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Doctoral Creative Research Music: Siamese Mass of The Roman Catholic Liturgy

Sirarat Sukchai* and Weerachat Premananda

Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

*Corresponding author, Email: bsukchai@gmail.com

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Abstract

The Ordinary Mass is a choral composition popular around the world, which reflects the beliefs and faith of Christianity and is an important element of sacred rituals. In addition, famous composers have written a large number of Mass compositions. In Thailand, there are few Thai composers who have composed an ordinary mass. As a result, the researcher was inspired to create the Siamese Mass of the Roman Catholic Liturgy. The objectives are to 1) create a contemporary Mass for the Roman Catholic Liturgy; 2) disseminate the Siamese Mass of The Roman Catholic Liturgy, and knowledge of the composition to the public. The researcher studied the context of religion and music, analyzed and interpreted numerous chants, and composed the Siamese Mass for a mixed choir and solo in Latin, with a total of 8 sections, namely Kyrie, Gloria, Credo I - IV, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, with the complete musical piece being 30 minutes long.

Keywords: Mass, Liturgical Music, Sacred Music, Choral Music

1. Introduction

Mass, a worship service of the Catholic Church (Crocker, 2000) demonstrates faith in God through ritual, celebrating the Eucharist with bread and wine representing the Blood and Body of Jesus Christ (Ulrich, 1973). Mass in a musical context refers to two groups of sacred music, namely the Ordinary and the Proper Mass (Grout, & Palisca, 2000). Sacred music has played an important role in the Roman Catholic Liturgy, while many world-famous Christian composers have composed an Ordinary Mass to reflect the beliefs and faith of Christianity. Mass has become popular and has developed into a music for listening. Today, Mass is not just a music for worship, but also serves the aesthetic demands of people around the world.

The topic of *Musicam Sacram* (1967) is mentioned in Chapter IV of *The Sacrosanctum Concilium* (His Holiness Pope Paul VI, 1963) providing instruction regarding sacred music, noting that in the modern world the purpose of sacred music is to praise God; composers should compose melodies with the authentic nature of sacred music which can be sung by a large or small choir, incorporating a melody that the whole congregation can participate in singing. It can be seen that the Church encourages the composition of sacred music and singing in the Mass, and that the chorus plays a very important role in this (Sacred Music Department Council of Catholic Bishops of Thailand, 2013).

After the Second Vatican Council, the Sacred Music Commission of the Archdiocese of Bangkok, Thailand fulfilled the intention of the Vatican by promoting and encouraging Thai ritual compositions. The committee collected Thai Catholic ritual songs published since 1984, edited the music scores and published the first edition of the new Catholic songbook under the name of *Sathukarn* in 2008 (Sub-Committee of Sacred Music of Thailand, 2008). Few choral pieces were published in this book, and it was found that there are few sacred choral music compositions, especially regarding ordinary mass compositions by Thai composers. As a result, the researcher was inspired to create a Doctoral Creative Research Music: Siamese Mass of The Roman Catholic Liturgy, through composition of an Ordinary Mass for mixed choir and solo singer in Latin including the sections of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.

2. Objectives

1. To create a contemporary Mass for the Roman Catholic Liturgy.
2. To disseminate the Siamese Mass of The Roman Catholic Liturgy, and knowledge of the composition to the public.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Scope of creative music research

In this research, data were collected from related documents, textbooks, research papers, musical literature, and chants from the Catholic service, to analyze, and synthesize, the conceptual ideas and materials necessary to compose the Siamese Mass, with an emphasis on composing an Ordinary Mass comprised of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo I - IV, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei appropriate for a mixed choir, solo, and piano.

3.2 Composition Method

1. Study the knowledge of choral music literature and documents related to the Ordinary Mass.
2. Analyze and synthesize data in order to obtain ideas and materials for composition.
3. Design the composition structure, form, melody, voicing, and accompaniment.
4. Compose and consult relevant experts.
5. Meeting of the choir members for rehearsal and recording processes.
6. Recording, mixing, and mastering the music, and presentation of the Siamese Mass via social media.
7. Complete the written creative research music of the Siamese Mass composition.

