

Choral Treats 5

This set of Treats includes Poulenc's beautiful *Gloria*, a fond reliving for many and an eye-opening modern treatment of the long-lived text for those new to the work. We include several other of his gems. A handful of the Elizabethan composer William Byrd's sacred works provide a contrast for the ear.

Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963)

An extensive biographical sketch can be found on [Wikipedia](#).

A word that comes to my mind when I think of Poulenc's music is "flippant," and I was surprised to see a similar description in one of the YouTubes. Don't get me wrong. I love singing these exquisite sacred pieces, but at the end of *Gloria's* second movement who hasn't thought of singing "Lau-da-, lau-da-, laudamus te! Hey!" Perhaps a nicer way to say this is found at the site above, "His music was also popular in America, seen by many as the quintessence of French wit, elegance and high spirits," ~ *NY Times*, April 1963. We'll let it rest there.

Poulenc composed the *Gloria* in 1960. Please also enjoy the exuberant *Sanctus* and the soothing *Benedictus* of his *Mass in G*, completed in 1937.

Gloria, 25:02

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

Mass in G: III. Sanctus, 2:27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIdx9hOl2tM>

Mass in G: IV. Benedictus, 4:10

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BGa7vBgvvk>

O Magnum Mysterium, 3:15

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

Salve Regina, 4:31

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thcLH7jf7FU>

William Byrd (1543 - 1623)

Ave Verum Corpus, 4:52

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

Note that the director is taking a bit more time between phrases to allow for the hall's reverb, so as not to muddy the sound.

Mass for Four Voices: Agnus Dei, 4:12

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op8yU7R11TU>

In Tudor England the Catholics needed to keep a low profile. In spite of having Elizabeth I's favor, Byrd held masses in his home with a choir perhaps as small as in the recording. I heard the Agnus Dei for the first time in concert and just melted. Swallow hard when you hear the cascading "Dona nobis" run through all the parts.