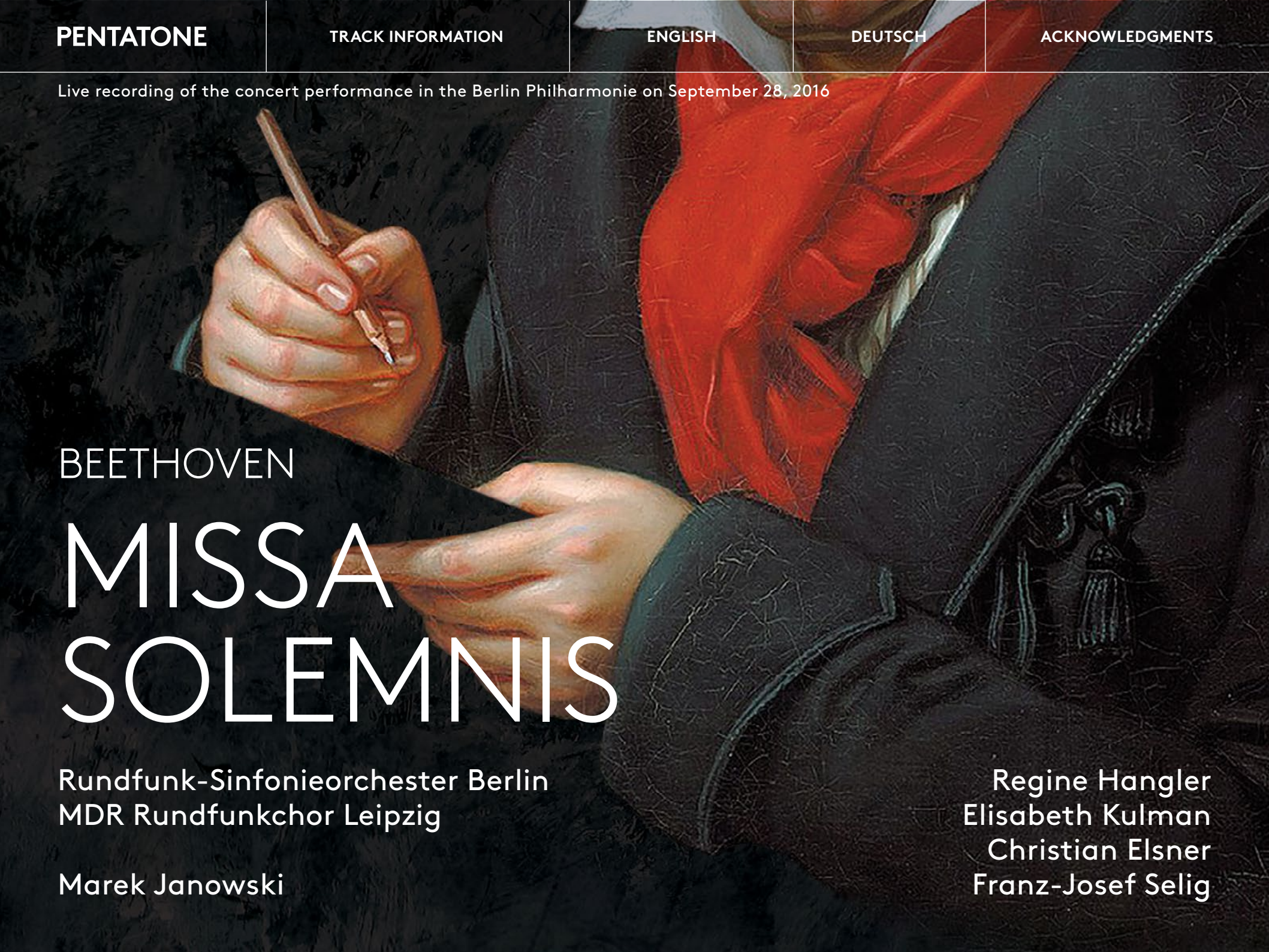


The background of the entire page is a classical painting. It depicts a hand in a dark, textured sleeve holding a thin, light-colored baton. To the right, a vibrant red sash or ribbon is draped over a dark, possibly black, garment. The painting style is visible, with brushstrokes and a rich, dark palette.

PENTATONE

TRACK INFORMATION

ENGLISH

DEUTSCH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Live recording of the concert performance in the Berlin Philharmonie on September 28, 2016

BEETHOVEN

MISSA SOLEMNIS

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin
MDR Rundfunkchor Leipzig

Marek Janowski

Regine Hangler
Elisabeth Kulman
Christian Elsner
Franz-Josef Selig



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

MISSA SOLEMNIS

in D Major Op. 123

1	Kyrie	9. 22
2	Gloria	15. 41
3	Credo	16. 59
4	Sanctus – Benedictus	15. 26
5	Agnus Dei	15. 32

Total playing time: 73. 04

Regine Hangler, Soprano

Elisabeth Kulman, Alto

Christian Elsner, Tenor

Franz-Josef Selig, Bass

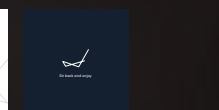
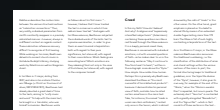
MDR Rundfunkchor Leipzig

Michael Gläser, Chorus Master

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

Rainer Wolters, Concert Master

Conducted by **Marek Janowski**



With devotion

Reflections on Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*

Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* is a unique gem. A work of dramatic external power and well-nigh incredible inner strength. Full of conviction. Rich in profoundly personal visions of the faith that has remained, carved in stone, in the form of the Latin mass text for centuries. And yet also rich in moments of doubt about dogmatic religion and the formal institution of the church. In its monumentality and lengthy duration of just under 90 minutes, the *Missa solemnis* departs from all liturgical guidelines – despite the fact that the work was originally intended for a specific high mass; yet it was not actually performed there in the end.