4. Results

4.1 Structure of Siamese Mass

After studying the information and musical literature, the researcher analyzed, synthesized, and designed the structure of the Siamese Mass, adapting the music from 5 sections into 8 sections, and ensuring suitability for mixed choir, solo, and piano. The structure of the Siamese Mass for each section was designed with diverse characteristics, tone color, voicing, time signature, and key signature, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Siamese Mass Structure

	Ordinary Mass	Mixed Choir	Time Signature	Key Signature
Kyrie		S1 S2 A1 A2 T B Piano	4/4	D minor
Gloria		SATB Piano	6/8, 4/4	D Major B minor
Credo	I. Credo in unum Deum	Solo & SATB A cappella	4/4	F Major
	II. Et in unum Dominum	SATB Piano	6/8	C Major
	III. Et incarnatus est	SATB Piano	4/4	Eb Major C minor C Major
	IV. Et in Spiritum sanctum	SATB Piano	4/4	C Major
Sanctus		SATB Piano	4/4	F Major
Agnus Dei		Solo & SATB Piano	3/4	D Major B minor D Major

4.2 Siamese Mass

4.2.1 Kyrie

The Greek chant *Kyrie* is a three-part text set in an ABA form, consisting of the *Kyrie eleison*, *Christe eleison*, and *Kyrie eleison*, meaning *Lord have mercy*, *Christ have mercy*, and *Lord have mercy*. The introduction of this piece presents the idea that people may come from different places and have different rhythms of life, but everyone has faith and wants to plead to God for help. The music starts with SATB on different rhythmic patterns while the piano accompaniment plays a homophonic texture with chords on the right hand and arpeggios on the left hand. The bass is sung on a descending D Minor scale while the tenor and alto are sung in harmony with the same rhythmic pattern. The soprano line was designed to harmonize with the skipped note on the weak beat as shown in Example 1.

Adagio ♩ = 63

SOPRANO: Ah, Ah, Ah, Ah, Ah

ALTO: 8 Ah, 8 Ah, 8 Ah

TENOR: 8 Ah, Ah

BASS: Ah, Ah

Piano: Adagio ♩ = 63

Example 1 Introduction of the Kyrie

The melodic line was composed by the nature of the text by reading text out loud, searching for the rhythmic motive for the “*Kyrie eleison*”. The idea of the melody line was designed with less movement on the pitches to give a feeling of prayer as demonstrated in Example 2.



Example 2 The rhythmic motive of the “*Kyrie eleison*” is derived from the rhythm of speech

The section of “*Christe eleison*”, was presented with the new tune. The second soprano sings the main theme from bar 27 to 32. Then, in bar 37, the theme of “*Kyrie eleison*” comes back in G minor, with the melody started by the bass, tenor, alto, and soprano respectively, and all voices harmonized in a homophonic texture. The expression of this section presents a thick harmony with a simple rhythmic pattern, imitating the congregation’s prayer as shown in Example 3.

Example 3 The Kyrie theme in G minor with homophonic texture**4.2.2 Gloria**

Gloria is set in the introductory rites of the Mass, containing a long text praising God and Jesus Christ. The difficulty in composing this section lies in designing melodies that are most suitable for the unrepeated text. To produce a composition which creates a glorious sensation without any breaks, the music must be composed in through-composed form, starting in D major and modulated by several keys to end in B minor. The time signature starts with 6/8 and later changes to 4/4, with a variety of tempos being used to change the mood, tone and characteristic of each section as shown in Example 4. The concept of rhythmic motive from the “*Kyrie*” is also applied in this piece as shown in Example 5.

