

**A HISTORICAL STUDY OF CHARLES GOUNOD'S
MESSE SOLENNELLE DE SAINTE-CÉCILE**

by
ERICK G. ARENAS

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Dr. Anne Dhu McLucas, Chair of the Examining Committee

6 August 2007
Date

Committee in charge: Dr. Anne Dhu McLucas, Chair
Dr. Lori Kruckenberg
Dr. Sharon Paul

Accepted by:



Dean of the Graduate School

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Church music has been given relatively little scholarly attention in the study of nineteenth-century music. While there is an array of mass settings that were composed by Romantic-era composers, current musicological research marginalizes them. Paris was one location where a tradition of composing new masses continued well into the nineteenth century. While best known for his works for the stage, Charles Gounod (1818-1893) was a leading French composer of sacred music and one of the most prolific sacred composers of his time. His most important liturgical composition is the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*, which once enjoyed considerable international success.

This thesis focuses on the history of this mass in biographical and historical context. I discuss the topics of music and religion in France from the Revolution to Gounod's time, the composer's long musical relationship with the church, the music of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, and its reception. ✓

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Erick G. Arenas

PLACE OF BIRTH: Fresno, California

DATE OF BIRTH: January 2, 1979

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon
University of the Pacific

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts in Music History, 2004, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Music in Music History, 2002, University of the Pacific

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon School of Music,
2003-2004

AWARDS

Outstanding Graduate Scholar in Music History, University of Oregon
School of Music, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of church music is one that has been granted relatively little attention in the study of nineteenth-century music. Despite the fact that there is a significant array of sacred music by Romantic-era composers, scholarship has tended to marginalize such pieces in this period. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of this area by presenting a historical study of one prominent example of nineteenth-century church music, Charles Gounod's 1855 *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*.

The Catholic Mass occupies a fascinating place in the history of Western music, for it has fostered a genre with which composers of every period have worked. The composed mass remained a major genre through the High-Classical period, in which W. A. Mozart and F. J. Haydn provided some of the most well-known examples. However, after the end of the eighteenth-century the prominence of the genre diminished. In the nineteenth century composers were no longer primarily tied to the courts of nobility or ecclesiastics and European culture gradually shifted to embrace the role of the independent musical artist. The composition of music on sacred texts was no longer routine as it was in the times of Palestrina, Bach or Haydn--a fact that makes the liturgical music of the period especially fascinating. The substantial liturgical compositions of the nineteenth century tended to be products of particular places and moments for which new large and artistic church music was deemed necessary or desirable; or they were products of a composer's own religiosity. In any case, the nineteenth century saw many composers produce large religious pieces, even pieces on liturgical texts, with less intention for the church than for the concert hall.

Paris was one important location where the production of new liturgical music continued in the nineteenth century. The output of many distinguished French Composers include various masses and other Latin church music, indicating that the nation's Roman Catholic heritage remained a strong influence in the musical scene. There were many such works composed by musicians better known and remembered for concert and/or operatic music, as well as works by a few church music specialists. All, however, have tended to be overshadowed by the majority of secular works.

Charles Gounod (1818-1893) is a composer best known for works for operatic works, especially *Faust* (composed 1856-1859). Throughout his life, however, he devoted considerable energy to religious music. The best known of his religious pieces have been the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*, and the oratorio *Mors et vita* (1885). It is not often recognized, however, that Gounod was one of the most prolific mass composers of the Romantic Era. He is responsible for twenty-one masses, the first was composed when he was twenty-one years old and the last, a Requiem, was his final work.¹

The *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* was Gounod's eighth mass. It is a product of the period in which his reputation as a leading composer was solidified. Composed in the same year as his first symphony (1855) and the year before he began work on *Faust*, this Mass is a setting of the complete ordinary, for large orchestra, choir and organ.² It is one of only a handful of Gounod's masses to be composed on a large scale and utilizing a full orchestra. The occasion for its composition was the 1855 celebration of the feast of Saint Cecilia,

¹ Steven Huebner, "Charles Gounod," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 2001), 10: 231. The *Messe funebre* of 1883 was arranged from Gounod's music by J. Dormois.

² The mass also includes a setting of the *Domine salvum*, a prayer for the well-being of the monarch, which had once been particular to French liturgical music (see page 146).

patron of musicians, which was organized by the Paris *Association des artistes musiciens*. In its time it was favored with warm reception and has been perhaps the best known mass composed in France during the nineteenth century.

The chapters that follow present information on this mass, its composer, and their historical background in an effort to highlight the complexities involved in understanding nineteenth-century French church music and the significance of Gounod in this area.

Chapter one will offer a summary of historiographical issues that are relevant to the study of nineteenth-century church music and a review of literature on this topic. In this chapter I discuss the significance of the mass in western music history, its changing role in music over the centuries, and our general modern-day perceptions of it. I point out some gaps in our understanding of the musical history of the mass and the dearth of scholarly materials on the topic.

The second chapter explores religion and music in nineteenth-century France in order to establish a cultural background for Charles Gounod's career as a church musician. I attempt to summarize the often unstable relationship between the French nation and Roman Catholicism that resulted from events during the French Revolution. I focus on the challenges and developments in the continuation of music for the church after the revolutionary years had brought sacred music in France to a halt. While the challenges mainly concerned reestablishing a sacred music tradition, developments included new styles and practices in church composition, and also movements to restore historic church music.

Chapter 3 focuses on the life and early career of Charles Gounod. The composer had strong ties to the Catholic Church throughout his life but it was in the earlier years of his musical career that he was most associated with the

church. I discuss his earliest experiences in sacred music, his interest in the clergy as a young man and his first post as a *mâitre de chapelle*. As a student and young composer Gounod was influenced by a number of experiences involving his religion. At the age of twenty-one he composed his first mass and directed it at the magnificent church of Saint-Eustache in Paris. While on his *Prix de Rome* sojourn he was awed by the art and music of the Sistine Chapel. He composed three masses during the course his *Prix de Rome* travels (1840-1843) and assumed a church post upon his return to Paris. Before 1848 he twice considered pursuing a career in the clergy. This chapter describes important aspects of the composer of *Faust* that are not often remembered today.

The fourth chapter concentrates on the music of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*. I provide a discussion of the large instrumentation of the work and how aspects of it reflect nineteenth-century French taste and practice. A detailed overview addresses the music of each part of the mass. Finally I discuss the overall style and effect of Gounod's writing.

The occasion of the premiere of the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* is described in chapter five. I discuss the background of the Saint Cecilia celebration, the role of the *Association des artistes musiciens* and details of the solemn mass of that day. The reception of this first performance of Gounod's mass is described using contemporary reviews and reminiscences. I also delve into the reputation of the mass in later years.

Chapter six presents some final issues and brings this study to a conclusion. I offer a brief summary of history and reputation of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* after its 1855 premiere, and cite reasons for the decline of its popularity. Some significant criticisms of the piece that have appeared over the years are also considered. I address the fact that, unlike some other nineteenth-

century sacred works, the success of the mass did not transfer to the concert hall. A number of suggestions for potential research related to this study are discussed, as well as issues to take into account when evaluating nineteenth-century church music.

CHAPTER I

**HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ISSUES AND
REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Mass History and Historiography

Although there has been a continuous liturgical music tradition through the centuries of Western music history, secondary literature has left gaps in our understanding of it. The tradition of mass composition as it existed in the nineteenth century has been particularly difficult to evaluate. To highlight this issue, I would like to begin this study with a brief overview of the Roman Catholic Mass in European music history, highlighting some important areas that would benefit from deeper investigation.

The Mass occupies a unique place in music history; its text has been a fixture since the early centuries of European music up through our own time. The Roman Catholic Liturgy was most intimately tied to some of the earliest music we study in traditional musicology, as it fostered a significant amount of the plainchant repertory and then vocal polyphony. Throughout the course of Western music history however, musical artistry gradually expanded beyond the boundaries of serving mainly the ecclesiastical institutions. Still, the liturgy, especially the mass, was a continuing motivation for musical composition. In the Renaissance no form approached the importance of the polyphonic mass setting. But the mass lost its supremacy as an art form with the expansion of the musical arts into secular and instrumental genres in the seventeenth century.

By the Baroque period secular forms had achieved their own

preeminence, and composers, depending on the artistic outlets available to them, could pursue a number of lucrative opportunities in secular music composition. In our modern evaluation, the renowned composers of this age owed their reputation to both sacred and secular music, unlike most of the great composers of earlier centuries, who depended primarily on the church. It is clear that, in the age of Monteverdi and Bach, ecclesiastical demands were still a dominant force in the musical arts.

The status of the mass tradition in Europe by the high Baroque period is difficult to evaluate. Two of the most revered composers of the age, J. S. Bach and Handel, are tied to Protestantism. And it was the Lutheran Bach who composed the most famous mass of his time, his great Mass in B minor. The prominent contemporary Italian composers tend to be revered mainly for their operatic and instrumental accomplishments; their sacred works are largely overshadowed by them. A number of sacred works by such composers that have remained popular are works based on texts outside of the mass liturgy, such as the more dramatic *Stabat Mater* hymn. Pergolesi and Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater* settings are important examples..

French taste in sacred music leaned strongly towards the para-liturgical *grands motets* favored by Louis XIV and the oratorio. Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704) stands out as the principal perpetuator of the high-mass composition tradition in France, yet his accomplishments are overshadowed by both the prevailing sacred music and the popular secular forms that satisfied the tastes of the highest classes.

Other Baroque composers who specialized in Catholic Church music, Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745) for example, have been historically overshadowed by composers who achieved greater fame in secular genres. In Austria the concerted mass tradition that was initially influenced by Italian styles was

developed during the High Baroque; the tradition would reach its zenith in the masses of Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

It is not my intention to express a disparaging view of any of the genres and composers that are prominent in the traditional outline of the Baroque period (or any other period I discuss here); however I must point out that it is in the study of late-Baroque music that sacred music appears to become a victim of the musicological canon. The study of late-Baroque music traditionally focuses on the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel. It was their work that was revived and made known to nineteenth-century German audiences. Sacred and secular works by these two figures were elevated to landmark status not long before the advent of serious historical research in music. When considering the important works by contemporaries of Bach and Handel, music scholarship has generally focused on the secular, especially operas and instrumental pieces. The result of this inclination has been an overwhelming bias towards the secular and, where church music is considered, a taste for the Protestant. In this process we tend to lose track of the continuing tradition of setting the Catholic mass, which was still maintained in Catholic cities and courts.

As mentioned above, the concerted mass has generally been more prominent in the study of the Classical period, but the best known works from this period are products of the canonic composers such as F. J. Haydn and W. A. Mozart. Though they did have some dependence on the church during their career, the lasting fame of these composers could otherwise rest almost entirely on their secular compositions. Their important works show us that the mass tradition was very active in the High-Classical period. However, the relative obscurity of a recognized contemporary church music master such as Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806) shows us how history has had the tendency of remembering best only the sacred music of composers who achieved their

greatest fame outside of the church. Michael Haydn and other church music specialists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have remained on the periphery in surveys of Classical-era music. Such tendencies have caused an insufficient understanding of the continuing sacred music tradition by the time of Mozart and Haydn.

We are least clear in our understanding of the mass in the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century the large-scale concerted mass had become popular in locations where composers were supported by patronage and where the important institutions regularly held grand liturgical ceremonies, as in Vienna and Salzburg, for example. With the changing European political and cultural climate at the end of the eighteenth century came a decrease in patronage by the noble establishments and high churches, resulting in less demand for large-scale mass celebrations and musical settings of the mass. Even in the regions that were historically and strongly Roman Catholic, the involvement of major musical figures in the production of church music decreased significantly. Thus, the nineteenth century would be the first in European history in which most of the major composers did not, for some part of their career, regularly concern themselves with church music.

This lack of attention to church music is evident when we consider the German, Austrian and Italian (opera) composers of the nineteenth century. With the exception of Franz Schubert and later Anton Bruckner, this group of composers did not produce much new, practical church music. The best-known sacred music from the Romantic era tends to be by canonic composers. Examples include Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (one of only two masses by Beethoven), and the singular examples of Requiem settings by Berlioz and Verdi. With their lengths, grandeur and dramatic effects, such examples were hardly suited for actual liturgical use and have usually been heard as concert pieces. They are not

particularly useful in understanding the more liturgically functional church music of the time. There are other important works that represent a more practical type of mass composition, a type that is artistic and expressive yet more suitable for church use. One of the few popular examples of such a composition comes from the last years of the Romantic era, the Requiem by the Parisian Gabriel Fauré.

France is perhaps the most important location where the practice of composing masses for liturgies on important occasions continued during the nineteenth century. The importance of such works in the romantic vein begins with the grandiose works by Berlioz but the tradition is perpetuated in the more practical efforts of later composers who had stronger ties to the church. Composers such as Franck, Saint-Saëns and especially Gounod were regularly involved in liturgical music. Many other distinguished composers in nineteenth-century France contributed to the liturgical music repertory, including Adolphe Adam, Leo Delibes and Ambroise Thomas. Yet, the sacred compositions of even these nineteenth century composers have been eclipsed by their successes in the concert hall and on the stage. They are also not composers readily recognized as part of the musicological canon, so not only have their biographies received less scholarly attention (compared to those of the canonic composers) but works, such as their compositions for the church, that did not achieve continuous popularity have received little investigation. A debate on whether such works belong or do not belong to the musicological canon is not relevant here, as it would be of little value to understanding the past. What must be emphasized is that France was a musical center in which the tradition of composing the mass remained important in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, this tradition extended past even the nineteenth century to distinguished twentieth-century composers such as Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986).

In the study of the liturgical music tradition in France during the nineteenth century, one composer, Charles Gounod, stands out as one of the most prolific mass composers and one of the most important proponents of new religious music. Though he was famed as a church musician, Gounod earned much of his fame from works for the concert hall or the stage, such as the opera *Faust*. Despite Camille Saint-Saën's proclamation that Gounod would be remembered best for his church works, Gounod's legacy rests largely on his opera *Faust*.³ Unfortunately, music scholarship has done little to broaden the public's view of Gounod in recent years. There are very few modern biographical works on the composer, and most publications relating to the composer deal with his operatic output. There exists at this time no complete works edition or thematic catalog for the composer. It would seem that musicologists have considered this particular composer a low priority among the noted figures in nineteenth-century music.

During the course of this summary I have discussed some of the challenges in understanding liturgical music and pointed out particular issues in studying such music by composers and in areas apart from the musicological canon. To these challenges must be added one more important concern in the study of liturgical music from our modern perspective. That is, since large scale masses in general, but especially in the United States, are frequently heard as concert pieces, it is difficult for listeners to appreciate them in their intended context. On their own they are incomplete, for such pieces were not generally conceived as mere multi-movement choral works but as elements of a high liturgical celebration. Some masses by Haydn and Mozart, for example, are well-known and widely enjoyed but rarely experienced in the architectural environment of a church with the chanted prayers, readings, processions and

³ Camille Saint-Saëns, *Portraits et souvenirs* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, n.d.), 117.

other actions that the works were intended to accompany. Such large choral and orchestral settings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are intimately tied to a particular place and ceremony. Any evaluation of such a sacred musical composition is flawed without recognizing its function and liturgical circumstances in conjunction with its musical/artistic qualities.

Review of Literature

Understanding the background and music of a solemn mass setting such as Gounod's *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* requires investigation into a group of distinct topics, primarily: Catholic Church music history, history of French music, French cultural history, the composer and the composition itself and its reception. Since there are no major publications dealing exclusively with nineteenth-century church music, religious music in France, or the sacred music of Charles Gounod; I have had to draw information from a wide array of sources.

Writings on Church Music History

There are not many authoritative books that focus on church music throughout every age of Western music, and there are very few that devote considerable attention to sacred music in the nineteenth century. Franz Krieg's *Katholische Kirchenmusik: Geist and Praxis* of 1954, for example, is a substantial volume covering church music from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. Unfortunately after the Baroque period, the book narrows its focus to Germany and Austria, providing no substantial information on activities in France.⁴ Karl Gustav Fellerer's *Geschichte der katholische Kirchenmusik*, however, is closer to being comprehensive. The English translation by Francis A. Brunner, C. Ss. R.

⁴ Franz Krieg, *Katholische Kirchenmusik: Geist und Praxis* (Teufen: Verlag Arthur Niggli und Willy Verkauf, 1954).

(1961) was issued with the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Baltimore.⁵ Church music in France during the nineteenth century is discussed, if only briefly, as part of the greater Romantic movement in European church music. A substantial work on the history of Christian music is Elwyn A. Wienandt's *Choral Music of the Church*, published in 1965. The nineteenth century is discussed at great length, addressing numerous important composers and works; however, Gounod is discussed only briefly. Wienandt discusses only one mass by Gounod, his *Messe brève et salut*, op. 1 (1846), leveling strong criticism against it:

If criticism may be levelled [sic.] at the large concert works, the smaller compositions intended for church use are not exempt from harsh judgment. For public performance the composers were able to let their imaginations run wild; in church they were confined by the limitation of singers who were too few and too ill-prepared to undertake anything extraordinary. Added to these restrictions was the necessity for eschewing counterpoint. Gounod fell victim to these compound ills a number of times but never more than in his early *Messe Brève et Salut* [sic]. . . Much of the composition ~~is~~ has a plodding, note-against-note movement that is unrelieved by either melodic interest or harmonic variety. Even the best moments in the work have little to lift them above average level. The piece is by no means Gounod's earliest, even though it was printed as his Opus 1. It dates from about 1846, before which date its composer had already been awarded a number of prizes for composition and had also undertaken a study of the works of Palestrina. There is no indication that he was in any way influenced by Renaissance counterpoint.⁶

Wienandt's focus on Gounod's first published mass and neglect of the numerous more significant masses provides a disappointingly narrow insight into Gounod's works which effectively paints a negative image of the composer as a church musician.

⁵ Karl Gustav Fellerer, *The History of Catholic Church Music*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961).

⁶ Wienandt, Elwyn, *Choral Music of the Church* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), 413-414.

A 1936 book entitled *Sacred Music and The Catholic Church* by Rev. George V. Predmore is not so much an historical volume as it is a treatise or manual on musical practice in Catholic ritual.⁷ It is particularly useful because in it Predmore discusses liturgical music of different styles and periods and their merits or lack of merit as liturgical works.

A substantial French work on church music history is the *Histoire de la musique religieuse* (1957) by Paul Huot-Pleuroux. This is a lengthier monograph than the other books just mentioned and is particularly valuable because of its attention to the French tradition, including nineteenth-century composers and works.

One book focuses exclusively on nineteenth-century church music, Arthur Hutchings *Church Music of the Nineteenth Century* of 1967. It is valuable as an introduction to its subject. Hutchings provides a brief discussion of the cultural/religious environments in which Romantic-era composers produced their church works. Gounod is discussed as a major figure in the church music of this age.⁸ Understanding the influential presence of Gregorian Chant in nineteenth century France is well-aided by Katherine Bergeron's *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes*. Bergeron's fascinating account of the development of the Solesmes method and traditions helps to explain the religious-musical environment of nineteenth-century France from the Revolution to the twentieth century.

Two articles in particular help to portray the state of sacred music in Gounod's time. The first, "Music in the Church," by Camille Saint-Saëns was

⁷ George V. Predmore, *Sacred Music and The Catholic Church* (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly Co., 1936).

⁸ Arthur Hutchings, *Church Music in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1967). ✓

written early in the twentieth century. In it Saint-Saëns, a younger contemporary of Gounod, reflects on church music in his time.⁹ The second, "The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era," by Richard Boursy discusses the style, practice and reputation of the Papal Choir during the nineteenth century, a period in which many composers, such as Gounod, found inspiration in its ancient traditions.¹⁰

Biographical Material on Charles Gounod

The literature on Charles Gounod includes James Harding's brief *Gounod*, which is the only English-language biography of Gounod produced in the last 50 years, aside from the Gounod articles in the *New Grove Dictionary*.¹¹ Steven Huebner published a major study of Gounod's operas in 1990. Although it deals exclusively with the operas, it is a work valuable for understanding Gounod's career.¹²

The most comprehensive sources of information on Gounod are much older than these works. Louis Pagnerre's *Charles Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres* was published in France three years before the death of Gounod. While the first part of this work is mainly biographical, its second section discusses the composer's works historically but engages in very little analysis. Pagnerre's contemporary perspective on the composer's life and career is especially important in Gounod studies.¹³ A work of similar scope was published in 1911,

⁹ Camille Saint-Saëns, "Music in the church," *Musical Quarterly* II (1916): 1-8.

¹⁰ Richard Boursy, "The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era," *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993).

¹¹ James Harding, *Gounod* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973).

¹² Steven Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

¹³ Louis Pagnerre, *Charles Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: L. Sauvaitre, 1890).

Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres, d'après des documents inédits by J.-G. Prod'homme and A. Dandelot. This work is also valuable due to its chronological proximity to the composer's life and location; it is retrospective and more thorough than Pagnerre's biography. Camille Saint-Saëns contributed the preface to the work which includes information on Gounod's genealogy, chronology, numerous plates, and a catalog of works. This work provides some valuable specific information on the *Messe de Sainte-Cecile* and other church works.¹⁴

Gounod did leave autobiographical writings which were published in English translations at the end of the nineteenth century by Annette E. Crocker, *Memoirs of an Artist: An Autobiography by Charles Gounod* (1895); and by W. Hely Hutchinson, *Charles Gounod: Autobiographical Reminiscences with Family Letters and Notes on Music* (1896). Unfortunately Gounod's autobiographical writing ends suddenly just before the 1860s. Either he did not continue this activity or he suppressed any later accounts. While his memoirs give valuable insight into his career up to this point, including his early experiences in Rome and later as a *maître de chapelle* at the church of the *Missions étrangères* in Paris, Gounod writes little about his sacred compositions.

Steven Huebner's article on Charles Gounod in *The New Grove Dictionary* is the most recent significant work on the composer's life and works. Invaluable are its modern perspective and authoritative catalog of works. It includes a synoptic essay on the church music in which Huebner emphasizes the stylistic variety among Gounod's twenty-one masses. Another useful reference article on Gounod is that found in the 1909 *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Though quite brief, this

¹⁴ J.-G. Prod'homme, and A. Dandelot, *Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres, d'après des documents inédits*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1911).

essay provides both another near-contemporary perspective on the composer but also a specifically Catholic perspective.¹⁵

There are but a few scholarly essays dealing specifically with Gounod's sacred music. An early example, "*Gounod autore di musica sacra*" appeared in *Rivista musicale italiana* in 1894. A number of Gounod's masses are discussed in brief, but the author, G. Tebaldi is very critical of many aspects and examples of Gounod's writing. He levels some strong complaints about the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*.¹⁶

In "*Die Messen Charles Gounods*," Heinz Wagener discusses some of Gounod's masses with an emphasis on stylistic elements. The article does not venture deeply into analysis or history, but provides important information on the chronology and publication of the masses and a summary of Gounod's church music activities and reputation.¹⁷

¹⁵ Joseph Otten, "Gounod, Charles-François," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909).

¹⁶ G. Tebaldi, "Gounod autore di musica sacra," *Rivista musicale italiana* (1894): 67-85. ✓

¹⁷ Heinz Wagener, "Die Messen Charles Gounods," *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch* 51 (1967): 145-153. ✓

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND MUSIC IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

Gounod's *Messe solennelle de Saint-Cécile* occupies a significant position in nineteenth-century French music and provides a worthwhile starting point for investigating the sacred music of that time and place. It is one of the best-known sacred works of one of the most distinguished and influential French composers of the Romantic era. More importantly, it was one of the most popular contributions to the liturgical music repertoire in France during that time.

Gounod was one of very few nineteenth-century composers who clearly had strong emotional and artistic ties to the church throughout his career. Because he lived in France, his religious connection was to a Catholic church establishment and a musical tradition that had been in a precarious state for decades before his birth and continued to experience instability through much of the nineteenth century. The *Messe solennelle de Saint-Cécile*, dating from near the middle of the century, is an achievement within a sacred music heritage that had endured but had also been subject to a variety of influences. A comprehensive study of this heritage would be quite complicated and is beyond the scope of this project, but some understanding of it is necessary to evaluate the significance of the *Messe de Sainte-Cecile*.

Sacred Music at the End of the Monarchy

In the century preceding the French Revolution, the preeminent sacred music genre in France had been the *grand motet*, which was favored by Louis XIV (r. 1661-1715) for masses at the *Chapelle royale* at Versailles. Such pieces were often

extended settings of para-liturgical or non-liturgical texts, such as psalms, for choral and orchestral performance. When utilized in the context of the liturgy, they would usually be performed during the course of a low mass--that is a mass spoken by the celebrant rather than rendered in song. In this manner the liturgy was not presented in music but accompanied by it.

Grands motets often utilized large vocal and orchestral forces in a multiple-section form that could include choruses, ensembles, arias and recitatives. Their suitability for concert performance is confirmed by the fact that they became standard fare in the programs of the Concerts Spirituels, founded by Philidor in 1725. Thanks to the initial royal preference for these pieces and the subsequent spread of their popularity in both church and concert venues, the number of *grands motets* composed during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries far surpassed the number of mass settings. In his book on French music from 1789-1830, Jean Mongrédien points out that the popularity of the *grands motets* did not wane until the mid-eighteenth century, and the genre remained relevant until late in the century:

Around 1750, the public apparently grew tired of of the grand motet because of its standard effects and stereotyped texts. Audience and composers alike aspired to the renewal of sacred music forms. In his *Spectacle des Beaux-Arts* published in 1763, Lacombe wrote: "We must diversify the materials of our sacred music." In 1783, the *Mercure de France* concluded: "The grand motets no longer excite the people's interest."¹⁸

Though the composers who were associated with the court during these decades dealt almost exclusively with *grands motets* for celebrations of the mass, the practice of setting the text of the mass, nonetheless, did survive outside of the sphere of the Chapelle Royale. Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-1704), achieved renown working outside of the court, composing for various churches that

¹⁸ Jean Mongrédien. *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism, 1789-1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 160.

provided opportunities for composing settings of the mass ordinary in addition to motets. With the several settings of the ordinary he composed during his successful career, Charpentier stands out as the principal mass composer of his time.

No other significant developments in the setting of the mass occurred in France until the years immediately preceding the revolution, the time at which the *grands motets* had fallen from popularity. The composer Jean-François Le Sueur (1760-1837) attempted to take innovative steps towards a new kind of music for the liturgy around this time, while he was a choirmaster at Tours and at the Cathedral de Notre Dame in Paris. However, his ideas sparked protests from his employers at these locations.¹⁹ The main issues that led to Le Sueur's dismissal from his post at Notre Dame concerned his practice of taking liberties in the setting of liturgical texts. His introduction of soloists and a full orchestra into the Cathedral's liturgies incited considerable criticism. Mongrédien, however, writes that this alone was not extreme for the period; it was Le Sueur's inclination towards the alteration of and addition to liturgical texts that was particularly objectionable to the clergy of the cathedral. Le Sueur utilized such methods in an effort to portray liturgical services more as dramatic productions. His short tenure at Notre Dame lasted from 1786 to 1787.²⁰

The Revolution

Years of mounting political tensions in France led to the outbreak of revolution in 1789. In the decade that followed, the revolutionary war expanded into a complex international conflict that would change France forever. Within two

¹⁹ Jean Mongrédien. "Jean-François Le Sueur" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 2001), 14: 594.

²⁰ Mongrédien. *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism, 1789-1830*, 161.

years of the outbreak of the hostilities, while the king lived under what amounted to house arrest, the National Constituent Assembly worked to redesign the French nation. The work of the assembly resulted in a redefinition of the role of the Catholic Church in France. The most drastic change to the Church's position was the complete nationalization of lands and properties owned by the Church, which dealt a financial death blow to French Catholicism. By the end of 1791 even the historic papal property of Avignon had been returned to French rule. In 1790 the assembly redefined the position of the church with the *Constitution Civile du Clerge*. Its primary reforms included the following.²¹

New boundaries of ecclesiastical divisions were formed, based on the civil divisions (*départments*) recently established. Each *département* was to form one diocese.

The 83 dioceses were grouped into ten provinces, but the title of archbishop was abolished.

Cathedrals became parish churches.

Locations with more than 6,000 persons were to form a single parish while other parishes were suppressed or merged.

All cathedral dignities were abolished.

Appointment to ecclesiastical office done by popular election.

Bishops were to be chosen by an electoral assembly of the *département* with confirmation by the metropolitan bishop, but forbidden to seek papal confirmation, and required to take an oath to watch over the

²¹ C. S. Phillips, *The Church in France: 1789-1848: A Study in Revival* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 12-13.

diocese, remain faithful to the nation and maintain the national constitution. *Curés* were to be chosen by an electoral assembly of the district.

A fixed payment scale for the clergy was established.

The civil constitution of the clergy was only reluctantly accepted by the king, a loyal Catholic, and was strongly opposed by the pope. The new regulations and the subsequent government control of ecclesiastical properties, made the clergy, in effect, into a new type of civil servant. Eventually the assembly pressured all of the clergy to take a constitutional oath. Some of the clergy subscribed to the new church laws, but many did not. The result of this divide was a schism involving those members of the clergy who were obedient to the constitutional church and those remaining faithful to the Holy See in Rome.²² The larger implication for the citizens of France, which would cast a shadow over church and society during the revolution years, was the idea that to be a fervent Catholic was to be aligned with the aristocracy and thus unpatriotic.²³

In September of 1792 the new National Convention abolished the monarchy and by the end of January of 1793 had convicted Louis XVI of treason and executed him. In that year even the constitutional church appeared to lose its security, as government policies seemed to challenge the existence of any sort of Catholicism in France. The government began to encourage priests to marry and eventually threatened to punish any bishop who tried to prevent a priest from marrying. The commune of Paris was even allowed to abolish the constitutional

²² Phillips, *The Church in France: 1789-1848*, 15-18.

