

Kyrie from Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo

Kyrie is the opening movement of the sacred Mass entitled “Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo” by Joseph Haydn, written in 1775. This article is divided into the following sections.

Lyrics

- I. - 4 articles about the Mass, which includes the Kyrie.
- II. – 1 article about the Missa Brevis form in music.
- III. - 2 articles about the Kyrie in music.
- IV. - 3 articles about the Kyrie Eleison prayer in Catholicism.
- V. - 1 article about the composer, Joseph Haydn.

Audio Links and Discography

References

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**Lyrics**

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison  
Lord Have Mercy, Christ Have Mercy

(Repeated numerous times)

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**I. Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis De Deo (including Kyrie)**

This short and concise work (autograph preserved by the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna) is written for four voices only, two violins, and organ solo. It is interesting to see that in Haydn’s original manuscript of this mass the notes of the bass and the organ parts were written about twice as large as those of the rest. Apparently the organist – probably Haydn himself – intended to play from the full score.

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Both the *Gloria* and *Credo* are "compressed" or "telescoped" settings of the mass text; the recitation of the ordinary is accelerated by having the various sections of the choir sing *different* words at the *same* time. As a result, the elongated setting of the *Gloria* by the composer's brother is an often preferred alternative, if the ecclesiastical propriety of hearing the text one word at a time is to be observed!

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Joseph Haydn composed four, possibly five, *missa breves*; the *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* was his last. (Because there is some doubt about whether the *Missa brevis* “*Rorate coeli desuper*” is indeed Haydn, the number of Haydn’s *missa breves* remains uncertain.) These charming liturgical “miniatures” all share a small orchestra (usually two violins and continuo), brevity, and the infamous “telescoping” (ie. compression) of texts for the prolix Gloria and Credo. Conductor-scholar Denis McCaldin has prepared this handsome new edition of the *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* which, according to the introduction, “dates from about 1775.”

Posterity has given this Mass the subtitle “Kleine Orgelmesse” (“Little Organ Mass”) because of the organ solo in the Benedictus – a frequent practice during this period. Only in this movement is the right hand of the organ continuo part written out so as to provide ornate *ritornellos* that frame and complement the soprano solos. The adjective “kleine” can be applied to the organ as well as the Mass for, as “McCaldin correctly notes, the work was probably first performed at the chapel of Eisenstadt’s Brothers of mercy Convent (actually a hospital) where the organ was, and still is, a small positive with only six stops. Its diminutive size and lack of pedalboard explain the elegant simplicity of Haydn’s organ solo.

Church musicians of the eighteenth century often adapted any extant work for the current resources or liturgical requirements of a particular institution or feast day. The *Missa* is a fine example of that practice.

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Forchtenstein Castle is an ancient fortress belonging to the Esterhazy family in the province of Burgenland. The castle stood good service in the second Turkish invasion of 1683. The Serviten Monastery still owns some contemporary MSS of Haydn’s works, including *Missa St. Joannis de Deo*.

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## **II. Missa Brevis form in music**

A *missa brevis* ([Latin](#), pl. *missae breves*) is, literally, a "short [Mass](#)". It can refer to several forms of the mass, from the "telescoped" Viennese masses of [Haydn](#) and [Mozart](#) to the [low mass](#) (called [messe basse](#) in [French](#) and [Deutsche Singmesse](#) in [German](#)), or in the specifically [Lutheran](#) sense to a mixed setting. Nowadays it is generally understood as a setting of the ordinary that does not include the [Credo](#) and is a popular genre of [twentieth century choral](#) composition.

