

M i c h e l R o s s e t

# Mors et Vita

**pour quatuor à cordes**

Réflexions sur la séquence grégorienne  
*Victimae paschali laudes*

- I. Incantatio
- II. Victima
- III. Sacrificium
  
- IV. Testimonium
- V. Resurrectio
- VI. Invitatio

18'

Séq.  
1.

**V**ictimae paschali laudes \* immolent Christi-áni.

Agnus redémit óves : Christus innocens Pátri reconci-  
li-ávit peccatóres. Mors et ví-ta du-éllo conflixére mirán-  
do : dux ví-tae mórtu-us, régnat vívus. Dic nóbis Marí-a,  
quid vidísti in ví-a? Sepúlcrum Christi vivéntis, et gló-  
ri-am vidi resurgéntis : Angé-licos téstes, sudá-ri-um, et  
véstes. Surréxit Christus spes mé- a : praecedet sú-os in Ga-  
lilaé-am. Scímus Christum surrexísse a mórtu- is vere :  
tu nóbis, víctor Rex, mi-se-ré-re. Amen. Alle-lú-ia.

Séquence grégorienne de Pâques attribuée à Wipo de Bourgogne (v. 980 - 1048)

## Mors et Vita

pour quatuor à cordes

Source d'inspiration de la composition, le texte de la séquence grégorienne *Victimae paschali laudes* est divisé en deux parties. La première exprime le paradoxe de la rédemption par le sacrifice de l'agneau. Dans *l'affrontement de la vie et de la mort*, c'est par la Mort du Christ sur la croix que l'humanité accède à la Vie. Dans la deuxième partie, Marie de Magdala, pressée de questions, nous livre son émouvant témoignage : *le tombeau vide, le suaire et les vêtements, l'apparition de l'ange, la gloire du Ressuscité*. La conclusion, faite de certitude quant à la résurrection, mais loin de tout triomphalisme, invite le *Roi vainqueur de la Mort* à prendre l'humanité en pitié.

La composition en deux mouvements reflète le sens profond du texte et le contenu musical de la séquence grégorienne. Elle combine l'emploi de la polymodalité et de l'atonalité. Élément omniprésent, l'accord majeur-mineur illustre le paradoxe *Mors et Vita*.

Premier mouvement :

### I. Incantatio

Le rythme incantatoire en 15/8 (8+7) est directement tiré de la structure syllabique du texte de la première strophe. Le thème grégorien, d'abord sous-jacent dans un contrepoint archaïque, finit par s'imposer à la danse du sacrifice.

### II. Victima

Apparition de la victime expiatoire : le thème, écartelé, est orné de variations sur les premières notes de la deuxième strophe, qui sont également annonciatrices de la troisième strophe, *mors et vita duello*.

### III. Sacrificium

Un roulement de tambour (joué *col legno*) annonce l'exécution du sacrifice. La musique qui était jusque là polymodale verse dans l'atonalité. Le *combat de la Vie et de la Mort* est illustré par un développement sériel. Dans la dernière section, une double série et son miroir chantent simultanément *le Guide de la vie qui, bien que mort, règne vivant*.

Second mouvement :

### IV. Testimonium

Au questionnement du violoncelle répond le solo de l'alto, passant progressivement de l'effroi devant le sépulcre vide à l'éclatement de la joie devant la résurrection. Sous une forme libre mais marquée par une atonalité rampante, la musique s'achemine vers la lumière.

### V. Resurrectio

Fugato combinant le thème du *témoignage* (entièrement transformé) et celui du *Guide de la vie*. La danse de joie en quintole suggère une réminiscence de la danse incantatoire initiale.

### VI. Invitatio

Sur la certitude de la résurrection, le temps n'a plus de prise. Le thème de la dernière strophe résonne enfin dans son intégralité, mais *Al tempo dell'eternità*, en guise d'invitation à méditer sur l'éternel mystère de la Mort et de la Vie.