²³ Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism: 1789-1914* (London: Routledge, 1989) 53.

worship. On November 10, 1793 the "Feast of Reason" was observed at Notre Dame. A dancer from the opera was seated upon the altar in the cathedral to be adored as the Goddess of Reason.²⁴

A restricted kind of freedom was restored to the Catholic church in France after the assembly decided no longer to fund any one religion, but to theoretically allow all types of worship to exist on the same level. The state still controlled many elements of Catholic worship, forbidding priests who had not previously taken the clerical oath from officiating in public and from renting churches for services. The Convention also attempted to provide an alternative to traditional worship. The Christian calendar had been abolished; this included the eradication of the seven-day week. They were replaced with ten-day *décades*, the tenth day of which was marked by civic festivals.²⁵ That these *Fêtes décadaires* did not achieve long-term success shows that much of the French public was not interested in replacing the traditional Christian observances. Another short-lived alternative, based on the idea that the Republic would benefit from the idea of a supreme being, was the Festival of the Supreme Being observed on June 8 1794.

The "Directory" government, named for its five-member executive segment, assumed control in October of 1795. This leadership pursued a particularly strong policy of religious persecution. This government went so far as to deport hundreds of priests who had not taken the constitutional oath to the coast of Guiana, a virtual death sentence. And it was this government that was responsible for the invasion of the papal states and proclamation of the Roman Republic in 1798. At this time Pope Pius VI was taken to Valence as a prisoner.²⁶

²⁴ Phillips, *The Church in France: 1789-1848*, 29.

²⁵ Phillips, *The Church in France: 1789-1848: A Study in Revival*, 26-33.

²⁶ Georges Goyau, "Revolution, French" *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) 13:16.

Pius VI died in Valence the following year. His successor, Pius VII, was elected at Venice and, shortly thereafter, announced his recognition of the monarchy as the legitimate government of France.²⁷

Aftermath of the Revolution and the Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon Bonaparte rose to the leadership of the French nation as the First Consul in November of 1799. His policy on religion was based on a belief that bringing Catholicism back to France would help him to earn the confidence of the French and, more importantly, that the church could provide a significant measure of social control.²⁸

In June of 1800 the First Consul initiated negotiations with Rome for a lasting settlement for religion in France. These negotiations resulted in the signing of the Concordat of July 15, 1801. This agreement recognized officially that Roman Catholicism was the religion of the majority of the French people and provided for an end to the schism between the Roman and the Constitutional church. The schism was remedied by the replacement of all of the nation's bishops. The freedom to practice Catholicism was finally guaranteed again, but Napoleon was granted numerous regulatory powers over the ecclesiastical establishment in France.²⁹

The monasteries, convents, and cathedrals had been effectively emptied of their inhabitants and property during the early years of the Revolution. Many such facilities suffered plundering, vandalism, and/or destruction at the hands of

²⁷ Georges Goyau, "Concordat of 1801, The French " *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) 4:205.

²⁸ Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism: 1789-1914*, 47.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

revolutionaries eager to destroy any evidence of the glories of the monarchy and aristocratic clergy.³⁰ Less visible to those who might have surveyed the aftermath was the damage done to the nation's sacred music tradition. The church reforms of the Revolution years resulted in the abolishment of the nation's major church choirs and choir schools, as well as the monastic communities. Many such institutions had been in existence for centuries. The composition of new sacred music and training of church vocalists was essentially halted for over ten years.³¹ The most significant contribution towards music education made by the authorities during the Revolution was the transformation of the musical school of the National Guard to the *Institut National de Musique* (the forerunner of the Conservatoire) in 1793.³² This institution, however, was not concerned with training for church musicianship.

With the signing of the Concordat and the return of legal worship, a sacred music renewal began. Napoleon decided to create a chapel, complete with music, at the Tuileries Palace, where he resided. The First Consul was partial to Italian music and invited Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) to be his first *mâitre de chapelle*, rather than appointing a French composer. Paisiello's music was used for most of the early important church services. Paisiello composed several works for the chapel and received encouragement from Napoleon for his activities in the opera house as well. Nonetheless, Paisiello decided to return to Italy in the Spring of 1804. Le Sueur was chosen to replace Paisiello. One of Le Sueur's first

³⁰ Katherine Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments: The Revival of Gregorian Chant at Solesmes*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 1. ✓

³¹ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 161.

³² François Lesure, "France" (Art music) in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 2001) 9:154.

tasks was to organize the music for Napoleon's coronation as emperor at *Notre Dame de Paris*. The Mass and *Te Deum* used for this occasion were works by Paisiello, commissioned by the future emperor before Paisiello's departure. Also performed were shorter works by Le Sueur. The musical forces required for this occasion were quite large: an orchestra and choir played at each end of the transept of Notre Dame, both in alternation and together.³³ It was during this ceremony that Napoleon made the bold gesture of taking the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII and placing it upon his own head rather than allowing the Pope to place it there. He then took it upon himself to crown the Empress Josephine. Though he had felt it necessary to have the Pope lead the coronation ceremony, Bonaparte was not willing to accept any indication that his power was invested in him by the Pope. Soon after, the short honeymoon period of the reunited church and state drew towards a close as Napoleon became more aggressive in his demands of the church and also became more politically aggressive on the Italian peninsula.

A taste for grandeur was central to the Emperor's religious ceremonies. Accounts of the imperial church services of this time indicate that the effort to glorify the military and political power of the nation and its leader was the driving force behind its general style. The emperor had a new, larger chapel built at the Tuileries Palace, which was inaugurated in February of 1806. From a contemporary account of this event Mongrédien quotes the following:

Last Sunday, the mass was celebrated in this chapel where the public was invited to witness, with customary admiration, the Imperial Restorer of Religion preside over the opening of the temple that he had just consecrated within his palace.³⁴

³³Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 164.

³⁴Ibid., 165.

Mongrédien also quotes an eyewitness account of Tuileries ceremony in the memoirs of the German composer Wilhelm Speyer (1790-1878). I quote substantial portions below because they further describe the liturgical taste of the imperial court. Note the social formalities and aggrandizing aspects described; many sentences here could be used also to describe a night at the opera or a military display. The mass on this occasion, as described by Speyer, seems to have been an obligatory function at which the celebration of the cult of the emperor and the state overshadowed the gravity of the liturgy. Speyer, himself appears to have been more taken with the impressive spectacle and the presence of the Emperor than with the religious service:

Lesueur had previously composed a mass upon Napoleon's orders. The Imperial couple had just returned from Holland and Antwerp, and Lesueur received orders to prepare the performance of his mass for the following Sunday, 8 December 1811. He called on Paër to inform the artists of the Chamber and ask them to be there but declared that they should not have too high expectations from his music because the emperor's will had put some limits on his invention. Napoleon is known to have had a preference for sweet and calm music. . .

At noon, the two side galleries began to fill up. The most important figures of the capital--even of the Empire--were gathered in this small space (Talleyrand, Fouché, Ney and so on).

The entire household of the empress and those of the princesses filled the Ladies' gallery. Wives and ministers, generals, and ambassadors were also present, wearing the most dazzling dresses and the richest jewelry and diamonds. In the nave, under the Imperial gallery stood two halberdiers in Spanish uniforms of the high period. Behind them, a squad of grenadiers and two drummers occupied the whole width of the church. The whole display was at once imposing and picturesque, even though it had a somewhat theatrical effect. . .

That day I saw Napoleon for the first time. all this preparation had made me extremely impatient. I became feverish and excited. As I was going to see the hero of the century in the

flesh for the first time, I reflected upon the remarkable exploits of his career. . .

The halberdiers knocked on the ground with their spears and shouted: "L'Empereur!" The officer on duty ordered them to present arms, and the drums played a march, the empress rose. At that moment Napoleon entered, wearing the simple uniform of a cavalry grenadier, surrounded by his followers who, wearing brilliant uniforms lined with gold and silver, advanced with measured steps. The effect of contrast was striking and well calculated.

As soon as the emperor had taken his place in the seat on the right, the empress sat down and Lesueur's mass began. The work was written in a very simple sacred style, lacking spirit and very monotonous. At the Sanctus, the Imperial couple stood. Napoleon seemed agitated and did nothing to conceal it. He snorted several times, leaned his whole body from left to right and bit his nails. At the Agnus Dei, the scene changed. The music was in D-flat major, dolce and pianissimo with muted strings.

All of a sudden, a fanfare began. The loud music of the guard could be heard, and the horse-drawn cannons outside: the troops were taking their places for the parade in the Tuileries courtyard, on the carousel square, and the nearby streets. Immediately, the whole assembly seemed electrified. Napoleon himself appeared the most affected of all. His body motions accelerated, and he tapped his leg and his boot with his short riding-whip.

Another no less interesting event now took place. The best troops of the time and the powerful Imperial Guard in close ranks were being inspected by the emperor, their general: the cavalry on the Carousel square, and the infantry in the Tuileries courtyard. One of the windows of the Gallery of Paintings provided a marvelous vantage point on the whole scene. *Gone was the theatrical impression left by the previous ceremony in the chapel. Everything now seemed natural and real.* [italics mine] The grandeur and the sheer power of the period were symbolized by this impressive military show.³⁵

Since its founding and the tenure of Paisiello, the music of the imperial chapel had displayed a fashionable and often secular character that corresponded

³⁵ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 180-182.

with current French musical tastes. This influence lasted well past the years of the first empire. Numerous observers reported the influence of operatic styles in the sacred music of the Tuileries. In 1811 one critic reported, in the journal *Tablettes de Polymnie* that the music heard in the chapel was better suited to the Feydeau Theater than to Notre-Dame.³⁶ German musicians were particularly surprised by the styles they heard. The critic of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* wrote in 1804: "I wish that Parisians could hear the wonderful music of our churches." In his autobiography, Louis Spohr criticized the church music by Plantade that he heard as reminiscent of comic opera.³⁷

Spohr also recalled with criticism a a midnight mass by Le Sueur on Christmas Eve during his stay in Paris in 1820:

First, we had to endure a long test of our patience. For two whole hours, from ten to midnight, nothing but psalms sung in the most monotonous manner, interrupted at times by primitive organ preludes. At midnight, finally, the mass began. It was in the same frivolous theatrical style as Plantade's, [on whom he commented earlier in his autobiography] but at this solemn time of night, it sounded even more unpleasant. What surprised me most coming from Le Sueur, who enjoys here a reputation as an excellent harmonist and, if I am not mistaken, teaches harmony at the Conservatoire, was that not once did I hear true four-part singing.

There is one further aspect of the musical practices of the Tuileries chapel that should be pointed out. Though the *grands motets* had become obsolete, the para-liturgical use of music remained an active tradition in French liturgical celebrations. Mongrédien writes:

I observed that in the vocabulary of the time, the title "mass" was commonly used as a generic term that could be applied indiscriminate [*sic*] to any piece of sacred music, not just a mass in the proper sense, but also to an oratorio or a religious cantata

³⁶Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 172-173

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

freely adopted to Latin words of the Vulgate. Only in the event of major official ceremonies, such as the coronation of Napoleon or Charles X, did composers set all five parts of the Ordinary and the

Domine Salvum fac Imperatorem (or *Regem*) to conclude the service. For the usual Sunday services at the Tuileries, only one or two of the parts were performed, either alone or interspersed with settings of texts not taken from the Ordinary; with "petites scènes bibliques," short oratorios in Latin using a compilation of texts most often borrowed from the Old Testament; or within a succession of arias for soloists and chorus using Latin words borrowed from a great variety of sources.³⁸

The Bourbon Restoration

After the decisive defeats that led to the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Bonaparte was dethroned and fled to Elba in exile. With the restoration of the monarchy under Louis XVIII, a parliamentary government was established in France. The instability of this new government led to Napoleon's return to France ten months later and a brief return to power. After the defeat of his forces at Waterloo, however, Napoleon abdicated and departed France for the last time. Power passed to his son but soon after was restored to Louis XVIII.

The 1814 restoration brought little change to the nation's main venue for sacred music, at the Tuileries. In 1788, Jean-Paul-Gilles Martini (1741-1816) had been named successor to the current *surintendant de la musique du roi* and with the restoration laid claim to that position at the Tuileries.³⁹ As a compromise, the leadership was shared by Le Sueur, who remained from the Empire era, and Martini. This situation lasted only briefly, however, as Martini died in February of 1816. He was replaced by Cherubini who, together with Le Sueur, managed

³⁸ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 169.

³⁹ M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, "Jean-Paul-Gilles Martini," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 15:925.

the chapel until 1830.⁴⁰ They were the last two men to hold the directorship of the royal chapel, as the 1830 revolution and rise of King Louis-Philippe led to the elimination of their posts.⁴¹ Le Sueur and Cherubini oversaw the last years of existence of a formal Chapelle Royale. Events such as the coronation of Charles X in Cathedral of Rheims in 1825 marked the final examples of grand, religious royal ceremonies of a celebrated, centuries-old musical establishment.

Sacred Music Education and Scholarship in France During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

The suppression of sacred music that resulted from revolutionary policies not only halted the composition and performance church works, but also spelled the end of the institutions that had formed the cornerstone of musical education in France. In the aftermath, French musical education was redefined and sacred music training had to be rebuilt.

Prior to the revolution, the primary institutions for music education were the venerable choir schools, known as *maîtrises*, which were affiliated with cathedrals and major churches, and the choir schools of royal chapels. For centuries these schools provided male choristers, usually beginning in childhood, training in sacred music performance, theory and composition, as well as some instrumental studies.⁴² The origins of the oldest *maîtrises*, at Notre Dame de Paris and Chartres Cathedral, date to the twelfth century; several others were

⁴⁰ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 166.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴² Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 12.

founded in France during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴³ Only during the final years of the monarchy was a school created for the express purpose of training singers for the opera, the Royal School for Voice and Drama.⁴⁴ After fostering generations of professional musicians, including noteworthy composers from Du Fay to Le Sueur, all *maîtrises* were closed, beginning in 1792.⁴⁵

Throughout the eighteenth century, the choir schools of Catholic Europe provided many talented young singers the opportunity to develop their musicianship while providing music for important churches. Franz Joseph and Johann Michael Haydn, for example, had been recruited as boys in rural Austria to be educated in the choir school at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. The last of the French provincial composers to achieve fame after training in the *maîtrise* system was Jean-Francois Le Sueur (1760-1837), who began his training at the schools of Abbeville and Amiens.⁴⁶

The vacuum in music-education resulting from the suppression of the choir schools was filled in part by the creation of a new institution that would become one of the most influential in Europe. In 1793 revolutionary authorities developed the music school of the National Guard into the Institut National de Musique. The Institut became the Conservatoire in 1795, incorporating faculty from the old Royal School for Voice and Drama.⁴⁷ A highly secular and

⁴³ Lesure, "France," 140-141.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁵ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 13.

⁴⁶ Mongrédien, "Jean-François Le Sueur," 594.

⁴⁷ Gordon A. Anderson et al., "Paris" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 19:110.

centralized institution, the Conservatoire was never intended to recover the heritage of the *maîtrise*. Regarding the National Music Institute, the journal *Annonces, Affiches et Avis Divers* reported in November 1794:

In the past, we used to have around six hundred secondary schools in operation, but what were they? Cathedral schools, with their usual archaic tastes, their marked and heavy singing style, their choral singing devoid of melody or expression, where there was more interest in self-protection than in true talent, in short, where good taste and admirable progress were excluded.⁴⁸

Le Sueur, who had gone on to become a successful opera composer, when the channels for sacred music were closed during the Revolution, became an administrator of the Conservatoire when it was reorganized in 1795. He became, however, a critic of the institution's principle of treating instrumental and vocal music equally, and its failure to produce a significant group of outstanding vocalists. In 1802 he was fired from the Conservatoire but remained a strong, and influential critic of it.⁴⁹

The signing of the 1801 Concordat between Napoleon's government and the Pope allowed the return of choir schools, but the renewed institutions, under the new regime, did not have the influence and resources to recapture the presence that the old system had. Mongrédien writes:

The little research that I could do in the Paris diocesan archives quickly convinced me that the reopening of the choir schools--when it did occur--took place under such conditions that prevented these small music schools from ever competing with the Conservatoire.⁵⁰

During the first two decades of its existence, the Conservatoire was highly promoted by those who held strongly revolutionary or republican beliefs and

⁴⁸ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 16-17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁰ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 26.

criticized by those who held royalist sentiments. Mongrédien quotes Count Fortia de Piles, a composer and former officer of the king:

Has the conservatoire taken the place of nearly one hundred schools in all parts of France, that is to say, in most of our cathedrals? These schools used to provide the training for young musicians who wanted nothing else but to make music from their youngest age and who, by the age of fifteen, knew it as well as their mother tongue. Today, out of the Conservatoire come a few virtuosos who will show off in our theaters and orchestras, and that means that three quarters of France will never hear of them.⁵¹

Some important changes to the state of music education were fostered after the Bourbon restoration. The Conservatoire, which was too prominently connected to the Revolution, was replaced by the new École Royale de Musique et de Déclamation, In effect this was probably more of a name change than a creation of a new institution.⁵²

Meanwhile Church music received more favorable official attention than it had at any time since the 1790s thanks to the efforts of musicians such as Alexandre-Etienne Choron and later Louis Niedermeyer.

Alexandre-Etienne Choron (1771-1834), who had previously written essays on church music, including plainchant, and published works of Renaissance composers, was nominated to reorganize music in the French cathedrals and the royal chapel. By 1817, he was working towards the founding of an Institution Royale de Musique Classique et Religieuse. He received funding

⁵¹ Mongrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, p. 25. This quotation was taken from Fortia de Piles, *Quelques réflexions d'un homme du monde sur les spectacles, la musique, le jeu et le duel*, (Paris, 1812), 48.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 27

for this endeavor under Charles X, but due to the political climate after the 1830 revolution and the rise of Louis Philippe, this support was withdrawn.⁵³

Choron's school was not revitalized until 1853, when Niedermeyer reopened it with assistance from the government. It went on to become a leading institution for musical education, counting Camille Saint-Saëns among its instructors and Gabriel Fauré among its students. Students of the *École Niedermeyer* received a general education that included instruction in chant.⁵⁴

Despite its early instabilities, identity change and the gradual reinstatement of choir schools, the Paris Conservatoire became the undisputed center of musical education in France during the first half of the nineteenth-century. It was here, rather than in choir schools, that most of the distinguished post-Revolution French composers took their higher education. After assuming the identity of the *École Royale de Musique et de Déclamation* during the restoration, this establishment became known as the Conservatoire again in 1831. By the time Gounod enrolled, the Conservatoire faculty included two composers who were prominent in sacred music. Le Sueur, who had been fired in 1802, returned in 1818, and taught there until his death in 1837. More than anyone else, Le Sueur represented a link to the traditions of French music before the Revolution. The Italian composer Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) was internationally renowned for sacred music as well as opera and instrumental works and was a fixture in Parisian music for decades. He served as director of the conservatoire from 1822 to 1842.

⁵³ Arthur Hutchings and Hervé Audéon, "Alexandre Choron," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 5:766.

⁵⁴ Guy Ferchault and Jaqueline Gachet, "Louis Niedermeyer," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 17:883.

Perhaps the most important development in sacred music scholarship occurred outside of Paris at the the Abbey of St. Peter, Solesmes. There in the early 1830s Dom Prosper Guéranger refounded the Benedictine priory as part of his effort to restore monastic life and foster a recovery of traditional liturgical practices in France. In the decades that followed, Solesmes became a leading center for the study of plainchant and production of liturgical chant books.

Guéranger's desire to make the liturgy in French churches conform to Tridentine Roman practices placed him in opposition to much of the nation's clergy who continued to favor the the various local liturgies that were in use. The local liturgies had long been key to French assertions of episcopal autonomy from Rome. Traditions such as the Parisian usage allegedly had their origins in ancient Gallican rites but had been heavily influenced by Neo-Gallican efforts of the seventeenth- century. The bitter debate between the two liturgical factions that lasted through decades of the nineteenth-century is a fascinating topic in nineteenth-century ecclesiastical history and politics. A lengthy discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, but the issue is worth highlighting here because any mass setting composed through the 1860s would likely have been used in a Gallican-type Rite. The 1738 *Missale Parisiense*, which enjoyed considerable success during the eighteenth century, remained a strong influence on the liturgies of France through much of the nineteenth century and it was not until the 1870s that the Roman Rite achieved dominance in the French churches.⁵⁵

A re-creation of mid-nineteenth-century French Catholic liturgy, depending on the feast, would likely utilize some prayers that differ from the those prescribed in the Tridentine Roman Rite. For example, the Introit, Epistle, Gradual, Alleluia, Secret, and Postcommunion prescribed in the *Missale*

⁵⁵ *Missale Parisiense 1738* (Rome: CLV - Edizione Liturgiche, 1993), VII.

Parisiense for the Feast of Saint Cecilia are all different from those prescribed by the Tridentine liturgy for that day.⁵⁶

Mass Settings in France During the Nineteenth Century

Despite the years of tribulation for church music described above, the practice of setting liturgical texts to music flourished in France perhaps more than in any other European nation. It is a testament to the importance of the Catholic ritual to the French population that the musical mass re-emerged so strongly so soon after the Church was re-established under Napoleon, and that it remained a significant genre through the nineteenth century. There are few distinguished nineteenth-century French composers who did not render the ordinary of the mass at some point in their careers.

Below is a list of prominent composers active in France who contributed to the nineteenth-century mass repertoire. While only masses are cited, many of the composers also wrote sacred music of other genres. Most of the composers listed here were not specialists in church music and few are commonly remembered for sacred compositions. The list helps to illustrate the prominence that mass continued to have in French musical life throughout the nineteenth-century.

Jean-François Le Sueur (1760 -1837): several masses

Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842): 11 masses (including 2 Requiem Masses)
composed after settling in Paris

Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868) 1 mass composed after settling in Paris

Louis Niedermeyer (1802-1861): several masses

⁵⁶ *Missale Parisiense* 1738 , 728-729.

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856): 3 masses

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869): 1 mass (*Messe solennelle*), 1 Requiem

Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896): 3 masses

Charles Gounod (1818-1893): 21 masses (including 2 Requiem Masses)

Cesar Franck (1822-1890): 2 masses

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921): 1 mass, 1 Requiem

Leo Delibes (1836-1891): 1 mass (*Messe breve*)

Jules Massenet (1842-1912) 1 mass, 1 Requiem (both lost)⁵⁷

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924): 1 mass (*messe basse*), 1 Requiem (both
composed late in the century)

Erik Satie (1866-1925): 1 mass (1893-1895)⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Hugh MacDonald, Annagret Fauser, Patrick Gillis, "Jules Massenet" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 16:101.

⁵⁸ Robert Orledge, "Erik Satie," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 22:319.

CHAPTER III
THE LIFE AND SACRED MUSIC CAREER
OF CHARLES GOUNOD

Gounod: Early Years and Education

Charles Gounod was born in Paris on June 17, 1818. His father, François Gounod, was an artist who had come from a line of artisans who enjoyed royal support, including a residence at the Louvre, which in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century contained housing and studios for artists and craftsmen. The Gounod residency there lasted around 75 years. In 1805, François, along with the other artistic residents of the Louvre were removed from the complex and given a small pension. The following year, François, forty-seven years of age, married Victoire Lemachois, twenty-six, in Rouen and the couple settled in Paris. Victoire was the daughter of a Rouen magistrate, whose family fortunes declined severely because of the revolution. As a young girl she displayed musical talent and was able to teach piano lessons when only eleven years old. She went on to take lessons from Louis Adam (father of Adolphe Adam) in Paris and Nicolas Hüllmandel in Rouen.⁵⁹

Though an artist of considerable talent, François Gounod was a man of modest ambition.⁶⁰ He did not seek notoriety or wealth but enjoyed an artistic

⁵⁹ Harding, *Gounod*, 17-22.

⁶⁰ Steven Huebner, "Charles Gounod," 215.

life. With the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon Dynasty, however, François was able to obtain royal patronage. He was appointed as official artist to *Le Duc de Berry* and drawing master to the pages of the King's Chamber. Victoire had given birth the couple's first son, Louis-Urbain in 1807. Shortly after the birth of their second son, Charles-François, on June 17, 1818, the Gounods moved to Versailles where the family was given official lodgings.⁶¹

François Gounod died in 1823, leaving Victoire to care for their two sons, who were then fifteen and nearly five years old, respectively. To support herself and her sons, François' widow learned lithography so that she could take over the private lessons her husband had taught to augment his income. Her return to teaching piano lessons, however, afforded her steady work.

In dying, my father took with him the livelihood of the family. . . my mother, by her virile energy and her incomparable tenderness, more than compensated us for the loss of the protection and support of the father who had been taken from us.⁶²

Gounod maintained that as an infant he imbibed as much music as he did milk, since his mother always sang when nursing him.⁶³ The young Gounod displayed exceptional musical awareness, which his mother was glad to foster. She was not, however, inclined to direct him towards a career in music. Gounod's formal education, which started at the age of seven, did not emphasize music in particular. Nonetheless, Gounod's musical development continued. At his first school, Gounod encountered a young singer named Gilbert Duprez, who was visiting music teacher. Duprez would go on to become a famous operatic

⁶¹ Harding, *Gounod*, 22.

⁶² Charles Gounod. *Memories of an Artist*, trans. and ed. Annette Crocker (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1895) 20.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 24.

tenor.⁶⁴

At the age of eleven, Gounod entered the *Lycée Saint-Louis* as a boarder. There, his best subject happened to be Latin, and he won numerous awards and honorable mentions for Latin prose and verse.⁶⁵ Gounod was able to participate in music at the chapel of the *Lycée Saint-Louis*. In his *Memoirs*, he recalls his time as a chorister, also relating that his voice was not allowed to mature properly:

There was at the Lycée St. Louis a chapel in which high mass was celebrated every Sunday. The gallery was divided into two parts and ran across the whole width of the chapel. In one of these parts were the organ and the seats reserved for the singers. The chapel master, at the time I entered the lyceum, was Hippolyte Monpou, then employed as accompanist at the Choron school of music, and who has since become known by several melodies and dramatic works that have made his name very popular.

Thanks to the musical education received from my mother from my most tender infancy, I read music at first sight. I had, besides, a very good and true voice, and when I entered the school was presented at once to Monpou, who was astonished at my ability, and immediately appointed me soprano soloist of his little musical band, consisting of two first sopranos, two second sopranos, two tenors and two basses.

An imprudence of Monpou's caused the loss of my voice. He continued to have me sing during the time of change, in spite of the rest and quiet required by this transformation of the vocal organs, and after that I never acquired again the force, sonority, and timbre possessed as a child, and which are the necessary qualities of a good voice. Mine remained weak and husky. But for that accident, I think I should have made a good singer.⁶⁶

In 1831, Gounod, among other students, was rewarded for academic excellence with an invitation to the school's annual St. Charlemagne banquet and the granting of two days leave from the Lycée to visit home. As a reward for this distinction, his mother promised him the opportunity to attend a performance of

⁶⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 24.

⁶⁵ Harding, *Gounod*, 25.

⁶⁶ Gounod, *Memoires*, 37-38.

Rossini's *Otello* at the *Théâtre des Italiens*. This was a pivotal experience for the young Gounod, an experience that caused him a surge of musical ambition:

Never shall I forget the impression received at the sight of that interior, of the curtain, of the chandeliers. It seemed to me that I was in a temple, and that something divine was to be revealed to me. The solemn moment arrived; the three customary raps were given, and the overture was about to commence. My heart was beating to burst my breast! That representation was an enchantment, a delirium. . . the voices, the orchestra--all made me literally wild.

I emerged from the theater thoroughly at variance with the prose of real life, and completely wrapped up in that dream of the ideal which had become my atmosphere, my fixed purpose. I did not close my eyes that night! I was beset, possessed! I thought of nothing but producing--I also--an *Othello*! (Alas, my exercises and translations suffered severely, and soon showed the effect of this madness!) I hurried off my work without first writing it in the rough, making at once a copy on finishing paper, so as to be the more quickly rid of it, and to have my undivided time for my favorite occupation--musical composition--which seemed to me the only thing worthy of my attention or thoughts.⁶⁷

Gounod subsequently decided to make his ambition official. He wrote a long letter to his mother, explaining his inclination towards an artistic career and passionate desire to pursue music:

For I can find nothing more impressive nor more moving than a beautiful piece of music. For me, music is such a sweet companion that a very great happiness would be denied me if I were prevented from experiencing it. How happy one is to understand that heavenly language! It is a treasure I would not exchange for many others, and it is a delight which will, I hope, fill every moment of my life.⁶⁸

Concerned with this development, Mrs. Gounod consulted the headmaster, who assured her that her son would remain on a practical track. The

⁶⁷ Gounod, *Memoires*, 41-43.

⁶⁸ Harding, *Gounod*, 26-27.

headmaster, who happened to possess some musical training himself, met with Gounod to challenge his notions of pursuing music. Ultimately, he would encourage Gounod's musical ambition.⁶⁹ Mrs. Gounod eventually capitulated and sought an opportunity for her son to begin formal musical training. She arranged to send Gounod to have lessons, once a week, with the Czech composer Anton Reicha (1770-1836) . At the time, Reicha was a professor at the Conservatoire but also a private teacher. Gounod's mother made it clear to Reicha that she was apprehensive about her son's pursuit of a musical career, wanting him to pursue music studies only if he had true talent and the will to overcome the first difficulties. She requested that Reicha seriously test her son's abilities and drive.⁷⁰ Gounod ultimately earned the confidence of Reicha, and their lessons led to further opportunities.