The "[Credo](#)" is often omitted, but these movements may be included: [Kyrie](#), [Gloria](#), [Credo](#), [Sanctus](#), Benedictus, [Agnus Dei](#)

Notable examples of the *missa brevis* form are by composers such as: [Johann Sebastian Bach](#), [Richard Rodney Bennett](#), [Benjamin Britten](#), [Gabriel Fauré](#), [Joseph Haydn](#), [Michael Haydn](#), [Zoltán Kodály](#), [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#), [Stephen Paulus](#), [William Walton](#)

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### III. The Kyrie in music

The Kyrie is the first sung prayer in the Ordinary of the pre–1969 Tridentine Mass, and is a mandatory part of any musical setting of the Mass. Kyrie movements often have a ternary (ABA) musical structure that reflects the symmetrical structure of the text. Even today the Kyrie is traditionally sung by the cantor, choir, and congregation when it occurs; musical settings of the prayer in styles ranging from Gregorian chant to Folk are popular.

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As the first item in settings of the mass ordinary and the second in the requiem mass (the only mass proper set regularly over the centuries), numerous composers have included Kýries in their masses, including [Guillaume de Machaut](#), [Guillaume Dufay](#), [Johannes Ockeghem](#), [Josquin des Pres](#), [Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina](#), [Johann Sebastian Bach](#), [Joseph Haydn](#), [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](#), [Ludwig van Beethoven](#), [Hector Berlioz](#), [Giuseppe Verdi](#), [Ralph Vaughan Williams](#), [Igor Stravinsky](#), [Leonard Bernstein](#), [Benjamin Britten](#), [Mark Alburger](#), [Erling Wold](#), and [Lisa Scola Prosek](#). In original settings, [Michael Nyman](#) included it in his score for *The Libertine* and [Trevor Jones](#) used it in his score for *Hideaway*.

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### IV. Kyrie Eleison prayer in Catholicism

Kýrie is from the [Greek](#) word κύριε (kyrie), the [vocative case](#) of κύριος (kyrios), meaning *O Lord*. It is the common name of an important [prayer](#) of Christian [liturgy](#), also called **Kýrie, eléison** which is [Greek](#) for *Lord, have mercy*.

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The Kýrie prayer, offered during the [Roman Catholic Mass](#) and in some other denominations (such as [Lutheran](#) and many in the [Anglican Communion](#)), led by the [priest](#) or celebrant, and repeated by the [congregation](#). It is conjectured by scholars, including Jungmann, that the Kýrie in the Roman Mass is a vestigial remnant of a [litany](#) at the beginning of the mass, much like that of the Eastern Churches. Though today usually recited in the [vernacular](#), the traditional form of the Kýrie in [Western Christianity](#) is a [transliteration](#) of the Greek prayer into [Latin](#), and is used in this form in Latin-language Masses.

*Κύριε ἑλέησον, Χριστέ ἑλέησον, Κύριε ἑλέησον.*

*Kýrie, eléison; Christé, eléison; Kýrie, eléison.*

*"Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy."*

Traditionally, each line was sung three times. The three lines being sung thrice is an allusion to the [Trinity](#).

This prayer occurs early in the Ordinary of the [Roman Catholic Mass](#), directly following the [Penitential Rite](#). However, since an alternate form C of the Penitential Rite of the [Mass of Paul VI](#) incorporates the Kýrie text, no additional Kýrie is recited when this form is used. The Penitential Rite and Kýrie are omitted when the [Rite of Sprinkling](#) is celebrated, according to this modern use.

The Kýrie is the first sung prayer in the [Ordinary](#) of the pre-[1969 Tridentine Mass](#), and is a mandatory part of any [musical setting of the Mass](#). *Kýrie* movements often have a [ternary](#) (ABA) musical structure that reflects the symmetrical structure of the text. Even today the Kýrie is traditionally sung by the [cantor](#), choir, and congregation when it occurs; musical settings of the prayer in styles ranging from [Gregorian chant](#) to [Folk](#) are popular.

Since 1549 Anglicans have normally sung or said the Kýrie in English. In the 1552 [Book of Common Prayer](#) the Kýrie was inserted into a recitation of the [Ten Commandments](#). Modern revisions of the Prayer Book have restored the option of using the Kýrie without the Commandments.

