa concertata*. In fact, with the exception of psalm and Magnificat settings, there is no other platform in music history where the compositional achievements of the past and present times were positioned side by side in such a systematic way. The spiritual commitment that led to the accumulation of musical means and the dualism of the conservative and the progressive remained effective as an autonomous ethical-artistic source of energy, even when the works' original liturgical function was later on lost.

GJ Werner's mass settings represent a landmark in this complex development. As a student of Antonio Caldara (1670-1736), a Venetian master who was employed in Vienna as vice *Kapellmeister* at the imperial court and who was the main representative of the late baroque mass style, Werner referred back to Caldara's ceremonial masses (of which there were c.100 in total), transforming their conception and style. In the two settings recorded here, Werner retained the allocation of the text sections into separate movements featuring different techniques and textures, but compressed them in size, according to the requirements of the Esterházy court chapel. This reduction also affected the scoring. Whilst a ceremonial mass at the Viennese imperial court was unthinkable without trumpets and timpani, including them in Eisenstadt during Werner's time was the exception. Werner compensated for the reduction of the outer dimensions by enriching his works internally, partly by developing a brilliant and expressive style of diction, which was made possible by the remarkable virtuosity of his small vocal-instrumental ensemble. The bravura he demands of the solo voices – especially the soprano – is unique in eighteenth century mass settings, as is his differentiated and virtuosic writing for the violins. He explores all the possibilities of the outwardly modest disposition of the "Viennese church trio" (2 violins, basso continuo) and arrives at an intricately declamatory violin language which – not least due to his generation – also kept its distance from the fashionable "galant style". Werner's violins perform veritable acrobatics "for the glory of God", weaving around the vocal parts in manifold ways, always at the service of the words. All this is characterised by Werner's eminently colourful harmonic idiom, which originated from Caldara's vivid harmonies. The ultimate expressive means that a mass setting could offer, however, was the traditional polyphonic art. Werner adopted Caldara's principle of concluding all five movements of the mass with a fugue, demonstrating his contrapuntal mastery. He makes creative use of the reduced scale, frequently shortening the dimensions of the fugues right from the beginning by producing artful strettos of the fugal subjects. Werner's final fugues are character pieces of the most differentiated kind. As the fundamental, most noble form of counterpoint, Palestrina's *stile antico* – a legacy of the sixteenth century and a representation of the timeless – was mostly found as an inner movement in the "Gloria" or "Credo" sections. This austere technique, particularly cultivated in Vienna and even ennobled by the music-loving emperor, found in Werner its latest and greatest master, even outside the realm of mass composition.

The two Latin proverbs used as titles of the mass settings recorded here shed some light on Werner's enigmatic nature. It seems that in both cases he alludes to the dualism of good and bad, or light and dark, in creation. "Sunt bona mixta malis" ("The good are mixed with the bad") perhaps refers directly to music as an image of

the creation with its tension between consonant (“good”) and dissonant (“bad”) sounds. A similar meaning is probably conveyed by “Post nubila Phoebus” (“After the clouds the sun”).

So far, it has not been possible to distinguish between Werner’s early, middle and late styles. As our two masses survive only as undated copies, we are left with no clues to enable their chronological classification. Werner’s dated works show that he already made use of all his progressive harmonic expressive colours shortly after his appointment as *Kapellmeister* at the Esterházy court in Eisenstadt (1728) – where he was Joseph Haydn’s immediate predecessor – and also revealed himself as a great contrapuntal master. Both his *Mass III/19* and his *Missa solemnis* display an almost incomprehensible stylistic spectrum between renaissance vocal polyphony and early romanticism. The different or analogous settings of the same text reveal much about Werner’s consideration and selection of the diverse structures and means of expression. He often comes up with surprises, as in the “Crucifixus” of the *Missa solemnis*, where instead of expressing pain, he honours the crucifixion drama in the *stile antico*. Here, as in other parts of the masses, the strict structure in the writing is elevated by a *fuga ad minimam*. For this type of canon, using the smallest possible temporal distance of a minim (“minima”), Werner, in a tour de force of craftsmanship, drew on the art of the Franco-Flemish masters of around 1500. The cross shape of the melodic line reveals that the technical pushing of the borders was, at the same time, a reflection of the events of the cross. As if from another world, the surprisingly galant “Dona nobis pacem” at the end of the *Missa solemnis*, forms a sharp contrast to the incantatory “Dona” double fugue at the end of *Mass III/19*.

Our four Motets are closely related to their two companion pieces recorded for the second album in this series and, together, they form a small compendium of Werner’s extensive motet oeuvre. All six works reveal Werner’s differentiated treatment of the *stile antico* and the multifaceted diversity of the dialectical tension between old and new. As the second album’s passion motets, due to their texts, resulted in intensely affect-laden excursions within the strict style, the four Marian antiphons of this recording show themselves to be more subtle. After the sonorous, impassioned “Alma redemptoris” and the songlike, intimate rondeau “Sub tuum praesidium”, the “Ave Regina” and “Regina coeli” clearly showcase the imitation technique of the sixteenth century classical motet in order to re-energise the 200-year-old structure by increasing dissonance. Werner’s culture, his treatment of the creatively profound *stile antico*, is a deeply touching musical experience.

