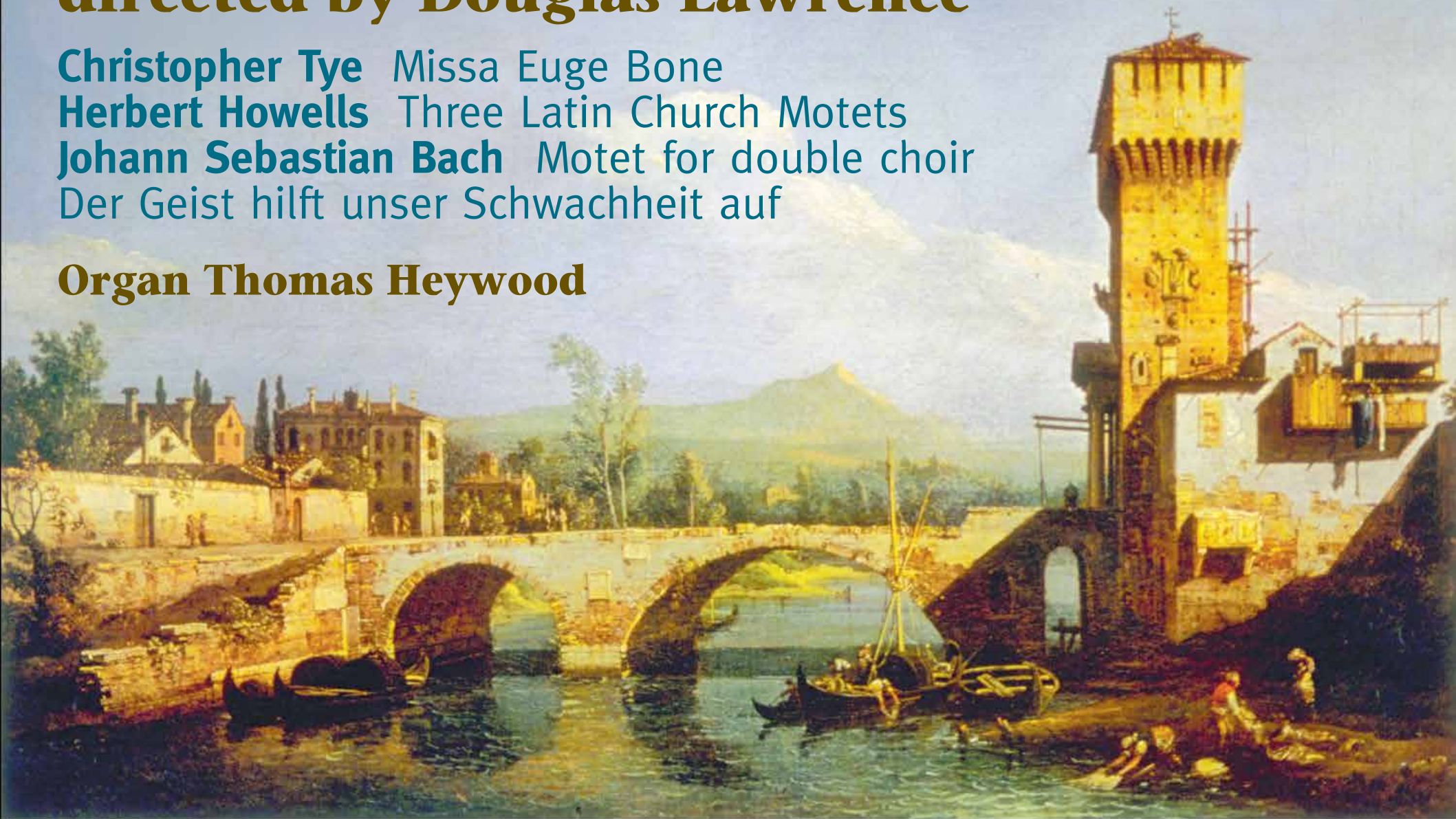


# Kodály Missa Brevis

**THE CHOIR OF ORMOND COLLEGE**  
**directed by Douglas Lawrence**

**Christopher Tye** Missa Euge Bone  
**Herbert Howells** Three Latin Church Motets  
**Johann Sebastian Bach** Motet for double choir  
Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf

**Organ Thomas Heywood**



# Kodaly Missa Brevis

THE CHOIR OF ORMOND COLLEGE  
directed by Douglas Lawrence

Organ: Thomas Heywood

**Christopher Tye** 1497-1572

Missa Euge Bone

- 1 Kyrie Octavi Toni 2'47"
- 2 Gloria 4'41"
- 3 Credo 4'05"
- 4 Sanctus et Benedictus 4'53"
- 5 Agnus Dei (four verses) 4'13"

**Herbert Howells** 1892-1983

Three Latin Church Motets

- 6 Salve Regina (à 6) 4'02"
- 7 Regina Cæli (à 8) 3'19"
- 8 Nunc Dimittis (à 8) 2'46"

**Johann Sebastian Bach** 1685-1750

The motet for double Choir

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf

- 9 Verse 1 3'24"
- 10 Verse 2 2'06"
- 11 Chorale 1'27"

**Zoltan Kodaly** 1882-1967

Missa Brevis

- 12 Introitus: Maestoso (organ solo) 3'10"
- 13 Kyrie: Andante 2'01"
- 14 Gloria: Allegro, Adagio, Tempo primo 3'56"
- 15 Credo: Allegro moderato, Adagio, Allegro Mosso 4'49"
- 16 Sanctus: Larghetto 2'11"
- 17 Benedictus: Tranquillo 3'04"
- 18 Agnus Dei: Maestoso 5'01"
- 19 Ite Missa est (organ solo) 3'34"

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This recording was recorded in two sessions during the choir's 1997 concert tour of Europe.

On 26 June the Kodály Missa Brevis was recorded in the 17th century Martinskirche in Wangen in Allgäu; Southern Germany. Wangen is just 25 kilometres from the Bodensee, known to English speakers as Lake Constance.

The second recording session was held on 24 July in the 15th century church of Santa Maria Bressanoro near Crema in Northern Italy. This church is unique in the choir's experience in that we had absolute silence for the whole period of the recording session.

This tour is the seventh that the choir has undertaken since its formation in 1982. On these tours the choir has given concerts in New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria and Italy.

At Melbourne University the choir sings in the chapel

at Ormond College, presents an annual concert series and undertakes select engagements for leading concert organisations. The choir has 24 singers though that number is increased when major works are performed with orchestra.

The choir's repertoire is wide, ranging from the earliest choral music to recently composed works. Special interest has been taken in the music of Bach and in contemporary Australian music. The choir gave, with the Australian Baroque Ensemble playing early instruments, the first historically accurate performances of Bach's *B Minor Mass* and *St. John Passion* and Handel's *Messiah*, to be heard in Melbourne. Many first performances of Australian works have been given. Perhaps the best known of these is: *I Heard the Owl call My Name* by Phillip Nunn. This work was recorded in 1993 on Move CD *I Heard the Owl call My Name*.

## **The 1997 choir:**

### ***Cantoris***

*Sopranos:* Katrina Renard, Bianca Schimizzi, Lee Abrahmsen, Sarah Norman, Nathalie Chambers

*Altos:* Amée Baird, Susan Furphy

*Tenors:* Matthew Flood, Joel Gladman

*Basses:* Christopher Johnston, Samuel Furphy, Jonathan Wallis

### ***Decani***

*Sopranos:* Katherine Abrat, Rebecca Bennett, Virginia Jones, Lucy Monie, Caroline Tunnell-Jones

*Altos:* Helena Simpson, Kate Brian

*Tenors:* Vaughan McAlley, Michael Roe

*Basses:* Jamie Wallis, Dougal Phillips, Grantley McDonald

**Christopher Tye** 1497-1572  
Missa Euge Bone

- 1 *Kyrie Octavi Toni (plainchant)*
- 2 *Gloria*
- 3 *Credo*
- 4 *Sanctus and Benedictus*
- 5 *Agnus Dei (four verses)*

Christopher Tye was one of the most famous and revered composers of his time. His career stretched through four eventful reigns: those of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, a period marked by turmoil and instability in the history of the English monarchy and the church. Professional musicians, by necessity, had to compose their music to satisfy the constantly changing needs and doctrinal specifications of the time; the music of Tallis and Tye demonstrates these changes clearly. Their early works recall the glories of late-fifteenth century English music: the soaring treble lines, the rich inner textures, the frequent opposition of high voices against lower voices, and techniques such as the 'Gimmell' (a corruption of *cantus gemellus* or 'twin song'), in which the upper lines split, as in the *Sanctus*.