Liner notes

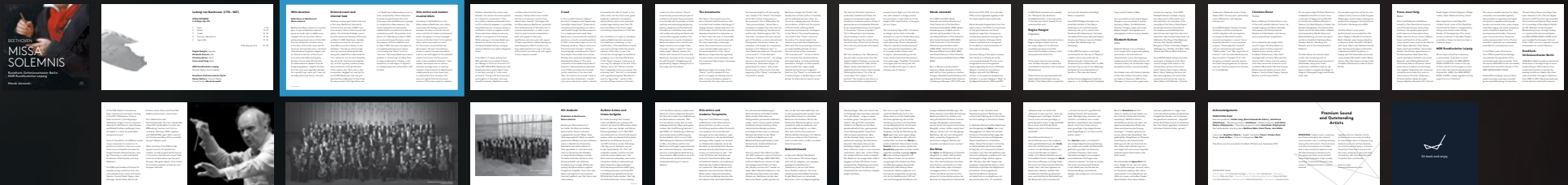
External event and internal task

Creating a unique gem takes time: and in this case, Beethoven took plenty of time. In the summer of 1818 it was announced in Vienna that his pupil and patron, the Archduke Rudolph, was to be enthroned as Archbishop of Olomouc on March 9, 1820. Beethoven decided to compose a mass for this event. In June 1819, he wrote as follows to the Archduke: "The day on which a high mass by my hand will be performed during the celebrations solemnized for Y.I.H. will be for me the most beautiful day of my life. And God will enlighten me, so that my paltry creative powers may contribute to the glorification of this solemn day." But work on the composition dragged out, and by the end of 1819 Beethoven had only just sketched the middle part of the Credo. The day arrived of the High Mass, and

– not Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*, but a mass composed by Johann Nepomuk Hummel was performed. Not until three years later did Beethoven manage to complete the *Missa solemnis*, the reason being that he had quickly realized that he would have to take an extraordinary path. The première took place in St. Petersburg on April 7, 1824, as a concertante performance under the auspices of Prince Gallitzin; and on May 7, 1824, the mass was given an incomplete performance in Vienna, not including the "Gloria" and the "Sanctus." Obviously, Beethoven had no problem in "extracting" his *Missa* from its original destination. Clearly, in the meantime, he had begun to regard it as a deeply personal confrontation with his faith.

Stile antico and modern musical idiom

According to Carl Dahlhaus, in his *Missa solemnis* Beethoven was mainly concerned with finding a good mix between the idiom of ancient church music and that of modern instrumental music. He appears to have managed this due to the fact that "in the archaic idiom, which was meant to vouch for the church, he simultaneously discovered a ferment of modernity, thanks to which the work was able to hold its own with regard to the aesthetic maxim that music must be novel in order to be considered authentic." And indeed, techniques such as motivic-thematic passage work, or evolving variation (characteristic for Beethoven's middle period) are to be found only in rudimentary form. However, this does not signify that the structural sections of the mass coexist in isolation.



Dahlhaus describes the motivic links between the various structural sections as “submotivic connections.” Thus, very subtly, individual parameters from motifs constantly reappear in a precisely calculated manner – however, always in a different context as regards content. These submotivic references are very difficult to recognize at first hearing. While working on his mass, Beethoven delved into ancient church music in Archduke Rudolph’s library, studying works by Palestrina as well as Gregorian chant.

In his Mass in C major, dating from 1807, and also in his oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* (= Christ on the mount of olives, 1803/1804/1811), Beethoven had already devoted a great deal of time to the texts, aiming to “unify music and word.” To help with the mass text, he brought in a translator, who was himself a musician. Beethoven wrote

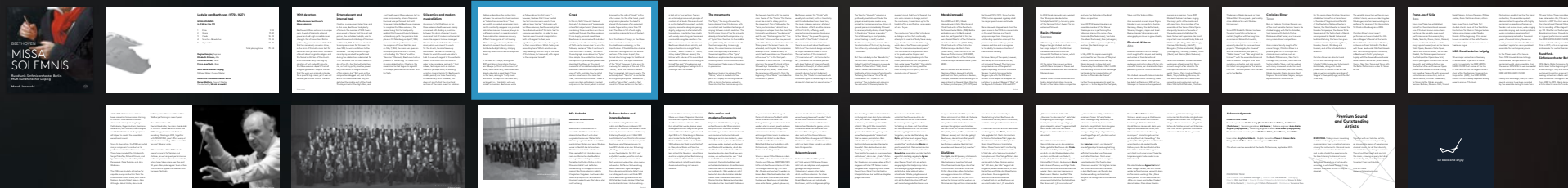
as follows about his first mass: “... however, I believe that I have treated the text in a manner in which it has seldom been treated.” And again with his *Missa solemnis*, Beethoven subjected the individual words of the Latin text to a precise examination, in order to give them an exact musical interpretation: both with regard to their pure significance, but above all, with regard to their connotations. Which feelings are resonating here? Which emotions are they releasing? And not only in the case of the listener, but above all, with regard to the composer himself.

Creed

Is this my faith? How do I believe? And why? A religious and “expressively intensified subjectivism” (Ackermann) containing these questions runs like a red thread through the *Missa solemnis*. It is a deeply personal creed. Here, Beethoven is concerned with individual emotions, not with universal questions of faith – as he makes clear to us in the following sentence “May it continue to flow from heart to heart,” written in the autograph score above the “Kyrie.” How simple. How noble. How human. Perhaps this is precisely why Beethoven described the *Missa* as “the most successful of his intellectual products”: because it demonstrates his personal view of faith, and also how he rated certain assertions in the mass text. Take, for instance, the casual “credo in unam sanctam catholicam,” recited only once in the tenors, which is almost

drowned by the calls of “credo” in the other voices. On the other hand, great emphasis is placed on the belief in eternal life by means of an extended double fugue lasting more than 170 bars. The *Missa* is full of such highly contrasting interpretations of the text.

