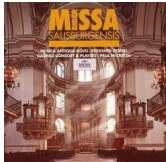


Heinrich Biber – Missa Salisburgensis (1999)



1. *Ein langer und schöner Aufzug* 2:41 2. *Kyrie* 5:51 3. *Gloria* 9:43 4. *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes: Sonata XII* 5:20 5. *Credo* 15:04 6. *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes: Sonata V* 6:02 7. *Sanctus – Benedictus* 8:04 8. *Agnus Dei* 8:25 9. *Sonata Sancti Polycarpi* 4:34 Musica Antiqua Köln Reinhard Goebel – conductor (2-8) Gabrieli Players (1,9) Paul McCreesh – conductor

The Missa Salisburgensis for 53 parts in eight separate choirs, often called "the Mahler 8th of the baroque," is by far the most grandiose work composed before the 18th century. Written (by an unnamed composer generally presumed to be Biber) for the 1,100th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Salzburg, it has extravagant scoring reflecting that city's enormous self-regard. This Mass is rarely performed or recorded, and probably not just because of logistical and financial constraints--the work can often seem tedious and overblown. The large number of parts and the reverberant acoustic of Salzburg Cathedral allowed for very little harmonic variety (virtually the entire Mass is in C major) or virtuoso fireworks; the music can make its effects only through variety of instrumental color and sheer massive sound. It is very much to the credit of Paul McCreesh, Reinhard Goebel, and their musicians that the Missa Salisburgensis sounds so engaging here: the grandeur is leavened with plenty of rhythmic snap, and some lighter moments sound tender and almost delicate. Unusually for McCreesh, there are no chants, prayers, or other trappings of a liturgical reconstruction; there are, however, three sumptuous instrumental sonatas and a motet included with the Mass. This may not be the most profound music of the 17th century, but it is surely among the most jubilant. --Matthew Westphal, amazon.com

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