The magnificent early Sonata prima is the opening piece of a collection of Werner’s instrumental music printed in 1735 and composed to welcome the returning Prince Paul Anton after his grand tour. Conceived as a four-movement Italian church sonata, the piece reveals in its opening movement what was to become the harmonic linchpin of Viennese classicism: the suspenseful augmented sixth. This interval, generally characteristic of Werner’s harmonic idiom, had reached him as a Venetian legacy via Caldara, to whom he also owed his contrapuntal training. It was not least the two large-scale fugal movements with their passionately declamatory themes that revealed the lion’s claws of the young master.

Lajos Rovatkay
Translation: Viola Scheffel



MAGDALENE HARER soprano

As an internationally sought-after concert singer, for many years Magdalene Harer has been regularly engaged to perform the central roles in the great oratorios. Her extensive repertoire ranges from the music of the Middle Ages to contemporary works of the twenty-first century. In concerts in Europe, Israel and the USA she performs as a soloist with orchestras such as Concerto Köln, Lautten Compagney, Academy for Early Music Berlin, la festa musicale, North West German Philharmonic, Göttinger Symphonieorchester, Neue Philharmonie Westfalen, Neue Düsseldorfer Hofmusik and Munich Chamber Orchestra.

Another focus of her work is ensemble singing. Magdalene Harer is a permanent member of the six-part ensemble Polyharmonique, with whom she performs on the stages of the major concert halls and at renowned festivals. Polyharmonique's extensive discography, which includes many award-winning releases, testifies to the ensemble's high artistic reputation.

Magdalene Harer has also worked closely for many years with the conductor and early music specialist Konrad Junghänel and his solo vocal ensemble Cantus Cölln. Magdalene Harer is a music graduate of the Musikhochschulen in Detmold and Hanover.



ANNE BIERWIRTH alto

Anne Bierwirth, alto, studied singing and historical performance practice at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Frankfurt am Main with Prof. Heidrun Kordes.

As an internationally sought-after concert and oratorio singer, she regularly performs in major cities in Germany and Europe. Concert tours have also taken her to Brazil, China, Russia and South Africa.

As a soloist she has worked with conductors such as Ivor Bolton, Thomas Hengelbrock, Pablo Heras-Casado, Hermann Max, Wolfgang Schäfer, Michael Schneider and Florian Heyerick. She is also a regular guest at renowned festivals such as the Bachfest Leipzig, the Telemann-Festtage Magdeburg, the Rheingau Musik Festival, the Zermatt Festival and the Whitsun Festival Baden-Baden.

Sacred music remains a focal point in Anne Bierwirth's artistic work, which is reflected in numerous CD recordings and radio broadcasts. In addition, she devotes herself to a varied repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the classical, romantic and contemporary eras.



TOBIAS HUNGER tenor

Tobias Hunger, tenor, appeared as a soloist with the Dresdner Kreuzchor whilst still a student. At the same time, he gained important insights from masterclasses with Peter Schreier, Scot Weir, Gerd Türk, Eva Randová as well as the King's Singers.

Today he is especially committed to the interpretation of the works by Johann Kuhnau and Johann Sebastian Bach. In addition to music from the Renaissance and baroque periods, he is also fascinated by the music of the 1920s and 1930s, and he regularly appears on the opera stage in a variety of tenor roles.

Tobias Hunger is also a sought-after lied, concert and oratorio singer, and has been invited to perform in major European concert halls such as the Berlin and Cologne Philharmonie, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Zurich Tonhalle and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, working with conductors including Philippe Herreweghe, Václav Luks, Hans-Christoph Rademann, Ton Koopmann and Wolfgang Katschner.

Tobias Hunger graduated under the tutelage of Prof. Christian Polster at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in Leipzig.



MARKUS FLAIG bass-baritone

Since his success at the Leipzig Bach Competition, Markus Flaig has been one of the most sought-after singers of his generation. Concert tours have taken the bass-baritone all over Europe, to Colombia, Mexico and Korea as well as to Japan for a tour under Masaaki Suzuki, and most recently to Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina for performances of JS Bach's B minor Mass with the Thomanerchor Leipzig. Numerous recordings for radio, television as well as on disc under conductors such as Thomas Hengelbrock, Hermann Max and Konrad Junghänel document his wide-ranging repertoire.

Markus Flaig came to music via the organ, and to singing via his music teaching and church music degree courses. Whilst still at university, he received his first guest contract at the Städtische Bühnen Freiburg for the role of Azarias in Benjamin Britten's church parable *The Burning Fiery Furnace*. Since then he has appeared in operas by Monteverdi, Purcell, Rameau, Strauss and Britten on the stages of Baden-Baden, Schwetzingen, Bayreuth, Hanover, Freiburg and Frankfurt, as well as in rediscoveries of long-forgotten operas such as Joseph Schuster's *Il marito indolente* and Christian Ludwig Boxberg's *Sardanapalus*. During the last five years, Flaig has completed a Latin degree course at the University of Frankfurt and has since been researching musical recitation of poetry in antiquity. He presents his research results on his YouTube channel "Mysis amicus".