In the years after the death of Reicha in 1836, Gounod studied with a number of prominent teachers in Paris. In that year, Gounod and his mother approached Cherubini at the Conservatoire to pursue classes in composition. Because Cherubini did not like methods of the "German" Reicha, Cherubini informed Gounod that he would have to start over again, this time however following the Italian school.⁷¹ In his memoirs, Gounod recalled:

Now the Italian school preferred by Cherubini was the great one handed down from Palestrina , just as, for the Germans, the master par excellence is Sebastian Bach. Far from discouraging me, this decision delighted me.

"So much the better," said I, repeatedly to my mother. "I shall only be more thoroughly equipped, having learned from each of these two great schools that which characterizes each. All is for the best."⁷²

⁶⁹ Harding, *Gounod*, 27.

⁷⁰ Gounod. *Memoires*, 52.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 64-65.

Cherubini directed him to the classes of Jacques Fromental Halévy (1799-1862), for counterpoint and fugue, and Henri Berton (1784-1832), for lyrical composition. Due to Berton's death two months later, Gounod moved to the class of Jean Le Sueur (1760-1837). After the death of Le Sueur in October 1837, Gounod became a student of Ferdinando Paër (1771-1839).

Halévy had been a student of Cherubini and the two had great esteem for each other. Halévy became professor of counterpoint and fugue in 1833, and became a professor of composition in 1840. Simultaneously he held posts at the opera and Théâtre Italien.⁷³ Of the influence of Halévy, James Harding writes:

It is doubtful whether Gounod learned much from Halévy, charming and sympathetic though he was. His own theatrical affairs took up so much of his time that he had little to spare for his pupils. It was difficult for the hard-pressed musician to concentrate on teaching fugue while he was trying to think up a finale to his current opera. When he told his class to get on with some written work in lesson time, it was a heaven sent opportunity for him to complete the orchestration of some long-overdue trio a theatre manager had been insisting on for weeks.⁷⁴

Indeed, two later students, Lecocq and Saint-Saëns, complained that they learned very little from Halévy.⁷⁵ On his progress under Halévy, Gounod recalls:

I went over again, under the direction of Halévy, the whole course of counterpoint and fugue; but in spite of my work, with which my master was well satisfied, I never obtained a prize at the Conservatory. My special object was the *grand prix de Rome*, which I was determined to carry off, cost what it might.⁷⁶

⁷³ Hugh Mac Donald, "Fromental Halévy," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 10:688.

⁷⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 32.

⁷⁵ Mac Donald, "Halévy." 688.

⁷⁶ Gounod, *Memoires*, 66.

Gounod studied with Henri Berton only two months, until his death in 1832. Berton's influence on Gounod was important because of the former's admiration of W. A. Mozart. Berton had introduced *The Marriage of Figaro* to France earlier in the century. He urged Gounod to study Mozart.⁷⁷

"Read Mozart," repeated he, constantly; "read the *Marriage of Figaro*."

He was right; this ought to be the breviary of musicians. Mozart is to Palestrina and to Bach what the New Testament is to the Old, both being considered as parts of the same Bible.⁷⁸

Gounod's metaphorical use of the term 'breviary' to indicate a standard reference here is interesting; he chose to evoke this liturgical prayer book rather than the Bible itself. It reflects either that religious imagery was not far from his mind even when thinking of secular music, or that invoking religious terminology in such a way was commonly understood in Gounod's environment.

Berton was succeeded by Le Sueur, who became a strong influence on the young composer, though their lessons lasted less than a year.

Cherubini placed me in that [the class] of Le Sueur, the author of *Les Bardes*, *La Caverne*, and of several masses and oratorios; a man serious, reserved, earnest, and devout, with an inspiration sometimes biblical; very much given to sacred subjects; tall with a face pale as wax, and with the air of an old patriarch. Le Sueur treated me with paternal kindness and tenderness; he was affectionate; he had a warm heart. His instructions, which, lasted only nine or ten months, were very beneficial, and I derived from him ideas, the light and elevation of which insure him an indelible place in my memory and in my grateful affection.⁷⁹

Of his early instructors, Le Sueur stands out for his importance in church music. Le Sueur was one of the most significant figures in French sacred music during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The elder composer,

⁷⁷ Harding, *Gounod*, 32.

⁷⁸ Gounod, *Memoires*, 64.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

no doubt, provided the young Gounod with the most significant church music influence during his conservatory years.

Le Sueur's career had begun at the age of sixteen, when he started in the first of a string of choir master posts in various provincial choir schools. One of his first appointments was at Saint Martins in Tours, where he incited hostility with his attempts to introduce novel musical practices into the church. He achieved early notoriety as a composer with performances of his *grands motets* at the *Concerts spirituels* in 1782-1786. In 1786 he became choirmaster at the Notre Dame of Paris, remaining there only a year. At the Cathedral he sparked the wrath of the the clergy with his sacred music ideas (see page 20). A scandal ensued and he was dismissed. Though few of his works of this time survive, the composer published numerous treatises which describe his practices. In 1804 Napoleon appointed him to the directorship of the Tuileries Chapel, a post he held until the closing of the chapel in 1830. Although at first a church composer exclusively, Le Sueur would also become a successful opera composer.⁸⁰

Le Sueur's offense to the clergy and parishioners of Notre Dame had stemmed in part from his introduction of soloists and instrumentalists into the liturgy and his turn to a new dramatization of Latin texts. But it was Le Sueur's attitude towards the texts of the usual masses and *grands motets* that was particularly upsetting to the ecclesiastical establishment; he felt that they obstructed his invention. Latin texts were conceived as sacred drama to him, he exercised the freedom to alter or add to sacred texts and dramatize them. His works might be said to mark the birth of the nineteenth-century Latin oratorio and also the death of the *grand motet*, which had been in decline since the middle of the eighteenth-century.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Mongrédien, "Jean-François Le Sueur," 594.

⁸¹ Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism: 1789-1830*, 161.

For a mass commemorating the first anniversary of Leseur's death, Gounod composed an *Agnus Dei* for three solo voices with choir. Berlioz, who was in attendance, wrote in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*:

Especially noteworthy was an *Agnus . . .* by M. Gounod, the youngest of Le Sueur's pupils, which we find to be beautiful, very beautiful. Everything about it is novel and refined: the melodic line, the modulations and the harmony. M. Gounod has shown that much can be expected of him.

Apparently, Gounod did not meet Berlioz in person until 1839, by which time the younger composer had been thoroughly impressed by the music of Berlioz' *Romeo et Juliette*, which he had heard at a rehearsal.⁸² Also in 1839 Gounod made his third attempt at the *Grand Prix de Rome*. In 1837, he had won second prize, but failed to place in 1838. He was successful in 1839, with the cantata *Ferdinand*. At the official ceremony, Gounod's older brother Louis-Urbain, now a successful architect, was also awarded departmental honors from the School of Fine Arts.

Soon afterward, Gounod was approached by the *maître de chapelle* of the church of Saint-Eustache with an offer to compose a mass to be sung in the church before Gounod's departure for Rome. Gounod produced a mass for choir with orchestra for the occasion. Because he did not have enough money to employ a copyist, Gounod's mother aided him in the copying of the music. The first setting of the mass by Gounod was dedicated to the memory of Le Sueur and its premiere was conducted by Gounod himself. Of this early work, Gounod wrote:

My mass was certainly not a remarkable work; it showed the inexperience that might be expected from a young artist as yet a novice in the handling of the rich palette of the orchestra, the acquirement of which demands such long practice. As to the value

⁸² Harding, *Gounod*, 35.

of the musical ideas, considered by themselves, they were conceived with correct feeling, and with the sense of the sacred text; but in the particulars of arrangement and development, there was much left to be desired. Such as it was, however, it brought me much kind encouragement . . .⁸³

One kind of encouragement, in particular, came from none other than Gounod's old headmaster at the Lycée Saint-Louis. A note sent to the Gounod residence shortly after the performance read: 'Bravo! dear young man, whom I knew as a child. All honor to the Gloria, to the Credo and especially to the Sanctus! it is fine , it is truly religious. Bravo! and thanks; you have rendered me truly happy.'⁸⁴

Prix de Rome Sojourn: Rome, 1840-1842

Winning the *Grand Prix de Rome* in music provided Gounod the opportunity to study for two years in Rome and then for a year in Austria and Germany. The sojourn, especially the residency in Rome, gave Gounod the most important, life- and career-shaping experiences of his early years.

On December 5, 1839 Gounod, traveling by mail-stage with fellow Prix de Rome laureates, set off towards Rome.⁸⁵ The route took the group through Lyons, Marseille (where they transferred to a horse-drawn coach), Monaco, Mentone, Pisa, Sienna and Florence before arriving at their final destination on January 27.⁸⁶ Years later Gounod would recall the slow coach journey with

⁸³ Gounod, *Memoires*, 72.

⁸⁴ Gounod *Memoires*, 72-73.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 68-69,75. The other grand prize winners were the artists Hébert (for painting), Gruyère (for sculpture), Le Fuel (for architecture), and Vauthier (for engraving on medals).

⁸⁶ Harding, *Gounod*, 37.

delight, appreciating the leisure and opportunities for sight-seeing and learning that such travel afforded. With nostalgia, Gounod later recalled how such a journey was far more desirable than train travel, which soon would supersede it:

The coach! ("Vetturino!") how many memories are suggested by the word! Poor, old vehicle! crushed, ground down, outstripped by the breathless, dizzy speed of the iron wheels of steam--the coach which permitted one to stop, to look, and to peacefully admire the places through which--if, indeed, not *under* which--the roaring locomotive now drags you like a piece of baggage, and hurls you into space with the fury of a meteor. . .

But no the coach exists no longer. I bless it for having been; it permitted me to enjoy in detail the admirable route from La Corniche, which prepares one so well for the climate and the picturesque beauties of Italy . . . alternating and progressive instruction in nature, which explains the masters, who in their turn, teach one to observe nature. All this we dwelt upon and enjoyed at our leisure for nearly two months.⁸⁷

In Rome, Gounod took up residence with fellow distinguished students of the French Academy at the Villa Medici. At that time, the director of the academy was the painter Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), a man who had known Gounod's father years before. When the new students presented themselves to Ingres, he told Gounod, "You are Gounod! *Dieu!* How much you resemble your father!" He proceeded to praise the talent of the late François Gounod, which greatly pleased Charles.⁸⁸

The young and enthusiastic Gounod, was actually quite disappointed with his first impressions of Rome; for he did not immediately see it as the magnificent place he had envisioned:

Instead of the city that I had imagined--majestic in character, striking in character, striking in appearance, magnificent, full of temples, ancient monuments and picturesque ruins--I found myself

⁸⁷ Charles Gounod. *Autobiographical Reminiscences with Family Letters and Notes on Music*, trans. W. Hely Hutchinson (London: William Heinemann, 1896), 54.

⁸⁸ Gounod *Memoirs*, 78.

in a veritable provincial city, ordinary, colorless, and dirty almost everywhere. My illusions were completely destroyed, and would have taken but little to induce me to give up my studies, pack my trunk, and leave post haste for Paris, there to find all that I loved.⁸⁹

However, Gounod came to love the city and savor its treasures. He went on to recall that:

Of course, Rome contained all that of which I had dreamed, but not in a way to strike one at first sight; it must be sought for; one must look here and there, and question, little by little, the sleeping grandeur of the glorious past, bringing it to life again by familiar acquaintance with those silent ruins--the bones of Roman antiquity.

I was too young then, not alone in years, but also in development of mind; I was too much of a child to seize and comprehend at first sight the profound meaning of that grave and austere city, which had appeared to me so cold, arid, sad, and taciturn, which speaks in a tone so low as to be understood only by ears trained by silence and meditation. Rome can say what the Holy Scriptures represent God as saying with regard to the soul: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her."⁹⁰

One major comfort to Gounod was the enthusiasm for music at the Villa Medici. Ingres was passionately interested in music, and enamored mainly of German works. Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Gluck were among his favorite composers, but he was also fond of the music of Cherubini.⁹¹ The students usually spent Sunday evening in the company of Ingres, in the drawing room of his apartment. Music was a regular part of these gatherings, and Gounod would often play music for the enjoyment of Ingres and himself. Gounod's friendship with Ingres was enhanced also by their mutual interest in the visual arts. Gounod was fond of sketching and did so actively during his spare time in Rome. On one particular occasion, Ingres saw some of his sketches and enlisted Gounod to

⁸⁹ Gounod *Memoirs*, 79.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁹¹ Harding, *Gounod*, 39.

assist him in his studio. While doing this work for Ingres, he praised Gounod as having the potential to return to Rome as the winner of the *Grand Prix* for painting.

Gounod's pursuits in the visual arts, however, clearly remained secondary as he did not desire to attempt to pursue any other field than music. His focus on music in Rome took him to two principal venues: the church and the theater. Of these, it was the church music at the papal court that had the greatest impact on the young composer. According to Gounod, most of the churches in Rome at the time were dominated, musically, by secular-inspired works. Of music at the churches of Rome Gounod writes:

. . . in the matter of religious music, there was hardly more than a single place one could go satisfactorily and profitably, and that place was the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. What went on in the other churches was enough to make one shudder! Outside of the Sistine Chapel, and the one called the Chapel of the Canons in St. Peter's, the music was not even good-for-nothing; it was execrable. One can not imagine a more unsuitable collection of things brought out in the other churches, in the name of the honor of heaven. All the gaudy tinsel of secular music appeared on the stage of these religious masquerades. One hearing was sufficient, and after my first experience I was not found there again.

Gounod regularly attended mass at the Papal, or Sistine, Chapel on Sundays. There he heard Gregorian chant and Renaissance polyphony performed by the Papal Choir. The chapel was, and remains to this day, the only major venue in Western Christendom where this repertory has been used continuously. The origins of the choir date back to pontificate of Gregory I (590-604). During its golden age, generally considered the period between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, members of the choir included renowned composers such as Dufay, Josquin and Palestrina.⁹² In the following

⁹² Boursy, "The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era," 279.

centuries the choir was distinctive for its obedience to the use of traditional music, sung without instrumental accompaniment.

In the nineteenth century the Papal Choir still consisted of unmarried, adult males, including castrati and falsettists. In his article on the mystique of the Papal Choir in the nineteenth century, Richard Boursy points out that during the nineteenth century, while the choir faithfully avoided modern music and eschewed instrumental accompaniment, they sometimes added luxurious ornamentation that could significantly change the sound of a piece. Thus the historical purity of at least some of the works as Gounod first heard them is somewhat unclear. His writings do not reflect any specific remarks on the choir's execution. Any potential performance practice flaws aside, the Chapel was, nonetheless, recognized by countless visitors as a unique historical venue. While nineteenth century accounts of the quality of Papal Choir performances vary, it is clear that for many the chapel services and music represented a lost innocence, purity and renunciation of modern corruption and complexities. According to Boursy, it answered a deep psychological need at the time.⁹³

With its historic musical repertory, famed art by Michelangelo, and important papal ceremonies, the Capella Sistina is one of the world's great sacred spaces. In the nineteenth century it drew significant attention from different types of foreign visitors. Assuming that Gounod attended the ceremonies of Holy Week at the chapel in 1840, he would have been part of a large, diverse group of spectators gathered in Rome from near and far. It was attendance at the Holy Week ceremonies, in particular, that became a popular part of the European 'grand tour' in the nineteenth century.⁹⁴ In addition to the artists and

⁹³ Boursy, "The Mystique of the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Romantic Era," 329.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

intellectuals who attended such observances, there were often a large number of tourists . It appears that only some of those in attendance were faithful participants. Others were curious intellectual observers, while many others attended only to be spectators.

Gounod was one of many foreign musicians to visit the chapel and evaluate its music. He had obviously not been exposed to such music up to this point; for him, the chapel and its choir provided a great musical revelation. In his memoirs, Gounod discusses the intellectual and emotional impact this music had upon him:

I went, therefore, as often as possible to the Sistine Chapel. The music there--severe, ascetic, horizontal, and calm as the line of the ocean, monotonous by reason of serenity, ante-sensuous [*sic*], and, nevertheless, possessing an intensity of contemplation that sometimes amounts to ecstasy--produced at first a strange, almost unpleasant effect upon me. Whether it was the character of the composition itself, or the especial sonority of those particular voices, heard for the first time, or, indeed, that attack, firm to harshness, that forcible hammering that gives such strong relief to the various entrances of the voices into a web so full and close, I can not say, but, at any rate, this impression, however strange it might have been, did not displease me. I went the second time, and still again, and finished by not being able to do without it.

There are works that must be seen or heard in the places for which they were created. The Sistine Chapel is one of these exceptional places, unique of its kind in the world. The colossal genius who created its vaulted ceiling and the wall of the altar [Michelangelo] with his matchless conceptions of the story of Genesis and of the Last Judgment, the painter of prophets, with whom he seemed to be on an equality, will, doubtless, never have his equal . . .

. . . The music of Palestrina seems to be a translation in song of the vast poem of Michael Angelo [*sic*], and I am inclined to think that these two masters explain and illustrate each other in the same light, the spectator developing the listener, and reciprocally, so that, finally, one is tempted to ask if the Sistine Chapel--painting and music--is not the product of one and the same inspiration.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Gounod *Memoirs*, 97-98.

Reflecting specifically on his first impressions of the music of Palestrina, Gounod writes:

The hearing of a work of Palestrina produces something analogous to the reading of one of the grand pages of Bossuet. Nothing is noticed as you go along, but at the end of the road you find yourself carried to prodigious heights; the language, docile and faithful servant of the thought, has not turned you from your own course nor stopped you in its own interest; and you arrive at the summit without the rude shock, without turning from the way and without accident, conducted by a mysterious guide who has concealed from you both himself and his methods. It is this absence of visible means, of worldly artifices, of vain coquetry, that renders the highest works absolutely inimitable. To attain to the same degree of perfection requires the same spirit by which they were conceived, and the same raptures by which they were dictated.⁹⁶

Since Gounod was also obliged to study the secular music in Rome, he surveyed the city's theaters. The venues and the works they presented were, however, of much less interest to Gounod:

The repertoire of the Theater in Rome, at this time, was almost entirely made up of the operas of Bellini, Donizetti, and Mercadante, all of them works, which, in spite of their individual characteristics and the occasional personal inspiration of their authors, were, by the ensemble of means employed, by their conventional style, and by certain forms, degenerated into formulas, so many plants trained around the robust Rossinian trunk, of which they had neither the vitality nor the majesty, and which seemed to disappear under the momentary brilliancy of their ephemeral foliage. There was, besides, no musical profit to be obtained from these representations, which, in point of execution, were much inferior to those at the *Théâtre des Italiens* in Paris, where the same works are interpreted by the best of contemporary artists. . .

I went, therefore, but rarely to the theater, finding it more profitable to study at home the scores of my beloved masters, Gluck's *Iphigenia*, Lully's *Alceste*, Mozart's *Don Juan*, and Rossini's *William Tell*.

Gounod's increasingly deep involvement with sacred music was coupled with a new, growing passion for religion. As a Frenchman, Gounod had

⁹⁶ Gounod *Memoirs*, 99-100.

experienced an essentially Catholic upbringing, though his family was not particularly devout. In addition to his passionate appreciation of the religious venue of the Papal Chapel, there were certain personalities in Rome who guided the young composer's mind towards a fervent religiosity.

Charles Gay had been friend of Gounod's at the Lycée Saint-Louis, where the two sang in the choir. Both went on to study music with Reicha, but Gay ultimately decided to give up any musical ambition and study for the priesthood. Gay had traveled to Rome to study theology and was there when Gounod arrived in 1840. When Gounod attended mass with Gay on the Feast of the Annunciation, he apparently took communion for the first time since childhood.⁹⁷

Gounod was also influenced by the eloquent and persuasive Dominican Friar Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire. Gounod was taken by Gay to hear Lacordaire speak and Gounod was quickly impressed. At this time, Lacordaire had been a recent addition to the Dominican order and was actively recruiting men to join his Brotherhood of Saint John the Evangelist, which he intended to be the Italian branch of the Paris organization.⁹⁸

The absorption of the young composer into religious circles caused Gounod's family and friends to worry that while in Rome he might leave his musical career to pursue a life in the church. His mother urged him that the right path for him was to become an artist with religious interests, rather than a religious man with artistic interests. She felt that the church would be a power that would stifle his career:

I feel well assured of the goodness of your heart and the purity of your intentions, of your loftiness of soul, of your desire to speak only of useful matters and to conform your actions to win the approval of the master of all things; and, nevertheless, in spite of all

⁹⁷ Julien Tiersot, "Charles Gounod: A Centennial Tribute," *Musical Quarterly* IV (1918): 419.

⁹⁸ Harding, *Gounod*, 43.

this, my dear child, while regarding your last letter my heart was sorely troubled by a sort of vague anxiety which it inspired. . . Be constantly on your guard, and assert yourself with all frankness as an artist of religious tendency, but not as a man of religion (with its multifarious observances) who proposes to reserve himself for the career of an artist.⁹⁹

His brother, Urbain, was more forceful in his advice:

Your letters are more like a homily, like a flesh-and-blood sermon, than anything else. You appear to be wholly absorbed and controlled by the influence of your friend Gay. . . It is not for you to assume the mission of converting others--our mother, for example--to observances to which she is no longer accustomed, and the neglect of which has in no way prevented her from doing those things which, in my opinion, are the very essence of true piety.¹⁰⁰

Eventually Gounod came to agree with the views expressed by his family.

His religious manifestations became more calm; he gave up Lacordaire's brotherhood and any desires to enter the priesthood appear to have dissipated. In return for this capitulation, Gounod's mother became a more active member of the church, as her son had desired.¹⁰¹

During the period in which Gounod spent his years in Rome, there was an annual celebration of the birthday of the King of France, Louis-Philippe, at the church of *Saint-Louis des Français*. For each year's celebration, on May 1, it was tradition that the music student currently at the French Academy, by right of the *Prix de Rome*, compose a high mass. The year that Gounod arrived, the mass had been composed by Georges Bousquet. The 1841 mass provided Gounod's turn.¹⁰² In his memoirs, the composer recalled:

⁹⁹ Tiersot, "Charles Gounod: A Centennial Tribute," 419.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 418.

¹⁰¹ Harding, *Gounod*, 45.

¹⁰² Gounod, *Memoirs*, 118.

Fearing that, with my duties as a student, I might not have the time to accomplish a work of this importance, my mother sent me my mass of St. Eustache, entirely copied anew by her own hand from the manuscript of my orchestral score, and from which she did not want to part, nor to risk its transportation through the mail.

My feelings upon receiving this new proof of maternal patience and tenderness may easily be imagined. But I did not make the use of it intended by my mother. It seemed to me more worthy of a conscientious artist to try to do better than that (which was not difficult), and I bravely continued my work upon the new mass already commenced for the king's fête. I composed it and directed its execution myself. This work brought me good luck.¹⁰³

This *Messe à grande orchestre* was scored for a chorus of tenors and basses with orchestra with solo alto and tenor. The work has never been published.¹⁰⁴ Utilizing, as it does, a full orchestra and soloists, it is obvious that Gounod was not inclined to reflect his fascination with the repertory of the Papal Choir for this occasion. It is likely that the style of Palestrina would not have been considered appropriate for or well-received in a celebration at a French church of this time. In any case, Gounod may not have been confident in his ability to compose in the Renaissance polyphonic style he had only recently been introduced to. Another work by Gounod in the Palestrina style composed in 1841 was less successful (see below). The *Messe à grande orchestre* was the only work of Gounod's to be performed in public during his stay in Rome.¹⁰⁵ The mass was so well received that it led to Gounod receiving the title of Honorary Chapel Master for Life of the church of *Saint-Louis des Français*.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 119.

¹⁰⁴ Steven Huebner, "Charles Gounod," 231.

¹⁰⁵ Tiersot, "Charles Gounod: A Centennial Tribute," 419.

¹⁰⁶ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 119.

Students of the Academy were required to send examples of their work to be reviewed periodically at the *Académie des Beaux Arts*. Also in 1841, Gounod, drawing on his inspiration from the repertory of the Papal Choir, had composed a *Te Deum* for unaccompanied voices, which he sent to the committee. The head of the committee, the eminent composer Gaspare Spontini, responded to Gounod in September of 1841 with harsh criticism. He was outraged that Gounod attempted to imitate Palestrina and judged Gounod's composition to be clumsy and monotonous.¹⁰⁷

During the winter of 1840-1841, Gounod made the acquaintance of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, who, with her husband, the eminent painter Wilhelm Hensel, and son, also lodged at the Villa Medici. Gounod became a great admirer of Mrs. Hensel for her intellect and musical ability. Her most significant impact on Gounod as a composer was her introduction to him of works by her brother and other German composers, but most importantly works by Johann Sebastian Bach. In his memoirs, Gounod recalled:

She was gifted with rare ability as a composer, and to her are due several of the *Songs Without Words* published in the piano collection under her brother's name. Monsieur and Madame Henzel [sic] came to the Academy on Sunday evenings. She used to place herself at the piano with good grace and simplicity of those who make music because they love it, and, thanks to her fine talent and prodigious memory, I was brought to the knowledge of a mass of the chefs-d'oeuvres of German music, of which I was completely ignorant at that time; among others, a number of pieces by Sebastian Bach--sonatas, concertos, fugues and preludes--and several of Mendelssohn's compositions, which were, also, a revelation to me from an unknown world.¹⁰⁸

Gounod's stay in Rome was to be completed at the end of 1841; however, not willing to depart just yet, Gounod made an appeal to stay longer. With the

¹⁰⁷ Harding, *Gounod*, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 126.

approval of the director (now the artist Schnetz, who replaced Ingres in April of 1841), Gounod was allowed to stay an additional six months before traveling to Vienna and Germany (as prescribed by the *Prix de Rome* program). He left Rome in June of 1842:

I shall not attempt to describe my sorrow when the time came to say farewell to that Academy, those dear comrades, to that Rome where I felt that I had taken root. My fellow students accompanied me as far as the Ponte Molle, and after having embraced them, I mounted the coach which was to *tear* me away--yes, that is, indeed, the word--from those two blessed, happy years in the Promised Land. . . as long as the route allowed, my eyes remained fixed upon the cupola of St. Peter's, that summit of Rome and the center of the whole world. When the hills concealed it entirely from my sight, I fell into a deep reverie and wept like a child.¹⁰⁹

The Sojourn Continues: A Year in Austria and Germany

Gounod traveled through Florence, Venice and Graz before finally arriving in Vienna. After leaving Rome, he was not exceedingly enthusiastic about his stay in Vienna: 'I arrived at Graetz, [Graz] and then at Olmutz, whence the railroad carried me to Vienna, my first stop in Germany [*sic*] for which I cared only to have done with as quickly as possible, in order to shorten the exile that separated me from home and mother.'¹¹⁰

His first thoroughly pleasing experience in Vienna was at the opera house, a performance of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, conducted by Otto Nicolai. After the performance Gounod was able to become acquainted with some of the musicians. Through a French-speaking member of the orchestra, Gounod was introduced to Count Stockhammer, the influential president of the Vienna Philharmonic.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 131.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹¹¹ Harding, *Gounod*, 48.

Gounod very quickly gained recognition as a composer of sacred music. After being introduced to Gounod's mass written for *Saint-Louis des Français*, the count offered to have it produced at the church of St. Charles (Karlskirche) in Vienna by the musicians of the Philharmonic. This performance took place on September 14, 1842. The count was sufficiently impressed by Gounod to ask him to compose a requiem to be performed on the Solemnity of All Souls (November 2). He had only six weeks to complete the work, which he did successfully.¹¹² In a letter to Hector Lefuel, dated August 21, 1842, Gounod writes:

I should have been glad to tell you, a long time ago, the good fortune that has happened to me here--that is the the opportunity of having performed with grand orchestra, on the 8th of September, in one of the churches of Vienna, my mass written in Rome, and played there at *St. Louis-des-Français* at the king's fête. It is a great privilege, and one which has never before been accorded to any student. I owe it to the acquaintance of some very kind artists who have presented me to people of influence. In Vienna, I work; I see but very few people. I hardly ever go out; I am up to the neck with a requiem with grand orchestra, which will probably be performed in Germany [*sic*] on the 2d of November. An offer has already been made me for the performance of my requiem in the church where my mass will be played, but as I do not know how well I shall be satisfied with the execution of the latter, I have not yet decided with regard to the requiem.¹¹³

The Requiem was well-received by its Viennese audience. Critics praised Gounod's use of daring, yet successful harmonies. They foresaw a promising future for Gounod.¹¹⁴ A composer/critic named Becker said that the work showed a grandeur of conception that was rare at the time.¹¹⁵ Later Gounod

¹¹² Gounod, *Memoirs*, 144.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 214-215.

¹¹⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 48.

¹¹⁵ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 146.

noted above the Dies Irae, in his manuscript score, 'Mendelssohn has done me the honor of writing to me that this piece might have been composed by Cherubini (see page 62).'¹¹⁶

After the Requiem was completed, Gounod fell ill with a severe inflammation of the throat. Not wanting to alarm his mother, Gounod informed only his friends of his condition. One friend, the artist Desgoffe, traveled from Paris to Vienna and stayed with Gounod for no less than three weeks.¹¹⁷ Around this time Gounod received another commission from Count Stockhammer for the Vienna Philharmonic Society, for an unaccompanied mass to be performed during Lent at the Karlskirche. With this work, Gounod returned to a Sistine Chapel style for the first time since Spontini had criticized his *Te Deum* of 1841. Because of this task, and perhaps also due to his health, Gounod extended his stay in Vienna. The mass was eventually performed on Easter at the Karlskirche. Gounod left Vienna soon after fulfilling this engagement, in April of 1843.