As in the Mass in C major, in the *Missa solemnis* Beethoven also renounces the traditional numbering, i.e. the classification of the distribution of arias and choral settings within the various sections of the mass. In part, the formal structuring keeps to traditional guidelines, as in the tripartite division of the “Kyrie”; however, it also goes its own way, for example at the end of the “Gloria,” when the “Gloria in excelsis Deo” is repeated, but now in *presto*. The extremely short “Sanctus” is contrasted with a greatly elongated “Benedictus”; and the “Agnus Dei” – which in fact consists of three sections in the text –



is laid out in four sections. There is an extremely pronounced principle of contrast at all levels. Peace and quiet is contrasted with movement, ecstatic rejoicing resonates alongside pacing dignity, polyphony is alternated with homophony. A recitative tone meets with widely resonating cantilenas and concise folk-song-like creations. The *Missa solemnis* is a work of extremes. Beethoven blends choir, soloists, and large orchestra into a single "body of sound," which is meant to "touch, strike, shake" (Werner-Jensen) the listener with volume of its sound. And Beethoven succeeds at this, having set himself the goal "of awakening and perpetuating religious feelings both in the singer and the listener."

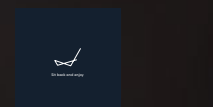
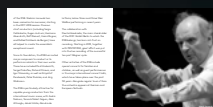
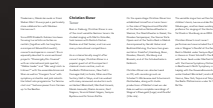
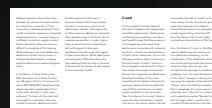
The movements

The "Kyrie," the song of invocation, has a classical tripartite division, with a constant and humble interchange of singing between soloists and choir. The first D-major chord of the full orchestra already anticipates the impressive cry of "Kyrie" from the choir. In the middle part ("Christe"), the soloists lead with the choir responding. Increasingly dense, the voices become more and more contrapuntally interwoven. In the varied repetition of the "Kyrie," Beethoven emphasizes the agonizing mood by means of chromaticism, and the movement fades away in the prayer in *pianissimo*.

Beethoven begins the eulogy of the "Gloria," which is divided into four parts in a hugely contrasting manner. After a stormy *fortissimo* upbeat in the orchestra, the choir races up into

the heavenly heights with the soaring main theme of the "Gloria." This theme recurs like a motto at key points in the movement. This is followed by the "terra pax hominibus," almost like a homophonic whisper from the choir, the hymnically worshipping "Laudamus te" and the airy "Gratias agimus tibi." The "Qui tollis" introduces the slow, second part of the Gloria, in which clarinets and flutes present the lament theme. An extended, contrite plea for compassion develops in the "Miserere nobis," in which Beethoven draws out the emotion in the vowel "o." In the third part – "Quoniam tu solus sanctus" – the eulogy returns in the powerful choral setting, followed by a tremendous fugue, "in gloria dei patris, amen," after which the recurrence of the motto from the beginning of the "Gloria" concludes the movement in *presto*.

Beethoven designs the "Credo" with equally rich contrast, both in its entirety and its individual sections. Here, too, the music is deeply personal, all about the confession of faith and the miracle of Christ's birth, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. Analogous to the "Gloria," the powerful opening core motif of the "Credo" returns at the end as if to close brackets. Can there be any doubt about Beethoven's faith here? The musical design cements an imperturbable attitude of mind. The next section of the movement ("Et incarnatus est" – "et homo factus est") recreates the individual phases with deep feeling: at times profoundly absorbed in thought, at others painful and sorrowful, then again vividly majestic during the Last Judgment. Here too, the "Credo" is concluded with a massive fugue – a double fugue on the phrase "et vitam venturi saeculi, amen."



The Sanctus “devoutly” assumes a profoundly meditative attitude, the prayers are whispered *mezza voce*, primed by trombones and low strings. A general pause is immediately followed by an energetically driving choral fugato to the phrase “Osanna in excelsis.” This is followed by a short prelude, almost lacking in motif, in which Beethoven portrays the miracle of the transformation of the host; by the way, this is the only exclusively instrumental “movement.”

But then suddenly in the “Benedictus,” the solo violin swoops down from the highest heights of heaven in a *coup de théâtre*. Profane kitsch? Well, Arnold Werner-Jensen described this as “a legitimate artistic means of emotionally flustering the listener.” For after all, it was about the “impact of the promise.” The muted sound-colours in the orchestra further emphasize the

reverent mood. Right up to the end, the solo violin remains in charge; and at the conclusion, it soars back up to the heights after a glorification, once again set as a fugue.

The concluding “Agnus Dei” introduces an Adagio section that continually attempts to soar, but finally fades away in *pp*. Beethoven wrote the following words above the “Dona nobis pacem”: “Plea for internal and external peace.” Two instrumental interpolations with, so to speak, warlike timpani and trumpets, violently breaking into the music, demonstrate that this peace is truly under siege. “Fearfully,” the soloists once again plea for mercy; and the choir virtually insists upon it, with its *sforzato* cries of “pacem.”

Marek Janowski

From 2002 until 2015, Marek Janowski was Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin (RSB). Before embarking upon his Berlin period, and also partly parallel to this, he was Musical Director of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (2005-2012), Chief Conductor of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo (2000-2005), Chief Conductor of the Dresdner Philharmonie (2001-2003), and Musical Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France (1984-2000).