LAJOS ROVATKAY leader / conductor

The harpsichordist, organist, chamber musician, ensemble director, music researcher and educator Lajos Rovatkay studied at the conservatories of his native Budapest as well as in Frankfurt am Main, and played a prominent role in establishing historically informed performance practice in Germany. His detailed knowledge of the vocal and instrumental music of several centuries is fundamental both to his artistic work – concerts in Germany and abroad, as well as several CD recordings – and to his research activities.

The focal points of his work are the Venetian early baroque period, late baroque church music in Venice and Vienna, the Caldara pupil and Haydn predecessor Gregor Joseph Werner, as well as Agostino Steffani, whose first Hanoverian opera *Henrico Leone* Rovatkay presented as a modern premiere in 1989 at the 300th anniversary of the Hanover Opera House with Capella Agostino Steffani (founded by Rovatkay), and performed in concert at the Boston Early Music Festival.

In 2014 Rovatkay founded the Forum Agostino Steffani for the public communication of the high baroque musical culture of the Welf court in Hanover. He is currently focused on recording the music of Gregor Joseph Werner.

As a professor of harpsichord and organ, Rovatkay taught at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, where he directed the “Studio for Early Music”, whose former participants have become indispensable pillars in renowned baroque ensembles in Germany and abroad.

VOKTETT HANNOVER

To perform outstanding works at a high level – that is the vision which the Voktett Hannover passionately pursues.

Since the ensemble's foundation in 2012, its eight singers have devoted themselves primarily to *a cappella* works representing the polyphonic vocal music of European music history in as many facets as possible. Their repertoire ranges from the beginnings of polyphonic vocal music to the present.

Voktett Hannover has won prizes at several renowned competitions, including the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Conservatory Competition and the vocal ensemble category of the German Choir Competition.

With its versatile programmes, the ensemble has thrilled audiences at renowned festivals such as the Bachfest Leipzig, Rheingau Musik Festival, NDR Musikfest and the Hitzacker Summer Music Festival.

Since 2017, the Voktett Hannover has also been performing regularly with instrumental accompaniment.

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LA FESTA MUSCALE

The North German baroque ensemble *la festa musicale*, founded in 2014, stands for excellent artistic standards, which are reflected in creative, cross-disciplinary concert formats and top-class cooperation projects. Concertmaster Anne Marie Harer is the artistic director.

The ensemble has appeared at major festivals including the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, the Handel Festival Halle, the Tage für Alte Musik Knechtsteden and the Niedersächsische Musiktage.

Concerts performed by the ensemble have been recorded by Deutschlandfunk and Norddeutscher Rundfunk. *la festa musicale* has also already released several CD recordings, including a much-praised album of concertos by Francesco Venturini, virtuoso concertos and graceful arias from the baroque metropolis of Naples (*Storie di Napoli*), new discoveries of Venetian musical treasures (ANTONIO: Lotti – Caldara – Vivaldi) and the first two parts of a Gregor Joseph Werner series, motets by JS Bach (together with the Kammerchor Hannover) and church music by Bonifazio Graziani (alongside Collegium Vocale Hannover), Diogenio Bigaglia and Antonio Lotti (together with Knabenchor Hannover).

The musicians enjoy sharing their enthusiasm for early music with diverse and inquisitive audiences. They are particularly interested in creating their own programmes and performance formats. Creatively curated programmes, music education projects as well as family and children's concerts bring musicians and listeners together in an intensive way.

la festa musicale has been selected as one of 16 orchestras and ensembles to participate in the federal funding program "Germany's Excellent Orchestral Landscape" for the years 2023/2024. The ensemble is cooperation partner of the Forum Agostino Steffani and an official partner of the UNESCO City of Music Hannover.



recording:

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Stadtkirche St. Johannis, Hanover

recording producer:

Dipl.-Tonmeister Ludger Böckenhoff

sound & editing:

Dipl.-Tonmeister Justus Beyer

recording format:

pcm, 96kHz, 24 bit

cover image:

detail of tendril from the treasury chamber's vaulted ceiling at Forchtenstein Castle, c.1696; picture credit: Esterházy private foundation, photo credit: Manfred Horvath

photos:

p. 14: Esterházy Palace, Eisenstadt; engraving by Carl Franz Rohrich after a drawing by Ludwig Rohbock, mid-19th century

p. 5 + p. 6: Christian Palm

p. 7: Zsófia Raffay

p. 8: Carl Brugger

p. 9: Nils Ole Peters

p. 11: Nadja Mahjoub (Voktett Hannover)

p. 13: Jérôme Gerull (la festa musicale)

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audite

info@audite.de , audite.de

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