After a stop in Prague and Dresden, where he stayed briefly to view "the fine museum there," Gounod proceeded to Berlin.¹¹⁸ There he was able to enjoy a reunion with Fanny and Wilhelm Hensel. Since their time with Gounod at the Villa Medici, Fanny and her family held the young composer in high esteem. They were impressed not only by his musical talent and judgment but also by his enthusiasm for musical performances and discussions, as well as his appreciation of German poetry. In talking about Gounod's future, they suggested to him that the greatest potential for French music lay in the oratorio. Gounod agreed with this idea, telling them that he had already thought of

¹¹⁶ Harding, *Gounod*, 49.

¹¹⁷ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 146-147

¹¹⁸ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 148.

composing an oratorio, *Judith*.¹¹⁹ If he did follow through with this idea, the work does not survive.

After only a few weeks in Berlin Gounod became seriously ill with a digestive affliction. The Hensels' physician attended to Gounod. Since at this point Gounod's planned homecoming was not far off, he was very concerned with keeping to his schedule. In his memoirs, Gounod recalls giving the doctor the following ultimatum:

Monsieur, I have a mother in Paris who is waiting for my return, and now counting the intervening hours. If she knows that I am detained from her by illness, she will set out on the journey by herself, and might lose her senses on the way. She is advanced in years. I will give her a reason for my detention here, but the delay must be short. Fifteen days is all I can allow you in which to put me under the ground or to set me on my feet.¹²⁰

Just slightly more than two weeks later, Gounod departed from Berlin. With a letter of introduction from Fanny, Gounod traveled to Leipzig, where her famous brother resided. Though only nine years older than Gounod, Felix Mendelssohn was already a renowned composer and conductor. He was kind enough to devote four days to Gounod, during which time the two discussed the younger composer's studies and work. It was during this visit that Mendelssohn complimented the *Dies Irae* from Gounod's *Requiem*, saying "My friend, this part might be signed by Cherubini."¹²¹ Gounod played some of his works at the piano for Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was director of the celebrated Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchester, which was then finished with the year's concert season. For Gounod, Mendelssohn assembled the musicians of the orchestra for a special

¹¹⁹ Harding, *Gounod*, 49-50.

¹²⁰ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 149.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

performance of Mendelssohn's Scottish Symphony . Mendelssohn was generous enough to give Gounod a handwritten copy of the score of the symphony before the latter departed.¹²²

Mendelssohn was also responsible for acquainting Gounod with the organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach. He did this at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, upon the very organ used by Bach:

He [Mendelssohn] was an organist of the first order, and wished to acquaint me with several of the numerous and admirable compositions of Sebastian Bach for the instrument, over which he reigned supreme. For this purpose he ordered to be examined and put in good condition the old organ of St. Thomas, formerly played by Bach himself; and there, for more than two hours, he revealed to me wonders of which I had no previous conception; then, to cap the climax of his gracious kindness, he made me a gift of a collection of motets by this same Bach, for whom he had a religious veneration, according to whose school he had been formed from his childhood, and whose grand oratorio of *The Passion According to St. Matthew* he directed and accompanied from memory when only fourteen years old.¹²³

The young Gounod was deeply impressed by Mendelssohn and his kindness. Of the attention Mendelssohn granted him he recalled:

Mendelssohn received me admirably. I use this word purposely, in order to express the gracious condescension with which a man of such distinction treated a young fellow who could have been nothing more in his opinion than a pupil.

Of Mendelssohn's kind words on Gounod's *Dies Irae*, he recalled: 'Words like these, coming from such a great master, are real decorations, and one carries them with more pride than any number of ribbons.'¹²⁴ The final words on his

¹²² Gounod, *Memoirs*, 151.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

encounter with Mendelssohn, to be found in Gounod's memoirs, offer the following reflection:

Such was the extreme courtesy shown me by that great artist, that eminent musician, who was taken away in the flower of his age--thirty-eight years--from the admiration that he had won, and from the master-works reserved for him by the future. Strange destiny of genius, even the most pleasing! It required the death of him who wrote the exquisite compositions, that are to-day the delight of the subscribers to the concerts of the Conservatory, to win for them favor in the ears that had formerly rejected them.¹²⁵

With the conclusion of his visit to Leipzig, Gounod's tour as a *Prix de Rome* laureate came to an end. After setting out from the city of Bach and Mendelssohn, Gounod finally returned to Paris on May 25, 1843.

Position at L'Église des Missions étrangères

During Gounod's absence his mother had relocated to a residence in the parish of the Église des Missions étrangères (Church of the Foreign Missions). Residing also in the same building was Gounod's old friend Charles Gay. Though the ecclesiastical influence Gay had had on Gounod while they were residing in Rome had caused Gounod's mother some alarm, she was now on good terms with Gay. With her son's encouragement, she had even started theology lessons with Gay. Gay was pleased with her newfound religiosity and admired her generosity. She devoted most of her free time to charitable pursuits and religious study and writing.¹²⁶

Also living in the same building was the abbé Dumarsais, another acquaintance from Gounod's days at the *Lycée Saint-Louis*. Dumarsais had been Gounod's chaplain at the *Lycée* and was now in charge of the nearby *Église des*

¹²⁵ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 153.

¹²⁶ Harding, *Gounod*, 50.

Missions étrangères.¹²⁷ While Gounod was in Rome, his mother and Dumarsais had arranged for Gounod to be appointed organist and *maître de chapelle* at the *Missions* church upon his return. Gounod had received the offer when he was living in the Villa Medici.

Gounod accepted the position under the condition that as the director of music, he would have complete control over the music to be played. He was apparently well aware of the fact that the traditional church music styles to which he had become so strongly attached during his sojourn would not immediately be welcomed in his Parisian parish:

I did not wish to receive advice, and much less orders, either from the curé, the vestry, or anyone else whomsoever. I had my ideas, my sentiments, my convictions; in short, I wished to be the "curé of music"; otherwise, not at all. This was radical, but my conditions had been accepted; there was no objection to them. Habits are, however, tenacious. The musical *régime* to which my predecessor had accustomed the good parishioners was quite opposite to the tastes and tendencies that I had brought back from Rome and Germany. Palestrina and Bach were my gods, and I was going to burn what the people had until then worshiped [*sic*].¹²⁸

Gounod's resources at the *Missions* church were modest. The organ was 'very mediocre and limited,' and his choir consisted of three men and one boy.¹²⁹ With impressions of the music of the Papal Chapel and the sacred works of J. S. Bach still fresh in his mind, the new *maître de chapelle* endeavored to initiate, at *Missions étrangères*, a revival of traditional liturgical music. The congregation, however, was accustomed to undemanding, more entertaining music. They were slow to grasp the complex, solemn pieces, such as works by Palestrina, that

¹²⁷ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 156.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 156-157.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

Gounod introduced.¹³⁰ In his memoirs Gounod recalls:

I finally surmised, from a certain coldness and reserve on the part of the parishioners, that I was not entirely in the good graces of my audience. I was not mistaken. Toward the end of the first year my curé called me to him and confessed that he had to suffer complaints and fault-finding from the members of the congregation. Monsieur So-and-So and Madame So-and-So did not find the musical service in the least degree gay or entertaining. The curé then asked me to "modify my style," and to make concessions.¹³¹

Gounod reminded the curé of his original condition and refused to relent.

He immediately resigned:

I am here not to consult your parishioners; I am here to elevate them. If 'my style' does not please them the case is very plain. I will resign; you may recall my predecessor, and everybody will be satisfied. Take it as it is or leave it alone.

Gounod's resignation was accepted, however, later the same day Dumarsais contacted Gounod for further discussion. Gounod remained firm, willing to stay only on his original terms. In the end, the curé conceded the argument and Gounod stayed, retaining full musical control. The parishioners of the *Missions étrangères* continued to hear a steady program of Gounod's austere church music selections, and their attitudes gradually softened: 'After that, my most determined opponents became, little by little, my warmest supporters, and the small additions successively made to my salary indicated the sympathies of my hearers.'¹³²

Gounod spent nearly five years in his position at the *Missions étrangères* church. James Harding cites these years as one of the happiest periods of Gounod's life:

¹³⁰ Harding, *Gounod*, 51.

¹³¹ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 157-158.

¹³² Gounod, *Memoirs*, 160.

Watched over by his mother and brother Urbain he passed the days sheltered from the pressures of the secular world. The *Église des Missions étrangères* became a refuge where, for perhaps the only time in his existence, he was able to harmonize with complete success the dominant passions which absorbed him: music and religion. He lived in a mood of calm. No serpent troubled his Eden.¹³³

During his years at the church, however, Gounod lived on the periphery of the Parisian musical scene. He was rarely involved in concerts and his name was rarely mentioned in newspapers.¹³⁴ Certainly his church post alone could never bring him great distinction in the musical life of Paris.

Gounod distanced himself further from the mainstream during his third year at the *Missions étrangères*. At this time he experienced another strong pull towards life in the clergy: 'I . . . felt a strong desire to enter ecclesiastical life.'. In addition to his passionate devotion to church music and his frequent contact with Charles Gay, Gounod was, once again, attending and studying sermons by Lacordaire, who had returned to France.¹³⁵ Gounod assumed certain tendencies that suggested a direction towards the priesthood. These included the use of a monogram in a devotional-art style on his letters, and the signing of letters as 'abbé Ch. Gounod.' In 1846, while on a holiday with Gay and Dumarsais, Gounod succeeded in converting a Protestant man to the Catholic faith, and acted as his sponsor. Also in 1846, a rumor that Gounod had taken holy orders was reported in an issue of *Revue et Gazette musicale*.¹³⁶ Gounod received permission from the Archbishop of Paris to attend lectures at the Carmelite

¹³³ Harding, *Gounod*, 52.

¹³⁴ Huebner, *The Operas of Charles Gounod*, 24.

¹³⁵ Harding, *Gounod*, 54.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 54

Seminary of Saint-Sulpice as a day student.¹³⁷ He did so starting in October of 1847.¹³⁸ That winter, he even appeared at the seminary dressed in clerical garb.¹³⁹

In the end, Gounod realized that he was not meant to follow the path towards the priesthood: 'But I was strangely mistaken as to my own nature and my true vocation. I realized in time that it would be impossible for me to live without my art, and, laying aside the garb for which I was not adapted, I entered again into the world.'¹⁴⁰ Another factor may have contributed to Gounod's decision to abandon an ecclesiastical pursuit: the political events of 1848 made a life in the church much less attractive. February of that year brought the revolution that ended the reign of Louis-Philippe and by June there was fighting in the streets.¹⁴¹ The future of the government and the future of the clergy in France were uncertain. Gounod left his position at the *Église des Missions étrangères* just after the revolution broke.

Gounod's surviving output from his period of employment at the *Église des Missions étrangères* is small. He is known to have produced a great deal of music for use at church services, but little was preserved. With his efforts to introduce traditional liturgical music to the *Missions étrangères* congregation and his enthusiastic philosophical and theological pursuits consuming much of his time, he perhaps allocated a limited amount of time to composing new works. The instrumentation for the two masses (1845 and 1846) reflect Gounod's taste for austere music and the limited resources at the *Missions étrangères*. Gounod's

¹³⁷ Huebner, "Gounod," 216.

¹³⁸ Harding, *Gounod*, p. 55.

¹³⁹ Gounod/Crocker, *Memoirs*, p. 164.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁴¹ Harding, *Gounod*, p. 56-57.

first two published works were sacred pieces from this time. The extant compositions from this time are as follows:¹⁴²

Sacred Works

Messe in C for TTBB Choir and organ (1845, unpublished)

Messe brève et salut in C minor-E-flat major for TTBB Choir,
unaccompanied (published as op. 1, 1846)

Offices de la Semaine Sainte sur la psalmodie rythmée de l'Epistolier
parisien (published as op. 2, 1847)

Secular Works

Between c. 1840 and 1848 Gounod composed six *melodies* for horn and piano.

The year 1848 marks a transition to the second phase of Gounod's career. Up to this point he had concerned himself almost exclusively with sacred music, but in the following years he delved into the mainstream, specifically the theater. It was not possible to achieve prominence in the musical world as a mere *maître de chapelle* at a small parish, nor would it have been possible holding only that position even at a major church. There is no evidence that Gounod desired a position at a more important church, and the political unrest of the time may have made even a higher-profile church position a less than secure opportunity. Gounod had always had a love of music of the stage and concert hall, but only now was he ready to make his first significant compositional forays into these areas. Reflecting on this time Gounod writes:

¹⁴² Huebner, "Gounod," 231.

I had filled a position for four years and a half, which, while very useful and profitable in the way of musical studies, had, nevertheless, the disadvantage of leaving me to vegetate, as far as my career and future were concerned, in a position without prospect of advancement. For a composer, there is hardly but one road to follow [*sic*] in order to make a name, and that is the theater.

The theater is the place where one finds the opportunity and the way to speak everyday to the public; it is a daily and permanent exposition opened to the musician.

Religious music and the symphony are certainly of a higher order, abstractly considered, than dramatic music, but the opportunities and the means of making one's self known along those lines are rare, and appeal only to an intermittent public, rather than to a regular public, like that of the theater. And then what an infinite variety for a dramatic author in choice of subjects! What a field opened to the fancy, to imagination, and to romance! The theater tempted me. I was then nearly thirty years of age, and was impatient to try my powers upon this new field of battle.¹⁴³

First Stage Works and London Debut

Gounod was fortunate to gain the support of the Belgian violinist François Seghers, founder of the *Société de Sainte-Cécile*. Through the concerts of the Société Seghers promoted contemporary composers and their music while at other venues, such as at the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire*, the standard fare was dominated by composers of the past.¹⁴⁴ Thanks to Seghers' society, Gounod was able to have a number of pieces performed in public, and he was able to make important connections with the Parisian musical scene.

In 1849 Gounod met the celebrated singer Pauline Viardot, whose family were friends of Seghers. Pauline Viardot was the daughter of the famed tenor Manuel Garcia; she had siblings who were successful musicians and she was married to the critic and impresario Louis Viardot. After examining some of Gounod's compositions, she encouraged his desire to write his first opera, even

¹⁴³ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 166-167.

¹⁴⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 59.

offering to sing the principal role.¹⁴⁵ Viardot's support aided Gounod in obtaining a libretto from the writer Émile Auger, who had been a childhood acquaintance of Gounod's. She also helped him get an engagement with the Paris Opera for a short work, which would become the opera *Sapho*.¹⁴⁶

Just as Gounod was able to begin work on the opera, *Sapho*, in April of 1850, his brother Louis-Urbain died suddenly after a short illness. He left a wife, one child and one child expected. Gounod had to postpone the start of his work as he tended to his mother, and his brother's family and business affairs. In an effort to provide some comfort and peace to Gounod and his mother, Pauline Viardot invited them to stay in her country home. Around a month after the death of Louis-Urbain, Gounod and his mother left Paris and Gounod worked on *Sapho* at Viardot's through September.

In 1850 Gounod had also met, through Pauline Viardot, the English critic Henry F. Chorley. In Chorley, who wrote for a journal entitled *The Athenaeum*, Gounod gained an influential supporter who welcomed the composer's English debut in early 1850.¹⁴⁷ On January 5 of that year, Gounod was in London for a concert at St. Martin's Hall that included four of his compositions. According to a review by Chorley in *The Athenaeum*, the selections included a *Libera me*, a *Sanctus*, a *Benedictus* and a dramatic piece featuring a bass solo, entitled *Pierre L'Ermite*.¹⁴⁸

The January 26 edition of the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, which announced the impending performance of *Sapho* (to occur in April), also reprinted the

¹⁴⁵ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 168.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 170.

¹⁴⁷ Harding, *Gounod*, 64.

¹⁴⁸ J.-G. Prod'homme and A. Dandelot, *Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1911), 113-114.

Athenaeum account of Gounod's London performances. The review reveals Chorley's intense enthusiasm for Gounod's music and potential career:

Nos souvenirs de critique ne nous rappellent aucun début fait dans de semblables circonstances: une musique entièrement nouvelle, d'un compositeur entièrement inconnu, devant un auditoire presque entièrement composé d'artistes musiciens, nationaux ou étrangers, parmi lesquels à peine quelques-uns pouvaient avoir quelques bienveillance. Le succès, cependant, a été complet, décisif, et, comme le disait près de nous un vétéran de l'art musical, plus habitué à donner son attention que ses éloges: il marque le commencement d'une nouvelle carrière en musique.

Des quatre compositions soumises au jugement du public, nous ne parlerons que des trois avec accompagnement, l'exécution en a été si défectueuse par suite de l'abaissement successif du ton, qu'on n'a pu s'en former une opinion juste, si ce n'est celle d'un pur et grand style dans le maniement des voix.

Le *Libera me* (choeur final d'un Requiem) est sévère, digne et solennel. Il offre, entre autres, sur le verset *Requiem aeternam* une combinaison de voix qui est à la fois neuve, grandiose et saisissante.

Le *Sanctus*, fragment d'une messe, composition plus longue et plus importante, est le morceau qui a définitivement assuré le succès de M. Gounod. Dans son ordonnance et ses détails brille la même originale beauté. Il commence par un solo de ténor dont le mélodie est répétée par l'orchestre, le choeur accompagnant; puis la seconde partie du solo est suivie d'un crescendo admirablement conduit, qui ramène le thème primitif, exécuté cette fois par la masse de l'orchestre et des la nef de Saint-Pierre de Rome ne serait pas trop grande.

Au *sanctus* succède un mouvement de fugue bref et nourri sur l'Hosannah. Le *Benedictus* pour soprano solo accompagné de l'orgue et répété par le choeur, est écrit dans le vieux style du chant grégorien. Pour revenir aux idées musicales de ce morceau, nous n'avons pas souvenir d'une mélodie plus simple, plus suave et plus élevée que celle du *Sanctus*.

A la plénitude de la beauté mélodique, s'unissent une ferveur et une dignité religieuse qui rendent le chant tout à fait inapplicable à un sujet profane. Cette musique ne nous rappelle aucun autre compositeur ancien ou modern, soit par la forme, soit par le chant, soit par l'harmonie: elle n'est pas nouvelle, si nouveau veut dire bizarre ou baroque; elle n'est pas vieille, si vieux veut dire sec et raide, s'il suffit d'étaler un aride échafaudage de science

derrière lequel ne s'élève pas une belle construction; c'est l'oeuvre d'un artiste accompli, c'est la poesie d'un nouveau poète. . .¹⁴⁹

In all our critical memories we cannot recall a début made under similar circumstances: an entirely new music, of an entirely unknown composer, in front of an audience almost entirely composed of musical artists, national or foreign, among whom only a few might have some benevolence. Success, however, was complete, decisive, and as a veteran of musical art more accustomed to giving attention than praise sitting near us said; it marks the beginning of a new career in music.

Of the four compositions submitted to the judgement of the public, we will speak only about the three with accompaniment, the execution of which was so defective in consequence of the successive lowering of the tone, that one could not create a just opinion, if it were not for the pure and great style in the handling of the voices.

The *Libera me* (final chorus of a Requiem) is severe, dignified and solemn. It offers, among other things, on the line *Requiem aeternam* a combination of voices which is at the same time new, imposing and gripping.

The *Sanctus*, fragment of a mass, a longer and more important composition, is the piece which definitively ensured the success of Mr. Gounod. In its order and its details the same original beauty shines. It starts with a tenor solo, the melody of which is repeated by the orchestra, with an accompanying chorus; then the second part of the solo is followed by a crescendo admirably conducted, which brings back the original theme, carried out this time by the whole of the orchestra, and as though the nave of Saint Peter's in Rome would not be too large for it.

The *Sanctus* is followed by a short fugal movement nourished by the *Hosannah*. The *Benedictus* for soprano solo accompanied by the organ and repeated by the chorus, is written in the old style of Gregorian chant. To return to the musical ideas of this piece, we do not recall a simpler melody, more suave and more elevated than that of the *Sanctus*.

With the abundance of melodic beauty, an enthusiasm and a religious dignity are united which make the piece completely inapplicable to a profane subject. This music does not remind us of

¹⁴⁹ Prod'homme and Dandelot, *Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. 1, 113-114.

any other old or modern composer, either in terms of the form, the melody, or the harmony: it is not new, if new means odd or baroque; it is not old, if old means dry and stiff, if it is enough to display an arid scaffolding of science behind which a beautiful construction does not rise; it is the work of an accomplished artist, it is the poetry of a new poet.

The *Libera me* performed on this occasion was most likely from Gounod's 1842 Requiem, as there is not record of another requiem written before this time, nor of a surviving separate *Libera me* in Gounod's catalog. The final piece, *Pierre L'Ermite*, foreshadows a number included in Gounod's opera *La Nonne Sanglante* of 1854.

The *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* appear to have been compositions new at this time, since none of Gounod's masses to this point have a solo tenor and solo soprano. In view of the lavish praise given these movements as heard in London, it would have seemed a mistake for Gounod not to repeat or expand on these pieces at a later time. However, Gounod's next full mass, the *Messe aux Orphéonistes*, originally composed in 1853 does not utilize these solo voices or orchestra. The *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* (1855), is the closest mass, chronologically, to utilize these solo voices. It is apparent, from these circumstances, that the music described here is an early version of the Sanctus-Benedictus setting used in the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*. The features described here closely parallel the music in the Saint Cecilia mass:

Sanctus

Tenor solo on a simple melody, repeated by orchestra and choir

Impressive crescendo leading to a statement of the main theme by the full orchestra (and choir?)

Benedictus

Soprano solo, described as chant-like (Here with organ accompaniment

but in *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* the solo is accompanied by the orchestra), repeated by the choir.

On January 4, 1854 Seghers' *Société de Sainte-Cécile* presented a concert which included a *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, likely the same as first heard in England. In the *Revue et Gazette* musical of January 11, Henri Blanchard reported that the *Sanctus* was not retrospective of Palestrina, nor without a high quality of construction (*ou sans règle ni unité de pensée*). While he thought it grand and inspired, he felt the *Benedictus* to be less striking.¹⁵⁰ The *Société de Sainte-Cécile* repeated the *Sanctus* on Good Friday of 1855 (April 6).

In an article entitled "*La musique religieuse en L'année 1855*," in *La Musique a l'église*, Joseph d'Ortigue discusses the new *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* but refers to an earlier article for discussion of the *Sanctus*.¹⁵¹ That earlier account might have been d'Ortigue's review of the April 6 performance, published the *Journal des Débats* of April 15, 1855. Like Chorley and Blanchard, d'Ortigue was impressed by the *Sanctus*, and like Chorley expressed admiration for the large crescendo in the *Sanctus*.¹⁵² Both Chorley and d'Ortigue make reference to a fugue in Gounod's *Sanctus*. D'Ortigue reports that after the *récit* and fugue the principal theme is reprised by the whole choir and orchestra ("*...après le récit et la fugue, le theme principal est repris par tout le choeur et tout l'orchestre ...*"). What either of them refer to is unclear since there is ultimately no actual fugue in the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*. Could there once have been a fugal section? Or might d'Ortigue have been referring to the very brief imitative section that proceeds the crescendo in the *Sanctus*, as heard in the *Messe de Sainte Cécile*?

¹⁵⁰ Prod'homme and Dandelot, *Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. 1, 132-133.

¹⁵¹ Joseph d'Ortigue, "*La musique religieuse en L'année 1855*," in *La Musique a l'église*, (Paris: Didier et Ce., 1861), 256.

¹⁵²Prod'homme and Dandelot, *Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. 1, 164-165.

Gounod was occupied through much of early 1851 with the preparation of *Sapho*, which was premiered at the *Opéra* on April 16.¹⁵³ The opera enjoyed a generally positive public reception but a lukewarm reception by much of the critical press. The work did not follow the formulas that many of Gounod's contemporaries used, such as elaborate stage effects or a ballet, and it was restrained in its musical expression.¹⁵⁴ One positive review was that written by Berlioz which, Gounod recalled as "one of the highest and most flattering tributes that I have had the honor and good fortune to gather in my career."¹⁵⁵

Though *Sapho* was not a great success and closed after only seven performances, the work led to further professional opportunities for Gounod. On the evening of the premiere of *Sapho*, Gounod was invited by François Ponsard to compose incidental music for his production of the tragedy *Ulysse* at the Comédie-Française.¹⁵⁶ Gounod was also engaged to arrange and adapt music by Lully for a performance of Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* at the Comédie-Française in January of 1852. The premiere of *Ulysse* occurred in June of 1852.¹⁵⁷

Marriage and Significant Career Appointments

Also in June of 1852, Gounod married Anna Zimmermann, daughter of the respected piano professor Pierre Zimmermann. Zimmermann had been Gounod's teacher at the Conservatoire and was now a supporter of the young composer. Ironically, according to Gounod's biographers, the marriage into

¹⁵³ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 175.

¹⁵⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 68-69.

¹⁵⁵ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 177.

¹⁵⁶ Huebner, "Gounod," 217.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 230.

which the intensely sentimental and philosophical Gounod entered appears to have been driven less by passion than by comfort and convenience.¹⁵⁸ In the ensuing years, the marriage would undergo various difficulties. Huebner writes that Gounod rarely acknowledged creative or intellectual stimulation from his wife.¹⁵⁹

The marriage to Anna Zimmermann led to the end of Gounod's friendship with the Viardot family. Although the Viardots had known the Zimmermanns for years, the Zimmermanns were uncomfortable with Gounod's friendship with Pauline, perhaps even believing rumors that Gounod had had a romantic relationship with Pauline. In any case, Gounod distanced himself from the Viardots, arousing resentment and resulting in the loss of one of his most important advocates.

Soon after his marriage, Gounod received an important dual career appointment. He was given the directorship of the Paris Orphéon, an association of choral societies whose membership was drawn from the working class and lower bourgeoisie. He held this position until 1859. In addition to this post, he assumed the directorship of vocal instruction in Parisian Public schools.¹⁶⁰

During his years directing the *Orphéon*, Gounod gained experience in composing choral works for large ensembles and also composing patriotic choral works. Of particular significance was Gounod's setting of the national anthem of the Second Empire, *Vive l'Empereur!*¹⁶¹ Of his *Orphéon* and educational posts Gounod recalled:

¹⁵⁸ Huebner, "Gounod," 217.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

In this position I replaced M. Hubert, pupil and successor to Wilhem, founder of that branch of instruction. . .

These functions, filled during eight years and a half, exercised a most happy influence over my musical career, by the experience they afforded me in the direction and handling of large vocal forces, treated in a style simple and favorable to their best sonority.¹⁶²

The leadership of the *Orphéon* then occupied the greater part of my time. I wrote for the large choral reunions of the organization a number of compositions, of which some were especially remarked; and among those are two masses, one of which was performed under my direction, June 12, 1853, in the church of *St. Germain-l'Auxerrois* in Paris.¹⁶³

Gounod's choral output in this period was large, including several sacred works for choir *a capella*. Yet only one mass was composed for the *Orphéon*, the *Messe aux Orphéonistes* of 1853 (later *Messe no. 1 aux Orphéonistes*, 1863), originally set for unaccompanied voices. Since this mass was written for a large choir comprised mainly of amateurs, Gounod was probably not able to delve as deeply into the severe Palestrina style that would have been his church music ideal, though the *Messe aux Orphéonistes* was an unaccompanied work.

Aside from the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, the *Messe aux Orphéonistes* was the only mass composed during the 1850s. It was first heard in June of 1853 and brought Gounod recognition as a composer and conductor.¹⁶⁴ Also in June, Gounod's wife gave birth to their first child, a daughter who did not survive infancy.

One of Gounod's most performed products, the *Méditation sur le premier prélude de Bach* was heard in public for the first time in April of 1853. This small piece, which achieved swift and lasting fame, had started as an improvised trifle

¹⁶² Gounod, *Memoirs*, 84.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁶⁴ Harding, *Gounod*, 82.

not meant for serious use. Gounod's father-in-law, having become enchanted with it, promoted it and the *Meditation* found its way into the concert hall. Originally an instrumental piece, in 1859 Gounod set the *Ave Maria* to the melody he had composed above Bach's prelude. It is in this form that the piece is most often heard.

During this busy time Gounod received assistance from two admiring, younger composers who would later achieve fame. Georges Bizet, who had first met Gounod when Bizet was a student of Pierre Zimmermann, assisted (at the organ) in early performances of the *Meditation* and also with various tasks such as arrangements and transcriptions. Such assistance was also provided by the younger composer Camille Saint-Saëns.¹⁶⁵

Gounod's third theatrical composition was the opera in five acts, *La Nonne Sanglante*. Berlioz had set a few scenes of the libretto by Eugène Scribe and Germain Delavigne, but had abandoned it, and the work was also dropped by other composers including Verdi, Meyerbeer and Halévy, before Gounod agreed to the project in 1852.¹⁶⁶ Gounod composed the opera during 1852-1853 and rehearsals began in October of 1853. Due to delays, however, the opera was not performed until October of 1854. The critical reception was warm; Adolphe Adam, for example, declared that if Gounod had had a German name impossible to pronounce, he would by now have become a great man.¹⁶⁷ The strongest criticisms were aimed at the libretto, not the score.¹⁶⁸ After eleven performances, however, the run of the opera was ended by a new director at the *Opéra*:

¹⁶⁵ Harding, *Gounod*, 81-82.

¹⁶⁶ Huebner, "Gounod," 218.

¹⁶⁷ Harding, *Gounod*, 87.