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Kyrie Eleison (Greek for "Lord have mercy"; the Latin transliteration supposes a pronunciation as in Modern Greek) is a very old, even pre-Christian, expression used constantly in all [Christian liturgies](#). Arrian quotes it in the second century: "Invoking God we say *Kyrie Eleison*" (Diatribæ Epicteti, II, 7). A more obvious precedent for [Christian](#) use was the occurrence of the same formula in the [Old Testament](#) ([Psalm 4:2](#), [6:3](#), [9:14](#), [25:11](#), [121:3](#); [Isaiah 33:2](#); [Tobit 8:10](#); etc., in the [Septuagint](#)). In these places it seems already to be a quasi-liturgical exclamation. So also in the [New Testament](#) the form occurs repeatedly ([Matthew 9:27](#), [20:30](#), [15:22](#); [Mark 10:47](#); [Luke 16:24](#), [17:13](#)). The only difference is that all these cases have an accusative after the verb: *Kyrie eleison me*, or *eleison hemas*. The [liturgical](#) formula is shortened from this.

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## **V. Joseph Haydn**

(**Franz**) **Joseph Haydn**<sup>[1][2]</sup> ([March 31, 1732](#) – [May 31, 1809](#)) was an [Austrian](#) composer. He was one of the most prominent [composers](#) of the [classical period](#), and is called by some the "Father of the [Symphony](#)" and "Father of the [String Quartet](#)".

A life-long citizen of Austria, Haydn spent much of his career as a court musician for the wealthy Hungarian [Esterházy](#) family on their remote estate. Isolated from other composers and trends in music until the later part of his long life, he was, as he put it, "forced to become original".<sup>[3]</sup>

During his lifetime, the composer was always known as **Joseph Haydn**. The form "Franz Joseph Haydn" is avoided by modern scholars and historians.<sup>[4]</sup>

Joseph Haydn was the brother of [Michael Haydn](#), himself a highly regarded composer, and [Johann Evangelist Haydn](#), a [tenor](#).

Haydn was a devout [Catholic](#) who often turned to his [rosary](#) when he had trouble composing, a practice that he usually found to be effective.<sup>[30]</sup> He normally began the manuscript of each composition with "in nomine Domini" ("in the name of the Lord") and ended with "Laus Deo" ("praise be to God").<sup>[31]</sup>

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### **Audio Links and Discography**

*If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in “Haydn Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis De Deo Kyrie” and then you can listen to a sample from each artist.*

*If you do not subscribe to iTunse, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, you can listen to two MP3 files, which can be downloaded from these websites.*

American Bach Soloists <http://www.valeriodistefano.com/haydnmasses.htm>

GNHCC Choir [http://www.geocities.com/busca\\_partituras/listm.html](http://www.geocities.com/busca_partituras/listm.html)

### ***YouTubes***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs8ive--5zI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiJdqXACxgA&feature=related>

*These recordings can be purchased online:*

<http://www.amazon.com/brevis-Sancti-Joannis-Kleine-Orgelmesse/dp/B000VHMBUE>

<http://www.amazon.com/Haydn-Angustiis-Regina-Brevis-Joannis/dp/B000005KHX>

<http://www.amazon.ca/Missa-Brevis/dp/B000003WU8>

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Haydn-Nelson-Little-Organ-Masses/dp/B000001SK5>

<http://www.classical.net/music/recs/reviews/h/hyp55208a.php>

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### **References:**

The above article about the song “Kyrie from Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo” was extracted from these websites. For more information, please read the articles:

[http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Missa\\_Brevis\\_Sancti\\_Joannis\\_de\\_Deo\\_\(Franz\\_Josef\\_Haydn\)](http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Missa_Brevis_Sancti_Joannis_de_Deo_(Franz_Josef_Haydn))

<http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Category:Kyrie>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyrie>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missa\\_Brevis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missa_Brevis)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph\\_Haydn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Haydn)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08714a.htm>

The Collected Correspondence of Joseph Haydn

<http://www.jstor.org/pss/942089> NOTES: *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* (Hob. XXII:7) "Little Organ Mass" with Michael Haydn's Prolongation of the Gloria by Joseph Haydn; Denis McCaldin