

Choral Treats 4

Maurice Duruflé (1902 - 1986) did not leave us a prodigious amount of music. One reason may be his perfectionism. He was constantly tweaking his pieces and remained dissatisfied with several of them. A few he never programmed or published.

His much-loved Requiem receives occasional criticism for relying too much on Faure.

“Duruflé had his own silent collaborators on this work: the anonymous monks and church musicians who, in the medieval era, composed the treasure chest of Gregorian chants that are a permanent part of Christian service music. Although the music swims in a luxuriant harmonic bath that combines elements of Debussy, Fauré, and Messiaen, all of its melodies, according to the composer, are based exclusively on themes from the Gregorian funeral mass. The result is spellbinding, especially in the “Pie Jesu” movement for organ, cello, and solo voice.”

~ Russell Platt, The New Yorker

Requiem, 42:48

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mr4UYqBjJm0>

My own memories of singing it include a moving experience in Ireland. There are many good reasons to be a nurse, firefighter, beat cop, or ... a singer. Our North Country Chorus sang this Requiem at a noon concert in Dublin, 1976. I thought well of our performance and was ready to hit the streets and celebrate. On the way out a side door we saw a woman in a pew sobbing profusely. We asked her what was wrong. Did she need assistance? She related to us that her daughter had died the previous week. We had just sung a requiem *for her*. Celebration postponed ... for some soul-searching.

Ubi Caritas is not a Christmas song, but I chose it for many of our holiday singing parties. The translation tells us that Ubi is a good choice anytime.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus, et in ipso iucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a
sincere heart.

Here are two very different renderings of Ubi Caritas:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-LQve92U1o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY4S-GGzd2I>

Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548 - 1611)

Victoria, a Late Renaissance organist, singer, and composer was born in Spain, worked in Rome alongside Palestrina, and then retired to Spain to teach and compose for many more years.

Among other things, Victoria was noted for his close harmonic suspensions. Listen to the altos and tenors execute these throughout I love to hear and sing his melismatic (running) passages.

Jesu Dulcis Memoria, 1:56

Music and translation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3WFoq9SUYw>

Find a website that features Sistine Chapel ceiling images and have a listen to ...

O quam Gloriosum, 2:39

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feAT-Kxw5rc>