A curious feature of the mass *Euge Bone*, but one that we can be grateful for, is the inclusion of four *Agni Deorum*. Unique in the mass repertoire of the time one can only assume that this simply evolved whilst the mass was being composed. Agnus I finishes in

the dominant key of G major. Agnus II begins daringly on the second inversion of that key and finishes with an interrupted cadence in the key of F major. Agnus III takes the second inversion of that key F major as its starting point and finishes in the dominant of F major which is C major and in that key the fourth Agnus Dei brings this exquisite work to an end.

The Mass *Euge Bone* is probably based on a lost antiphon of the same name. It demonstrates two further features typical of English mass settings of the time: the abbreviation of the text of the *Credo*, and the omission of a polyphonic *Kyrie*, which was usually still sung as 'pricksong' or Sarum Chant in England during the sixteenth century. Byrd's Masses are anomalies in this respect, since they were written for private devotion during the time of Catholic persecution under Elizabeth, and for international audiences. The demands of liturgical change obviously had their effect on Tye's patience. The chronicler, Antony Wood, tells us that the verger of the Chapel Royal was once sent by Elizabeth into the organ loft to tell Tye that he was playing out of tune; the old man sent the reply that it was Her Majesty's ears that were out of tune!

**Herbert Howells** 1892-1983  
Three Latin Church Motets

- 6 *Salve Regina* (à 6)
- 7 *Regina Cæli* (à 8)
- 8 *Nunc Dimittis* (à 8)

Herbert Howells was the last composer in the great tradition of English romantic church music—the tradition of Stainer, Parry, Stanford and Vaughan Williams. These three Latin motets were written in 1914/15 for the Choir of Westminster Cathedral, London's Roman Catholic seat. The motets are distinguished by their sumptuous harmonies and fluent melodies. Perhaps the most important feature of Howells' music is his ability to write in a romantic idiom, without falling into sentimentality; in the case of these motets, this is possibly a result of the strong modal feel of the writing.

*Salve Regina*  
*Soprano solist: Katherine Abrat*

*Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae:  
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus, exsules, filii Hevae.  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in  
lacrymarum.  
Eia ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos  
misericordes oculos ad nos converte.  
Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris  
tui, nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
O clemens: O pia: O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

*Hail, Queen, mother of mercy. O Life, Sweetness, our Hope— Hail. To you we cry, the exiled children of Eve, groaning and weeping in this valley of tears. Please, then, be moved by our prayer to turn your merciful eyes on us. And after this exile show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb. O mild and holy one; blessed Virgin Mary.*

Regina Caeli

Regina Caeli laetare, alleluia:  
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia:  
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia:  
Ora pro nobis Deum: alleluia.

*Praise to you, Queen of Heaven, since He whom you were worthy to bear has risen again, as He promised. Pray to God for us.*

Nunc Dimittis  
*Soprano soloist: Nathalie Chambers*

Nunc dimittis servum tuum Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace: Quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum: Quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum: Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis tuae Israel. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto. Et nunc, et semper, et in saeculorum, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

*Now Lord, you send forth your servant in peace, according to your word: Because my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people:*

*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be; world without end. Amen*

**Johann Sebastian Bach** 1685-1750

The motet for double Choir  
Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf

This joyous work for double choir, one of only six or seven motets by Bach, takes its text from the eighth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The first part is written in lively triple time, and contains vigorous dialogue between the two choirs. The two choirs gradually unite during the second half of the first verse, *Sondern der Geist selbst vertritt uns auf's beste*, and sing the second part, *Der aber die Herzen forschet* in unison. The last section, the chorale *Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost*, is both a commentary on the previous text and a musical conclusion to the whole. The work shows Bach's pre-eminent genius in composing for choir. Compositional techniques flood the texture; canon, fugue, haemiola, stretto, profound modulation and all this imbued with the unequalled musicality of this peerless composer.

