

Ubi Caritas

“Ubi Caritas” is one of four motets from “Quatre Motets sur des Themes Gregoriens” composed in 1960 by Maurice Duruflé. The lyrics are based on a traditional hymn from the Roman Catholic Church. It is written as Gregorian Chant in Motet form, and was first performed by Ensemble Vocal Stephane Caillat.

This report is divided into the following sections:

[Lyrics](#)

[I. Ubi Caritas – The Roman Catholic Hymn](#)

[II. “Ubi Caritas” and the Four Motets of Duruflé](#)

[III. Maurice Duruflé](#)

[IV. Gregorian Chant](#)

[V. Motet](#)

[VI. Ensemble Vocal Stephane Caillat](#)

[Audio Links and Discography](#)

[References](#)

Lyrics^{1,2}

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exultemus, et in ipso iucundemur.
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.

Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a sincere heart.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Simul ergo cum in unum congregamur:
Ne nos mente dividamur, caveamus.
Cessent iurgia maligna, cessent lites.
Et in medio nostri sit Christus Deus.

Where charity and love are, God is there.
As we are gathered into one body,
Beware, lest we be divided in mind.
Let evil impulses stop, let controversy cease,
And may Christ our God be in our midst.

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Simul quoque cum beatis videamus,
Glorianter vultum tuum, Christe Deus:
Gaudium quod est immensum, atque probum,
Saecula per infinita saeculorum. Amen.\

Where charity and love are, God is there.
And may we with the saints also,
See Thy face in glory, O Christ our God:
The joy that is immense and good,
Unto the ages through infinite ages. Amen.

Note: The original hymn was very long; only three verses are used in the rite. The 1973 Roman Missal changed the first line of the hymn's stanzas. Now, the first line of each stanza reads "Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est," after certain very early manuscripts. This translates to: "Where charity is true, God himself is there."

I. Ubi Caritas – The Roman Catholic Hymn^{3, 4, 5}

“Ubi caritas” are the opening words of a Roman Catholic hymn by the same name. The traditional music was set sometime between the fourth and tenth centuries, though some scholars believe the text dates from early Christian gatherings before the formalization of the Mass. Its author is unknown. The hymn is usually sung at Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and on Holy Thursday evening at the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The “Antiphon” of the text refers to its first line, “Where charity and love abide, God is there.” The remaining words are the verses. *Ubi caritas* is the eighth (and final) antiphon for the rite of the Washing of the Feet on Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter). It is Antiphon, Mode 6 in the *Liber Usualis*, p. 675. *Ubi Caritas* is sung at mass on Holy Thursday, an action that commemorates Jesus' washing of the feet of the apostles at the last supper.

It is not easy to translate Ecclesiastical Latin's sense of *caritas* with just one word; it means "spiritual love", or "love in action", the love which is born from a profound respect of the other (or the Other). Another word for love is *amor*, which is more along the lines of the affectionate love humans express (indeed one version of this hymn uses the chorus *ubi caritas et amor...*) The name of the Catholic Church's charitable arm is Caritas; and we obtain the English word *charity* from *caritas*.

II. “Ubi Caritas” and the Four Motets of Durufle⁶

Maurice Durufle composed and published the *Quatre Motets sur des Themes Gregoriens*, Op. 10, for unaccompanied chorus, in 1960, in four separate octavos, dedicating them to Auguste Le Gennant, the director of the Institut gregorien de Paris, whose counsel Durufle had sought regarding the Solesmes rhythmic interpretation of Gregorian chant.

Though the motets have come to be sung during the mass, more or less at will, and though Durufle indicated they could be sung during benediction of the blessed Sacrament, their texts are rooted in particular services from the liturgical year. All of them reflect some feature of Roman Catholic piety, namely, its Petrine foundation (*Te us Petrus*), its veneration for Mary (*Tota pulchra es*), its Eucharistic devotion (*Tantum ergo*), or its Holy Week practices (*Ubi caritas*). All of the texts are drawn from the Tridentine liturgy still in use prior to the Second Vatican Council.

The pieces were first performed at Saint Merry, on May 4, 1961, by the Chorale Stephane Caillat. Three of the motets are for SATB chorus; (*Tota pulchra es*) is for women's voices. In each case Durufle constructed the voices around the Gregorian melody associated with the texts, as he had done with the *Requiem* and would later do with *Messe “Cum jubilo.”* The craft and elegance of the motets, and the frequency with which they are sung, are testimony to Durufle's success with small choral forms.

III. Maurice Duruflé^{7,8}

Maurice Duruflé (January 11, 1902 – June 16, 1986) was a French composer, organist, and pedagogue. Duruflé was born in Louviers, Haute-Normandie. His work stands firmly in the line of French organist-composers that began with César Franck.

