

Luigi Cherubini - Missa solemnis in E major (2007)

Written by bluesever

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Mass No. 8 for chorus & orchestra in E major ("Missa Solemnis") 1. *Kyrie* 2. *Gloria* 3. *Credo* 4. *Sanctus* 5. *Communio O salutaris hostia* 6. *Agnus Dei*

Ruth Ziesak (soprano) Marianna Pizzolato (mezzo-soprano) Herbert Lippert (tenor) Ildar Abdrazakov (bass) Antiphons (9), for 4 voices & orchestra ("à la Palestrina") (3 lost):

7. *Antifona sul canto fermo* 8. *tono* 8. *Nemo gaudeat*

Barbara Fleckenstein (soprano) Barbara Muller (alto) Bernhard Schneider (tenor) Andrew Meyer (tenor) Christoph Hartkopf (bass) Harald Feller (organ) Max Hanft (organ) Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks Peter Dijkstra - choir master Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks Riccardo Muti - conductor

Luigi Cherubini's Missa Solemnis in E major may not be as important as his later coronation masses, and it is certainly not on a par with Ludwig van Beethoven's great Missa Solemnis in D major, completed a few years later. But this work has enough drama and power to mark it as one of the more significant sacred works of the early Romantic period in France. Composed in 1818, when Cherubini was exclusively active in church music and supported by the restored Bourbon monarchy, the eighth of his masses is quite conservative in approach, though ambiguous in mood and style, partly because the music vacillates between the penitential mood of E minor and the triumphant feeling of E major, and because much of the mass is cast in studied counterpoint that at times evokes the Baroque era, rather than its own time. Riccardo Muti leads the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus on this 2007 release, and their dutiful performance does justice to Cherubini, especially in the rich orchestral sonorities and suave choral parts; there are times when their sound approaches Beethovenian grandeur, even if the music itself seems less imposing. At just over 40 minutes, this Missa Solemnis is a bit short for a CD, so it is followed by two motets of gentle character that are beautifully performed, and the album seems full enough with these works. EMI's resonant sound has a wide dynamic range, so listeners may need to adjust the volume periodically. ---Blair Sanderson, AllMusic Review

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