Example 4 Changing tempo

Majestic ♩. = 60 Soprano & Alto

SOPRANO ALTO

Glo-ri a,—

Tenor & Bass

TENOR BASS

Glo-ri a,—

Majestic ♩. = 60

Piano

Example 5 The rhythmic motive of “Gloria” is derived from the rhythm of speech

Credo

Credo, the longest chant in the ordinary Mass, is intended for Christians to pray, proclaiming their faith in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and jointly announcing a belief in the teachings of Catholicism. The researcher studied and interpreted the *Credo*, dividing the text into: 1) Belief in the Father 2) Belief in Jesus 3) Jesus descent from heaven and becoming man 4) Crucifixion 5) Resurrection on the third day 6) Ascension to Heaven 7) Belief in the Holy Spirit 8) Belief in the One Church, 9) Confession of Baptism, and 10) Resurrection. After understanding the overall picture, the researcher analyzed and divided the *Credo* into 4 sections as follows:

- I. Credo in unum Deum*
 - II. Et in unum Dominum*
 - III. Et incarnatus est*
 - IV. Et in Spiritum Sanctum*

4.2.3 Credo I. Credo in unum Deum

Credo in unum Deum was composed as a cappella. This piece has a simple, calm, mainstream, melody and harmony. The researcher did not specify the type of soloist voice as either male or female, with the idea that in the creation of the world, the gender of living beings had not yet been determined and all things were equal. The melodies have a rather slow tempo, while the long tone harmony of the SATB creates a calmness as shown in Example 6.

Calmato ♩ = 60

Solo: Cre - do in u-num De - um, Pa - trem Om-ni-po- ten - tem, fac-

SOPRANO: hoo hoo hoo hoo
hoo hoo hoo hoo

ALTO: hoo hoo hoo hoo

TENOR: hoo hoo hoo hoo

BASS: hoo hoo hoo hoo

Example 6 *Credo I* - the long tone harmony of the SATB creates calmness

4.2.4 Credo II. Et in unum Dominum

The lyrics of the *Et in unum Dominum* refer to faith in Christ. This piece is composed in a 2-part harmony for a male and female. The composition is in C major, with a 6/8 time signature. The accompanying text mentions faith in Jesus Christ who is the light and true God. The melodic line was designed with a lively tune, using an upbeat note with repeating text from the female voice. During the introduction, the piano sets the mood of the music with the acciaccatura on the left hand representing the sound of a bird as shown in Example 7. Meanwhile, the melody gives a cheerful tune. Part II presents the main theme while part I is harmonized with the repeated text as shown in Example 8.

Piano: L.H. 8th - - - - L.H. 8th - - - -

Example 7 The acciaccatura on the left hand represents the sound of a bird

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Solo: De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-ne, De-um ve-rum

Soprano: De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-ne, De-um ve-rum

Alto: De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-ne, De-um ve-rum

Tenor: De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-ne, De-um ve-rum

Bass: De-um de De-o, lu-men de lu-mi-ne, De-um ve-rum

Example 8 Part II presents the main theme while part I is harmonized with the repeated text

4.2.5 Credo III. Et incarnatus est

Et incarnatus est refers to the belief that the Son of God became man, was crucified, died, and then rose again on the third day. The story is lead to music full of emotion, tranquility, suffering, sorrow, and joyfulness. The researcher presents these ideas using a through-composed form as with the *Gloria*, 4/4 time signature, and the key of Eb Major at the start; the key is modulated to C minor during the crucifixion, as shown in Example 9, but then ends in C major, expressing gladness for the resurrection.

The musical score for Example 9 consists of two staves. The top staff is for voices (Soprano and Alto), and the bottom staff is for piano. The vocal part consists of three lines of text: "Cru-ci - fi - xus", "Cru-ci - fi - xus", and "Cru-ci - fi -". The piano part shows harmonic changes from Eb Major to C minor and back to Eb Major.

Example 9 The crucifixion in C minor

4.2.6 Credo IV. Et in Spiritum Sanctum

The text of *Et in Spiritum Sanctum* describes a belief in the Holy Spirit, and the Church, affirming belief in baptism and waiting for a new life in the next world, while also referring to a declaration of faith in a Christian life. The music uses the form of 2-part, 3-part and 4-part harmony in C major, and has 4/4 time signature. The tune is designed with a simple and sweet melodic line and an arpeggiated piano accompaniment as shown in Example 10.

The musical score for Example 10 consists of two staves. The top staff is for voices (Soprano and Alto), and the bottom staff is for piano. The vocal part sings "Et in Spi - ri - tum" and "sanc - tum Do-mi-num", with "hoo" onomatopoeia. The piano part provides an arpeggiated harmonic accompaniment.

