

A Cambridge Mass – Ralph Vaughan Williams

Vaughan Williams composed the mass for his doctorate of music in 1899. It was performed for the first time in March 2011 after scholar and conductor Alan Tongue found the work filed away in Cambridge University Library and spent a year transcribing the piece.

The work is Vaughan Williams' first large scale work and is a non-liturgical setting of the mass designed for the concert hall and has moments of vivid theatricality. The writing for double chorus is often rich, and some harmonies in the Sanctus are daring for English choral works of the time.

The opening Credo, set for four soloists, double chorus and orchestra is on a dramatic scale. The Offertorium is for orchestra only in sonata form. The third part includes the Sanctus for double chorus, brass, timpani and organ; then the serene Benedictus for soloists, wind and strings and the work closes with a full choral and orchestral Hosanna.