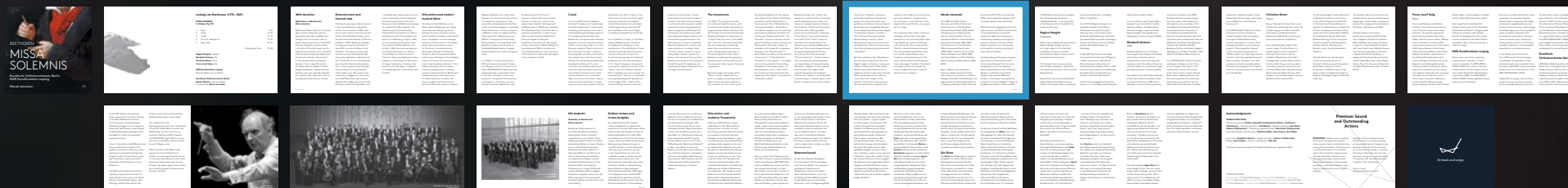
Born in Warsaw and educated in Germany, Marek Janowski's artistic path led him from positions in Aachen, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Hamburg to his appointment as General Music Director in Freiburg im Breisgau (1973-1975) and

Dortmund (1975-1979). Since the late 1970s, he has appeared regularly at all the major opera houses world-wide.

Marek Janowski stepped back from the opera scene in the 1990s to concentrate on the great German and French symphonic repertoire. He enjoys an outstanding reputation amongst the premier orchestras of Europe, North America and Asia and is recognised for his ability to create orchestras of international standing.

His leave-taking of the opera, however, was merely an institutional matter, not a musical farewell. Thus he is now recognized as one of the greatest experts regarding the music of Richard Wagner, to which his concertante Wagner cycle with the RSB bears witness. In the sequel he accepted the invitation to conduct Wagner's “Ring” at the Bayreuth Festival in 2016 and 2017.

Artists



In 2014 Marek Janowski was awarded the "Ehrenpreis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik" (= honorary prize of the German Critics' Award) for his extensive life's work.

Regine Hangler Soprano

After having studied viola and technics, Regine Hangler studied canto as her major subject at the Kärntner Landeskonservatorium and the Universität für Musik in Vienna, which she passed with distinction.

At the same time she was working with KS Mara Zampieri in Padua and concluded her education with numerous Masterclasses.

Several times she was decorated with highly skilled scholarships, became finalist of the Italian Aslico competition

and won the 2nd prize in the Birgit Nilson competition.

Since 2013/14 Regine Hangler is an ensemble member of the Wiener Staatsoper and is performing the following roles, just to name a few: Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus), Santuzza (Cavalleria Rusticana), Elsa (Lohengrin), Ariadne (auf Naxos), Leonore (Fidelio) and Eva (Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg).

In May 2015 the soprano was highly acclaimed for her title role of "Daphne" in Berlin, which was conducted by Marek Janowski, in New York und Cleveland by Franz Welser-Möst. In 2016 she had a big success at the Salzburger Festspiele for her interpretation of Xanthe in "Die Liebe der Danae".

Further future engagements lead the soprano i.e. to the Bayreuther Festspiele,

Tokyo and the Scala in Milan.

As a successful concert singer Regine Hangler is very successful in Austria, Germany, Albany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Hungary, Japan and Israel. Regine Hangler's discography and videography continue to grow steadily.

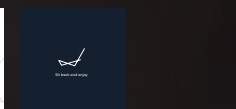
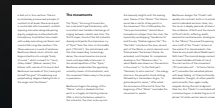
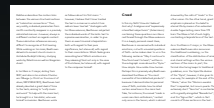
Elisabeth Kulman Alto

Elisabeth Kulman is one of today's most sought-after singers and leading authorities in the international classical music scene. She impresses audiences and critics alike with her rich, colourful timbre, her charismatic stage personality and her musical versatility.

She studied voice with Helena Lazarska at the Vienna Music University, made her debut as Pamina in 2001 at the Volksoper in Vienna and enjoyed early

success as a soprano. Since 2005 Elisabeth Kulman has been singing the major parts of the mezzo and alto repertoire. As a member of the ensemble at the Vienna State Opera she quickly became a favourite of the audience and established the basis for her vast repertoire. Her most important roles include Fricka, Erda and Waltraute (The Ring of the Nibelung), Carmen, Mrs. Quickly (Falstaff), Brangäne (Tristan and Isolde), Begbick (Mahagonny), Orlofsky (The Bat), Orfeo (Gluck) and Marina (Boris Godunov).

Since 2010 Elisabeth Kulman has been working as a freelance artist. She is a much sought-after soloist in the metropolitan centres of the music world: Vienna, Paris, London, Munich, Berlin, Tokyo, Salzburg, Moscow, etc. She works regularly with world-class orchestras and conductors such as Zubin Mehta, Kirill Petrenko, Christian



Thielemann, Marek Janowski or Franz Welser-Möst. She enjoyed a particularly close collaboration with Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

Since 2015 Elisabeth Kulman has been focusing her artistic activities on recitals (together with her longtime accompanist Eduard Kutrowatz), concerts and operas in concert. She is especially devoted to unconventional projects: "Mussorgsky Dis-Covered" with an international jazz quartet, "Mahler Lieder" and "Wer wagt mich zu höhnen?" with the ensemble Amarcord Wien as well as "Hungaro Tune" with symphony orchestra and jazz soloists. Her latest solo programme "La femme c'est moi" features pieces from Carmen up to the Beatles.

Christian Elsner Tenor

Born in Freiburg, Christian Elsner is one of the most versatile German tenors. He studied singing with Martin Gründler, took lessons with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Neil Semer, and has won many international competitions.

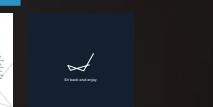
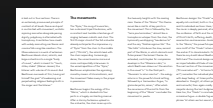
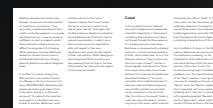
As an internationally sought-after concert singer, Christian Elsner is a popular guest at all the important classical music centres, such as the Berlin Philharmonic, New York's Carnegie Hall, La Scala, Milan and the Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and has worked with many renowned conductors such as Herbert Blomstedt, Manfred Honeck, Marek Janowski, Mariss Jansons, Kent Nagano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Semyon Bychkov and Sir Simon Rattle.