¹⁶⁸ Huebner, "Gounod," 218.

It had only eleven representations [performances], after which Roqueplan [the director who engaged Gounod for the project] was replaced in the direction of the *Opéra* by M. Crosnier. The new director having declared that he would not allow "such filth" to be played any longer, the piece disappeared from the billboards, and has never been seen there since.¹⁶⁹

Though they had discussed another collaboration, after the librettist Scribe had read some of the negative press concerning *La Nonne Sanglante*, he rejected the possibility of working with Gounod again.¹⁷⁰

For his part, Gounod recognized that *La Nonne Sanglante* reflected his maturing compositional skill:

I think that my part of this work showed substantial progress in the employment of the orchestra. Certain pages therein are treated with a surer knowledge of instrumentation, and with a more experienced hand. Several parts are well colored; among others, the song of the *Crusade* by Peter the Hermit and chorus in the first act; in the second act, the symphonic prelude of the *Ruins*, and the march of the *Ghosts*; in the third act, a cavatina by the tenor, and his duo with the *Nonne*.¹⁷¹

After his *La Nonne Sanglante* ordeal, Gounod retreat^(e), to some extent, from the operatic scene. His next opera, *Le médecin malgré lui*, would not be composed until 1857 and premiered the following year. ✓

1855 - 1856: A Short Break From the Stage, a Holiday
and the Messe de Sainte-Cécile

In the year following the first performances of *La Nonne Sanglante*, Gounod occupied himself with substantial compositional projects in diverse genres, many of which met with considerable success. In addition to the two symphonies and

¹⁶⁹ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 185.

¹⁷⁰ Harding, *Gounod*, p. 88.

¹⁷¹ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 186.

the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, Gounod composed and published his first set of six *melodies* during this year.¹⁷² He also composed numerous small choral and vocal works during this time. The concert hall and salon provided a fruitful respite for the composer:

I consoled myself for my mortification by writing a symphony (No. 1 in D) for the Society of Young artists, just founded by Padeloup, and whose concerts took place in the *Salle Herz, rue de la Victoire*. This symphony was well received, and I was thus encouraged to write another for the same society (No. 2 in E-Flat), which also met with certain success.¹⁷³

Gounod had not distinguished himself as a composer of orchestral music before 1855; there are very few instrumental works by Gounod dating before that year. His principal experience in orchestral writing had been in the context of his early masses, sacred music and works for the stage, yet it was at this stage of his career that he felt confident enough to pursue the symphonic genre. The years 1855-1856 saw the premieres of Gounod's only two symphonies. The first symphony was premiered in Paris during February of 1855 and achieved success sufficient to warrant a total of eight performances.¹⁷⁴

During the summer of 1855 Gounod vacationed near Avranches, in Normandy, on property owned by one of his brothers-in-law. During his stay here he focused religious matters. His principal diversion from music was the study of the writings of Saint Augustine.¹⁷⁵ His musical efforts were directed towards composing a mass, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*. As discussed above, it is apparent that the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* of this mass had been composed, in

¹⁷² Huebner, "Gounod," 218.

¹⁷³ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 187.

¹⁷⁴ Huebner, "Gounod" 218.

¹⁷⁵ Paul Landromy, *Gounod* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), 71.

some form, as early as 1850. Without examples of the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* from 1850-1854, it is impossible to know what changes or revisions Gounod would have carried out at this time. The complete new mass, his eighth to date, was composed for upcoming Feast of Saint Cecilia, for performance in the mass of the annual commemoration organized by the Parisian *Association des artistes musiciens*. Unfortunately, in his memoirs, Gounod recalls very little of this event:

I also wrote, at this epoch, the *Messe Solennelle de Sainte-Cecile*, which was brought out successfully for the first time by the Association artistes Musiciens, on the 22nd of November, 1855 [*sic*], at the church of St. Eustache, and which has been performed several times since. It is dedicated to the memory of my father-in-law, Zimmermann, whom we lost on October 29, 1853.¹⁷⁶

With this mass he returned to the concerted mass style--choir with orchestral accompaniment--for the first time since 1842. With the success of his first symphony in February, Gounod went to work in Avranches more secure in his orchestral abilities than before. The masses since his return from his *Prix de Rome* sojourn had been composed with only organ accompaniment or unaccompanied; but the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* would utilize a generous orchestration.

Gounod in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

January of 1858 saw the premiere of the comic opera *Le médecin malgré lui*, which Gounod considered his first operatic success.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately, he was not able to savor the success of the first performances for long, as his mother died the day after the premiere. She was seventy-seven and had suffered a lengthy illness.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Gounod, *Memoirs*, 186.

¹⁷⁷ Huebner, "Gounod," 218.

¹⁷⁸ Harding, *Gounod*, 105.

The week which brought the composer distinction on the stage saw him lose his oldest and strongest champion.

After irregular work on it since 1856 Gounod's best known opera, *Faust*, received its premiere in March of 1859. Encouraged by the successes of *Le médecin* and *Faust*, Gounod completed five theatrical works during the 1860s: *Philémon et Baucis* (1860), *La colombe* (1860), *La reine de Saba* (1862), *Mireille* (1864) and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867)¹⁷⁹ *La reine de Saba*, however, was not successful, and its failure was particularly traumatic for Gounod. A long trip helped to console him; a month after its premiere the composer returned, along with his family and some friends, to Rome.¹⁸⁰ While in Rome he returned to the Villa Medici, where he had resided as a *Prix de Rome* laureate, and also visited the Vatican a number of times to hear the historic sacred music that had enchanted him years before. Gounod remained in Rome until sometime in June. As he had in June of 1842, he lamented having to leave the city to return home.¹⁸¹

In 1866 Gounod was honored with election to the Académie des Beaux Arts.¹⁸² Three months after the awarding of this honor, he was promoted to *officier* of the Légion d'honneur. A period of mental stress and fatigue led to yet another trip to Rome at the end of 1868. Gounod composed a handful of religious works during the 1860s but only one mass, the *Deuxième messe pour les sociétés chorales* in 1862 (new versions in 1882 and 1893).

After the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war in July of 1870, Gounod and his family moved from Paris to a location near Dieppe and then, in

¹⁷⁹ Huebner, "Gounod," 218.

¹⁸⁰ Harding, *Gounod*, 124.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁸² Prod'homme and Dandelot, *Gounod: Sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. 2, 76.

September, they joined a wave of emigration to England, where he temporarily reestablished his career. In 1871, Gounod befriended the amateur singer and teacher Georgina Weldon and her estranged husband. Jealousy due to the close professional and personal relationship that developed between Mrs. Weldon and Gounod might have been the cause of Anna Gounod's return to France in May. Gounod's first significant work composed in England was the Latin motet *Gallia*, for the grand opening of the Royal Albert Hall in May of 1871. Gounod took up residence at the Weldon's home, not returning to France until 1874.¹⁸³ The situation of the composer's estrangement from his wife, family and country, and his relationship with Georgina Weldon is an intriguing biographical topic in itself, but beyond the scope of this paper. Gounod's works from his period in England include three masses: the *Messe brève* of 1871 (titled *Messe brève* No. 5 *aux séminaires* in 1892), the *Messe brève, pour les morts* of 1873, and the *Missa angeli custodes* of 1873.

After returning to France Gounod continued to devote energy to composing religious music while being an active theater composer. However, in the last years of his career he devoted increasing attention to church music. He composed the large-scale *Messe du Sacré Coeur de Jésus* for choir, soloists and orchestra in 1876 and a Mass in C in 1877 (revised and titled *Messe brève* no. 7 *aux chapelles* in 1890). During these years he prepared the two operas that would be his first premiered since before his English sojourn, *Cinq Mars* (1877) and *Polyeucte* (1878). After *Polyeucte*, Gounod would compose only two more stage works, but would compose the music for seven more masses:¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Huebner, "Gounod," 222.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 231.

Messe funèbre, arranged from Gounod's music by J. Dormois (1883)¹⁸⁵

Messe solennelle no. 3 de Paques (1883)

*Messe à la mémoire de Jeanne d'Arc précédée d'un prélude avec fanfare sur
l'entrée dans la cathédrale de Rheims* (1887)

Messe solennelle no. 4 sur l'intonation de la liturgie catholique (1888).

Composed for the beatification of J. B. de La Salle.¹⁸⁶

Messe de St Jean, d'après le chant grégorien (publish posthumously, 1895)

Messe dite de Clovis, d'après le chant grégorien (publish posthumously, 1895)

Requiem (publish posthumously, 1895) Gounod's last work, written as a tribute to his grandson Maurice, who died in 1891. Gounod died before orchestrating the work; His pupil Henri Busser prepared several arrangements for performance.¹⁸⁷

Two of Gounod's most popular sacred works were completed in the 1880's: the large oratorios *La rédemption* (1883) and *Mors et vita* (1885). Though they are distinctly products of Gounod's Roman Catholic inspiration, these two works achieved immense popularity in England.

In his later years Gounod was regarded as somewhat of a patriarchal figure in French music. This aspect and the religiosity of the composer are reflected in the caricature below. The artist Coll-Toc, in a book of illustrations entitled *Les hommes d'Aujourd'hui* presents the image of a stern, white-haired Gounod in monastic costume, holding a long list of his compositional achievements and gesturing as if he is about to make a proclamation or deliver a sermon (Illustration 1).

¹⁸⁵ Huebner, "Gounod," 231.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Charles Gounod, Requiem (1893), ed. József Ács (Eschweiler: Musica Sacra, 1996), 4.

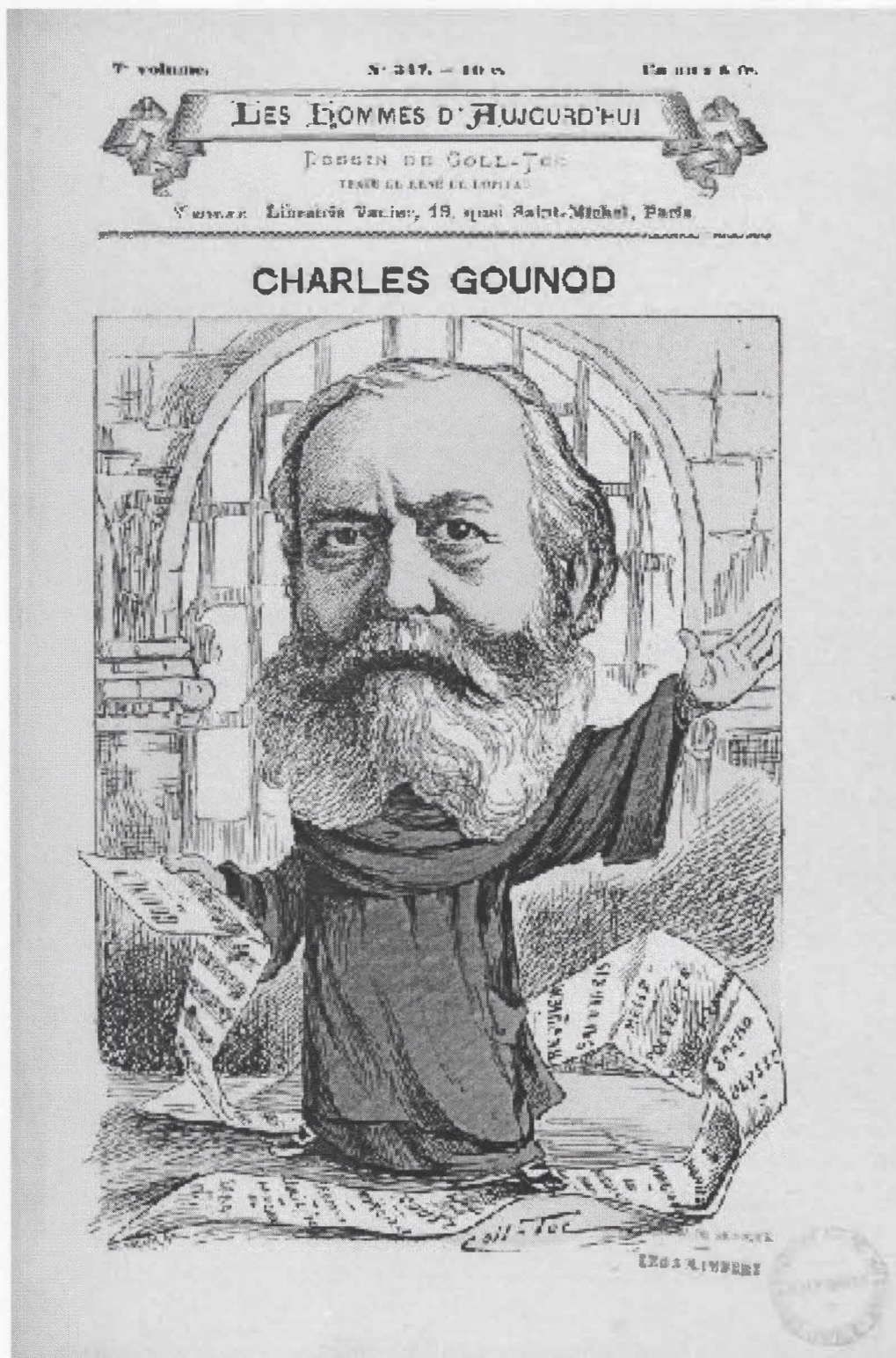


Illustration 1. Gounod, Caricature by Coll-Toc. The composer is seen here in his later years, depicted in monastic garb.

The year 1877 saw Gounod return to the church organ. He became the organist of the parish church of Saint-Cloud, where his family had a home. It was at Saint-Cloud that he spent the last years of his life, playing the organ until 1893. His career, to some extent, had come full circle; beginning and ending at a parish church. It was Gounod's student, Henri Busser, who succeeded Gounod as organist at the church. Of Gounod the organist Busser recalled:

Nearly every Sunday, at the 9 o'clock Mass, Gounod ascended to the tribune and improvised, in preference at the *sortie*, using all the power of the organ, with big, majestic chords, always in simple keys like G major, F major and especially C major. Didn't he used to say that God was in C?¹⁸⁸

Gounod died on October 18, 1893. Two days earlier he had lost consciousness while working on his *Requiem* score. He spent the intervening time in a coma with a crucifix clenched in his hands. A state funeral was held at the Church of the Madaline in Paris on October 27. The music sung for the occasion was plainchant, in accordance with Gounod's wishes.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Orpha Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-century France and Belgium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 64.

¹⁸⁹ Harding, *Gounod*, 223.

CHAPTER IV
THE MUSIC OF THE MESSE SOLENNELLE
DE SAINTE-CÉCILE

Gounod's efforts during the the summer of 1855 resulted in a large-scale, eight-part mass setting that utilizes three solo voices, choir, orchestra and organ. For the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* Gounod set the six usual parts of the Ordinary of the Mass, but he also provided two additional pieces: an instrumental offertory (*Offertoire*) and a *Domine salvum*. The parts of the mass are as follows:

- I. Kyrie
- II. Gloria
- III. Credo
- IV. Offertoire (*Invocation pour l'orchestre seul*)
- V. Sanctus
- VI Benedictus
- VII. Agnus Dei
- VIII. Domine salvum

Gounod avoids any sort of cantata-like division of the texts of the ordinary into smaller movements, as many composers of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often did in their long masses. The *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* could be considered a Romantic *Missa brevis*. The *Offertoire* is a piece that serves as an addition or accompaniment to the offertory prayer, which follows the *Credo*. The *Domine Salvum* is a setting of a type of prayer that was customary in French masses of the eighteenth century. In this chapter, I will discuss the musical and textual aspects of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, including a detailed description of each part.

A Note Regarding Musical Editions

The *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* was first published in Paris in 1855 by Lebeau, who issued further editions in 1861 (reduction for organ), 1864 (edited by E. Vast) and 1872. An edition was published in London in 1874 by Goddard and Company which includes a second offertory.¹⁹⁰ The success of the mass led to the production of numerous other editions from firms such as Leduc in France, Novello in England and Schirmer in the United States. Two significant, modern editions of the full score have appeared since 1980. The first was edited by Elmar Schloter and published by Max Hieber in 1983.¹⁹¹ The second was edited by Andreas Schenck and published by Peters in 1995.¹⁹² Neither are *Urtext* or scholarly editions. The Schenck edition updates the *Domine Salvum* (see below) and the edition by Schloter omits the piece entirely. Both prescribe an instrumentation revised from the original. According to the preface of the Schenk score, his edition is based on the first printed score by Lebeau.¹⁹³

The principal source for musical analysis and musical examples is an undated Lebeau score from the nineteenth century. Since the cover page of this particular score refers to the composer as a *Membre de l'Institut* and *Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur*, this score must be the 1872 edition since Gounod was not awarded membership in the *Institut* and *Légion d'Honneur* before 1866. Consulted also was an Alphonse Leduc edition vocal score that retains all of the eight original movements. In the *Domine Salvum* this edition provides an

¹⁹⁰ Wagener, "Die Messen Charles Gounods" in *Kirchenmusicalisches Jahrbuch* 51 (1967): 146. Unfortunately, it was not possible to study the second offertory for inclusion in this paper.

¹⁹¹ Charles Gounod, *Cäcilienmesse*, ed. Elmar Schloter (Munich: Max Hieber, 1983).

¹⁹² Charles Gounod, *Messe en l'honneur de Sainte-Cécile*, (Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1995).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, preface.

alternate text (see below).

A manuscript of the mass is located at the British Library in London (Add. Ms. 37639). I have not yet had the opportunity to examine this manuscript, but I have obtained basic information on the item from the British Library. This copy is not complete; according to the British Library the *Offertoire* follows the Gloria, indicating that the *Credo* is missing. It is dated only as from the reign of Napoleon III (1852-1870).

Orchestration

The *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* is scored for three vocal soloists and four-voice choir, large orchestra and organ. The complete orchestration called for in the Le Beau score is as follows:

Orchestra:

2 Flutes/Piccolo (Petite-Flûte)/2 Oboes /2 Clarinets/4 Bassoons

4 Horns (two pairs)/2 Trumpets, valved (Pistons)/

2 Trumpets, natural (Trompettes)/2 Trombones

Timpani /Cymbal and Bass Drum (Cymb. et Gr. Csse.)

6 Harps

Violin I/Violin II/Violoncello/Contrabass (Contre-Bass)/Octo-Basse

Organ

Choir:

Soprano I (1er Dessus)

Soprano II (2d Dessus)

Tenors (divided into Tenors 1 and 2 in *Et expecto resurrectionem* and

Benedictus)

Basses (divided into Basses 1 and 2 in *Et expecto resurrectionem* and *Benedictus*)

Soloists:

Soprano

Tenor

Bass

Gounod's orchestral forces surpass what one might consider the standard large romantic symphonic ensemble. The orchestra for this work is quite large in comparison with many symphonic works written in Europe around the mid-nineteenth century. However, the size of the orchestra would not have been outstanding France at the time. During the early nineteenth century, the Parisian listening public had been exposed to imposing musical ensembles with some regularity. The Revolution had spawned a practice of staging large-scale musical performances by forces that could number several hundred. Such events were considered important because they served to glorify the republic and highlight the revolutionary ideal of entertainment for the masses. During the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, after the legal celebration of the mass was restored, the liturgy became subject to grandiose musical treatment and its ceremony. It was often infused with regal and military elements, including the martial sound of trumpets and drums, serving to glorify the empire and its leader. Paris had heard the most extreme church music forces in monumental works by Hector Berlioz. His *Grande Messe des Morts* (1837) and *Te Deum* (1849), both composed for state occasions, defined a type of French Romantic colossal style for liturgical music. Berlioz's *Te Deum* was premiered in April of 1855 in the same church in

which the *Messe de Saint-Cécile* was first heard that November.¹⁹⁴ Its orchestration is smaller than that of the *Requiem* but is, nonetheless, exceptionally large:¹⁹⁵

Piccolo/4 Flutes/4 Oboes/English Horn/4 Clarinets (IV doubling Bass Clarinet)/4 Bassoons

4 Horns/"Sax-horn piccolo in B-flat alto"/2 Trumpets/2 Cornets à pistons/6 Trombones/2 Tubas (*Bombardone*)

Cymbals (4 or 5 pair)/Bass Drum and Cymbal/6 Military Drums/4 Drums in F/4Drums (untuned)

Chorus I: STB

Chorus II: STB

Chorus III: SA (optional children's chorus)

12 Harps

Violins I/Violins II/Violas/Cellos/Basses

Organ

Although Gounod's masses did not approach the magnitude of such works, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* shares a common heritage with the works of Berlioz. The instrumentation of the mass reflects the basic taste of the time for large-scale ensembles at important ceremonies and also the influence of instrumental performance, which had grown significantly since the revolution.

Since this mass was written for a large musical society, it can be concluded that Gounod faced few, if any, limits with regards to instrumental resources. The scoring utilizes all of the standard orchestral instruments and more. Certain instruments are used very selectively; for instance, the octo-basse is used only in the *Benedictus* and the *Agnus Dei*.

¹⁹⁴ D'Ortigue, "En l'année 1855," in *La musique à la Eglise*, 252.

¹⁹⁵ Hector Berlioz, *Requiem Mass and Te Deum* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1996), 135.

The octo-basse is the most unusual feature of the orchestration of the mass. For much of its part it doubles the contrabass. An explanation of this short-lived instrument can be found in the second edition of Berlioz's *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*, published in the same year as the premiere of the Saint Cecilia Mass, 1855. Its inclusion in the treatise testifies to use of this new instrument at the middle of the century. Berlioz describes it in the the segment titled "New Instruments" in the introduction for which he writes:

The author is under no obligation to mention the multitude of experiments made daily by instrument manufacturers . . . But he should draw the attention of composers to the good advances made by inventive musicians, especially when their excellence is widely recognized and when they have already been adopted in the musical practice of a considerable part of Europe.¹⁹⁶

In describing the octo-bass, Berlioz writes:

The Paris violin maker M. Vuillaume, whose excellent instruments are so sought after, has just enlarged the string family with a fine and powerful novelty, the octobass. This instrument is not, as many people imagine, an octave lower than the double bass. It is only an octave lower than the cello. Thus it goes a third lower than the four-string double bass's low E'. It has only three strings, tuned in a fifth and a fourth to C', G' and C. Since the fingers of the player's left hand are not long or strong enough to move comfortably up the strings, the dimensions of the octobass being enormous, M. Vuillaume has devised a system of moveable keys which press the strings down firmly into grooves marked out on the fingerboard in tones and semitones. these keys are activated by levers gripped in the left hand and pulled down behind the fingerboard and also by the seven pedals moved by one of the player's feet.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Hector Berlioz and Hugh Mac Donald, *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: A translation and commentary*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 296.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 316-318.

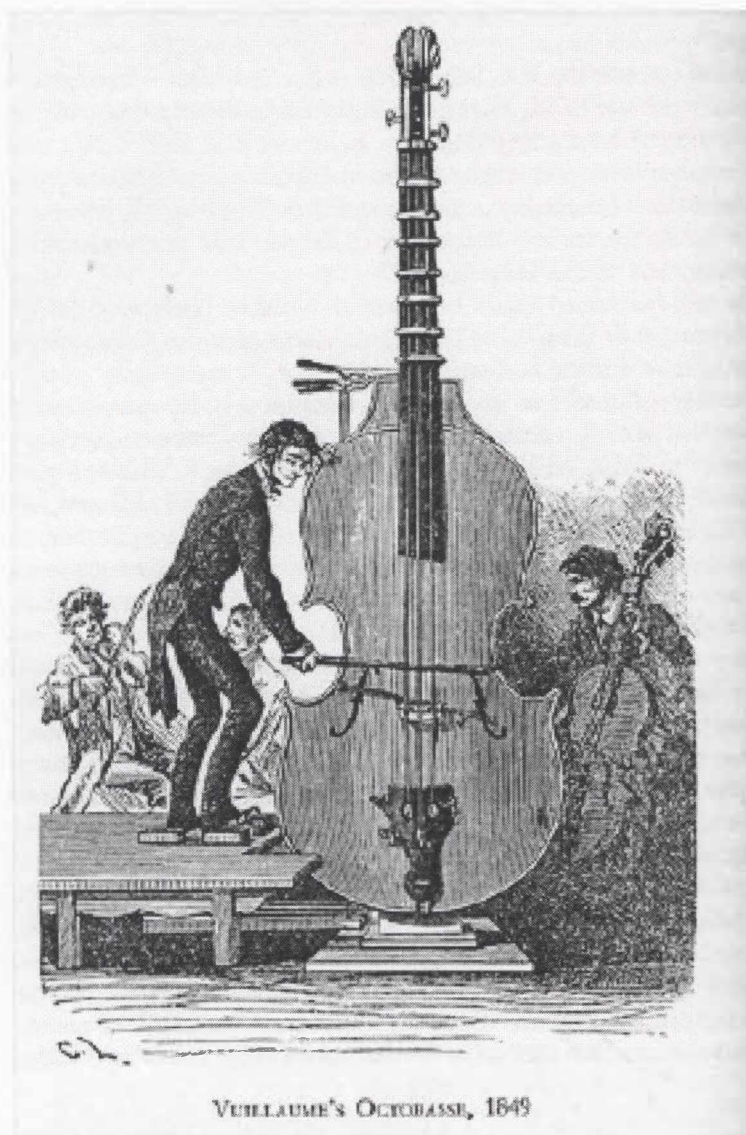


Illustration 2. The Octo-Basse. The instrument is seen here in an illustration of the mid-nineteenth century. It is difficult to imagine that an instrument this large was used, the size may be somewhat exaggerated here for comic effect.

He goes on to describe the sound produced as having beauty, and power, suitable for a large orchestra. He states that "any festival orchestra with over 150 players should have at least three of them."¹⁹⁸ Gounod's use of the octo-basse is

¹⁹⁸ Berlioz and Mac Donald, *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise*, 318. Hugh Mac Donald points out that, despite his enthusiasm for the instrument, Berlioz never wrote for the octobasse.

brief, in only the two movements mentioned above, which are the most gentle of the mass. That it is used sparingly, mainly to enhance the contrabass, makes its inclusion somewhat curious. Was it included primarily because of contemporary convention or was it specifically necessary to achieve the effects Gounod desired in those passages? In any case, it would be difficult to recreate the sound of this original instrumentation as only two examples of the octo-basse are known to exist at this time.¹⁹⁹

A striking feature of the instrumentation of the mass is the original prescription for six harps. The use of harps in religious music was a particularly French tendency in the early nineteenth century. While previously they had mainly been fixtures of the concert hall and theater, the harp and horn (often used together in duet passages), became popular in sacred music. Harp and horn were used in Paisiello's Great Mass for the coronation of Napoleon in an *obligato* in the *Credo*. The effect of the four harps used in a mass composed by Desvignes and performed in Notre Dame was well received in 1804.²⁰⁰

In his treatise on instrumentation Berlioz comments specifically on the use of harps in church music:

Unless they are to be heard in close intimacy in a salon, harps are more effective the greater number you have. Notes, chords and arpeggios projected across an orchestra or chorus are exceptionally splendid. Nothing matches the spirit of poetic celebration or religious ceremony better than the sound of a large section of harps carefully used. On their own, or in groups of two, three or four, they are also felicitous in effect combined with the orchestra or accompanying vocal or instrumental solos.

In his *Te Deum*, Berlioz calls for twelve harps in the *Marche pour la présentation des drapeaux* (March for the presentation of the Colours). Though not

¹⁹⁹ Berlioz and Mac Donald, *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise*, 318. These two specimens are located at the Musée de la Musique in Paris and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

²⁰⁰ Montgrédien, *French Music: From the Enlightenment to Romanticism*, 172.

comparable to Berlioz' tendencies towards musical enormity, Gounod's use of harps in the Saint Cecilia Mass is very much in line with French sacred music practice. The opening of the *Gloria*, with its horn solo doubled by harps, reflects the style that became popular in the early years of the century. The number of harps employed by Gounod was surely necessary for these instruments to be heard in such a large ensemble and in such a large space as the church of Saint-Eustache, where the mass was first performed; however, the number is not due merely to acoustic technicalities but reflects a traditional practice. At the beginning of the Credo, the score calls for "*Harpes*" but does not specify "*6 Harpes*," as elsewhere in the score. This may indeed be a simple error, but it should also be considered that since the harps are used for the fairly gentle *Et vitam venturi*, the difference might indicate the use of the harps at the discretion of the conductor. Modern editions of the Saint Cecilia mass tend to call for only two harps.

The use of military instruments such as the piccolo, bass drum and cymbals in a mass may be unusual for modern sensibilities but it clearly reflects French tendencies. Since the Baroque era, liturgical music for state occasions or royal ceremony often incorporated martial sounds. In Paris, this style remained into the nineteenth century, thanks in large part to the military-infused state liturgies for Napoleon, while it diminished elsewhere in Europe.

In the Saint Cecilia mass, the "military" instruments are truly used in a military manner only in the *Prière de l'armee* and *Prière de la nation* sections of the *Domine Salvum*. They are used for more general sonic and dramatic effects in the rest of the mass.

Kyrie

It is for the *Kyrie* that Gounod composed the most delicate music in the mass. To express the petitions "Lord have mercy" and "Christ have mercy" he chose not to make a grandiose statement but rather he sets the text in a more subdued manner. Since its words are few yet momentous, the *Kyrie* affords the composer room for considerable musical creativity. Gounod, however, utilizes his musical resources with great economy and conveys this brief text in a fairly simple manner. He did not endeavor to set it with displays of elaborate polyphony, complex harmony or virtuosity. Instead, the petitions are conveyed with elegant clarity in the vocal parts while the orchestral accompaniment serves to provide sensitive embellishment. The tempo of the movement is *Moderato, quasi Andantino* for all but the last five measures, which is marked *Più lento*. Most of the music is marked *piano* or a lower dynamic.

