

***Venite Populi*, K. 260** was composed for Salzburg by a teen-age Mozart. This work helps paint a picture of what was expected of Mozart in his hometown. It is one among a variety of shorter sacred works Mozart composed for the Archbishop that simply don't get performed very often.

While an "offertory" typically would use a text associated with the Liturgy of the Eucharist, by Mozart's time, there was considerable flexibility with the texts used. Thus, of Mozart's seven extant offertories, only the *Benedictus sit Deus*, (K. 117) is actually a true offertory; the other six use "free" texts, such as that used in *Venite Populi* ("Come, all ye people"), K. 260. Of particular interest with this work, however, is that it is an extremely rare example of Mozart composing for a double chorus. The only other composition of his that features two choirs is the magnificent "Great" *Mass in C minor*, K. 427. While considerably smaller in size than the mass, the antiphonal options made possible with two choirs are expertly displayed in this lively and joyful little work. From its very opening, we hear the spirited alternation of lines between the choirs, a tradition that can be traced back to Venetian music at St. Mark's at the turn of the 17th century and brought up north to Germanic lands by composers such as Heinrich Schutz. While the text is anonymous, the double chorus combined with the exclamation, "Come, all ye people" gives the impression of inviting crowds and multitudes from all corners of the Earth, to the Eucharist celebration. Particularly compelling in this regard are the multiple overlapping entrances over a dominant pedal; this "blizzard" affect of imitative entries is especially effective with a double chorus and truly echoes the Venetian polychoral tradition. The offertory consists of three sections: fast-slow-fast, and is remarkable for packing so much into a mere 5 minutes. There are two curious postscripts associated with this work. *Veniti Populi* was first published in 1872, (Vienna), edited by none other than Johannes Brahms, who greatly admired the work (Brahms also edited Mozart's *Requiem* for the collected works edition.) Perhaps even more interesting is the performance of *Veniti Populi* in September 1842, for the unveiling ceremony of a Mozart statue in Salzburg (still standing at Mozartplatz), an event attended by both of Mozart's sons. Sadly, Constanze, Mozart's widow, was not in attendance – she had died in March of that year at the address Mozartplatz 8.

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