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MISSA BREVIS

A Master’s Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

By

Eunwha Kang

December 2020
MISSA BREVIS

Department of Music

Missouri State University, December 2020

Master of Music

Eunwha Kang

ABSTRACT

Missa Brevis is a twenty-minute composition for mixed choir, horn, trumpet, and trombone. Because the piece is a “short mass,” it consists of only four movements, leaving out the Credo. It is composed more concisely than a general mass. The Mass is centered on the note E, and each movement is based on a different scale. The inspiration for this work came from composers of various historical periods and geographical regions. Elements of traditional South Korean music, as well as Neoclassical music elements similar to those found in the music of Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky are incorporated throughout this music.

KEYWORDS: choral, brass, mass, Missa Brevis, choir music
MISSA BREVIS

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A Master’s Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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December 2020

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.
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**MISSA BREVIS – INTRODUCTION**

*Missa Brevis* is a work that represents the composer’s musical interest and personal musical development. The primary purpose of composing this piece is to create a large-scale piece that employs the form of the Mass, an important and traditional genre of choral music. The inspiration for composing *Missa Brevis* came from composers from various periods and regions. Elements of traditional South Korean music by the environment in which the composer grew up, as well as Neoclassical music elements influenced by Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky are incorporated throughout this music.

*Missa Brevis* is an approximately twenty-minute composition for mixed choir, horn, trumpet, and trombone. Since the piece is a *Missa Brevis*, it consists of only four movements, leaving out the *Credo*, and is composed more concisely than a general mass. The four movements were written in the order: *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus,* and *Agnus Dei*.

*Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei*, which begin and end the work, are *a cappella* with no instrumental accompaniment. The other movements include the chorus and the instruments. The Mass is centered on the note E, and each movement has different scales as shown in Table 1. The tonic and scales give overall unity and diversity of sounds.

Table 1. Scales in each movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyrie</td>
<td>E Dorian (E-F#-G-A-B-C#-D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>Octatonic scale (C#-D-E-F-G-Ab-Bb-B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctus</td>
<td>Natural minor (E-F#-G-A-B-C#-D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>E major (E-F#-G#-A-B-C#-D#)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kyrie

Kyrie is *a cappella* composed in the traditional *Kyrie* form, divided into three parts by the text: *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison*.

In this movement, the composer uses several South Korean traditional music elements. First, the main motive of this movement has a syncopated rhythm with a longer offbeat. The syncopated rhythm and the intervals between two notes emphasize *Kyrie’s* “K” sound, which comes from *Choo-seong*, one of the vocal techniques of *Sigimsae*, a decorative note or a playing method that decorates the main note in front or behind it in traditional Korean music.¹ For the same reason, the composer uses the note E as a pedal tone in the bass with irregular rhythms. The soprano part uses only six notes, excluding the sixth scale degree, C-sharp, in *E Dorian* mode. The melody of the soprano begins with the same motive that is in the alto and tenor, which mimics *Jeong-ga*, the only music with a pitch in traditional Korean music. There are several pitches on one syllable.

The second part, *Christe Eleison*, has been modulated to F-sharp *Phrygian* mode, the major second melodic interval with the first section. This part has a homophonic texture in contrasts to the previous part. In measure 50, the use of the perfect fifth harmonic intervals between the soprano and the alto voices show the characteristics of organum, which contrasts with the previous part.

In the last section of *Kyrie*, spoken sound appears in the chorus. The spoken sounds appear randomly and unpredictably, making it on unclear to the listener where the sounds are coming from, so the lyrics can be emphasized.

¹ Kim (2009, 49-80).
Gloria

Gloria is for tenor and bass solo, chorus, and brass. It has the longest text in the mass, and it is not repetitive like Kyrie or Agnus Dei, so it was composed in a modified rondo form in which the last section is transformed as shown in Table 2, giving regularity to this movement.