On the opera stage Christian Elsner has established himself as a heroic tenor in the roles of Siegmund and Parsifal at the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar, the Staatstheater in Kassel, the Dresden Semperoper, the Vienna State Opera and at the Teatro Real in Madrid. Accompanied by Gerold Huber and Burkhard Kehring, the tenor has given recitals in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Bonn, Dresden, Munich, Würzburg and Brussels, and at the Schubertiade in Feldkirch.

Christian Elsner can also be heard on CD, with recordings such as Schubert's *Winterreise* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, along with studio productions of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde* as well as complete recordings of Wagner's *Rheingold* (Loge) and *Parsifal* (title role).

The versatile singer has written his own children's book, *Lennie und der Ring des Nibelungen*, and has been working as a professor for singing at the Hochschule für Musik in Würzburg since 2006.

Christian Elsner's most recent performances have included the title role in Wagner's *Parsifal* at the Teatro Real in Madrid under Semyon Bychkov, in Vienna in Franz Schmidt's *The Book with Seven Seals* under Manfred Honeck with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Leipzig with the Gewandhausorchester under Herbert Blomstedt, and in Berlin, Vienna, New York, Taipei and Tokyo with the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle.



Franz-Josef Selig

Bass

Franz-Josef Selig has established himself on the international scene as one of the best-known serious bass baritones. He regularly gives guest performances as Gurnemanz, King Marke, Sarastro, Rocco, Osmin, Daland, Fiesco and Fasolt at all the world's major opera houses (such as the Vienna State Opera, Bavarian State Opera, Teatro alla Scala di Milano, Teatro Real Madrid, the Parisian opera houses or the Metropolitan Opera New York) and at prestigious festivals such as the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festival and the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. Opera productions as well as concerts bring him together frequently with renowned orchestras and conductors, such as James Levine, Christian Thielemann, Sir Simon Rattle, Marek Janowski, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Muti, Yannick

Nezét-Séguin, Antonio Pappano, Phillipe Jordan, Zubin Mehta and many others.

Bass singer Franz-Josef Selig first studied church music at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Cologne before taking voice classes under Claudio Nicolai. At the beginning of his career he was a member of the Aalto Theatre ensemble in Essen. He has since been a freelance singer.

MDR Rundfunkchor Leipzig

When major orchestras in Germany or abroad plan to perform a choral work it is invariably the MDR LEIPZIG RADIO CHOIR that comes at the top of their wish list. As the largest concert choir within the German Broadcasting Corporation (ARD), the MDR LEIPZIG RADIO CHOIR is widely regarded among experts as one of the best.

Not only an excellent partner for major orchestras, the ensemble regularly demonstrates its expertise with highly acclaimed a cappella performances. Secular and sacred music, wide-ranging ensemble singing and choral symphonic works complete a repertoire that encompasses practically a thousand years of musical history. Numerous world premieres attest to the 73 choir members' reputation as a specialised ensemble for contemporary music.

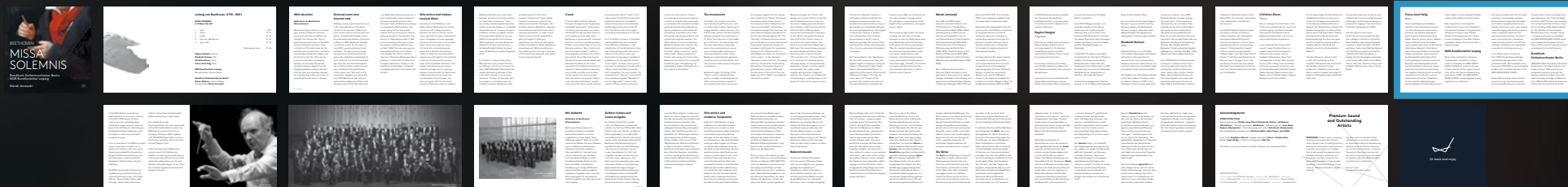
In the fifteen years of his tenure from 1998 Howard Arman lastingly consolidated the reputation of this acclaimed world-class ensemble. From the season 2015/2016 he was succeeded by Risto Joost as artistic director of the MDR LEIPZIG RADIO CHOIR.

Nearly 200 recordings, many of them award-winning, have been recorded by the ensemble during its more than

70-year history. These recordings have been released on LPs, CDs and digital formats. In 2017 the choir was awarded the International Classical Music Award for its recording of Max Reger's Motets op. 110. Whether via the European Broadcasting Union, through touring or in guest performances worldwide, the MDR LEIPZIG RADIO CHOIR, which was awarded the European Cultural Prize in 2013, acts as a supreme musical ambassador for central Germany.

Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

(RSB, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra) dates back to the beginnings of music broadcasting in 1923, and has since sustained its position amongst the leading orchestras in Berlin and other radio orchestras throughout Germany. From 2002 to 2015, Marek Janowski was artistic director and chief conductor



of the RSB. Vladimir Jurowski has been named as his successor, starting in the 2017-2018 season. Previous chief conductors (including Sergiu Celibidache, Eugen Jochum, Hermann Abendroth, Rolf Kleinert, Heinz Rogner, and Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos) have all helped to create the ensemble's exceptional sound.

Since its foundation, the RSB has invited major composers to conduct or to perform as soloists in their own works. These have included Paul Hindemith, Sergei Prokofiev, Richard Strauss, and Igor Stravinsky, as well as Krzysztof Penderecki, Peter Ruzicka, and Jörg Widmann.

The RSB is particularly attractive for capable young conductors from the international music scene, with Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Alain Altinoglu, Jakub Hrůša, Alondra de

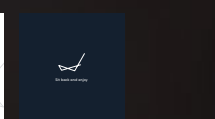
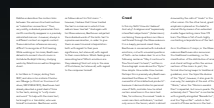
la Parra, Lahav Shani and Omer Meir Wellber performing in recent years.

