

**SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
PUCCINI'S GLORIOUS MASS  
A Jacobs Masterworks Concert  
Speranza Scappucci, conductor**

March 22 and 23, 2019

**FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN**

**Symphony No. 88 in G Major**

Adagio – Allegro

Largo

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegro con spirito

INTERMISSION

**GIACOMO PUCCINI**

***Messa di Gloria***

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

Sanctus – Benedictus

Agnus Dei

**Leonardo Capalbo, tenor**

**Daniel Okulitch, baritone**

**Michael Sumuel, bass**

**San Diego Master Chorale**

## **Symphony No. 88 in G Major**

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

Born March 31, 1732, Rohrau (Austria)

Died May 31, 1809, Vienna

Haydn spent 30 years as Kapellmeister to the Esterhazy family at their estates on the plain east of Vienna. If, as Haydn observed, that isolation forced him “to become original,” it also had the unfortunate effect of cutting him off from mainstream European musical life. Only gradually did his extraordinary achievement with the symphony and string quartet become known to musicians across Europe. By the 1780s, when Haydn was in his third decade with the Esterhazys, his prince finally allowed him to accept commissions from outside, and suddenly he had many requests for symphonies. For a concert series in Paris, he wrote his Symphonies No. 82-87 (known as the “Paris symphonies”), and for his two trips to England he composed his final twelve symphonies (Nos. 93-104), inevitably known as the “London symphonies.”

Between these two great cycles, Haydn composed five individual symphonies, probably all of them written with Parisian audiences in mind. He wrote the first two, Nos. 88 and 89, in 1787, at exactly the same moment Mozart was composing *Don Giovanni* in Vienna. One of the violinists in the Esterhazy orchestra, Johann Tost, was about to visit Paris, and Haydn sent the manuscripts of these two symphonies along with him, asking him to see to their publication. And here things got messy. Apparently Tost began to play fast and loose, throwing in a symphony by another composer and passing all three off as the work of Haydn, arranging deals of his own, and not forwarding any of the receipts. Back in Austria, Haydn got wind of this and fired off letters to friends in France suggesting legal action. The matter appears to have been settled satisfactorily: Tost and Haydn were soon on good enough terms that the composer dedicated three sets of quartets to the violinist.

The first of the symphonies Tost took with him to Paris, the Symphony No. 88 in G Major, has always been one of Haydn’s most popular – it was recorded several times in the 1930s, when audiences knew hardly any of Haydn’s symphonies, and it remains a favorite today of both performers and listeners. When he wrote this music, Haydn was 55 years old and at the height of his powers. The Symphony No. 88 is compact (only about twenty minutes long), but it manages to be both very sophisticated and very appealing at the same time – there is something utterly infectious about this music. It also appears to have rushed out of Haydn at white heat: his

biographer H.C. Robbins Landon reports that the manuscript is a mess, full of blots and mistakes – Haydn was desperately trying to get this music on paper as fast as it was occurring to him.

The first movement opens with a slow introduction full of grand and solemn chords. The music pauses, then steps out briskly at the *Allegro* as violins present a tune that seems almost childlike in its simplicity. But the wonder is what Haydn then does with this “simple” little tune. The entire movement grows out of this theme, and – rather than introducing new ideas – Haydn builds the entire structure here out of intervals, bits and rhythms of this spirited opening idea.

The *Largo* takes us into an entirely different world. Not only is the tempo slow, but the gestures are broad and dignified, the sound unique: the main melody, for instance, is first presented as a duet between solo oboe and solo cello. The movement unfolds as a series of repetitions of this noble theme, and Haydn gives it a subtly different color on each reappearance. There are surprises along the way, including huge outbursts from the entire orchestra, full of the sound of timpani and trumpets, instruments that (strangely) had sat silent throughout the first movement. This *Largo* has attracted many admirers, including Brahms, who is reported to have said that he wanted his Ninth Symphony to sound like this movement.

The third movement brings another sharp change: after the poised dignity of the second movement, this is a rollicking minuet. The most striking feature here comes in the trio section, where oboes and violins sing an agreeable little melody over a drone from bassoons and violas. This effect has led to a nickname for this symphony in German-speaking countries: *Mit dem Dudelsack* (“with the bagpipe”).