The piece is framed by a gentle, chant-like theme, heard at its opening and its conclusion. It is a simple two-phrase theme which begins in unison but is elaborated with harmony in the second phrase. At the opening of the piece this theme is introduced by the oboes, bassoons, violins, and violas with one flute, horns and low strings entering on the second phrase. These first eight measures introduce the *a cappella* first statement of the *Kyrie eleison*, set to the same simple theme (Illustration 3). The first phrase is heard in the upper voices of the choir and the second with all four voices. The simplicity of this opening effectively evokes a feeling of tranquil solemnity and unity. Its last cadence ushers in the main body of the movement. This delicate opening to the movement effectively evokes the ancient *una voce* ideal of liturgical music--that is of the prayers of the church being heard as one voice.

N 1 **KYRIE.**

Moderato, quasi Andantino

The musical score is arranged in a system of staves. From top to bottom, the parts are:

- Flûtes
- Hautbois
- Clarinètes en C
- 1^{er} et 2^e Bassons
- 3^e et 4^e Bassons
- Cor en sol
- Cor en ré
- Fagots en C
- Tromballe en C
- 1^{er} Violons
- 2^e Violons
- Altos
- Soprano Solo
- Ténor Solo
- Basse Solo
- 1^{er} Chœur
- 2^e Chœur
- 3^e Chœur
- Basses
- Violoncelles
- Contre-Basses
- Orgue de Chœur
- Pédalos

The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The tempo is indicated as *Moderato, quasi Andantino*. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The time signature is common time (C). The score is for a full orchestra and choir.

Paris chez Moutard, 17, rue de la Harpe, 18

Illustration 3. Opening of the Kyrie

The rest of the *Kyrie* proceeds without departing from the intimate mood set in its opening. Following the opening sixteen measures described above, the words *Kyrie* and *eleison* are sung in unison by individual sections of the choir, in flowing alternation. The text is accompanied by harmony in the winds and also by arpeggiated figures in the violins and violas. These elements continue to flow through much of the movement. With this delicacy, Gounod conveys the petition *Kyrie eleison* with an ardent humility that is not often heard in large-scale settings of the mass. The trio of soloists make their first entrance with homophonic repetitions of *eleison* (Illustration 4). Gounod's austere writing for the soloists at this point seems to convey a sense of affirmation to the preceding docile petitions. The first choral statement of *Christe eleison* is accompanied by a modulation from G Major to E-flat Major and introduces the full choir, singing in homophonic texture.

The image shows a page of a musical score, likely a Kyrie, spanning measures 33 to 39. The score is arranged in a traditional format with vocal parts and instrumental accompaniment. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) enter with the text "Ky - ri - e - e - le - i - son". The instrumental parts include Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses. The score is marked with dynamics such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianississimo). The tempo is marked *And* (Andante). The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The page number 100 is visible in the top right corner.

Illustration 4. Kyrie, mm 33-39. First entry of the soloists.

As the music proceeds, fleeting modulations sustain the repetitious homophonic passages and embellish the musical phrases. The passages sung by the trio of soloists and those of the full choir are adjacent but do not overlap. The two groups are heard mainly in alternation; there are few moments in the entire movement in which both ensembles are heard together. In the section beginning at measure 37, the choir quietly sings *Kyrie* once in unison and later *eleison*, similarly to ornament the trio passage. The words *Christe eleison* are handled in the same manner in the section beginning at measure 60. Thus the two groups never portray any sense of conflict; the passages sung by the trio of soloists generally sound as if to affirm or intensify the passages sung by the choir. All of these elements help give the *Kyrie* its remarkable flowing quality.

The final *Kyrie eleison* segment begins at measure 79 and, as in the *Christe eleison* segment before it, climaxes with a crescendo to very brief *forte*, as though a wave in the continuous flow of the movement. After the quick subsiding of this wave, the gentle opening theme returns (measure 104) to repeat the *Kyrie eleison* in the manner in which it was first heard. As the final syllable of *eleison* is sung, the orchestra briefly resumes the placid accompaniment it has played through most of the movement. This only lasts for two measures, however; it comes to a halt and the choir is heard *a capella* one last time, on the words *Kyrie, Kyrie eleison*. In the final two measures of the movement, on the last syllable of *eleison*, the orchestra joins with the choir in the concluding G major chord.

In this setting of the *Kyrie*, Gounod conveys the permanence of the prayer for mercy in a clear and graceful manner, avoiding theatrical or virtuosic musical displays. By setting this short text in a fairly simple, yet extended manner, he very effectively stresses its gravity and provokes meditation on it.

Gloria

As did so many other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century composers, Gounod took advantage of the length and grandeur of the *Gloria* text to compose an extended setting utilizing large orchestral and choral forces. The text is divided into distinct sections that can display varying and contrasting tempi, dynamics and emotions, but not into separate pieces. This movement of the mass is marked by grandeur, but in it Gounod remains committed to presenting the hymn intelligibly and as a single unit.

Rather than follow the tranquil conclusion of the meditative Kyrie with a large and majestic commencement of the *Gloria*, he begins this movement also with a soft instrumental introduction, marked *Larghetto* (Illustration 5). It is begun with a gentle statement of the tonic chord of D major by woodwinds, horns, two trumpets and strings (violins with tremolo). Of these instruments, only the violins, violas and cellos continue playing in the second measure. Here, with the harps (which enter in the second measure) they provide harmonic support for an eight-measure horn solo. The cadence of the horn solo is punctuated with a repetition of the tonic chord, as orchestrated in the first measure. The vocal ensemble finally enters at measure 11.

27

N° 2. **GLORIA IN EXCELSIS** *Larghetto.*

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The instruments listed on the left are: Flutes, Petite-Flûte, Hautbois, Clarinettes en la, 1^{re} et 2^e Bassons, 3^e et 4^e Bassons, 1^{er} et 2^{es} Cors en ré, 3^e et 4^e Cors en ré, Pistons en la, Trompettes en ré, Trombones, Tymballes 1. et 2., Cymb. et Gr. C^{ra}, 6 Harpes, 1^{er} Violon, 2^{es} Violon, Alto, SOPRANO SOLO, TÉNOR SOLO, BASSO SOLO, 1^{er} Trombe, 2^e Trombe, Tenors, Basses, Violoncelles, Contre Basses, Orgue de Chœur, and Pedales. The score begins with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Larghetto'. The woodwinds and strings enter with a soft dynamic (pp). The harps play a rhythmic accompaniment. The vocal soloists enter with a melodic line. The organ provides a harmonic support. The score is written for a full orchestra and choir.

Illustration 5. Opening of the Gloria.

The manner in which Gounod introduces the momentous line, "Glory to God in the Highest," would foil the expectations of any listener accustomed to the large, festive *Gloria* openings in masses such as the Haydn *Nelson Mass*, or Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, for example. Instead of a grandiose proclamation, Gounod sets the words, *Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis* first as an ethereal soprano solo (Illustration 6). Even more remarkable is that he chooses to attempt a mystical-sounding accompaniment for this solo; in addition to the harps and tremolo strings, the voices of the choir are instructed to render their notes *à bouche fermée*--that is, humming the harmony. At measure 27 the solo statement of the line concludes and the text is sung in an almost chant-like melody by the *dessus* voices of the choir while the tenors and basses continue to hum the harmony.

This illustration shows a page of musical score for the Gloria, measures 9 through 17. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. At the top right, the number '105' is printed. The score includes several staves for instruments, likely strings and woodwinds, with various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'pp' (pianissimo). Below the instrumental staves, there are staves for voices, including a Soprano Solo part. The vocal parts feature lyrics in Latin, such as 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' and 'Et in Spiritu Sancto'. The score is densely packed with musical notation and includes various performance instructions and dynamics.

Illustration 6. Gloria, mm. 9-17.

The next section, beginning in measure 37, presents the next line of the text, beginning *Laudamus te. Benedicimus te, etc.* (We praise thee. We bless thee, etc.) with the grandiose treatment. Here the music remains in D major but the tempo is specified as *Allegro Pomposo* and the full choir is joined by the strings and most of the wind sections in a loud homophonic rendering of the text.

When we consider the opening of the Gloria, with its soprano solo and mystical quality of the accompaniment along with the ebullient section that follows, the possible rationale for Gounod's technique is clear: The line *Gloria in excelsis Deo, etc.*, is stated in a passive voice while the following lines, *Laudamus te. Benedicimus te, etc.*, are clearly stated in the first person plural (*we* praise you, *we* bless you, etc.). It is a reasonable presumption that Gounod sought to portray the proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill," as emerging from the heavenly realm, while the following statements of praise, blessing, adoration and glorification to God come from the faithful on earth, depicted musically as a large, united choral ensemble.

At measure 54 the trio of soloists introduce the line beginning *Gratias agimus* (We give thee thanks). The full choir repeats this text at measure 62, emphasizing this statement of thanks. Meanwhile the orchestral accompaniment gradually becomes more involved. At measure 70 the orchestra becomes more important as the elaborator of the forceful statements of *Domine* and *Deus*. These statements alternate between the soloists and the choir. As the music proceeds through the words *Rex coelestis*, it drives towards a climax at the words *Deus Pater omnipotens* (God the Father almighty). With the last iteration of *omnipotens*, the orchestra begins a bold seven-measure conclusion to this section.

After a brief, dramatic pause the music takes a pastoral turn. Here begins the most intimate segment of the Gloria, sung by only the soloists, with

accompaniment. At measure 96 the oboe begins an extended solo, and is joined by the bass soloist, who becomes the focal point, at measure 100. The strings add a light, arpeggiated accompaniment. The choice of a pastoral sound for this section is unsurprising considering the text at this point in the *Gloria* deals with the Lamb of God: *Domine fili unigenite Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris* (Lord Jesus Christ, only son of God. Lord God, Lamb of God, son of the Father). At measure 116 this statement is completed in the tenor solo (accompanied by strings): *Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis*. At the end of the tenor solo the solo bass repeats the phrase *Qui tollis peccata mundi* which is the beginning also of the following phrase. At measure 127 the tenor and bass join to sing the completion of that phrase together: *suscipe deprecationem nostram* (receive our prayer). The soprano enters at 132, and the trio sings in unison *Qui sedes ad dexterum Patris, miserere nobis* (Who sits at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us).

The soloists repeat *miserere nobis* and are joined by the full choir at measure 143. This marks the first time that the choir and the soloists join together to sing the same line. The voices make a crescendo as they repeat the plea for mercy, reaching *forte* at measure 147. With a quick diminuendo, the music moves towards a B minor cadence at the end of *nobis*. The four measures that follow are of particular importance; the soft choral utterance of the words *Domine, Domine Jesu!* that occurs here is one of two places in the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* where Gounod actually departs from the prescribed liturgy. The line *Domine Jesu* does not actually occur at this point in the *Gloria*, thus the *Gloria*, technically, is liturgically flawed. Gounod felt that this statement concluded this section appropriately, however, and the alteration was evidently considered permissible when the mass was first performed.

The *Domine Jesu* addition leads to the grandiose final section of the *Gloria*. In measure 156 the *Allegro Pomposo* music returns on the words *Quoniam tu solus*, etc. sung by the choir without the soloists, who are silent for the remainder of the movement (Illustration 7). The choir sings the lines *Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dominus* (For you alone are holy You alone are the Lord) and then *Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe* (You alone are the most high, Jesus Christ). Around this point in the music the soloists would enter to sing in a trio, if done as earlier. Now, however, Gounod has chosen to propel the music forward to the end of the *Gloria*. The choir immediately begins the *Cum Sancto Spiritu* (measure 174), repeating these three words in a rapid, quasi-imitative manner for about eight measures, during which a crescendo is begun. Here also, the organ is heard for the first time in the *Gloria*. The *forte* is reached at measure 182 and in the following measure, the voices join together again in homophony to sing *in gloria Dei Patris* (in the glory of God the Father). Instead of proceeding directly to the Amen, the *Cum Sancto Spiritu* scenario as just described is repeated beginning in measure 194, but moves through different harmonies. A short statement of the *Dei Patris* concludes this section but the music proceeds, in the next measure, to the Amen. The Amen is sung three times, the last in slow *fortissimo*. The final page of the score shows that nearly the entire orchestra is heard at the end.

The music of the Gloria displays evidence of great thoughtfulness by the composer. Both the delicate and heavier styles heard here appear to serve particular portions of the text. However, Gounod's slight changes to the Gloria show that he could also utilize words to serve the music.

Credo

The *Credo*, because of its spiritual gravity and its length, is the text of the Ordinary that is most fertile for musical-dramatic interpretation. While the spiritual-dramatic apex of the liturgy of the mass is the consecration itself, in large scale settings of the complete ordinary the *Credo* is customarily the musical apex. The *Credo* of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* is a lengthy, multi-section piece, 279 measures altogether. Its divisions are dictated by the organization of the prayer text itself. The music is based on an ABA form in which the "I believe" segments of the text are set in the A sections framing the middle portion of the text, which deals with the miracle of the Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection.

The first 16 measures form an orchestral introduction in which many of the principal musical elements of the movement are presented (Illustration 8). The triumphal character of the *Credo* is heard at the outset with a fanfare-like first theme, played in unison by the chromatic trumpets and trombones, doubled by the clarinets and flutes. Measure 13 introduces the second theme in the same majestic manner. The melodic material is intensified by a continuous dotted-rhythm accompaniment in the bassoons and low strings and by the multi-stop off-beats played by the violins and violas. In this thin texture the horns and natural trumpets are used mainly to elaborate the cadences with block triads, as in measures four and eight.

CREDO.

N. 3. *Moderato molto maestoso.*

Flute
 White Flute
 Horns
 Clarinets
 Bassoons
 Oboes
 Bassoons
 Trumpets
 Trombones
 Timpani
 Cymbals
 Harp
 1st Violins
 2^d Violins
 Viola
 Cello
 Double Bass
 Soprano Solo
 Alto Solo
 Tenor Solo
 Bass Solo
 1st Tenor
 2^d Tenor
 Basses
 Violoncello
 Contrabass
 Organ or Clavier
 Chorus

CREDO.

Illustration 8. Opening of the Credo.

When this majestic music is repeated at measure 17, however, it is not the woodwind and brass instruments rendering the fanfare-like melody as before, but the choir singing *fortissimo* in unison/octaves the first sentence of the text: *Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium* (Illustration 9). The next two sentences are set to similar music, but Gounod musically distinguishes them from the first sentence in a manner that conveys their semantic subordination to the first statement. The *Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum Filium Dei unigenitum* (And in one Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten son of the father) is separated from the first sentence by a four-measure orchestral transitional passage (mm. 33-36), and is marked *forte* instead of *fortissimo*. The next sentence, *Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula* (m. 53) is distinguished in similar fashion, but is sung *piano*, providing musical contrast to both the preceding and following music. At measure 61 the phrase *ante omnia saecula* is repeated, emphasizing the statement ("before all ages") and to provide a transition to the next sentence. Gounod makes the phrase (based on the second theme) transitional by re-contouring it so that it is heard as a melodic ascent, ending on the dominant. It is emphasized by a *crescendo molto*. The word *saecula* occurs at the melodic and dynamic apex, and here the four choral voices, to this point singing in unison, diverge to emphasize pitches of the dominant chord. The orchestra punctuates the phrase, following *saecula* (m. 64) with three marcato repetitions of the dominant in the winds and upper strings, bringing the music to a moment of high intensity before the return of the tonic at measure 65.

A page of handwritten musical notation for a choir entrance. The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics, written in Latin, are: "Cre - do in u - num De - um". The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *ff* (fortissimo). The paper shows signs of age and wear.

Illustration 9. Credo, mm. 14-20. Entrance of the choir.

What occurs with the climactic arrival at measure 65 is a reprise of the music of the first choral entrance. Since the phrase *Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem*, the choral melodies to this point have been based on what I have identified above as the second theme. Both the first and second theme are heard here, with all of the grandeur of that first choral passage, altered rhythmically to accommodate new words. The reiteration of this music is used to present dramatically the poetic sentence *Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero* (God from God, light from light, true God of true God). At measure 76 the sentence *Genitum non factum*, etc. is sung, as *visibilium omnium*, etc. was at measure 29, but additional music accommodates the length of the text and also drives towards a stronger cadence (than that which occurred at m. 33) at measures 83-84 (a dominant seventh cadence on the words *facta sunt*).

Since it stresses grandiose sound yet is comprised of very simple musical elements, the music heard in the first 84 measures of the *Credo* might strike some listeners as perfunctory. It is important to understand, however, that Gounod does present an appropriate and effective setting of the first five lines of the Creed text. As the opening of the profession, these opening sentences are of an expository nature. A straightforward rendering is perhaps more appropriate here than at any other point in the ordinary of the mass. The text here describes the most basic and absolute Catholic beliefs. Gounod's triumphal style in this portion underscores the potency of the words, and the dominance of unison/octaves in the choral writing evokes the idea of unity.

In contrast to the expository first five lines of the Creed, the next lines, dealing with the life and death of Christ are narrative. Thus the music shifts towards a more dramatic style here. Measures 85-99 convey the text, *Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis* (Who for us . . . came down from heaven). This passage introduces the dramatic middle section of the

Credo, which starts at measure 101. Christ's descent from heaven is conveyed by the words, it is portrayed by the music here. These measures are set in a simpler style, marked *pp* and then *ppp* at measures 85 and 93, respectively. The orchestra provides simple harmonic support and ornamentation. The quiet tone of this passage is appropriate for emphasizing humility--either that of the people for whom Christ descended from the heaven or that of his incarnation on earth, depicted in the subsequent lines. Christ's descent is depicted by a chromatic, descending bass line in the choir (mm. 89-97).

Measure 101 begins the B section of the movement. Heard here are the most solemn lines of the Credo, those dealing with the earthly incarnation of Christ (Illustration 10):

*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
Ex Maria virgine
Et homo factus est*

And by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary
and became man.

In the score Gounod directs the performers to sing with the utmost reverence for the profound mystery of the incarnation:

Ce récit du mystère de l'Incarnation doit être chanté par les chœurs aussi piano que possible, de manière à répondre, par le profond recueillement des voix, à l'impénétrable profondeur du sujet.

This account of the miracle of the incarnation must be sung by the chorus as quietly as possible, as if to answer, by the profound meditation of the voices, the impenetrable depth of the subject.

The mysterious and reverent tone is reflected by the music. The text is sung in a slow chant-like manner. This is done with harmony moving from an F major chord at measure 101 through E and E-flat to a D major chord at measure 117, above a slow chromatic descending bass line. The orchestral accompaniment here is minimal, the strings and upper woodwind voices quietly emphasizing the ends of phrases. The soloists are heard here for the first time in the movement. Each of the three text phrases is sung by the trio of soloists and then repeated by the choir. Stressing the quiet sound required here, Gounod marks the choir dynamic *pppp* throughout this passage.

The D major harmony of measure 117 and the implied D dominant of the next measure prepare a shift to G minor that occurs with measure 119, the beginning of the *Crucifixus*. This segment, appropriately dark in its sound, is given a tense accompaniment by tremolos in the strings. In measures 119-124 the solo voices each proclaim the word *crucifixus* (He was crucified), the bass first, tenor second and soprano third. Subsequently, the three voices join to sing the text *etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato* (. . . for us, under Pontius Pilate). This sequence is then repeated by the choir. From measure 144 to 154, the *passus* (he suffered) is repeated by the choir, prolonging the dramatic tension. Here the upper voices sing the word in a half-note-quarter note descending figure in alternation with the lower voices, who answer with a staccato enunciation (on two eighth-notes separated by an eighth rest). Gounod enhances the forlorn tone of the choral writing with plaintive accompaniment figures in the thin orchestral texture. Finally, at measure 155, the choir proceeds to sing the remainder of the sentence: *et sepultus est* (and was buried).

The *Et resurrexit* begins at measure 159 (Illustration 11). Here the music begins a return to the tonic, C major, through E minor, but G and D are emphasized. In this beginning measure the second *dessus* (soprano II) are heard

with only the accompaniment of tremolos in the violins and violas, similar to the beginning of the *Crucifixus*. As the first *dessus* (sopranos) and then the tenors enter to sing *et resurrexit*, a crescendo builds. The full choir enters together singing these two words, their parts marked with a *crescendo molto*. The miracle of the resurrection is underscored by the building of a monumental sound starting with the sparse texture of measure 159, and effectively conquering the anguish of the preceding *Crucifixus*. A climax is reached in measure 167 with the *fortissimo* statement *et resurrexit tertia die secundum scripturas* (And in the third day he rose again, according to the scriptures). This statement, however, ending with a G major chord serves only as a climactic prefiguration. The true climax of the entire movement occurs at measure 173, at which point is proclaimed: *et ascendit in coelum, sedet dexteram Patris* (And he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father), in the tonic. Here, the choir is heard once again in unison and octaves. They are now joined by the full complement of the orchestra, including, for the first time, the piccolo and cymbals.

The image displays a complex musical score for the 'Credo' section, specifically measures 159-167, titled 'Et resurrexit.' The score is arranged in a grand staff format, featuring multiple staves for various instruments and voices. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'pp' (pianissimo). The score is densely packed with musical notes, rests, and articulation marks, indicating a highly detailed and expressive passage. The layout is organized into systems, with each system containing several staves. The overall appearance is that of a traditional printed musical score, likely from a 19th-century edition.

Illustration 11. Credo, mm. 159-167. *Et resurrexit.*

This dramatic return of the tonic brings also the return of the A section thematic material. This is not completely clear in measures 173-185, since here Gounod uses musical phrases that are related to the main subjects of the A

section, but are in a more agitated style. The use of melodic leaps and denser harmonies enhance the ecstatic nature of this musical and textual climax.

That this is a true return to the A section material becomes clear at measure 185, where the second subject returns with the text *judicare vivos et mortuos*, etc. Starting with the text *Et in Spiritum Sanctum* at measure 193, the choral writing mirrors the A section. The sequence of musical phrases heard here corresponds directly to the sequence beginning at measure 37. The return of the triumphal first subject elides two lines of the texts: *qui locutus est* and *Et unam sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesia*. The reprise of the A section is an obvious choice for the third section of the Credo. This is not merely to create a rounded musical form, but also because this section of the text is also expository—a return, as mentioned above, to the “I believe” text.

The text *Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi* (I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come) is set as somewhat of an epilogue, musically. It is heard as a distinct section proceeding from the A section material at measure 242. Gounod stresses the idea of expectation by setting the text in a very simple imitative manner. He divides the choir into six parts, each part entering a measure apart (starting from the bottom voice and moving up) repeating the sentence *Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum*. The effect is a quiet echo progression on those two words, emphasizing the idea of expectation. The choral voices sing on one note during this echo progression, each voice singing a pitch of the D minor seventh chord, the chord heard when all of the voices join (in third inversion). Ultimately, the voices sing *resurrectionem mortuorum* together in a progression leading to a half

cadence (G major). This whole *et expecto* sequence is repeated immediately, at measure 252 (Illustration 12), but this time leads to a cadence on the tonic (m. 261), which begins the slow, tranquil setting of *Et vitam venturi saeculi* (Illustration 13), followed by the *Amen*, which is sung three times before the final cadence.

The image shows a page of musical notation, likely a score for a choir or orchestra. The page is numbered 122 in the top right corner. The notation is arranged in 18 staves. The upper half of the page (staves 1-9) contains instrumental parts, while the lower half (staves 10-18) contains vocal parts with lyrics. The lyrics are written in Latin and are repeated across the vocal staves. The text is: "Et exspecto resurrectionem." The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "pp" (pianissimo) and "pp dolce". The page is framed by a double-line border.

Illustration 12. Credo, mm. 253-260. Second statement of *Et exspecto resurrectionem*.

The image shows a page of a musical score, likely from a Mass, specifically the 'Credo' section. The page is numbered 123 in the top right corner. The score is written for a choir and orchestra. The vocal parts are Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The instrumental parts include strings, woodwinds, and brass. The music is in a major key and 4/4 time. The lyrics 'Et vitam venturi' are visible at the bottom of the page. The score is written in a traditional musical notation style, with notes, rests, and other musical symbols. The page is numbered 123 in the top right corner.

Illustration 13. Credo, mm. 261-263. *Et vitam venturi.*

Offertoire

Gounod's *Offertoire* is described in the score as an *invocation pour l'orchestre seul*, or invocation for orchestra alone. It is a brief, serene piece in A-flat that utilizes a small ensemble of flutes, oboes, bassoons, two horns, violins, violas, cellos and basses. Unlike much of the music in the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, the music of the *Offertoire* relies heavily on counterpoint and frequent shifts of harmony for its effect. Its forty measures of flowing lines and harmonies are played no louder than *piano* until measure 35. If used as a substitute for the sung offertory, Gounod's piece would be performed during the preparation of the eucharist. It may have been used in addition to an offertory; in any case it provides a few minutes for reflection or meditation after the intensity of the *Credo* and provides a prelude to the communion preface.

The piece begins with a four-measure introduction in which an oboe is heard first and then joined gradually by the rest of the ensemble. The violins, violas and cellos all play with mutes (Illustration 14). There is a crescendo through the second and third measures but all have a diminuendo in measure four. At measure five the ensemble reduces to just the strings, with the violins playing a simple descending melody lasting eight measures. A crescendo occurs in measures 10-11, followed by a diminuendo in measure 12, which is reminiscent of measures 2-4. At measure 13 the woodwinds enter, with the solo flute playing the descending melody. At the end of this second statement of the melody, a crescendo and diminuendo are heard once again. At measure 21, however, it is not another statement of the descending theme that is heard, but a section in which an oboe solo and then a bassoon solo are heard with the accompaniment of the strings. The tranquil character of the first twenty measures is retained in the section beginning at 21; however, greater rhythmic,

harmonic and dynamic activity are heard starting at measure 28. Gounod builds this activity to a mild climax in measures 34-36, where there is a crescendo to *fortissimo* and then a diminuendo to *piano*. Since the strings, with the exception of the basses, are muted throughout the movement, the moment of the *fortissimo* is still serene. The last four measures are marked pianissimo and all of the instruments are heard on the final tonic chord, in the last measure, which Gounod emphasizes with a final dynamic swell.

OFFERTOIRE.
(INTRODUCTION POUR L'ORCHESTRE SEUL.)

Adagio, molto. *pp* *ppp*

Flûtes.
Hautbois.
Clarinettes en sol.
1^{re} et 2^e Bassons.
3^e et 4^e Bassons.
Cor en sol.
1^{re} Violons.
2^e Violons.
Altos.
Violoncelles.
Contre-Basson.

Illustration 14. Opening of the Offertoire.

Sanctus

The *Sanctus* is the hymn of unceasing praise of the angels and saints glorifying God; in the liturgy, the *Sanctus* represents the joining of the people in this praise. Though the text is relatively short, it does invite a dramatic setting. The *Sanctus* here is set for solo tenor, chorus and orchestra. The use of the solo tenor marks only the second time in this mass that a solo voice is featured. Until this movement, with the exception of the soprano solo in the *Gloria*, Gounod has mainly utilized the soloists in trio passages. The movement follows a general ABA form in which the orchestra and soloist present the first theme material. It is reworked in the middle section and then returns in a tutti choral and orchestral climax, followed by a brief, coda-like *Hosanna*. Clear declamation of the text with unobtrusive accompaniment, in both the musically intimate and musically grand passages, are important here, as in the other vocal movements. The *Sanctus*, however makes use of more frequent harmonic shifts and dynamic changes.

Like the *Kyrie* and the *Credo*, the *Sanctus* begins with an orchestral introduction: in the first measure, a statement of the F major tonic chord is played by the woodwinds, upper brass, strings and the organ. In the second measure the winds and brass cease, leaving the strings, now playing tremolo, and the organ, which plays only through measure two. Into this hushed sound, woodwinds (solo flute, solo oboe, solo clarinets, bassoons) enter at measure three, introducing the first theme (Illustration 15). At measure eight the solo tenor takes over this theme, repeating it and then elaborating on it in a second phrase, with the first line of the text, *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*. These first sixteen measures convey the text in a tranquil manner. The melodic design is relatively simple; the first phrase of the theme is almost chant like, however it is set in a somewhat waltz-like 9/8 meter. This phrase consists of

one two-measure motive which is heard twice, the second time raised a whole step above the first. The second phrase is like the first but with more ornamentation, mainly through scalar eighth notes. The accompaniment is delicate, with upper strings playing tremolo, providing harmonic support with the wind instruments. All are marked *ppp*. The first phrase is provided with a I-IV-I harmony, and subsequent repetitions of this material are handled in the same manner. The second phrase of the first theme, heard in the tenor solo, is more interesting harmonically, with a greater emphasis on V leading, through iii and I, to the V7 at measure 21. The tremolo in the violin and viola parts is continuous from the second measure of the movement to the seventh measure before the end.

The cadence at measure 17 which occurs on the final syllable of *Sabaoth* is remarkable. A tonic cadence is heard at measure 16 but in the following measure there is a shift to an augmented sixth chord. Above it, the soloist completes one phrase and rests for two eighth-beats. With this unusual harmonic move Gounod creates a moment of subtle tension which resolves with the beginning of the next phrase. On the next measure comes the tenor's leap of a fifth (with the phrase *Deus Sabaoth*) to G and the harmonic resolution to the distant C major chord. This leads to the V-V7 half cadence in measures 20-21 which resolves to the tonic with the entrance of the choir at measure 22.