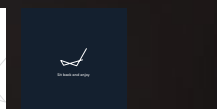
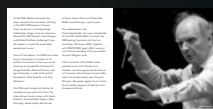
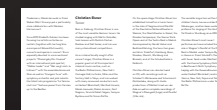
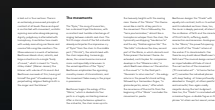
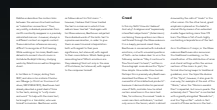
The collaboration with Deutschlandradio, the main shareholder of the ROC GmbH Berlin to which the RSB belongs, has born rich fruit on recording. Starting in 2010, together with PENTATONE, great effort was put into the live recording of the successful ten part Wagner cycle.

Other activities of the RSB include special concerts for families and children, as well as guest performances in the major international concert halls, which have taken place over the past 50 years. Alongside regular tours of Asia the orchestra appears at German and European festivals.



Marek Janowski
© Jean-François Leclercq







MDR Rundfunkchor Leipzig
© Peter Adamik

Mit Andacht

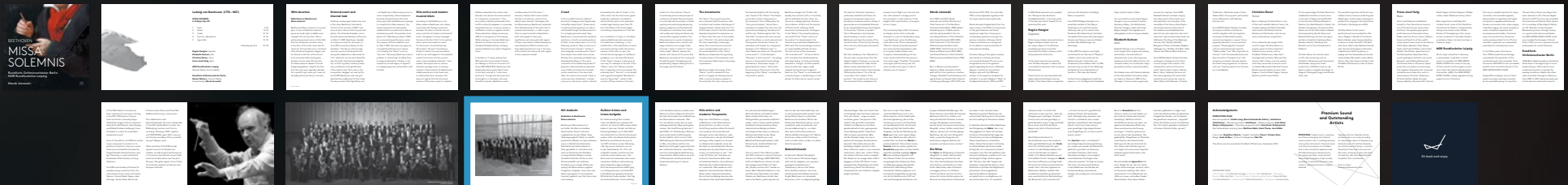
Gedanken zu Beethovens Missa solemnis

Beethovens Missa solemnis ist ein Solitär. Ein Werk von äußerer dramatischer Wucht und schier unglaublicher innerer Stärke. Voller Überzeugungskraft. Reich an zutiefst persönlichen Blicken auf jenen Glauben, wie er in Gestalt des lateinischen Messtextes seit Jahrhunderten in Stein gemeißelt ist. Und doch auch reich an Momenten des Zweifels an dogmatischer Religion und der formellen Institution Kirche. In ihrer Monumentalität und zeitlichen Ausdehnung von knapp 90 Minuten sprengt die Missa solemnis jegliche liturgischen Vorgaben. Auch wenn das Werk ursprünglich für ein konkretes Hochamt gedacht war. Dort dann aber nicht erklang.

Äußerer Anlass und innere Aufgabe

Ein Solitär benötigt Zeit. Und die nahm sich Beethoven in diesem Fall reichlich. Im Sommer 1818 wurde in Wien bekannt, dass sein Schüler und Gönner, Erzherzog Rudolph, am 9. März 1820 zum Erzbischof von Olmütz inthronisiert werden sollte. Aus diesem Anlass plante Beethoven eine Messvertonung. Im Juni 1819 schrieb er an den Erzherzog: „Der Tag, wo ein Hochamt von mir zu den Feierlichkeiten für I.K.H. soll aufgeführt werden, wird für mich der schönste meines Lebens sein. Und Gott wird mich erleuchten, dass meine schwachen Kräfte zur Verherrlichung dieses Feierlichen Tages beitragen.“ Doch die kompositorische Arbeit ging nur schleppend voran und Ende 1819 hatte Beethoven gerade einmal den Mittelteil des Credo skizziert. Der Tag des Hochamtes kam. Und es erklang –

Deutsch



nicht die Missa solemnis, sondern eine Messe von Johann Nepomuk Hummel. Erst drei Jahre später konnte Beethoven die Missa solemnis vollenden. Weil ihm schnell klar wurde, dass er einen außergewöhnlichen Weg würde gehen müssen. Die Uraufführung fand am 7. April 1824 in St. Petersburg im Rahmen einer konzertanten Aufführung des Fürsten Galitzin statt und am 7. Mai 1824 erklang das Werk bruchstückhaft in Wien, ohne Gloria und Sanctus. Beethoven hatte ganz augenscheinlich kein schlechtes Gewissen, seine Missa aus ihrer ursprünglichen Bestimmung herauszulösen. Betrachtete er sie doch mittlerweile als zutiefst persönliche Auseinandersetzung mit seinem Glauben.

Stile antico und moderne Tonsprache

Folgt man Carl Dahlhaus, so ging es Beethoven in der Missa solemnis kompositorisch vor allem um eine Vermittlung zwischen altem Kirchenstil und moderner Instrumentalmusik. Gelungen sei ihm dies dadurch, „dass er im Archaischen, das die Kirchlichkeit verbürgen sollte, zugleich ein Ferment von Modernität entdeckte, durch die das Werk vor der ästhetischen Maxime bestehen konnte, dass Musik neu sein müsse, um authentisch zu sein.“ Und in der Tat finden sich Techniken wie motivisch-thematische Arbeit oder entwickelnde Variation (ihres Zeichens Merkmale des mittleren Beethovens) nur rudimentär. Was wiederum nicht bedeutet, dass die formalen Teile der Messe isoliert nebeneinanderstehen. Die motivischen Bezüge zwischen den Formabschnitten beschreibt Dahlhaus