Example 10 Simple and sweet melodic line with an arpeggiated piano accompaniment

4.2.7 Sanctus

The text is set in the Eucharistic liturgy to praise the holy Lord with a delightful spirit. This music, composed in F major, has a time signature of 4/4, and 3 themes with a lively and cheerful melodic line. The researcher found that the word *Sanctus* was most suitable with short notes while it was necessary to be careful with the vowels and consonants to make the sound more effective. The refrain *Hosanna* in the soprano and bass line were designed with a regular rhythm while the alto and tenor were to sing short words in syncopation, generating a playful melody to match the praise as shown in Example 11.

Example 11 Alto and tenor sing short words in syncopation

4.2.8 Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei is set in the Communion rites of the Mass, mentioning the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, inferring the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This piece was designed in D major, with 3/4 time signature, for solo and SATB. The composer presents the main melody through a soloist at first and then moves to the chorus. There are switching melodies and harmony between the SA and TB in the middle section of the piece, which is combined with a mixture of legato and staccato articulations as shown in Example 12. The music then moves to an expressive section with a soprano solo accompanied by the SATB singing a long-tone to enhance the melody line, and gradually moves to the final section with a graceful harmony of all parts singing together. At last, the music ends with a cappella on *Dona nobis pacem* to present a peaceful feeling for the end of the Siamese Mass as shown in Example 13.

Musical score for Example 12, page 44. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a tempo marking of 44. It contains a single note followed by several rests. The middle staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. It features a melodic line with sustained notes and short rests, with lyrics "Ag - nus" and "De - i," repeated. The bottom staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a dynamic marking of *p*. It shows a harmonic progression with sustained notes and short rests, also with lyrics "Ag - nus" and "De - i," repeated.

Example 12 A mixture of legato and staccato articulations

Musical score for Example 13, page 84. The score consists of three staves. The top staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a tempo marking of 84. It features a melodic line with sustained notes and short rests, with lyrics "do - na", "no - bis", and "pa - - - cem.". The middle staff has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and includes dynamic markings "rit." and "rit.". It repeats the lyrics "do - na", "no - bis", and "pa - - - cem.". The bottom staff has a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and includes dynamic markings "rit." and "rit.". It repeats the lyrics "do - na", "no - bis", and "pa - - - cem.". The score concludes with a final "rit." marking.

Example 13 The cappella ending

5. Discussion

Siamese Mass composition is recommended for proclaiming the Christian faith and performing. The *Kyrie*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei* can be sung in the catholic service and concert, due to the text setting is presented in the same format of the chant while the *Gloria* and *Credo* are more suited to the performance as the long texts are divided into sections.

Those who are interested in church music can apply the knowledge gained from this research as a guideline for composing sacred music for rituals or for aesthetic purposes, such as composing the ordinary mass in Thai or composing the proper mass which requires knowledge and skills in wide areas such as theory and composition, history, linguistic and interpretation, and the understanding of church music.

6. Conclusion

This Doctoral Creative Research Music: Siamese Mass of The Roman Catholic Liturgy was composed in Latin, for choir, solo and piano accompaniment. It is comprised of eight sections, namely the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo I - IV, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, with a combined performance time of 30 minutes. The Siamese Mass presents the idea of composing a choral sacred music in various styles. The melodies of each section were designed to serve the conceptual ideas of the text and lead to different music structures, forms, tempo, key signatures, and voice. The researcher found that to compose the choral music a composer must have a range of concerns, particularly pronunciation, as this can affect the melodies and accompaniments supporting and highlighting the choral part.

Due to the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic around the world, a live performance was not possible. The researcher solved this situation by presenting the Siamese Mass on social media. The concert plan was changed to rehearse and record online, which was a very challenging process. The choir members (reduced to only 4 singers) and 2 pianists, recorded the music at home with their own equipment. Mixing and mastering was a long-run process during the new normal situation. The Siamese Mass was presented as music with score through online channels. This composition has enabled the researcher to enhance their own home studio skills which are considered essential to creative work nowadays.

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