



**Easter High Mass**  
Sunday, April 4, 2010

10:00 am

**The Ambrosian Choristers**  
& **Orchestra**  
at

**Saint Augustine**  
**Orthodox Church**

**Antonín Dvořák: Mass in D Major, op. 86**  
“*LUŽANY MŠE*”

**O**N Easter Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at St. Augustine’s Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, The Ambrosian Choristers and Orchestra will present The Mass in D, op. 86 by Antonín Dvořák. The High Mass begins at 10:00 A.M.

Dvořák's *Mass in D Major*, op.86, was first performed on September 11th, 1887, in the castle chapel at Lužany, southwestern Bohemia. Despite its length, and expansive layout, the *Mass in D* was conceived for performance on a modest scale. It was commissioned by Prague architect and President of the Czech Academy of Arts and Science, Josef Hlávka, and intended for the dedication services of his estate Marian chapel. Dvořák conducted the first performance himself; the solo parts were sung by Hlávka's wife Zdenka, Dvořák's wife Anna, Rudolf Humml and

Otakar Schwenda, with Josef Klička playing the organ.

Dvořák's publisher, Simrock, was not interested in publishing the Mass as it was accompanied by the organ alone. Novello in London indicated an interest in publishing the Mass if it were orchestrated. Dvořák orchestrated the organ accompaniment of the Mass in 1893. The vocal parts and the musical substance of the accompaniment of the first version were kept unchanged. The work's first fully orchestrated performance took place at the Crystal Palace, London, on the 11th of March, 1893.

Dvořák's tuneful, folk-like melodies create in the Mass a heartfelt presentation of this familiar sacred text. Dvořák wrote to Hlávka about the Mass:

I have successfully completed the work [the Mass in D], and I am very pleased with it. I believe it is a work which will fulfill its purpose. It could be called: faith, hope, and love of Almighty God, with thanks for the great gift which has permitted me to bring this work in praise of Him who is highest and in honor of our art to a fortunate end. Do not be surprised that I am so pious - an artist who is not, cannot achieve anything of this nature. Have we not found examples in Beethoven, Bach, Raphael and many others? I also thank you for giving me the stimulating spark to write a work in this form, for I should hardly ever thought of it; up to now I had written works of this kind only in large dimensions and with large forces. This time, however, I have written for only modest dreams, and still I dare to claim that my work has been successful.

This Mass holds an unusual place in Dvořák's choral output. It is neither a work by romanticist wrestling with questions of belief, nor a work whose musical qualities are those of the size of the *Stabat Mater* or *Requiem*. The mass does not necessarily comply with the ideals of the German Cæcilian movement, whose aim it was to restore church music to its original state of purity as they felt was exemplified in the Gregorian plainsong or the music of Palestrina and the 16<sup>th</sup> century polyphonists. Rather, the Mass is a personal affirmation of Dvořák's own faith. It serves in its liturgi-

cal context to express worship of God by lyrical mediation, rather than dramatic directness.

At St. Augustine's, a new edition of the work will be performed for the first time which blends the textures of the original organ version with the sumptuous qualities of the orchestral version. Mr. Slechta and Monsignor Mangels consulting with Richard Robertson prepared this edition of the *Mass in D*.

The Ambrosian Chorister and Orchestra will be under the direction of organist-choirmaster, Francis E. Slechta with guest organist Dr. Lyn Loewi. Soloists include, soprano-Jennifer Cress, alto-Patricia Gaggiani, tenor, Scott Merchant and bass, Jeff McClendon.

Other works to be featured are Gerald Near's *Most Glorious Lord of Life!*; Handel's *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; Pietro Yon's *Christ Triumphant*. The Gregorian Chant *Propers of the Mass* will be sung by a male *SCHOLA CANTORUM* and the congregation will join in the hymns of Easter.