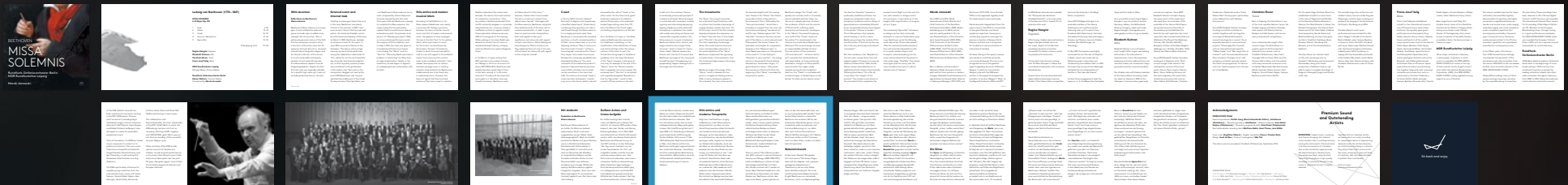
als „submotivische Beziehungen“. Demnach kehren auf äußerst subtile Weise einzelne Parameter aus Motivgestalten genauestens kalkuliert wieder – aber in einem jeweils anderen inhaltlichen Zusammenhang. Diese submotivischen Bezüge sind beim erstmaligen Hören kaum zu erkennen. Während der Arbeit an der Messe vertiefte sich Beethoven in der Bibliothek Erzherzog Rudolfs in alte Kirchenmusik, studierte Palestrinas Werke und die Gregorianik.

Schon in seiner C-Dur-Messe aus dem Jahr 1807 und auch in seinem Oratorium *Christus am Ölberge* (1803/1804/1811) hatte sich Beethoven intensiv mit den Textvorlagen beschäftigt, mit dem Ziel „Musick und wort ein's“ werden zu lassen. Beim Messtext bediente er sich der Hilfe eines Übersetzers, der selber Musiker war. Beethoven schrieb über seine erste Messe: „jedoch glaube ich,

dass ich den Text behandelt habe, wie er noch wenig behandelt worden“. Auch bei der Missa solemnis untersuchte Beethoven die einzelnen Wörter des lateinischen Messtextes genau, um sie musikalisch exakt auszudeuten. Auf ihre reine Bedeutung hin, vor allem aber auch auf ihre Konnotationen. Welche Gefühle schwingen mit? Welche Emotionen setzen sie frei? Und zwar nicht nur beim Hörer, sondern vor allem beim Komponisten.

Bekenntniswerk

Ist dies mein Glaube? Wie glaube ich? Und warum? Mit diesen Fragen zieht sich ein religiöser und „expressiv gesteigerter Subjektivismus“ (Ackermann) wie ein roter Faden durch die Missa solemnis. Sie ist ein zutiefst persönliches Bekenntniswerk. Es geht Beethoven um individuelle Emotionen, nicht um allgemeingültige



Glaubensfragen. Was nicht zuletzt der im Autograph über dem Kyrie stehende Satz „Von Herzen – möge es wieder – zu Herzen gehen“ transportiert. Wie schlicht. Wie groß. Wie menschlich. Vielleicht hat Beethoven die Missa gerade deshalb als das „gelungenste seiner Geistesprodukte“ bezeichnet. Weil sie seinen persönlichen Blick auf den Glauben zeigt. Und wie er bestimmte Aussagen des Messtextes bewertet. Man denke etwa an das beiläufige, lediglich einmal im Chor-Tenor rezitierte „credo in unam sanctam catholicam“, das in den „Credo“-Rufen der anderen Stimmen schier untergeht. Der Glaube an das ewige Leben erfährt dagegen auf über 170 Takten in einer ausgeweiteten Doppelfuge eine starke Gewichtung. Derart kontrastreiche Interpretationen der textlichen Vorgabe prägen die Missa.

Wie schon in der C-Dur-Messe verzichtet Beethoven auch in der Missa solemnis auf die traditionelle Nummerngliederung, also auf die Verteilung von Arien und Chorsätzen auf die Messabschnitte. Die formale Gliederung folgt teils traditionellen Vorgaben, wie bei der Dreiteilung des **Kyrie**, geht aber auch eigene Wege, etwa wenn Beethoven das „Gloria in excelsis Deo“ am Ende des **Gloria** im presto wiederholt. Dem extrem kurzen **Sanctus** steht ein extrem gedehntes **Benedictus** gegenüber und das textlich eigentlich dreiteilig angelegte **Agnus Dei** wird vierteilig umgesetzt. Auf allen Ebenen findet sich ein extrem ausgeprägtes Kontrastprinzip. Ruhe wird Bewegung gegenübergestellt, ekstatischer Jubel erklingt neben schreitender Würde, polyphone und homophone Ausgestaltung wechseln sich ab. Ein Rezitationston trifft auf weit ausschwingende Kantilenen und

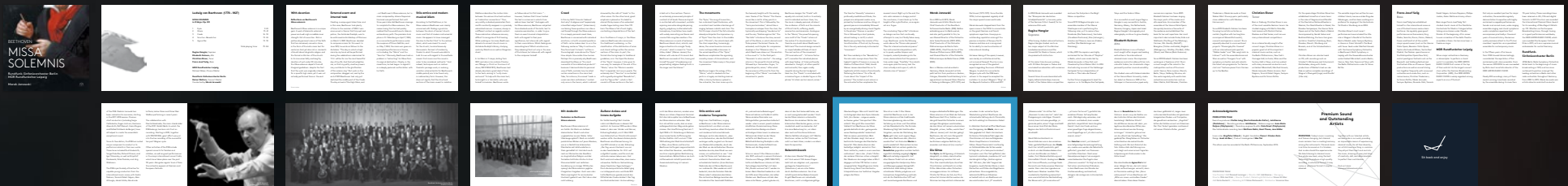
knappe volksliedhafte Bildungen. Die Missa solemnis ist ein Werk der Extreme. Beethoven lässt Chor, Solisten und das groß besetzte Orchester zu einem einzigen Klangkörper verschmelzen, der den Hörer mit seinem voluminösen Klangbild „rühren, treffen, erschüttern“ (Werner-Jensen) soll. Und das gelingt Beethoven, der sich zum Ziel gesetzt hatte „sowohl bei Singenden als bei Zuhörern religiöse Gefühle (zu) erwecken und dauernd (zu) machen“.