## Mors et Vita

für Streichquartett

Der Text der Ostersequenz *Victimae paschali laudes*, Grundlage dieser Komposition, ist in zwei Teilen gegliedert. Zunächst erscheint das Paradox der Erlösung durch das Opfer des Osterlammes. Im *Duell des Lebens und des Todes* schenkt Christus der Menschheit das Leben durch seinen Tod. Der zweite Teil ist dem Zeugnis der befragten Maria aus Magdala gewidmet : *Das leere Grab, das Tuch und die Gewänder, die Engel und der Glanz des Auferstandenen*. Die hoffnungsvolle *Gewissheit der Auferstehung* bringt aber kein Siegeszug mit sich ; *der siegreiche König* wird aufgefordert, sich der Menschheit zu erbarmen.

Die aus zwei Sätzen bestehende Komposition basiert sowohl auf der Bedeutung des Textes als auf dem musikalischen Inhalt der gregorianischen Sequenz. Es werden Techniken der Polymodalität und der Atonalität verwendet. Das immer wiederkehrende Erklängen vom simultanen Dur und Moll stellt eine Abbildung des Paradox *Mors et Vita* dar.

Erster Satz

### I. Incantatio

Der "Zauber-Rhythmus" in 15/8 (8+7) ist aus der Silbenstruktur der ersten Strophe abgeleitet. Das zuerst im archaischen Kontrapunkt versteckte gregorianische Thema wird schlussendlich zum Motiv des Opferrituals.

### II. Victima

Das *versöhnende Opferlamm* erklingt im auseinander gerissenen Thema, mit Verzierungen über die ersten Töne der Strophe (übrigens die gleichen wie im Abschnitt *mors et vita duello*).

### III. Sacrificium

Ein nachgeahmter Trommelwirbel (*col legno* gespielt) kündigt die Hinrichtung an. Von dort an wandelt sich die Musik von der Polymodalität zur Atonalität. Der Kampf zwischen Leben und Tod kommt in einer seriellen Durchführung zum Ausdruck. Im letzten Abschnitt wird *des Lebens Fürst, gestorben und doch lebendig herrschend* durch eine doppelte Serie und dessen Spiegelung gesungen.

Zweiter Satz

### IV. Testimonium

Auf die Fragen des Violoncellos antwortet die Bratsche. Das Entsetzen vor dem leeren Grab wird zum Freudentausch vor der Auferstehung. Die musikalische Form ist hier frei, doch durch schleichende Atonalität gefärbt, bevor das Licht wieder einbricht.

### V. Resurrectio

Ein Fugato kombiniert das umgewandelte *Zeugnis* Thema mit dem des *Fürsten des Lebens*. Der Freudentanz in Quintole sei eine Reminiszenz des anfänglichen Zaubertanzes.

### VI. Invitatio

Die *Gewissheit der Auferstehung* entgeht jedem Zeitgefühl. Endlich erklingt das vollständige Thema der letzten Strophe aber in einem zeitlosen Tempo, als Aufforderung, das ewige Mysterium des Todes und des Lebens zu betrachten.

# Mors et Vita

per quartetto d'archi

In memoriam Nicolas Schuney

Michel Rosset  
(\*1956)

## Prima parte

### I. Incantatio

Molto ritmico e ruvido  
(♩. = 80 / ♩ = 120)

Violino I  
Violino II  
Viola  
Violoncello

*ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco

*ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco

*ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco

*ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco *ff* pizz. arco

5

*ff* martellato coll'arco

9

*f* pizz. arco *f* pizz. arco *f* pizz. arco

13

*p* pizz. *p* poco a poco crescendo

*p* pizz. *p* poco a poco crescendo

17

20

23

25

27 *f*

Musical score for measures 27-28. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in a minor key and features a strong, rhythmic accompaniment in the lower strings and a melodic line in the upper strings. The dynamic marking is *f* (forte).

29

Musical score for measures 29-30. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music continues with the same rhythmic accompaniment and melodic line. The dynamic marking is *f* (forte).