Table 2. The form divided by text in Gloria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (m.1 – m.31)</td>
<td>Gloria in excelsis Deo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (m.32 – m.49)</td>
<td>Laudamus te. Benedictus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gracias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’ (m.49 – m.78)</td>
<td>Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (m.79 – m.100)</td>
<td>Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostrum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’ (m.100 – m.129)</td>
<td>Quoniam tu solus sanctus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tu solus Dominus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’’ (m.130 – m.144)</td>
<td>Cum Sancto Spritu in Gloria Dei Patris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The octatonic scale and brass instruments are featured in neoclassical music with a slow tempo but strong dynamics. The motive is composed of four diatonic segments of the octatonic scale: B, C-sharp, D, and E, which is unique to this movement.

The A section is divided into two smaller sections composed of the same motive with a tempo change at measure 16. In the first part of A section, the chorus and the instruments exchange the main melody. After the tempo change, all parts play together creating polyphonic textures.

The B section, which has lyrics praising the Lord, starts from the main note E with pp in the chorus, and it gradually expands through the addition of dynamics.
Unlike the lyrics of the other parts in this movement that praise the Lord, the C section has lyrics that ask the Lord to have mercy on us and receive our prayer. The composer used recitativo technique to express these lyrics, allowing two soloists to sing freely in place of the chorus. The instruments are composed of long notes rather than complex rhythms so that the solo’s recitativo can be more easily heard. The harmonic intervals between the instruments and singers use the same perfect intervals that are emphasized in the main melody.

The final section uses a modified rondo form because it is repeated twice. The chorus immediately sings the main melody in A’’’ without the brass and the movement finishes with a tempo change that only the brass instruments play.

**Sanctus**

*Sanctus* is not divided in form by lyrics as the other movements are, but is divided into four asymmetrical parts by musical elements. Table 3 shows the form of *Sanctus*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (m.1 – m.30)</td>
<td>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (m.31 – m.77)</td>
<td>Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua. Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horn solo (m.77 – m.90)</td>
<td>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B’ (m.91 – m.99)</td>
<td>Hosanna in excelsis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scale of the A section is E natural minor. The motive of the A section that includes a sixteenth note and a dotted eighth note which gives the effect of a grace note. This was influenced by the *Choo-seong* and *Toe-seong* of *Sigimsae*, a vocal technique of traditional South
Korean music. It is used to further emphasize the accent of the Latin words, and this motive is used only in the lyric “Sanctus,” which means Holy. The instruments coming in from measure 9 imitate the motive of chorus. Before music goes to the climax, the bass sustains main note E as a pedal tone. The climax begins with the change of the lyrics, and the A section ends with a change in rhythm and dynamics.

Unlike the A section, where the lyrics are simple and the music has a harmonic texture within one scale, the B section does not stay on a single scale but has several modulations. Rhythm dominates this section. The rhythm of the new lyric, “Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua,” consists of two consecutive groups of three eights notes followed by two. However, “Dominus Deus Sabaoth,” the text that also appeared in section A and meaning Lord God of Hosts, uses a change of meter to distinguish it from the previous text and emphasize its accent. In contrast to the complex rhythm of the chorus, the instrumental parts appear one by one to support the choir, in long notes until the end of the phrase. The Sigimsae motive in the A section appear in the instruments when the chorus is repeated, such as the horn part of measure 34. This section does not stay on one scale and has frequent modulations.

Through the rhythmic motive, accelerando, and crescendos, the music reaches a climax, which is resolved by a horn solo. The horn solo, which includes elements of Korean musical melody, Choo-seong, and Toe-seong, gives musical unity with the elements use in Kyrie as well as section A of this movement. The choir members freely and individually whisper the lyrics of “Sanctus” at the beginning of the horn solo. In measure 84, they perform the lyrics “Dominus Deus Sabaoth” with spoken sounds as in Kyrie until the solo finishes. Through the whispering and spoken sounds, the meaning of the lyrics, Holy, Lord God of hosts, is expressed more dramatically and effectively to the listener.
In the last section of *Sanctus*, the rhythmic motive of the B section increases the dynamics in a short time through *poco a poco crescendo*, and the tempo accelerates with *accelerando*, producing tension. The last tension is maximized by halting all sound at the fermata in the first beat of measure 97, and this tension resolves at the second beat of measure 97. The last harmony at measure 98 foreshadows the beginning of the next movement, *Agnus Dei*.