**9** Verse 1

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf, denn wir wissen nicht, was wir beten sollen, wie sichs gebühret; sondern der

Geist selbst vertritt uns aufs beste mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen.

*The Spirit helps us how to pray for we do not know what to pray for the Spirit intercedes for us with inexpressible sighs.*

**10** Verse 2

Der aber die Herzen forschet, der weiß, was des Geistes Sinn sei, demm er vertritt die Heiligen, nach dem, das Gott gefällt.

*The searcher of hearts knows the mind dwelling in the Spirit because he pleads for the saints according to the will of God.*

**11** Chorale

Du heiliger brunst, süßer Trost, nun hilf uns, fröhlich und getrost in deinem Dienst beständig bleiben, die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben.

O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit und stärk des fleisches blödigkeit, daß wir hie ritterlich ringen, durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.

Halleluia.

*Look down O Holy Dove, Spirit. Descend from heaven and help us now,. Inspire our hearts while humbly kneeling, to pray with zeal. Prepare us through thy cleansing, power for death, That we may find the grave a portal to thee in heaven and life immortal. Hallelujah.*

**Zoltán Kodály** 1882-1967

Missa Brevis

**12** Introitus: *Maestoso* (organ solo)

**13** Kyrie: Andante soloists: Caroline Tunnell-Jones, Virginia Jones, Katherine Abrat

**14** Gloria: *Allegro, Adagio, Tempo primo* soloists: alto-Helena Simpson, tenor-Joel Gladman, baritone-Grantley McDonald

**15** Credo: *Allegro moderato, Adagio, Allegro mosso*

**16** Sanctus: *Larghetto*

**17** Benedictus: *Tranquillo*

**18** Agnus Dei: *Maestoso* soloists: alto-Helena Simpson, tenor-Matthew Flood

**19** *Ite Missa est* (organ solo)

As The New Grove Dictionary Of Music And Musician's puts it "For Kodály the beauty of the human voice and the charm of singing were alike inexhaustible."

This splendid work composed in 1944 reflects Kodály's understanding of the capabilities of the voice and of using them to striking advantage. Soaring and penetratingly beautiful solos are combined with sections for the full choir, to create drama and passion. Jazz elements abound with idiomatic harmonies and the occasional use of blue notes.

Much of the work is based on chant. This mass was composed in the dark years of World War II and it may be that chant seemed to Kodály to form the best basis of a work reflecting the

horror of that period in history. In its passion and haunting melodies, the *Missa Brevis* contains a depth of emotion exceptional in Kodály's oeuvre. One could perhaps single out firstly the soprano divisi sections which occur in the Kyrie and in the Agnus Dei. Here is something new, Kodály pushing the limits of his music and indeed, the limits of the singers' abilities; then, secondly, at the words - *Qui tollis peccata mundi* the wonderful wide reaching melody sung in turn by alto, baritone and tenor. Not many composers have portrayed pathos as movingly as this.

This work may be accompanied by organ or orchestra. In this version we have used the organ version. Kodály composed two settings of the *Ite Missa Est* (Go, the mass is ended); one for choir and organ and the second for organ alone. Having the services of a fine player and the luxury of an absolutely wonderful organ, we decided to let the mighty organ roar!

**Notes:** Grantley McDonald and Douglas Lawrence

**Recording engineer:** Vaughan McAlley

**Digital editing:** Vaughan McAlley

**Front cover painting:**

"Bridge over the Brenta" Bernardo Bellotto  
The organ in Martinskirche: RIEGER  
ORGELBAU

Photographs of the recording venues (page 3) taken by Jonathan Wallis and Douglas Lawrence —

**Top left:** St Martin's Kirche

**Top right:** Santa Maria Bressonoro

**Bottom:** the choir at Santa Maria

Special thanks to Wllibald Guggenmos, the organist of Martinskirche in Wangen and to the church of Santa Maria Bressanoro and to Louisa Merlin/Buffari

Other choral recordings by The Choir of Ormond College and organ recordings by organist Thomas Heywood are available from Move Records. Ask us for a catalog.

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