Concerto for Organ and Orchestra
“Poème Liturgique”

by

Tyler Versluis

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
Faculty of Music
The University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

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Dissertation Title: Concerto for Organ and Orchestra “Poème Liturgique”

ABSTRACT: Concerto for Organ and Orchestra “Poème Liturgique” is a 14-minute work for organ and orchestra. Cast in five interconnected movements, the work attempts to embody the mood and atmosphere of the five main components of the Latin-rite mass: the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. Using respective chant melodies for each section from Mass II “Kyrie fons bonitatis” of the Kyriale, the music creates evocations of each mass section while weaving in a number of touchstones from the organ's varied role in liturgical music, as well as a series of recollections and vignettes from the composer's own experience as a liturgical musician.

**Kyrie:** Chant melodies from the Kyriale’s Mass II, as well as a responsory chant from a Feast of the Assumption procession, which the composer heard in the mountains of western Herzegovina.

**Gloria:** A full setting of the chant melody from the Kyriale’s Mass II, with the organ and orchestra responding dialogically.

**Credo:** An organ solo in trio-texture, weaving together three freely adapted chant melodies: *Veni Creator Spiritus, Christe Redemptor Omnium,* and Credo IV from the Kyriale.

**Sanctus:** Cascades of melodies from the Kyriale’s Mass II.

**Agnus Dei:** A chorale prelude, where free variations of chant from the Kyriale’s Mass II alternate with recitations from the Lutheran eucharistic hymn, “Christe, Du Lamm Gottes”.
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Thanks to my loving and supporting wife Erika, who has put up with my mercuriality for the entire duration of this degree.

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This piece is dedicated in memory of my grandfather, Gerard Versluis (1922-2011), who loved the organ.

"Van het concert des levens heeft niemand het een program."
INSTRUMENTATION & PROGRAMME NOTES

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2 Flutes (Flute 2 doubling Piccolo)
2 Oboes (Oboe 2 doubling Cor Anglais)
2 Clarinets in Bb
2 Bassoons
4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in Bb
2 Tenor Trombones
1 Bass Trombone
1 Tuba

Percussion (4 Players):

Percussion 1: Timpani (3)

Percussion 2: Mark Tree, Tubular Bells, Crash Cymbal

Percussion 3: Tissue Paper (several sheets), 2 Bongos (large and small), Glockenspiel, Vibraphone, Altar Bell (or Hand Bell)

Percussion 4: Bass Drum, Tam-tam

2 Harps

Solo Pipe Organ

Strings

Duration: ca. 14.5 minutes

The score is written at pitch.

Programme notes

This concerto for organ and orchestra is subtitled “Poème Liturgique”. The piece not only attempts to evoke the sounds and moods of an ecclesiastical atmosphere, but it is also cast in a 5-movement form that harnesses the poetic and symbolic meanings of the various sections of the Roman Catholic mass: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. Respective chant excerpts from the Kyriale’s Mass II, “Kyrie fons bonitatis” are interwoven into the music to ground the work in this wonderful tradition of Christian worship.

Kyrie: Chant melodies from the Kyriale’s Mass II, as well as a responsory chant from a Feast of the Assumption procession, which the composer heard in the mountains of western Herzegovina.

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Concerto for Organ and Orchestra

Kyrie eleison...
Concerto for Organ and Orchestra
Concerto for Organ and Orchestra

Credo in unum Deum...
Concerto for Organ and Orchestra
Concerto for Organ and Orchestra