

Ave Verum Corpus

Text attributed to
Pope Innocent I (c.1300 - 1362)

K. 618

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Adagio (♩ = 66)

SOPRANO

p sotto voce (♩)

A - ve, a - ve ve - rum cor - pus, na - tum

ALTO

p sotto voce (♩)

A - ve, a - ve ve - rum cor - pus, na - tum

TENOR

p sotto voce (♩)

A - ve, a - ve ve - rum cor - pus, na - tum

BASS

p sotto voce (♩)

A - ve, a - ve ve - rum cor - pus, na - tum

ORGAN

Adagio (♩ = 66)

p sotto voce (♩)

A - ve, a - ve ve - rum cor - pus, na - tum

15

S. *cru - ce pro hó - mi - ne.* Cu - jus

A. *in cru - ce pro hó - mi - ne.* Cu - jus

T. *in cru - ce pro hó - mi - ne.* Cu - jus

B. *in cru - ce pro hó - mi - ne.* Cu - jus

ORG.

23

S. la - tus per - fo - rá - tum un - da flu - xit et sán - guine, es - to cresc

A. la - tus per - fo - rá - tum un - da flu - xit et sán - guine, es - to cresc

T. la - tus per - fo - rá - tum un - da flu - xit et sán - guine, es - to

B. la - tus per - fo - rá - tum un - da flu - xit et sán - guine, es - to

ORG.

31

S. *poco* *a* *(γ)* *poco* *(ξ)* *mf*
no - bis_ præ - gu - stá - tum in mor - - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne, in mor - -

A. *poco* *a* *(γ)* *poco* *(ξ)* *mf*
no - bis_ præ - gu - stá - tum in mor - - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne, in

T. *cresc* *poco* *a* *poco* *(γ)* *(ξ)* *mf*
es - to no - bis_ præ - gu - stá - tum in mor - tis ex - á - - mi - ne, in

B. *cresc* *poco* *a* *poco* *(γ)* *(ξ)* *mf*
es - to no - bis_ præ - gu - stá - tum in mor - tis ex - á - - mi - ne, in

ORG.

39

S. *mp* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *rit.*
- - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne.

A. *mp*
mor - - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne.

T. *mp*
mor - - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne.

B. *mp*
mor - - - tis ex - á - - mi - ne.

ORG.

Ave Verum Corpus – notes, pronunciation and translation

Mozart's beloved motet, *Ave Verum Corpus*, was composed in June of 1791, for his friend, Anton Stoll, a school teacher and choirmaster of the small parish church of St. Stephan in Baden, a spa-town located near Vienna which was famous for its hot thermal mineral springs. Mozart's wife, Constanze, was pregnant with their sixth child and was ill, and so she was staying at the Baden spa for treatment ("taking the waters"). The work was written almost as a payment to Stoll, who had often helped Mozart by making travel arrangements to and from Baden for Constanze.

Writing very simply, Mozart was perhaps conscious of the limitations of a small-town choir, the manuscript for this work is dated June 17, 1791, and was presumably intended for the feast of Corpus Christi, which fell that year on June 23. Originally scored for SATB chorus, strings and organ, the work was completed just six months before his death, and contains just the minimal directions of *Adagio* and *sotto voce**. Tempo indication, dynamics, breathing and other markings are purely editorial.

**Sotto voce*, translated from the Italian as the "under the voice" is a direction that a musical passage is to be performed in a more subdued tone.

Conductors should pay close attention to the *alla breve* ("cut time") indication, which implies that the half note, and not the quarter note, is the principal unit of the pulse. This makes for a very slow beat in the *adagio* tempo, and as such this is not to say that the motet cannot be conducted in 4, but simply that the primary emphasis of the bars (and thus the text) should be on beats 1 and 3 in the measure.

Pronunciation Guide

Ave verum corpus natum
de Maria Virgine,
Vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine.
Cujus latus perforatum
unda fluxit et sanguine;
Esto nobis praegustatum
In mortis examine.

Ah-veh veh-room kawr-poos nah-toom
deh Mah-ree-ah Veer-gee-neh,
Veh-reh pah-soom, ee-maw-lah-toom
een kroo-cheh praw aw-mee-neh.
Koo-yoos lah-toos pehr-fah-rah-toom
oon-dah floo-kseet eht sahn-gwee-neh;
Eh-staw naw-bees preh-goo-stah-toom
Een mawr-tees ehk-sah-mee-neh

English translation

Hail, true Body,
born of the Virgin Mary,
who having truly suffered, was sacrificed
on the cross for mankind,
whose pierced side
flowed (with water) and blood:
May it be for us a foretaste (of the Heavenly banquet)
in the trial of death.