31 arco *8va* *subito ppp* *pp* *loco*

Musical score for measures 31-33. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in a minor key and features a strong, rhythmic accompaniment in the lower strings and a melodic line in the upper strings. The dynamic marking is *ppp* (pianissimo) and *pp* (piano). The performance instruction is *arco* (arco) and *8va* (8va). The dynamic marking is *subito ppp* (subito ppp) and *pp* (pp). The performance instruction is *loco* (loco). The dynamic marking is *pp* (pp) and *loco* (loco). The performance instruction is *naturale* (naturale). The dynamic marking is *pp* (pp).

34 *mp*

Musical score for measures 34-35. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The music is in a minor key and features a strong, rhythmic accompaniment in the lower strings and a melodic line in the upper strings. The dynamic marking is *mp* (mezzo-piano). The performance instruction is *pizz.* (pizz.).

38

*mf*

41

naturale

*p*

più marcato

*mp* espressivo

pizz.

*mf*

45

*p* sul tasto

*p* sul tasto

*p* sul tasto

*p* sul tasto

arco

*f*

*p* sul tasto

48

poco a poco sul ponticello

*mp*

*mf*

*mf*

poco a poco sul ponticello

*mp*

*mf*

poco a poco sul ponticello

*mp*

*mf*

poco a poco sul ponticello

*mp*

*mf*

51 *attacca*

*ff* marcattissimo sul ponticello

*ff* marcattissimo sul ponticello

*ff* marcattissimo sul ponticello

*ff* marcattissimo sul ponticello

## II. Vittima

Adagio ♩ = 54

55

*pp* 5

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp* arco *mf* pizz.

*pp* arco *mp* pizz.

57

*pp* 5

*pp*

*pp*

*pp* arco *p* 3 pizz.

*p* arco *p* 3

60

*mp* 5

*mp*

*mp*

*mp* loco 5 3 3

Musical score for measures 62-65. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts at measure 62 with a dynamic of *mp* and a 5-measure rest. The second staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *mp* and a 3-measure rest. The third staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *mp* and a 3-measure rest. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a dynamic of *mp* and a 3-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff has an *8va* marking above it. The second staff has an *8va* marking above it and a *col legno* marking above it. The third staff has an *8va* marking above it. The fourth staff has an *8va* marking above it.

Musical score for measures 63-65. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts at measure 63 with a dynamic of *mf* and a 5-measure rest. The second staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *mf* and a 5-measure rest. The third staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *mf* and a 5-measure rest. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a dynamic of *mf* and a 5-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff has an *8va* marking above it. The second staff has an *8va* marking above it and an *arco* marking above it. The third staff has an *8va* marking above it. The fourth staff has an *8va* marking above it. The first staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The second staff has a *pp* dynamic marking above it. The third staff has a *ppp* dynamic marking above it. The first staff has a *senza vibrato* marking above it. The second staff has a *senza vibrato* marking above it. The third staff has a *senza vibrato* marking above it. The fourth staff has a *senza vibrato* marking above it.

### III. Sacrificium

Poco più mosso ♩ = 60 (♩ = 120)

Musical score for measures 66-68. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts at measure 66 with a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The second staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The third staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff has an *8va* marking above it. The second staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The third staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The fourth staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The first staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The second staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The third staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The fourth staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it.

Musical score for measures 69-72. The score is written for four staves. The first staff (treble clef) starts at measure 69 with a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The second staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The third staff (treble clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The fourth staff (bass clef) has a dynamic of *p* and a 3-measure rest. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The second staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The third staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The fourth staff has a *col legno* marking above it. The first staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The second staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The third staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it. The fourth staff has a *p* dynamic marking above it.