The choir answers the solo, repeating the words *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus; Sanctus, sanctus Deus Sabaoth, Deus Sabaoth*. The choral rendering is a chant-like simplification of the tenor solo theme (though in three-part harmony). Accompanying this, the woodwinds quote the tenor solo, so that this important first theme becomes the ornamentation of the choral passage. The harmonies heard here are simple, like those heard in the first sixteen measures (mainly I, passing through IV, V, and iii). In Measure 26 instruments alone are heard, linking the first and second choral phrases. Gounod uses the bass drum in this quiet movement to emphasize the slow rhythm heard in the brass at this moment. He goes on to use the bass drum similarly in measure 35. Measure 31 shows another example of Gounod using a diminished 7th to punctuate the end of one phrase and introduce the next, as at measure 17 (described above). Here the harmony moves from the tonic to an F# diminished seventh chord. Again, this occurs on the last syllable of *Sabaoth*. The choir continues with the phrase *Deus Sabaoth* at measure 32, emphasizing the V harmony. This leads (through a [V7/V]-V7) to a dominant seventh chord built on F in measure 36 which functions as the V7 of the B-flat that arrives in measure 39.

The solo tenor reenters at measure 37 with the text *Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua* in a second theme which is similar in character but is distinctly different due to its greater range and use of larger intervals. It is also distinguished by more interesting harmonic movement. In the first six measures of the solo (37-42) the IV is emphasized using secondary dominants. The harmony focuses on the tonic in the next measures but cadences on an E dominant chord in measure 47 (the tenor on E); here once again a distant harmony is used to punctuate the end of a phrase. There is a strong return to the tonic on the following measure, where the tenor leaps to the A, the melodic climax of the solo, on the line *Pleni sunt, pleni sunt gloria tua* (full of your glory). This passage is repeated in the tenor solo before coming to rest on a perfect authentic cadence (mm. 55-56).

In the section that follows, the choir reiterates the line *Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua*, again in a chant-like manner, commencing the building up to the climactic return of the *Sanctus*. Here, however, Gounod has the basses, tenors and sopranos enter a measure apart, on the same pitch, in a very simple imitative style. This sequence occurs three times between measures 58-73, on *Pleni sunt coeli* (59), *coeli et terra* (64) and *Gloria tua* (69), the chant-like line moving up a semitone at each repetition. Measure 58 brings a shift to D-flat, at measure 64 the choir sings on D, at measure 69 they sing on D#. Elided to the *gloria tua* of 69 is a reiteration of the full line *Pleni sunt coeli et terra* that begins at measure 73. With this another layering begins, but the choir is given a more melodic line that moves upward as a crescendo builds. At 73 the organ is heard for the first time since the third measure, to emphasize the building crescendo in the choral and orchestral forces (Illustration 16). This section emphasizes A major, but moves to V-V7 in measures 79-80.

The climax arrives at measure 81 with the return to the tonic with the whole choir, marked *fff*, singing *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth* in

a harmonization of the first theme, to which the choir had only alluded previously (Illustration 17). The majestic effect is emphasized by a slowing of the tempo to Largo here. The full complement of the orchestra, with the exception of the piccolo and cymbals, is used. The organ plays full chords here and also emphasizes the eighth notes of the first theme. At measure 91, the musical excitement is enhanced with dotted figures evocative of a fanfare, played by the four horns.

A page of musical notation for the Sanctus, measures 74-80. The score is arranged in two systems. The upper system contains vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lower system contains piano accompaniment. The vocal parts feature lyrics in Latin: "San - ctus, Do - mi - nus, De - us, Pa - ter, Fi - li - us, Spi - ri - tus, Sanctus, qui ex - pat - ri - bus, Pro - ce - dit, et con - si - stit in - ter - ni - ta - ter - na - gen - ti - ta - tum, qui - bus - to - que - si - mus, et con - si - stit in - ter - ni - ta - tum, qui - bus - to - que - si - mus, et con - si - stit in - ter - ni - ta - tum." The piano accompaniment includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs, and a lower grand staff with bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics markings like *pp*, *mf*, and *f*.

Illustration 16. Sanctus, mm. 74-80.

At measure 96 the music quotes the descending three dotted quarter-note motive that was heard in the melodic crest of the second theme of the tenor solo (e.g. measures 48, 52). Here it is used to stress the *Deus* of the final *Deus sabaoth*. This is followed by the *Hosanna in excelsis* (measure 99-102), the final words of the movement. With the *Hosanna*, there is a brief progression through D-flat, and B-flat minor before a cadence on the tonic at measure 102. With a sudden hush, the final six measures bring a quotation of the opening woodwind statement of the first motive of the first theme, but in a more gentle character. It is played here by the solo flute accompanied by the divided strings (the tremolo ending at this point) with pizzicato contrabass, and horns sustaining the tonic harmony in long notes. They are all marked *ppp*. The movement concludes with the winds and strings (except the contra basses) playing the final F chord, underlined by two soft beats of the timpani (F) and the bass drum.

The *Sanctus* is remarkable for its overall effect. Gounod provides a very dramatic setting for its brief text, emphasizing it with both solemnity and grandeur. In the opening the solo tenor presents the text in a graceful melody but Gounod has the choir answer with an austere, chant-like statement of the text, as if to meditate on the words themselves. After the more melodically elaborate tenor solo on *Pleni sunt coeli et terra*, the choir answers again, but beginning the gradual buildup to the climax of the movement. The imitative and chant-like build up and crescendo creates an intense feeling of anticipation for the return of the *Sanctus*. At the climax it is the simple opening theme that returns, but now sung by the full choir and accompanied by the full orchestra. In this moment of grandeur, the text that had been conveyed in a mild manner at the opening is heard as a powerful proclamation. At the end the listener might have the impression that the he/she had heard the text sung both from the earth by man and proclaimed from heaven by the angels and saints.

Benedictus

The Benedictus is set in B-flat major for solo soprano, choir and strings. It is a small movement, just 36 measures in length. The text *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domine* is sung first by the soloist (mm. 2-13) and then the choir (mm. 14-31). The final *Hosanna in excelsis* is sung by the choir in the last five measures. The string sections, except for the contrabasses, are each divided throughout the movement, generating a rich sound. The tempo is *adagio* throughout the movement.

In the first measure only the strings (each divided into two parts) are heard *pp*, on the tonic. The soprano enters in the second measure with another chant-like melody centered on D. Its range is only a perfect fourth, the lowest pitch being B-flat and the highest E-flat (Illustration 18).

The solo is accompanied by uncomplicated harmonic movement, with the strings playing mainly block half and whole note chords. The tonic harmony is emphasized here; it is often repeated or revoiced. The first three measures are harmonized with tonic and dominant harmonies. In the four-measure second phrase the harmony proceeds from I to a half cadence on V. The five measure final phrase of the solo occurs over tonic and dominant harmonies. In the last three of these measures, *Domine* is emphasized with a dynamic swell and ends on a fermata.

BENEDICTUS.

Adagio

The score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom:

- 1^{re} Violons (Violins):** Treble clef, C major, *pp*.
- 2^e Violons (Violins):** Treble clef, C major, *pp*.
- Altus (Violins):** Treble clef, C major, *pp*.
- Violoncelles (Violas):** Alto clef, C major, *pp*.
- SOUS-BASSON (Soprano Soloist):** Treble clef, C major, *pp*. Lyrics: *Benedictus qui se - ni - in no - mi - ne Do - mi - ni*
- 1^{er} Basson:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- 2^e Basson:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- 1^{er} Trompe:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- 2^e Trompe:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- 1^{er} Basses:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- 2^e Basses:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- Contre Basses:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- Organo de Chiesa:** Treble clef, C major, *pp*.
- Organo de Chiesa:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.
- Organo de Chiesa:** Bass clef, C major, *pp*.

Adagio

Illustration 18. Opening of the Benedictus.

Measure 14 begins the choral section of the movement. What is heard through measure 24 is simply a choral version of measures 2 through 16. The same melody is heard, accompanied by the same harmonic progressions. There are, however, some new orchestral colors introduced. The strings are divided into more parts, enriching the sonority. The first violin plays an octave higher than it did in during the solo. This change in particular helps to make the overall sound more ethereal. The *octo-basse* is also added, doubling the contrabasses at the octave below. At measure 25 Gounod adds a section in which *qui venit in nomine Domini* is repeated. The sentence is broken into three small segments *qui venit*, *In nomine*, and *Domine*. The *Domine* is sung *ppp*.

The Benedictus comes to a sudden climax in measure 32, where (just following the quiet *Domine*) the triumphal *Hosanna in excelsis* is sung in a *ff* outburst. Each syllable is set on a half note, except the last two which are set on longer notes (the last with a fermata). With it is heard a more interesting harmonic progression: I-VII-IV-vi-ii-V-I, that underscores the intensity of this conclusion.

Agnus Dei

In the music of the Agnus Dei we hear a character distinctly different from that of the other movements of the mass. The lilting quality of the choral writing and the continuously flowing eighth-note accompaniment provide a feeling of tranquil perpetual motion throughout the setting. The movement opens with a short orchestral introduction and then proceeds to the first of three choral sections that present the three petitions of the Agnus Dei prayer:

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,*

*miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant us your peace

Between the three choral sections are two solo passages, the first featuring the tenor, the second the soprano. These solo passages contain a feature unique to the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*; in these passages Gounod introduces a line from outside the actual *Agnus Dei*:

Domine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum, sed tantum dic verbo et sanabitur anima mea.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

In liturgical context, this statement is normally said not long after the *Agnus Dei*, at Communion. Nonetheless, such an addition to a text of the ordinary is highly unusual. Gounod explained his motivation for this move in a letter to his mother:

Entre chacun des trois Agnus qui sont chantés par le chœur, j'ai placé une phrase de chant solo sur la mots: *Domine non sum dignus*, que j'ai pensé pouvoir intercaler comme étant les paroles de l'office même, au moment de la communion. La première fois, cette phrase est dite par un voix de ténor, représentant l'*homme*, dont la conscience plus chargée se traduit par un accent plus pénétré de pénitence; la seconde fois, elles est confiée, avec un tour un peu modifié, à la voix de soprano, emblème de l'*enfant*, dont la crainte est moindre et la confiance plus grande, en raison de la sérénité que donne l'innocence.²⁰¹

Between each of the three Agnus iterations which are sung by the chorus, I placed a solo passage on the words: *Domine non sum dignus*, which I thought I would be able to insert as the they are

²⁰¹ P.-L. Hillemacher, *Charles Gounod* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1906), 39.

part of the same ceremony, at the time of the communion. The first time, this passage is said by a tenor voice, representing the *man*, the weight of whose conscience reveals a tone more earnestly penitential; the second time, the are conveyed, with a slightly modified form, by the soprano voice, symbolizing the child, whose fear is less and confidence greater, because of the serenity which innocence gives.

The movement is set in D major and is *Andante moderato* throughout. The introduction lasts only seven measures. The first sound heard is that of the first horn, with a simple dotted figure that is reminiscent of a quiet fanfare. This is heard three times in the first three measures. Each time, the horn is answered by strings playing a short eighth-note flourish, sequencing up a whole-step in each repetition. The third entrance of the strings commences the perpetual eighth-note accompaniment which continues from the fourth measure, mainly in the first violin (Illustration 19).

The choir enters at measure 8, singing the first petition. While the first violins provide the continuing eighth-note accompaniment, woodwinds, horns and the other strings complete the texture, providing harmonic support to the choral writing. The solo flute and solo clarinet are also used to double the choral melody. Gounod embellishes the music with dynamic swells, most prevalently on the word *miserere*, where short, one-measure swells accent the penultimate syllable.

This musical score page, numbered 141, contains measures 5 through 9 of the 'Agnus Dei' section. The score is arranged in a system of 15 staves. The top five staves are vocal parts, with lyrics 'Agnus Dei' written below them. The middle section consists of string and woodwind accompaniment. The bottom three staves are additional instrumental parts. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Dynamic markings such as *mf* and *pp* are present throughout the score. The overall texture is dense and characteristic of a late 19th or early 20th-century choral work.

Illustration 19. Agnus Dei, mm. 5-9.

At measure 17 the tenor solo begins. There is a shift to a darker sound, which contrasts with the preceding choral passage and emphasizes the humility of the *Domine non sum dignus* (Illustration 20). The key shifts to G minor here and the continuing eighth-note accompaniment is transferred to the low strings, playing *pizzicato*. The woodwinds continue to provide harmonic support but they are also used, along with the upper strings and horns, to punctuate the phrases of the tenor solo. In this section we also hear a dotted-rhythm line against the tenor solo. This is heard most prominently played by bassoons and violas at measure 24.

A page of handwritten musical notation for the Agnus Dei, measures 15-19. The score is written on 18 staves, organized into three systems of six staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system (measures 15-16) features a vocal line with lyrics: "Agnus Dei qui tollis". The second system (measures 17-18) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "miserere nobis". The third system (measures 19-20) shows the vocal line with lyrics: "qui sedes ad dexteram patris". The score is written in a clear, legible hand, with some corrections and markings visible.

Illustration 20. Agnus Dei, mm. 15-19.

The second choral section begins at measure 27, with the return of the tonic. While the music of this section is the same as in the first choral section, the subsequent solo section does not present the *Domine non sum dignus* as in the first solo. The soprano solo is set in the relative major of the G minor tenor solo, now giving the text a brighter setting. This brighter character is emphasized by the transferring of the continuous eighth-note accompaniment to the harps, lending the music a more ethereal sound. In general there is also much more melodic activity accompanying the soprano solo, utilizing more instruments. Gounod obviously wanted this second *Dominum non sum dignus* to evoke a more hopeful or comforting feeling.

The choir re-enters at measure 46 with the return to the tonic and the third iteration of *Agnus Dei*. The musical material of the first two lines returns, but Gounod highlights this final line with a greatly expanded orchestration, including even the timpani and organ.

Measure 15 exhibits an interesting choice of text underlay. Here in the kind of swells used earlier to accent the word *miserere* (compare mm. 12-13 to 50-51), Gounod adjusts the word order to introduce *pacem*, so that rather than repeat *dona nobis*, or set *pacem* more melismatically (*dona nobis, pa-cem*) in measures 50-51, we hear *dona nobis, dona pacem* (grant us, grant peace); in this way Gounod perhaps desired to provide a slight emphasis to the petition. At measure 52, *Agnus Dei* is inserted, leading to the musical climax in measures 54-55 on *dona nobis pacem*.

The music quiets to *piano* again at measure 56. The words *Agnus Dei, dona nobis pacem* are repeated in a transition passage occurs from measure 56 through 64 over a D pedal point. The movement concludes with a three-part Amen, the final Amen heard in a IV-I cadence. The stream of eighth-notes finally comes to rest just after the last Amen, as the movement is extended by four measures of

orchestral writing which passes again through IV, but leading to the iv-I cadence that ends the movement.

With its delicate melodies, flowing accompaniment and Gounod's own alteration to the normal text, the *Agnus Dei* is a piece of remarkable creativity. It is admirable that Gounod chose to convey the petitions of the *Agnus Dei* with a bright and peaceful feeling, rather than with a more solemn imploring mood. We can assume that it is no mistake that in setting the petitions to the "Lamb of God" Gounod composes sounds that might evoke pastoral imagery. The orchestration is mild, relying mainly on strings and woodwinds, as is often the case in pastoral music. Its meter, 12/8 is possibly conducive to a dance-like feeling. The flowing eighth-note accompaniment might even be heard as evocative of a stream. The insertions of *Domine non sum dignus* provide two points of meditation within the piece, but its bright overall sound of the piece exhibits optimism. The same letter from Gounod to his mother, quoted above, reveals the composer's emphasis on a sense of mercy, and the intended effect of the end of the *Agnus Dei*.

Quant à l'instrumentation, le morceau est basé sur un dessin de violons doux, qui regarde du côté de la miséricorde; et, au moment du *Da [sic] nobis pacem*, l'orchestre s'endort dans une intention de recueillement qui mène à la communion. . .²⁰²

As for the instrumentation, the piece is based on the sound of soft violins, which is attentive to the side of mercy; and, at the moment of the *Dona nobis pacem*, the orchestra falls asleep in order to provide a mood of meditation, which leads to the communion

²⁰²Hillemacher, *Charles Gounod*, 39.

Domine Salvum

The final part of the mass is a setting of the prayer *Dominum Salvum*. This is a prayer that is not part of the Ordinary of the mass, but was traditionally sung in French masses during the *ancien régime*. The text, which comes from Psalm 20 (Vulgate No. 19) is a prayer for the well-being of the king. Thus in earlier masses, such as works by Charpentier during the late seventeenth century, the prayer was as follows:

*Domine salvum fac Regem
et exaudi nos in die qua invocaverimus te.*

Lord, save the King
and hear us in the day
when we shall call upon Thee.

Domine salvum settings do not appear to have been customary in the nineteenth century. Cherubini is known to have composed one in 1790, however none is included in the masses he composed between 1816-1825 for French royal ceremonies.²⁰³ Adolphe Adam's catalog lists one *Domine salvum*, the date of which is unknown.²⁰⁴ Gounod sets a variant of the original text that reflects the contemporary reign of Napoleon III:

*Domine salvum fac Imperatorem nostrum Napoleonem
et exaudi nos in die,
qua invocaverimus te.*

Gounod sets this text in three repetitions as a three-part prayer for the monarch:

1. *Priere de L'Eglise* (Prayer of the Church)
2. *Priere de L'Armée* (Prayer of the Army)
3. *Priere de La Nation* (Prayer of the Nation)

²⁰³ Michael Fend, "Luigi Cherubini," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 5:582.

²⁰⁴ Hugh Mac Donald, "Adolphe Adam," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 1:133.

The movement begins with a four-measure introduction in which the orchestra, with the organs, renders a progression from the tonic chord of G major through E minor and B minor to the V chord in an antiphonal style. Gounod portrays the Prayer of the Church by setting the text *a cappella*, in the style of chant (Illustration 21). As the Prayer of the Army, the text is set in a similar chant-like fashion, but sung by the male voices only and in a faster tempo. It is accompanied by the sounds of a military march, portrayed by the woodwinds (including piccolo) and drum with cymbal (Illustration 22). The Prayer of the Nation segment is set in a very grandiose fashion. It begins with a two-measure introduction played by the organ and orchestra. Here the tempo is reduced to *Très large* and the dynamic raised to *fortissimo*. The choir enters with the same chant-like setting of the text, but now sung in a loud, exclamatory manner, accompanied by the full complement of the orchestra, including rolls of the timpani and punctuations by the bass drum (Illustration 23). The choral section is followed by a five-measure fanfare section that brings the movement to its conclusion.

N. 1. PRIERE DE L'EGLISE.

Musical score for the first system of the 'Prayer of the Church'. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are for instruments (likely strings or woodwinds). The bottom three staves are for voices. The lyrics are: *Do - mi - ne sal - vum fac ho - sa - po - ra - to - rem nos - trum Na - po - le - o - nem*.

Musical score for the second system of the 'Prayer of the Church'. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are for instruments. The bottom three staves are for voices. The lyrics are: *et ex - au - di nos in di - e qui in - te - ce - ce - ri - mus te*.

Illustration 21. Domine salvum, mm. 5-16. Prayer of the Church.

150 N. 5. PRIERE DE LA NATION.

Très larg.

The musical score is arranged in a system of staves. At the top, it is labeled 'N. 5. PRIERE DE LA NATION.' and 'Très larg.'. The score includes a vocal line with the following lyrics: 'Do, mine saluum fac Imperatores, trunNa po, le o, nem.' Below the vocal line, there are several staves for instruments, including an organ part. The organ part is marked 'Très larg.' and 'arco'. The score is written in a complex, multi-measure format, typical of a large-scale musical work.

Illustration 23. Domine salvum, mm. 30-38. Prayer of the Nation.

Because it is now anachronistic, some editions of the mass alter or omit Gounod's *Domine Salvum*. The Alphonse Leduc edition, for example, provides an alternate text that can be sung with a slight alternation of the rhythm: *Domine salvam fac Imperatorum Republicam*.²⁰⁵ The Schenck edition omits the original line, providing only the substitution, *Domine salvam fac, Domine salvam fac republicam nostram*. As mentioned above, the Schloter edition omits this movement altogether. It is my opinion that, in order to preserve the possibility of performing the mass in a historical manner, editions should include the *Domine salvum* with both the original text and alternate text.

Concluding Comments

Though it utilizes a large orchestration and includes two movements beyond the standard prayers of the Ordinary, the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* is remarkably practical. In general, it presents the texts of the mass in a clear manner, and it is of moderate length compared to many notable masses of the nineteenth century. Gounod's vocal writing avoids complex counterpoint and excessive repetition of words, making it very accessible to both singers and listeners. When the *Offertoire* and the *Domine Salvum* are omitted, the length of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* is closer to that of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli* or W. A. Mozart's *Coronation Mass* than to lengthy Romantic settings such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* or Cherubini's *Messe solennelle* for the coronation of Charles X (1825).

Nonetheless, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* exhibits many moments of drama and musical creativity, such as the beginning of the *Gloria in excelsis*, the *Et vitam venturi saeculi*, the climax of the *Sanctus*, and the *Agnus Dei*. Gounod even takes

²⁰⁵ Gounod, Charles, *Messe Solennelle Sainte Cécile* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, n.d), 78.

the liberty of altering the text of the mass in the *Agnus Dei*. In the *Domine salvum*, Gounod recalls past tradition to provide a colorful nationalistic conclusion to the mass.

CHAPTER V

THE PREMIERE OF THE *MESSE SOLENNELLE DE SAINT-CÉCILE*,
ITS BACKGROUND AND ITS RECEPTION

Sacred Music and the *Association des artistes musiciens*

The *Association des artistes musiciens*, founded in 1843, was an important forerunner of the musicians' union in Paris.²⁰⁶ The primary concern of the organization was to help provide a comfortable retirement to the professional musicians of Paris.²⁰⁷ An annual event sponsored by the *Association* was a celebration of the feast of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music and musicians. One can assume that a large number of its membership was available for participation at this annual event; thus the opportunity to compose for it would have afforded a composer musical resources that were likely unavailable for any other liturgical event, with the possible exception of a royal event. This appears to be reflected in the ample instrumentation of Gounod's *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*.

Through their yearly Saint Cecilia commemoration, the *Association des artistes musiciens* had been responsible for a number of successful masses before Gounod's. In the beginning of an 1855 review of Gounod's new mass in *La France Musicale*, the critic Marie Escudier expresses gratitude for *Association's* role in introducing a number of fine new masses to Paris:

L'Association des artistes musiciens rend d'incontestables services à la musique. Nous lui devons quatre oeuvres religieuses

²⁰⁶ D. Kern Holoman, *The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1828-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 27, 247.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

remarquables. Sans cette association, les messes de MM. Niedermeyer, Adolphe Adam, Ambroise Thomas et Charles Gounod, exécutées d'année en année pour la fête de sainte Cécile, n'auraient peut-être jamais été écrites, et à coup sûr elles n'auraient point eu cet éclat exécution qu'on leur a donné.²⁰⁸

The *Association des artistes musiciens* renders unquestionable services to music. We owe it thanks for four remarkable religious works. Without this association the four masses of Messieurs [Louis] Niedermeyer, Adolph Adam, Ambroise Thomas and Charles Gounod, executed year after year for the celebration of Saint Cecilia, might never have been written, and certainly would not have been given such a brilliant execution.

Louis Niedermeyer's solemn Saint Cecilia mass for four-voice choir and orchestra had been composed for the 1849 celebration. It was praised by the critic and sacred music advocate Joseph d'Ortigue (1802-1866) as a masterpiece of religious style and sentiment that was better suited for the church than most modern sacred works.²⁰⁹ Adolphe Adam composed his *Messe de Ste Cécile* for soloists, chorus and orchestra for the celebration of 1850.²¹⁰ The *Messe solennelle* for soloists, chorus and orchestra composed in 1852 by Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896), must have been that composers contribution to the *Association's* celebration. In the *New Grove Dictionary*, however, Richard Langham Smith cites only a performance on the Feast of Saint Cecilia, 1857.²¹¹ It seems likely that this would have been a repeat performance as the only mass among Thomas' works before this one is a Requiem from 1833.

²⁰⁸ M. Escudier, "Messe de M. Gounod," in *La France Musicale* (9 December 1855), 387.

²⁰⁹ Joseph d'Ortigue, "Messe de M. Niedermeyer," in *La musique a l'église* (Paris: Didier et Ce, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1861) 280.

²¹⁰ Hugh Mac Donald, "Adolphe Adam," 133.

²¹¹ Richard Langham Smith, "Ambroise Thomas," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries Inc., 2001), 25:406.

Thus, when Gounod composed his Saint Cecilia Mass, he joined a small group of prominent composers in France who were active in sacred music composition, though to varying extents. The activities of this group exhibit the continuing importance of sacred music in the French musical sphere. Thomas and Adam are remembered as composers for the theater, but contributed a handful of significant sacred works to the nineteenth-century repertoire. Niedermeyer was primarily a sacred music specialist, composing several masses during his career but is hardly remembered among the important nineteenth-century French composers. Gounod also composed several masses during his career, but is, of course, generally remembered for his stage works. As for the towering French musical figure of the time, Hector Berlioz, by mid-century he had completed his last sacred work, the large, ceremonial *Te Deum* of 1849, and was pursuing a multi-faceted, secular musical career that included composition, critical journalism and conducting in and outside of France.²¹²

The annual celebration of the *Association's* mass for the Feast of Saint Cecilia was held in the church of Saint-Eustache. The church, constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries, still stands in central Paris in the *Halles* district. It is a gothic inspired building of monumental proportions and, by 1855, had been host to a number of important sacred music events. In addition to the annual celebrations of the *Association*, the church was also the venue for performances of notable works such as Berlioz's *Requiem*, *Messe solennelle* and *Te Deum*. It had also been the venue for Gounod's first mass, written shortly before his Prix de Rome journey (see above). In June of 1844 a large Daublaine-Callinet organ was inaugurated at the church, but regrettably was lost in a fire that December. A

²¹² Hector Berlioz, *Memoirs*, ed. David Cairns (London: Everyman's Library, 2002), 530. Though composed in 1849, the premiere of the *Te Deum* did not occur until April 1855, at Saint Eustache.

Ducroquet organ was built to replace it, but was not ready until 1854.²¹³ The organ void at Saint-Eustache during the intervening years would explain the lack of an organ part in the masses by Niedermeyer, Adam, and Thomas mentioned above. With the new organ of 1854, Saint-Eustache was able to host the April 1855 premiere of the *Te Deum* by Berlioz, in which the organ has a significant role, and Gounod's *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* could include an organ part.

Feast of Saint Cecilia 1855

The Feast of Saint Cecilia falls each year on the 22nd of November. In 1855, however, the annual celebration of the feast by the *Association des artistes musiciens* was postponed because most of the city's musicians were involved in concerts performed as part of the *Exposition Universelle* (World's Fair) held in Paris around this time.²¹⁴ The mass was celebrated on the 29th of November, within the octave of Saint Cecilia's day. Gounod himself directed the performance. Various sources recorded the names of the other key participants in the music. M. [Théophile] Tilmant, the instrumental conductor who later became conductor of the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire*, assisted with the preparation and direction of the orchestra.²¹⁵ M. [?] Hurand (or Huraut) assisted

²¹³ Orpha Ochse, *Organists and Organ Playing in Nineteenth-Century France and Belgium*, 41.

²¹⁴ "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale*, (2 Decembre 1855) 379.
 "Retardée par suite des concerts de l'Exposition qui ont occupé [sic] du 16 jusqu'au 26 de ce mois la presque totalité des artistes musiciens de la capitale, la solennité annuelle de Sainte-Cécile n'a eu lieu que jeudi dernier à l'église Saint-Eustache."
 (Delayed because the Exposition concerts occupied, from the 16th to the 26th of the month, nearly the totality of the musical artists of the capital, the annual solemnity of saint Cecilia took place only last Thursday in the church of Saint Eustache.)

²¹⁵ Holoman, *The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1828-1967*, 14.

with the preparation and direction of the choir.²¹⁶ Vocal soloists were: Mlle. [?] Dussy, of the Paris Opera, M. [?] Bussine, of the Opéra-Comique, and M. [?] Jordan, of the Opéra-Comique.²¹⁷ The organists were Edouard Batiste (grand orgue) and M. [?] Hénon (orgue d'accompagnement).²¹⁸ According to Joseph d'Ortigue, the choral forces used that day included children's and women's voices.²¹⁹

In attendance that day would likely have been many many, if not most of the important members of the Parisian musical world. Camille Saint-Saëns, a young man on the verge of a long and illustrious career, was there, as was Adolphe Adam, who was near the end of his successful career. Hector Berlioz was not in attendance, which is unfortunate since he might have left a detailed account and critique of the event had he been there.

Further details of the event are not recorded in secondary sources--details such as other music performed, number of musicians in the choir and orchestra, size of the congregation, celebrant(s) etc.. Since we know that the occasion was a High Mass, we have a basic idea of how the music was probably presented. Below is the progression of the major events of the mass, as it may have been rendered at Saint-Eustache that day. I have indicated the principal proper texts that are prescribed by the 1738 *Missale Parisiense* for the feast of Saint Cecilia.²²⁰

²¹⁶ The name "Hurand" is given in "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale*, 2 Decembre 1855; in J-G. Prod'homme and A. Dandelot, *Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 166, the name "Huraut" is given.

²¹⁷ "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale* (2 Decembre 1855) 379.

²¹⁸ J-G. Prod'homme and A. Dandelot, *Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 166.

²¹⁹ Joseph d'Ortigue, "En l'année 1855," 255.