**Agnus Dei**

While other movements create harmonies with polyphonic textures of each voice, the harmonies and melodies lead the entire movement in *Agnus Dei*. The movement is marked with the key signature of E major but additional notes in every chord create harmonies between consonance and dissonance. The lyrics of this movement are divided into three parts with two parts that use the same lyrics and one part with different lyrics. This movement, however, consists of four parts by dividing the form in different ways, as shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Original division</th>
<th>Missa Brevis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>Agnus Dei,</em> qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis</td>
<td><em>Agnus Dei,</em> qui tollis peccata mundi:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><em>Agnus Dei,</em> qui tollis peccata mundi: miserere nobis</td>
<td>miserere nobis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td><em>Agnus Dei,</em> qui tollis peccata mundi: dona nobis pacem.</td>
<td><em>Agnus Dei,</em> qui tollis peccata mundi:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coda</td>
<td>dona nobis pacem.</td>
<td>dona nobis pacem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The A section exhibits a homophonic texture in which the sopranos sing the main melody and the other voices sing harmony. In contrast to the A section, in the B section each voice independently sings the same motive and creates tension through changes in tempo and dynamics. In the A’ section, where the same theme is repeated, the main melody is sung by the altos in measure 28, while the sopranos provide the obligato. The tenors and basses are divided into two voices each in this section, providing a rich sound.

The composition of *Missa Brevis* is a primary achievement for the composer. The form and scale in each of the four movements was determined according to the content of the lyrics. Elements of traditional South Korean music were incorporated to give musical unity and to allow the composer’s own identity to come through the music. The whispered and spoken sounds are an application of modern techniques to the most traditional form of choral music, the mass. The use of these aleatoric elements ensures that each performance will be different as determined by the individual members of the choir.
WORKS CITED

MISSA BREVIS

Kyrie

\( \text{\textcopyright\textregistered\textregistered\textcopyright}\)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor 1

Tenor 2

Bass

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e

Ky - ri - e
* The boxed "Kyrie" indicates spoken sound. Speaking should begin approximately where the box appears in each part with individual tempos and pitches. Starting with a single singer in m. 87, the number of speaking singers will gradually increase. By m. 109, the number of singer speaking should be more than the number of singers singing.
Gloria

**Grandly** ($\text{\textit{j}} = 45$)

- **Soprano**
- **Alto**
- **Tenor**
- **Bass**
- **Horn in F**
- **Trumpet in C**
- **Trombone**
Sanctus
* Beginning in m. 78, the chorus whispers the word "Sanctus" using individual tempos and pitches. The dynamics gradually increase beginning in m. 81 and change into spoken sound with the change in lyrics ("Dominus Deus Sabaoth") at m. 84.
Allegro (M.M. \( \frac{3}{4} = c. 120 \))


Poco a poco cresc.


Poco a poco cresc.


Poco a poco cresc.
Agnus Dei

Peacefully ($\frac{1}{4}=52-60$)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei

Paxequi tol liquicatamun
di,
quitollicpecatamun
di,
quitollicpecatamun
di,
Agnus Dei

qui tollis pecata mundi,
S 32

qui tol·lis pec·ca·ta mun·di,

do·na no·bis pa-

A 32

qui tol·lis pec·ca·ta mun·di,

do·na no·bis pa-

T 8

qui tol·lis pec·ca·ta mun·di,

do·na no·bis pa-

B 8

qui tol·lis pec·ca·ta mun·di,
do·na

S 38

-cem. do·na no·bis pa·cem do·na no·bis pa·cem

A 38

-cem do·na no·bis pa·cem do·na no·bis pa·cem

T 8

do·na no·bis pa·cem do·na no·bis pa·cem

B 8

no·bis no·bis pa·cem no·bis pa·cem