71

col legno arco ricochet simile arco ricochet sempre

col legno arco ricochet simile poco a poco crescendo

col legno arco ricochet simile poco a poco crescendo

col legno arco ricochet simile poco a poco crescendo

73

arco ricochet sempre

75

arco ricochet sempre

arco ricochet sempre

77

battuta

battuta

battuta

battuta

*f*

79

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

arco *pp* *p*

81

arco *mf* *f*

*mp* *mf* *f*

*mp*

84

*p* *p*

87

*p* *p*

89

*poco a poco crescendo*

*poco a poco crescendo*

*poco a poco crescendo*

*poco a poco crescendo*

This system contains measures 89 and 90. It features four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and slurs. The dynamic marking 'poco a poco crescendo' is repeated on each staff.

91

This system contains measures 91 and 92. It continues the four-staff arrangement from the previous system. The musical notation is consistent, showing a progression of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals and slurs across all staves.

93

This system contains measures 93 and 94. The notation becomes more complex, featuring many beamed sixteenth notes and frequent accidentals. The four-staff structure remains, with two treble and two bass clefs.

95

This system contains measures 95 and 96. The musical texture is dense, with many beamed sixteenth notes and complex rhythmic patterns. The four-staff arrangement continues, maintaining the two-treble and two-bass clef layout.

97 *senza ritenuto*

*fff* *f* *mp* *p* *pp*

100 *Etereo (molto lento) ♩ = 30*

*p*

*p*

104

*p*

109

*p* *morendo*

# Seconda parte

## IV. Testimonium

Adagio (♩ = 40)

Musical score for measures 1-6. The piece is in common time (C) and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The first system consists of four staves. The top two staves are treble clefs, and the bottom two are bass clefs. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more active bass line. A *pp* dynamic marking is present in the second measure of the top two staves. A *Solo* marking with a *p* dynamic is placed above the third measure of the bottom two staves.

Musical score for measures 7-12. The piece continues with a *pp* dynamic. The first system consists of four staves. The top two staves are treble clefs, and the bottom two are bass clefs. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more active bass line. A *pp* dynamic marking is present in the second measure of the top two staves. A *Solo* marking with a *p* dynamic is placed above the third measure of the bottom two staves.

13 Più mosso ♩ = 60

Musical score for measures 13-18. The tempo changes to *Più mosso* (♩ = 60). The first system consists of four staves. The top two staves are treble clefs, and the bottom two are bass clefs. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more active bass line. A *p* dynamic marking is present in the second measure of the top two staves. A *Solo* marking with a *mp* dynamic is placed above the third measure of the bottom two staves.

Musical score for measures 19-24. The first system consists of four staves. The top two staves are treble clefs, and the bottom two are bass clefs. The music features a melodic line in the upper staves and a more active bass line. A *mf* dynamic marking is present in the second measure of the top two staves. A *Solo* marking with a *sf* dynamic is placed above the third measure of the bottom two staves. A *f* dynamic marking is present in the fourth measure of the bottom two staves. A *8va* marking is present in the fourth measure of the top two staves.

24 (8<sup>va</sup>)

*ff* *sempre crescendo*

## V. Resurrectio

27 *Giocoso e molto ritmico* (♩ = 60)

*f* *p* *leggero* *fz* *fz*

31

*p* *leggero* *fz* *fz*

35

*p* *leggero* *fz* *fz* *p*



55

*fz fz fz*

58

*pp legato pp legato pp legato*

*p*

64

*mf*

68

*crescendo mf crescendo f fz fz fz fz fz fz fz*

71

*p leggiero*

*p leggiero*

*p leggiero*

*p leggiero*

76

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

81

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

85

*f sempre crescendo*

*f sempre crescendo*

*f sempre crescendo*

*f sempre crescendo*

Musical score for measures 88-91. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music includes various chords, melodic lines, and dynamic markings such as 'v' and '5'.

## VI. Invitatio

Al tempo dell'eternità (♩ = max. 20)

Musical score for measures 92-96. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music is characterized by sustained chords and a slow tempo. Dynamic markings include 'ppp' and 'pp'.

Musical score for measures 97-101. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music continues with sustained chords and a slow tempo.

Musical score for measures 102-106. The score consists of four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music concludes with a 'morendo' marking.