²²⁰ *Missale Parisiense*, 728-729.

Introitus - *Me expectaverunt peccatores ut perderent me*
 Kyrie - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Gloria - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Collecta
 Epistola
 Graduale - *Posuerunt peccatores mihi*
 Alleluia - *Fiat Domine*
 Evangelium
 Concio (Homily)
 Credo - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Offertorium - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Secretae
 Praefatio
 Sanctus - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Canon
 Benedictus - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Pater Noster
 Agnus Dei - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Communio - *Confundantur superbi*
 Postcommunio - *Sumpsimus, Domine*
 Domine salvum - Gounod, *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*
 Ite missa est

I include this list of events to emphasize the fact that the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* was composed for use in the liturgy and thus a full appreciation of its effect on that day would take into account that Gounod's music was first heard not as consecutive movements, as in a concert performance, but during the course of the *Ordo Missae*. For instance, while the *Gloria* would have been heard directly after the *Kyrie*, the *Credo* would have been heard following the celebrant's homily. The preface would have led to the *Sanctus*; and the *Benedictus*, as per past custom, might have been heard separate from the *Sanctus*. The intervening texts would have been rendered in plainchant, if not in other composed settings. Furthermore, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* was conceived to resonate within the walls of one of the grandest churches in Paris.

Unfortunately, I have found no images depicting the 1855 Saint Cecilia celebration. However, illustration 24 (below) shows a similar event, a later Saint Cecilia mass at Saint-Eustache. On this occasion, an unidentified work was led by

the conductor Charles Lamoureux (1834-1899). The illustration shows a large ensemble placed in the transept, in front of the organ. In the foreground we see listeners seated in the opposite side of the transept. Instead of standing behind the orchestra, the chorus is located directly in front of the conductor, which was a common arrangement in the nineteenth century. Noteworthy are the seven harps visible in this picture. They are given a particularly prominent position, situated in the choir loft high above the rest of the ensemble.

Assuming that the musical ensemble led by Gounod on 29 November 1855 was also positioned in front of the organ, we may ascertain that the musical ensemble was not visible to most in the nave of the church. This detail emphasizes the liturgical aspect of the premiere of Gounod's mass, since in this configuration, the altar would have been the primary focal point of the event.

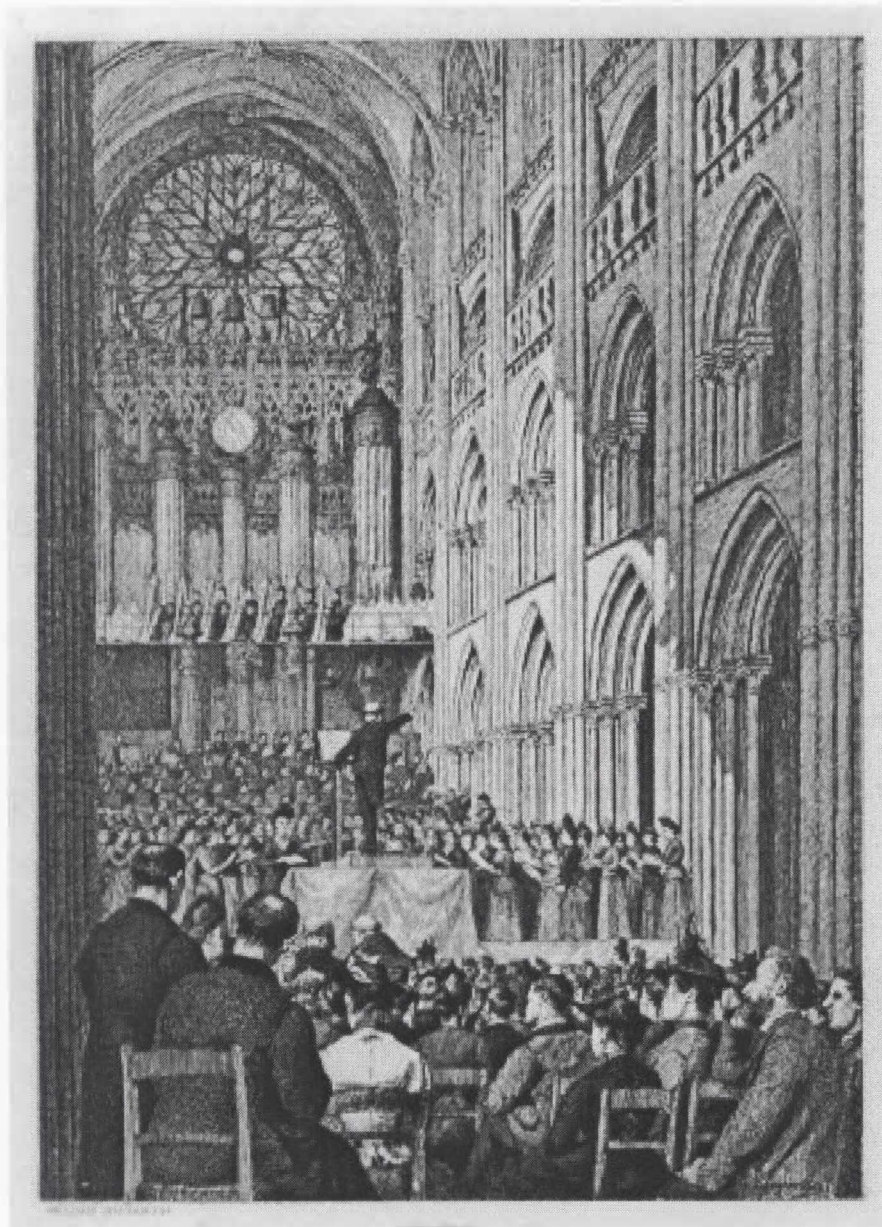


Illustration 24. A Saint Cecilia Mass at Saint-Eustache Conducted by Charles Lamoureux.

Reception

The young Camille Saint-Saëns was deeply impressed by the premiere of the mass. While he describes the experience as a revelation of Gounod's genius, he also tells us that many listeners were disturbed by it. Apparently, Gounod's music was novel to such an extent that it caused discomfort to the many who could not immediately grasp it:

L'apparition de la *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, à l'église Saint-Eustache, causa une sorte de stupeur. Cette simplicité, cette grandeur, cette lumière sereine qui se levait sur le monde musical comme une aurore, gênaient bien des gens; on sentait l'approche d'un génie et, comme chacun sait cette approche est généralement mal accueillie. Intellectuellement--chose étrange--l'homme est nocturne, ou tout au moins crépusculaire; la lumière lui fait peur, il faut l'y accoutumer graduellement.²²¹

The appearance of the Mass of Sainte-Cécile, at the Saint-Eustache church, caused a kind of stupor. Its simplicity, its grandeur, its serene light which rose on the musical world like a dawn, disturbed many people; one felt the approach of a genius and, as each one knows this approach is usually accepted badly. Intellectually -- strange thing -- the man is night, or at least twilight; the light frightens him, it is necessary for him to become accustomed to it gradually.

Even more than fifty years later, towards the end of his life, Saint-Saëns considered Gounod's *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* a landmark of sacred music: ". . . If I had a preference, it would be for Gounod, whose Saint Cecilia Mass, with his oratorio *The Redemption* (1883), and above all the oratorio *Mors et Vita* (1885), seem to me perfectly to characterize modern religious music."²²²

"Disturbed" listeners at the premiere notwithstanding, based on the published writings available to me, it seems that the new mass received a warm

²²¹ Camille Saint-Saëns, *Portraits et Souvenirs*, 100.

²²² Camille Saint-Saëns, "Music in the Church," 6.

critical reception. Several writers give favorable accounts of the premiere. In response to the premiere, Joseph d'Ortigue praised the the mass and its composer. He felt that in this work Gounod showed himself to possess the qualities that distinguish a composer of sacred music. He admired the humility expressed in the opening Kyrie, but was more impressed by the effective, modern manner in which Gounod treated the Gloria:

Le Gloria est le premier que j'entends qui soit conforme au vrai sens du text. Je ne parle pas des messes de Palestrina, ni de celles de la même école, Je parle des compositeurs modernes, des plus illustres même, qui, se figurant sans doute que les joies du ciel doivent être célébrées sur la ton des joies terrestres, ont déployé sur cette partie de l'office divin tout le luxe des fanfares de l'orchestre.²²³

The Gloria is the first that I hear as conforming with the true meaning of the text. I am not speaking of the masses of Palestrina or those of the same school, I am speaking of the modern composers, the most famous of whom undoubtedly believe that the joys of the heavens must be celebrated with terrestrial joys, utilizing in this part of the liturgy, all of the luxury of orchestral fanfares.

Ortigue also expressed great admiration for the *Credo*, of which the sincerity of the *Et incarnatus* and *Et resurrexit* settings impressed him particularly. He was struck by the intense humility displayed at the *Et incarnatus* and by the feeling of hopeful innocence that begins the proclamation of the resurrection. He considered the *Agnus Dei* to be excellent but felt that the interpolation of the *Domine non sum dignus* was not particularly effective.²²⁴

The critic Scudo, writing the *Gazette Musicale* and in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, expressed particular enthusiasm for the *Credo* and *Offertoire*:

²²³ Joseph d'Ortigue, "En l'année 1855," 254.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 255-256.

Il remarque particulièrement le *Credo*, morceau largement développé qui renferme des parties excellentes, entr'autres le *Ressurexit*. Il remarque aussi l'Offertoire intitulé: *Prière intime*. Ce prélude symphonique lui paraît traduire d'une manière très heureuse les sentiments qu'on doit éprouver à cet instant suprême.

²²⁵

One notices the Creed in particular, a piece developed on a large scale which contains excellent parts, among others the *Resurrexit*. One also notices the *Offertoire* entitled Intimate prayer. This symphonic prelude appears to him to translate in a very happy way the feelings which one must feel at this supreme moment. . .

A critic who would have been more sympathetic to Gounod's situation than most, because he had written a mass for a previous Saint Cecilia celebration, was Adolphe Adam. He commented on the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* in the journal *l'Assemblée Nationale* (December 4, 1855). The music impressed him as having its inspiration directly from the text of the mass. Apparently, the manner in which Gounod's *Gloria* begins has strong similarities to the manner in which Adam began the *Gloria* for his own Saint Cecilia mass. Their two *Glorias* probably began with similar musical ideas, both avoiding the type of fanfare start that Ortigue complained about in other modern works. Adam is quick to point out that he had hit upon this idea first, but is gracious to Gounod. He concedes that Gounod may have completely forgotten his *Gloria* and expresses that it would have been a shame if remembering it would have prevented Gounod from pursuing his own effective interpretation.

Dans le début du Gloria de ma messe de Sainte-Cécile, pour couper court à la banalité de l'emploi des fanfares pour l'annonce de ce chant d'hommage à Dieu, j'avais fait chanter les premières mesures par une voix de soprano, simulant celle d'un ange, et soutenue par des violons trémolo à l'aigu, et les voix humaines ne répondaient à la voix de l'ange qu'aux paroles *Et in terra pax!* il me semble que M. Gounod s'est inspiré d'une idée analogue, quoiqu'il l'ait présentée avec des moyens musicaux différents, et qu'il ne fasse intervenir les voix humaines qu'au changement de mouvement sur le *Laudamus*

²²⁵ Pagnerre, *Charles Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 397.

te. Il est bien probable que M. Gounod a entièrement oublié la disposition du début de mon Gloria, et je suis enchanté qu'il ne se la soit pas rappelée, car peut-être eût-il renoncé à cette manière d'interpréter le texte qui lui a fourni de charmants effets tout à fait différents de ceux que j'avais cherchés et obtenus.²²⁶

At the beginning of the Gloria of my Saint Cecilia mass, to trump the banality of employing fanfares to announce the song of homage to God, I made the music of the first measures for one soprano voice, simulating that of an angel, and supported by the violins in tremolo on a high pitch, and the human voices did not respond to the voice of the angel with the words *Et in terra pax!* It seems to me that Mr. Gounod was inspired by a similar idea, be that as it may, it is presented with different musical means, and it does not bring in the human voices with a change of movement on *Laudamus te*. It is quite probable that Mr. Gounod entirely forgot the arrangement of the beginning of my *Gloria*, and I am pleased that he did not recall it, because maybe he would have abandoned this manner of interpreting the text that provided him charming effects entirely different from the one I sought and obtained.

On December 2, *La France Musicale* featured a short summary of the Saint Cecilia observance which included basic information about the event, anticipating a more in-depth review to be published in the following edition. Nonetheless, in this short segment, the author sought to convey to the reader that the work was indeed a masterpiece:

Une messe de M. Charles Gounod a été remarquablement exécutés sous la direction de l'auteur . . . On a principalement remarque le *Gloria*, d'un facture toute nouvelle, le *Sanctus* et le *Dominum* [sic.] *salvum*. Ce dernier morceau, rempli d'effets grandioses et où se combinent sur la thème de l'église deux motifs d'une rare originalité, a profondément impressionné l'auditoire. Nous donnerons dimanche prochain une appréciation détaillée de cette oeuvre de musique sacrée qui, par l'élévation des idées et sa majestueuse ordonnance, est comparable aux chefs-d'oeuvre des plus grands maitres du genre.²²⁷

²²⁶ Prod'homme and Dandelot, *Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 167-168.

²²⁷ "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale* (2 Decembre 1855).

A mass by Mr. Charles Gounod was remarkably performed under the direction of the composer. . . Particularly remarkable is the Gloria, of an entirely new technique, the Sanctus and the Dominum [*sic*] salvum. This last piece, full of grandiose effects, combined in the theme of the church two motifs of rare originality, it deeply moved the audience. Next Sunday we will give a detailed account of this sacred work, by raising some of its ideas and majestic order, it is comparable to the masterpieces of the greatest masters of the genre.

That more detailed account appeared in the December 9th edition. In it

Marie Escudier discussed the work and reputation of Gounod:

Il était naturel qu'une partition religieuse d'un compositeur de la valeur de M. Ch. Gounod éveillât l'attention du monde religieux et musical. Par ses études approfondies, par la foi qui le domine, autant que par son amour exalté pour l'art, M. Gounod, après avoir écrit déjà des opéras, des symphonies qui révèlent une imagination puissant et riche, une science élevée, devait inévitablement tourner un jour ou l'autre son esprit vers l'interprétation musicale des textes sacrés.²²⁸

Nous lui avons entendu dire que c'était avec un sincère bonheur qu'il avait écrit la messe de Saint-Cécile. On y sent, en effet, à chaque page, le souffle de l'inspiration vraie, l'empreinte d'un cœur chrétien et convaincu. Il a peint avec un admirable sentiment religieux les vastes tableaux qui consistent l'une des plus belles épopées du catholicisme.²²⁹

It is natural that a religious score by a composer of the stature of Gounod would attract the interest of the religious and musical world. Through his deep studies and the faith that dominates him, as well as through his love for the art, M. Gounod, after having already written operas, symphonies that reveal a powerful and rich imagination and an elevated knowledge, had to inevitably turn his talent one day or another towards the interpretation of sacred texts.

We have heard him say that it was a sincere happiness with which he composed the Saint Cecilia mass. One senses, in effect, on each page, the breath of true interpretation and the imprint of a faithful

²²⁸ Escudier, "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale*, (9 Decembre 1855), 387.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 387.

and Christian heart. He painted with an admirable religious feeling the vast tableaux that constitute one of the most beautiful epics of the Catholic religion.

Escudier described the *Kyrie* as fresh, calm and tender, as the first impressions of youth. She found the *Gloria* striking for its opening, admiring Gounod's rejection of a fanfare-like opening for a mysterious sound of "invisible angels" evoked by the the choir singing with closed mouths. The moment in which the voices and instruments burst into song (*Laudamus te*) is described here by Escudier as the sounds of the earth combining with the sound of the heavens. In discussing the *Credo*, she describes how the voices seem to bow with respect at the *Et incarnatus*. In praising the *Et resurrexit* she writes that anything more majestic would be difficult to imagine. Only briefly does she address the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, describing them as delightful and sincere. In her description of the *Domine salvum*, Escudier tells us that on this occasion even carillon bells were used in the rendering of the *Prière de la nation*.

Escudier concludes her review with commentary on the experience of this performance. She writes that the entire audience was awed by the music, which she felt was comparable to the most beautiful masterpieces of sacred music. (*Tout l'auditoire est resté émerveillé après avoir entendu cette composition, comparable aux plus beaux chefs-d'oeuvre de la musique religieuse.*). She compliments the vocal soloists, assistant conductors and the choir and orchestra for a successful performance, but laments that the ensemble did not have enough rehearsal time, which resulted in some noticeable errors that day. Nonetheless, she states that the beauty of the work was understood as a whole. In her last sentence, Escudier admits that if it were permissible to applaud in a temple of worship, there would have been "bravos" and applause more than once.²³⁰

²³⁰ Escudier, "Messe de M. Charles Gounod" in *La France Musicale*, (9 Decembre 1855), 387.

This survey of reactions from notable members of the Parisian musical community shows that the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* met with considerable success when premiered in 1855. The comments cited here testify to the originality, grandeur and religious spirit of Gounod's writing. It would appear that the listeners of 1855, having been previously introduced to grandiose liturgical works of Berlioz and exposed to several masses by famed composers such as Cherubini, Thomas and Adam, felt Gounod's new mass was a landmark sacred work. The praise given to it by Saint-Saëns shows that its effect was a long-lasting one.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Beyond 1855

Depuis 1855, la messe solennelle de Gounod a fait son chemin dans le monde religieux. Les grandes cathédrales, les églises, les salles de concert ont accueilli, tant en France qu'à l'étranger, ce bel ouvrage qui est un des titres de gloire du compositeur.

Louis Pagnerre, 1890²³¹

Since 1855, the solemn mass of Gounod has made its way in the religious world. The large cathedrals, the churches, the concert halls welcomed, as much in France as abroad, this beautiful work which is one of the composer's claims to fame.

According to Pagnerre, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* was given its second performance, also at Saint-Eustache, on March 13, 1856 and was performed at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame not long after. It was known to have been used there on the Feast of the Annunciation of 1858 (March 25).²³² By 1890 the success of the mass had spread well-beyond France. As mentioned above, an English edition was published in 1874, and at some point even English translation versions appeared. An early North American performance of the mass took place on All

²³¹ Pagnerre, *Charles Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 397.

²³² Prod'homme and A. Dandelot, *Gounod: sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 199.

Saints Day of 1876, when it was heard in the church of Saint-Jacques in Montréal.²³³

The work remained one of Gounod's best-known for decades. Its attractiveness along with its accessibility kept it in regular liturgical use through much of the twentieth century. A brief story in the *New York Times* on April 4, 1904 reports on a splendid solemn mass held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The occasion was momentous because, at the time, it was thought to be the last mass to utilize an elaborate musical program. The current archbishop had announced that he would be taking steps to follow the wishes of Pius X and restore Gregorian chant to regular use. In the end, the chant would not completely displace composed liturgical music, but the story is valuable for providing an example of early twentieth-century liturgical music programming at a large American cathedral. It is possible that the mass heard on this day was Gounod's most famous, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*:

The music was on the same splendid scale for which the Easter services at St. Patrick's Cathedral are noted, and the enormous congregation which crowded every available inch in the Cathedral to the doors was due no doubt partly to the fact that in all probability a musical programme of the elaborate quality rendered yesterday will not be heard in the Cathedral again. . .

The Cathedral choir . . . has not yet received any notice that it will be necessary to disband, but it is daily expected. Many of the members of the volunteer chorus of girls, who gave their services to the Cathedral, wept yesterday when they assembled before the mass, on the prospect of parting with one another. . . The music included Handel's Prelude, on the great organ with violin obbligato, the Processional, "Come all Ye Faithful," by the altar choir, and a Postlude by Kretschmer. The mass was Gounod's.²³⁴

²³³ *De la musique religieuse: Les messes de Gounod* (Montreal: J. A. Plinguet, 1877), 10.

²³⁴ "Cathedral Choir Sorrowful Over Revival of Gregorian Chant," in *The New York Times*, 4 April 1904.

After the reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s there came a gradual and widespread retreat from Latin liturgy in many Catholic churches, especially in America. This has led to the neglect of many Latin church works and is largely responsible for the reduced popularity of Gounod's *Messe Solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*. I have even heard one account of a church choir director who went so far as to burn his church's copies of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* not long after the Second Vatican Council.²³⁵ The work was among the most popular mass settings fifty years ago but its use in church services has greatly diminished. Since this mass has been popular primarily as liturgical music and not as part of the choral concert repertoire, it no longer appears to be one of Charles Gounod's best known works (see below).

Through the years, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* has also attracted strong criticism. In an 1894 article on Gounod's sacred music, the Italian writer G. Tebaldi chided Gounod's text setting in the mass, judging the closed-mouth singing in the *Gloria* as inappropriate and Gounod's sense of syllabic accent as incorrect. He also accused Gounod of verbosity.²³⁶

The early-twentieth-century *Catholic Encyclopedia* lends insight into the popularity of Gounod's masses; however, it also reveals the author's dissatisfaction with Gounod's overall religious style:

In spite of Gounod's activity in the operatic field he never ceased writing to liturgical texts. His compositions of this character are numerous and varied. His "Messe Solennelle de Sainte-Cécile", *Messe de Pâques*, "Messe du Sacré Coeur", and "Messe des Orphéonistes" have enjoyed great vogue in France, Belgium, England, and the United States. The mass in honour of Joan of Arc and the one in honour of St. John Baptist de la Salle are less widely known than the first three mentioned. Although these two works come nearer to the spirit of the liturgy than any of the earlier masses, nevertheless they bear the general character of all his

²³⁵ Simon Berry, e-mail to author, 15 July 2004.

²³⁶ G. Tebaldi, "Gounod autore di musica sacra," in *Rivista musicale italiana*, 69-70.

compositions for the church. Gounod was a child of his time and of the France of the nineteenth century. His temperament, emotional to the point of sentimentality, his artistic education and environment bound him to the theatre and prevented him from penetrating into the spirit of the liturgy and from giving it adequate musical interpretation.²³⁷

In some modern writings, Gounod's church music has suffered from simplistic judgments that these works are the incidental products of an operatic mind. For example, in the book *Nineteenth-Century Churches*, church historian R. W. Franklin cites Gounod to aid in describing the poor state of liturgical music in early nineteenth-century France:

Public worship in 1830 was neither pure, simple, antique, nor unified. There was no church in France which followed [Prosper] Guéranger's patristic model. When T. W. Allies, a young English Puseyite, visited Paris during these years he was struck by the cultic deadness of the city and the lack of any liturgical comprehension. . . The chanting in the churches was so poor that no words could be distinguished. The favorite composers for the Opéra delighted worshippers as well. Charles Gounod' [sic.] *Messe solennelle St-Cécile*, composed in the 1850's is a reflection of contemporary French liturgical taste which could allow a musician to write for the church without altering his secular theatrical style. Gounod made the striking textural [sic] alteration of combining the words of the Agnus Dei with the modern sentimental devotional formula spoken by the individual before receiving communion, "Domine non sum dignus." Gounod's offertory is wholly instrumental, a "prière intime" indicating passive silent prayer rather than an action of offering by the people. At the end of his mass, the composer of *Faust* followed the common practice of inserting, as an equal of the ordinary texts, such as Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, the Gallican prayer for the sovereign "Domine, salvum fac" which Guéranger had argued should be expunged from the services. This was not only sung as a "Prayer of the Church," but with greater flourish as a "Prayer of the Army" and a "Prayer of the Nation."²³⁸

²³⁷ Joseph Otten, "Charles Gounod," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), 684.

²³⁸ R. W. Franklin, *Nineteenth-Century Churches: The History of a New Catholicism in Württemberg, England, and France*, (New York: Garland, 1987), 358-359.

While Franklin may be correct in linking Gounod to the Parisian ecclesiastical establishment that Prosper Guéranger opposed, given Gounod's experiences with the church and church music and his deep connection to religion, Franklin is incorrect in his portrayal of Gounod as an operatic outsider to the realm of church music and is moreover unfair in his implication that Gounod had no actual church style. Furthermore, I believe it is incorrect to state that Gounod conceived the *Domine salvum* of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* as equal to the actual ordinary texts. The *Domine salvum* is colorful and impressive in sound but it does not have the depth of the other movements of the mass.

Concert Hall and Church

Some nineteenth-century liturgical works, such as the Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* and the *Requiem* Masses by Berlioz, Verdi, and Fauré, have achieved lasting popularity in the concert hall. Many such pieces have transferred to the secular venue well because their large-scale, dramatic elements and compositional complexity appeal to the audiences. The Fauré *Requiem*, which is marked by serenity and simplicity, is one exception; it has become favored by audiences for its gentle beauty and intimate sound. Overall, however, masses popular in the concert hall tend to be conceived in a cantata style--lengthy, utilizing various solo and ensemble sections and often conveying texts in a dramatic manner. Many such masses also include sections of complex counterpoint which, while connecting to the contrapuntal tradition of earlier church music, also has a very dramatic effect on the listener. Important examples of this use of counterpoint are the monumental fugues heard in the *Missa Solemnis* and the Verdi *Requiem*.

Despite its grandeur of sound, the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* does not reflect a cantata style, nor does it present moments of complex counterpoint. These

aspects make the piece accessible to church musicians and listeners but do not help to transfer its effectiveness to the concert hall. It seems to me that the declamatory style of Gounod's writing, the predominance of the choir and the lack of varied, smaller sections within the piece might actually be taxing to a concert listener when the mass is performed as a progression of consecutive movements.

The effect is quite different in the context of liturgy, where these movements are distributed among several other texts (spoken, intoned, or chanted) and events. Gounod's music serves important functions in the context of the church service: to present the texts of the Ordinary of the mass and to enhance the listener's meditation on them and possibly to accompany events taking place at the altar. The fact that the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* did not transfer successfully to the concert hall is probably the main reason it is no longer a well-known work.

Suggestions for Further Research

The topics of nineteenth-century church music and the sacred music of Charles Gounod offer numerous opportunities for further investigation. I believe that, in general, nineteenth-century sacred pieces afford historians valuable opportunities to observe how the religious sentiment of a composer and his time and place intersect with contemporary musical style and practice. Many nineteenth-century sacred works have yet to be considered in their biographical and cultural context. ✓

A rich area for investigation is that of the sacred music of nineteenth-century France. It would be worthwhile to work towards a detailed understanding of the the church music tradition that was born in the aftermath of the Revolution and remained active through the Romantic era. Several sacred

works by composers of this time and place have yet to be given scholarly attention.

Charles Gounod was one of the most important figures in nineteenth-century French music; yet modern scholarship has produced few comprehensive works on his life, career and influence. A new and detailed scholarly biography of the composer would be worthwhile. As he was one of the most important and prolific church composers of his time, his great output of sacred music deserves scholarly attention. The *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile* is his best known mass, but still just one of 21 masses by the composer. They have yet to be treated as significant body of nineteenth-century French music and considered in their cultural context. A scholarly volume on the topic of these masses would contribute greatly to an understanding of religious music in nineteenth-century Europe.

An important area that requires greater consideration is the functional context of liturgical music. Nineteenth-century masses are rarely evaluated as elements of a religious ceremony. When such pieces are studied as single, self-contained works, as performed in a concert, the intended effect of the work is often lost. Unfortunately, few Catholic churches regularly utilize nineteenth-century liturgical compositions today, so opportunities to hear such pieces in religious ceremonies and venues are rare. Nonetheless, scholars must remember that a composed mass, such as Gounod's *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* was conceived as part of a larger performance--that of the Liturgy of the Mass. Furthermore, masses were intended to be heard in an architectural space very different from a concert hall, and in which listeners would ideally be focused upon the altar and not the musical ensemble. Thus scholars must refrain from evaluating such works with the same critical scale as used for concert or theatrical works.

Conclusion

It has been the aim of this thesis to examine Charles Gounod's long and significant involvement in French sacred music and to highlight his importance to it during a sometimes complicated, and long understudied era in the history of religion and music. By focusing on the *Messe solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*, I have attempted to show how certain musical and sacred tastes of the first half of the nineteenth century are reflected in Gounod's most important liturgical work. The *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* displays a musico-dramatic creativity that nonetheless could be considered reserved for its time and sensitive to the text of the mass. And above all, he created an attractive work that remained popular for decades and is still his best-known sacred composition. It is not my intention to refute criticisms against the piece but to show that, while he was, as Joseph Otten writes in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, "a child of his times," Gounod was a significant figure in nineteenth-century church music, and the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* shows him to be an effective and creative liturgical composer.

To conclude this study I would like to return to the words of Camille Saint-Saëns. His praises of the composer of the *Messe de Sainte-Cécile* provide an important testimonial to the esteem in which Gounod's church music was held during his lifetime and for years afterward. In his *Portraits et Souvenirs*, first written at the close of the nineteenth century, Saint-Saëns wrote:

. . . quand, de par le marche fatale du temps, dans un lointain avenir, les opéras de Gounod seront entrés pour toujours dans le sanctuaire poudreux des bibliothèques, connus des seuls érudits, la *Messe de Sainte-Cécile*, *Rédemption*, *Mors et vita* resteront sur la brèche pour apprendre aux générations futures quel grand musicien illustrait la France XIXe siècle.²³⁹



²³⁹ Saint-Saëns, *Portraits et Souvenirs*, 117.

. . . when, through the fatal march of time, in a distant future, the operas of Gounod enter for all time the powdery sanctuary of the libraries, known only scholars, the *Mass of Sainte-Cécile*, *Rédemption*, and *Mors and vita* will bridge the gap for teaching future generations what great musician graced nineteenth-century France.

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