Haydn marks the finale *Allegro con spirito*, and spirited it certainly is. The principal theme feels like a first cousin to the main theme of the first movement, and this movement is just as infectious as the first, with its happy main theme used as the basis for a rondo. But once again Haydn slips in surprises. He separates reappearances of the rondo theme with some really brilliant passages for the violins, with both first and second violins playing in unison. And along the way he throws in some deft canonic extension of his main theme. That sounds cerebral, but – at the movement’s breathless tempo – it’s all part of the fun.

In fact, this whole symphony is fun. It is no surprise at all that over the last two centuries audiences all over the world have loved it.

## *Messa di Gloria*

GIACOMO PUCCINI

Born December 22/23, 1858, Lucca, Tuscany

Died November 29, 1924, Brussels

From a family of musicians that stretched back several generations, the young Giacomo Puccini naturally gravitated toward music, but his early career had nothing to do with opera. Trained as a choirboy and organist, he sang in church choirs and by age 14 was serving as organist for several churches in Lucca. Puccini might have remained a church musician, but at age 18 he saw a performance of Verdi's *Aida* and was overwhelmed – on the spot he resolved to become a composer of opera. The boy wanted desperately to study in Milan, home of La Scala, but first he attended the Istituto Musicale Pacini in Lucca. There he composed a number of student works, including vocal pieces and a *Preludio sinfonico* that was performed by the student orchestra. As a final exercise before his graduation from the Istituto in 1880, the 22-year-old Puccini composed a setting of the mass, and this was performed in Lucca to enthusiastic reviews.

And then it disappeared. Puccini went off to study in Milan, the manuscript for the *Mass* went on the shelf, and very soon Puccini won fame as a composer of operas. The *Mass* was forgotten, and it remained largely unknown until 1951, when an American scholar working on a biography of Puccini discovered the manuscript in Lucca. He brought the manuscript back to the United States, and Puccini's *Mass* was performed in Chicago during the summer of 1952 – this was its first performance in 72 years. The European “re-premiere” quickly followed, and the *Mass* is today remembered as the finest of Puccini's “student” works, a work strong enough in its own right that it has been performed and recorded numerous times since its rediscovery.

The exact source of the title “*Messa di Gloria*” is uncertain, and Puccini apparently knew this music under the title *Mass for Four Voices and Orchestra*. In his evaluation of Puccini's *Mass*, one of his composition professors at the Istituto Musicale Pacini described it as “a little theatrical,” perhaps a more prescient remark than he could have known. The young composer divides the mass text into the standard five sections, but – curiously – calls for no female soloists: there are solo parts for tenor, baritone and bass only.

There is a very fresh quality about this music – it is a setting of the mass full of sunlight and high spirits rather than solemnity. We feel this from the first instant of the *Kyrie*, which is flowing and lyrical. The mood changes at the *Gloria*, comprised of nine different sections and

the longest in the work. The music here is quite varied: it begins as a march in sunny C Major, full of the sound of ringing trumpets, but the atmosphere grows more serious as the movement progresses; most impressive here are the tenor solo at the *Gratias* and the grand fugal setting of *Cum sancto spiritu* that drives this section to its dramatic close. The *Credo*, also sectional in structure, features solos for the tenor (*Et incarnatus est*) and bass (*Crucifixus*) and comes to its climax on the powerful chorus *Et resurrexit*.

The character of the final two movements is completely different: both are short, both are gentle, and there is evidence that – pressed for time – Puccini may have adapted choral movements he had written over the previous several years for use in this *Mass*. The brief *Sanctus* is highlighted by the baritone solo *Benedictus*, and the surprising final movement is a choral setting of the *Agnus Dei*. After the power of some of the preceding music, this final movement feels understated in the extreme, and the *Mass* comes to a delicate close. Those who know Puccini's operas may find this music familiar: in 1893 he retrieved some of it and used it as the madrigal in Act II of *Manon Lescaut*.

**-Program notes by Eric Bromberger**

## **PERFORMANCE HISTORY**

**by Dr. Melvin G. Goldzband, San Diego Symphony Archivist**

It is unfortunate that performances of Haydn symphonies by American orchestras have become rarer in recent years. The music in these works is generally delightful to hear, and besides, playing them gives orchestras good training in the classic style. This particular Haydn symphony, No. 88, was introduced to San Diego audiences when Zoltan Rozsnyal led it in 1969. Jahja Ling's performance of this work, in the 2005-06 season, was the orchestra's fourth outing of this work, and its most recent. Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* is being heard in San Diego for the first time at these concerts.