



The Hong Kong Medical Association
Presents

an Easter Performance of

"Seven Last Words of Christ"
- Joseph Haydn -

- Date : 30 March 1994 (Wednesday)
- Time : 8:00 p.m.
- Place : Chapel of Christ the King
St. Paul's Convent
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
- Narrator : Rev. Ciaran Kane S.J.
- Conductor : K.K. Chiu
- Performer : Hong Kong Medical Association
Orchestra
- Admission : Free. All are welcome!

Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809)

The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ/Die sieben letzten Worte Jesu Christi

(Musica Instrumentale sopra le 7 ultime parole del nostro Redentore In croce) Hob. III: 50 - 56, Op. 51

Joseph Haydn was born in the village of Rohrau in 1732, the son of a wheelwright. Trained at the choir-school of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, he spent some years living as best he could from teaching and playing the violin or keyboard, and was able to learn from the old musician Porpora, whose assistant he became. Haydn's first appointment was in 1759 as Kapellmeister to a Bohemian nobleman, Count von Morzin. This was followed in 1761 by employment as Vice-Kapellmeister to one of the richest men in the Empire, Prince Esterházy. On the death of the elderly Kapellmeister, Gregor Werner, in 1766 Haydn succeeded to his position, to remain in the same employment for the rest of his life.

On the completion of the magnificent palace at Esterháza, in the Hungarian plains under Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, Haydn assumed command of an increased musical establishment. Here he had responsibility for the musical activities of the palace, which included the provision and direction of instrumental music, opera and theatre music, and music for the church. For his patron he provided a quantity of chamber music of all kinds, particularly for the Prince's own peculiar instrument, the baryton, a bowed string instrument with sympathetic strings that could also be plucked.

On the death of Prince Nikolaus in 1790, Haydn was able to accept an invitation to visit London, where he provided music for the concert season organized by the violinist-impresario Salomon. A second successful visit to London in 1794 and 1795 was followed by a return to duty with the Esterházy family, the new head of which had settled principally at the family property in Eisenstadt, where Haydn had started his career. Much of the year, however, was to be spent in Vienna, where Haydn passed his final years, dying in 1809, as the French armies of Napoleon approached the city yet again.

In 1786 Haydn had been invited by a canon of Cádiz to provide music for a Lenten devotion in a grotto church. During the course of this the bishop would announce each of the seven last words of Christ, following each with a brief sermon. After each short discourse the bishop would descend from the pulpit and prostrate himself before the altar, while music was played. The original version of Haydn's remarkably varied slow movements was scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, trumpets and drums, with four horns and strings. The work had wide currency throughout Europe and was instrumental in establishing Haydn's international reputation. In 1796 he devised a choral version, having overheard a similar arrangement which he did not find entirely satisfactory. Haydn made the version for string quartet three days after completing the fuller orchestral version in February 1787.

The Seven Last Words opens with a solemn introduction, in impressive dotted rhythm. The first Sonata illustrates the words "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" and is followed by a meditation on the words "Verily, I say unto you: this day you shall be with me in Paradise". The E major third Sonata follows the words "Woman, behold thy son: son, behold thy mother". The desolate cry "Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?", set in F minor, leads to the A major "I thirst". A solemn G minor moves to G major for "It is accomplished", proceeding to the E flat "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit", played muted. Mutes are then quickly removed for the final earthquake, as the veil of the Temple is rent asunder.

THE SEVEN LAST WORDS

by Joseph Haydn

The First Word :

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

[Lk 23:34]

Father in heaven, look down from thy eternal throne!
Loving Father, Thy only-begotten prays for sinners and for thy children: hear
thy Son!

Oh, we have sunk low, we have grievously sinned, yet for our salvation thy Son's
blood has flowed.

The blood of the lamb cries not for vengeance but washes away sins.

O loving Father, let us find mercy: hear thy Son!

The Second Word :

In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.

[Lk 23:43]

Full of grace, mercy and love art thou, Mediator and Lamb of God!
That contrite thief appealed to thee: "When thou comest into thy kingdom, remember me"
You promised him mildly: "today shalt thou be with me in paradise"
Look upon us Lord God: at the foot of thy cross see our true repentance and atonement.
In our final hour give us also that consolation from thy lips: 'today shalt thou
be with me in paradise'.

The Third Word :

Woman, this is your son! Then to the discipline he said, This is your Mother.

[Jn 19:27]

Mother of Jesus who, comfortless, stood weeping, sobbing by the cross,
And the torments of his suffering at the hour of bitter parting felt seven-fold
within thyself, scarcely able to bear them, yet serenely and steadfastly
took as son the faithful disciple, and with him, us, to be thy children,

Mother of Jesus, O thou refuge of all sinners, hear the prayer of thy children;
stand by us in the final struggle; Mother full of tenderness, stand by
each one of us!

As we struggle with death and from our oppressed souls our sighs escape to thee,
let us not be vanquished there; help us then the foe to conquer; stand
by us in final struggle; reveal thyself as Mother, and commend us to thy Son!

The Fourth Word :

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ?

[Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34]

Why hast thou forsaken me; where is now the hand of God?
Who can fathom this mystery, O God of strength and might?
O God of strength and power, we are the work of thy hands, and thy love O Lord
O Lord we thank thee from our hearts.

For our sakes hast thou suffered the pain, scorn, desertion, fear and suffering.
Lord, who would not love thee, who would through his sins betray thee?

Who can mistake thy kindness? No, naught shall cleave us from thee, not here
nor in eternity.

has redeemed us.

The Fifth Word :

Jesus says, I thirst

[Jn 19:28]

Curb your vengeance, calm your rage! Mankind, let compassion move you, and
pity fill your hearts!

Jesus says, I thirst. They gave him wine mixed with gall; thus do they quench
his thirst. Can cruelty go further?

Now he can no longer bear the pain, he whose life was a boon to us.

The Sixth Word :

It is finished

[Jn 19:30]

It is finished. Nailed to the cross hangs Jesus through the night; then he cries aloud, 'It is finished'.

Just as this cross has harmed us, so it has brought its benefit.

Woe, ye sinners, woe ye blind ones, woe to all who heap sins upon sins!

Mankind, consider! Will you find pity, when he comes in all his glory and his might? Save us, Jesus, from perdition. Hear, O God-man, our petition!

Let thy sufferings and death not be lost on us! Let us yet inherit heaven and with thee rejoice for ever!

The Seventh Word :

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit

[Lk 23:46]

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Now no further can his suffering rise, now he triumphs and cries aloud, "Father, take my soul, to thee I commend my spirit" Then he bows his head and dies.

From eternal damnation his blood has saved us; for love of mankind he died a

HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ORCHESTRA

Violins

C.P. Yu

*Flora Chan
Paul Cheng
Thomas Cheung
P.Y. Chik
K.F. Li
Richard Poon
M.L. Szeto
Sylvia Tseng
Y.K. Wong
John Nicholls
Robin Su
Paul Lam*

Violas

*Jenny Brown
Anthony Holmes
Charles Wong*

Cellos

*Peter Lo
Buddy Wong
Fred Ebbek*