

Broadstairs Mozart

January 27, 2018

Between 18h00 on Friday evening, February 23, and mid-day, Sunday, February 25, there will be held at Queen of Martyrs House in Broadstairs a modest musical weekend featuring exclusively music of the famous Austrian composer of the late 18th century, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791). Why music, when the same time and effort could be spent on something more directly religious? And why Mozart in particular?

Why music? Because music is a gift of God to the world He created, an expression of the harmony which He planted at the centre of His universe, to which all living members of that universe respond, not only angels and human beings but even animals and plants in their own way. As for plants, Colorado researchers in the USA once built four boxes with identical light, air, humidity, soil and plants in all four, and they piped into three of them Gregorian chant or classical music or Rock, while the fourth they left in silence. With the Rock the plant grew but withered, with the chant it flourished, with classical music and silence the result was in between. As for animals, many a cowherd pipes into his cow-stalls at milking time tranquil music to increase the flow of milk, just as supermarkets pipe in tranquil music to increase buying by the human customers. Surprising? It is God that has made us, and not we ourselves (Ps. 115, 3), we are His creatures with the harmonious part that He designed for us to play in His universe as a whole.

For human beings, music is the supreme God-given language of access to that harmony of God, even if, like Brahms, one believes in no God. Music is therefore natural to human beings, and has a huge moral influence on them, for good or bad. As Mother Church resorts to chant and polyphony to lift souls towards Heaven, so the Devil uses Rock and all kinds of

modern music to cast souls down to Hell. "Tell me what your music is, and I will tell you who you are," goes the saying. Nearly every man has some music in him, and woe to him if he does not – Shakespeare says (Merchant of Venice, V, 1) –

"The man that hath no music in himself

Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils . . .

Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music."

One could say that the man that has no music in him is untrustworthy because he is out of tune with God.

And the modern world is out of tune with God, which corresponds to the wretched noise which so often today passes for music, and yet which people love, because music is so natural to man and goes so deep in his soul. And this ugly noise is what is in the soul of countless people around us, and through them it can only bear on ourselves, and bear us away from God, if we let it do so. The question is religious after all. Anything deep-down human bears on God, and music is certainly deep-down human.

On the other hand Mozart belonged to a much saner world than ours, and his music corresponds to a special moment of harmony and equilibrium between the old order and modern emotivity. Mozart is the musicians' musician. Here are a few of the testimonies from famous musicians – Tchaikovsky said, "I find consolation and rest in Mozart's music. In it he gives expression to that joy of life which was part of his sane and wholesome temperament." Schubert said, "What a picture of a better world you have given us, O Mozart!" Gounod said, "Mozart, prodigal Heaven gave thee everything, grace and strength, abundance and moderation, perfect equilibrium." Brahms said, "It is a real pleasure to see music so bright and spontaneous expressed with corresponding ease and grace."

Mozart wrote all kinds of music, but outstanding are his

operas and piano concertos. In Broadstairs we cannot manage the operas, but John Sullivan who played half of the Beethoven sonatas here in 2016 can easily manage a similar feat with Mozart's piano concertos and sonatas. Let us know if you plan to come, so that we may have an idea of numbers. No tickets to buy. Mozart is priceless!

Kyrie eleison.