Die Sätze

Das **Kyrie**, der Bittgesang, ist klassisch dreigeteilt, im steten, demutsvollen Wechselgesang zwischen Soli und Chor. Der machtvolle Kyrie-Anruf der Chorstimmen wird bereits im ersten D-Dur-Akkord des vollen Orchesters vorweggenommen. Im mittleren Christe-Teil führen die Soli, der Chor antwortet. Immer dichter werden die Stimmen kontrapunktisch miteinander

verwoben. In der variierten Kyrie-Wiederholung betont Beethoven die schmerzvolle Haltung durch Chromatik, der Satz verklingt im Pianissimo-Gebet.

In stärkstem Kontrast eröffnet Beethoven den Preisgesang des **Gloria**, das in vier Teile gegliedert ist. Nach stürmischem Fortissimo-Orchesterauftakt jagen die Chorstimmen mit dem aufsteigenden Gloria-Hauptthema in himmlische Höhen. Dieses Thema kehrt mottoartig an Schlüsselstellen des Satzes wieder. Es folgt das „et in terra pax hominibus“, homophon vom Chor fast geflüstert, das hymnisch anbetende „Laudamus te“ und das klanglich luftige „Gratias agimus tibi“. Mit dem „Qui tollis“ beginnt der langsame, zweite Teil des Gloria, in dem Klarinetten und Flöten das Klagethema präsentieren. Eine ausgedehnte, zerknirschte Bitte um Erbarmen entwickelt sich im von Beethoven um den emotionalen Laut „O“ erweiterte



„Miserere nobis“. Im dritten Teil – „Quoniam tu solus sanctus“ – kehrt der Preisgesang im mächtigen Chorsatz zurück, bevor sich eine gewaltige „in gloria dei patris, amen“-Fuge anschließt bevor erneut das Zitat des Gloria-Beginns den Satz im Presto krönend abschließt.

Gleichfalls kontrastreich im Gesamtrahmen wie in den einzelnen Teilen gestaltet Beethoven das **Credo**. Auch hier zutiefst persönlich, geht es doch um das Glaubensbekenntnis und um das Wunder von Geburt, Leiden, Tod, Wiederauferstehung und Himmelfahrt Christi. Analog zum **Gloria** kehrt das eröffnende, wuchtige Credo-Kernmotiv am Ende wie einer Klammer wieder. Kann man hier irgendwie an Beethovens Glauben zweifeln? Die musikalische Gestaltung zementiert eine unerschütterliche Geisteshaltung. Der Binnensatz („Et incarnatus est“

– „et homo factus est“) gestaltet die einzelnen Phasen tief empfunden nach. Mal abgründig versunken, mal schmerz- und leidvoll, dann wieder plastisch-majestätisch beim Jüngsten Gericht. Auch das Credo wird von einer gewaltigen Fuge abgeschlossen, einer Doppelfuge auf „et vitam venturi saeculi, amen“.

Das **Sanctus** nimmt „mit Andacht“ eine tiefgründige Versenkungshaltung ein, *mezza voce* werden die Gebetsrufe geflüstert, grundiert von Posaunen und tiefen Streichern. Nach einer Generalpause beginnt ein energisch vorantreibendes Chor fugato über „Osanna in excelsis“. Es folgt ein kurzes, fast schon amotivisches Präludium, in dem Beethoven das Wunder der Hostienwandlung nachzeichnet; übrigens der einzige rein instrumentale „Satz“.

Bevor im **Benedictus** die Solo-Violine in einem *coup de théâtre* von den höchsten Höhen des Himmels herabsteigt. Weltlicher Kitsch? Arnold Werner-Jensen sah darin „ein legitimes künstlerisches Mittel, den Hörer emotional aus der Fassung zu bringen“. Immerhin gehe es hier um die „Wucht der Verheißung“. Die gedämpften Klangfarben im Orchester unterstreichen die andachtsvolle Haltung noch. Bis zum Ende hat die Solo-Violine stets die Führung inne und steigt nach einer erneut fugierten Lobpreisung am Ende wieder in die Höhe hinauf.

Das abschließende **Agnus Dei** leitet einen Adagio-Teil ein, der sich immer wieder aufzuschwingen versucht, dann im Pianissimo verklingt. Das „Dona nobis pacem“ ist von Beethoven mit „Bitte um innern und äußern Frieden“ überschrieben. Dass dieser Frieden

durchaus gefährdet ist, zeigen zwei instrumentale Einschübe mit gleichsam kriegerischen Pauken und Trompeten, die gewaltsam einbrechen. „Ängstlich“ bitten die Solisten erneut um Erbarmen. Der Chor fordert geradezu insistierend mit seinen Sforzato-Rufen „pacem“.



Acknowledgments

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This album was live recorded at the Berlin Philharmonie, September 2016.

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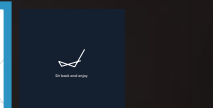
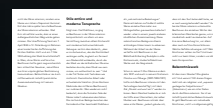
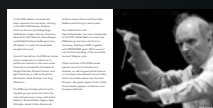
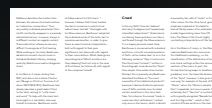
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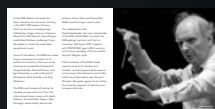
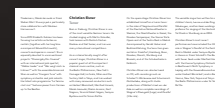
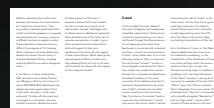
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