In 1912, he became chorister at the Rouen Cathedral Choir School, where he studied piano and organ with Jules Haelling. At age 17, upon moving to Paris, he took private organ lessons with Charles Tournemire, whom he assisted at Basilique Ste-Clotilde, Paris until 1927. In 1920 Duruflé entered the Conservatoire de Paris, eventually graduating with first prizes in organ, harmony, piano accompaniment, and composition.

Like his mentor, Dukas, Duruflé was incredibly self-effacing, and spent considerable time re-working his compositions until they achieved what he felt was the correct level of perfection; in fact, there are only 14 published Opus numbers to his name.

Duruflé's early musical training was at the cathedral in Rouen, where there was a famous school of Gregorian chant. This repertory of liturgical song had become something of a French speciality in the 19th century, and among the scholars working on the chants were a group of Benedictines at the French monastery of Solesmes, who developed a theory of chant rhythm as a free succession of notes of mostly equal value in groups of two and three. The Solesmes school of chant restoration and performance achieved widespread acceptance in the Catholic church and even some Protestant congregations. After a thorough steeping in this tradition, Duruflé came to Paris and studied at the Conservatoire, where he confronted the tradition of Fauré, Debussy, and Ravel.

In 1927, Louis Vierne nominated him as his assistant at Notre-Dame. Duruflé became titular organist of St. Étienne-du-Mont in Paris in 1929, a position he held for the rest of his life. In 1939, he premiered Francis Poulenc's Organ Concerto (the *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani in G minor*); he had advised Poulenc on the registrations of the organ part. In 1943 he became professor of harmony at the Conservatoire de Paris, where he worked until 1970.

In 1947, Duruflé wrote what is probably the most famous of his few pieces: the *Requiem* op. 9, for soloists, choir, organ and orchestra. The same year, Marie-Madeleine Chevalier became his assistant at St-Étienne-du-Mont. They married in 1953 (after Duruflé's first marriage to Lucette Bousquet, contracted in 1932, ended in civil divorce in 1947 and was declared null by the Vatican on 23 June 1953). The couple became a famous and popular organ duo, going on tour together several times throughout the sixties and early seventies.

Duruflé suffered severe injuries in a car accident in 1975, and as a result he gave up performing; indeed he was largely confined to his apartment, leaving the service at St-Étienne-du-Mont to his

wife Marie-Madeleine (who was also injured in the accident). He died in Louveciennes (near Paris) in 1986, aged 84.

Durufié's music consists of two strains: plainchant and the structural rigor of Dukas. His choral music is all based on plainchant for its themes. However, his individuality comes through in his modally-inflected harmonies and in the complete assurance of his craft. His orchestral music (only two scores) is less remarkable than his organ or choral catalogue, since it lies too close to Dukas, but it too shows tremendous skill.

Durufié was highly critical of his own composition. He only published a handful of works and often continued to edit and change pieces after publication. For instance, the Toccata from *Suite, op. 5* has a completely different ending in the first edition than in the more recent version, and the score to the *Fugue sur le nom d'Alain* originally indicated accelerando throughout. The result of this perfectionism is that his music, especially his organ music, holds a very high position in the repertoire.

IV. Gregorian Chant⁹

Gregorian Chant is the central tradition of Western plainchant, a form of monophonic liturgical chant in Western Christianity that accompanied the celebration of Mass and other ritual services. This vast repertory of chants is the oldest music known as it is the first repertory to have been adequately notated in the 10th century. In general, the chants were learnt by the viva voce method, that is by following the given example orally, which took many years of experience in the Schola Cantorum. Gregorian chant originated in Monastic life, in which singing the 'Divine Service' nine times a day at the proper hours was upheld according to the Rule of St. Benedict. Singing psalms made up a large part of the life in a monastic community, while a smaller group and soloists sang the chants. In its long history Gregorian Chant has been subjected to many gradual changes and some reforms.

The renewed interest in early music in the late 19th century left its mark on 20th-century music. Gregorian influences in classical music include the choral setting of four chants in "Quatre motets sur des thèmes Grégoriens" by **Maurice Durufié**, the carols of Peter Maxwell Davies, and the choral work of Arvo Pärt. Gregorian chant has been incorporated into other genres, such as Enigma's "Sadness (Part I)", the chant interpretation of pop and rock by the German band Gregorian, the techno project E Nomine, many of the songs by American Power/Thrash metal band Iced Earth, and the work of black metal band Deathspell Omega. The modal melodies of chant provide unusual sounds to ears attuned to modern scales. It has also been used in The Omen's main theme, Ave Satani.

V. Motet¹⁰

In Western music, *motet* is a word that is applied to a number of highly varied choral musical compositions.

The name comes either from the Latin *movere*, ("to move") or a Latinized version of Old French *mot*, "word" or "verbal utterance." The Medieval Latin for "motet" is "motectum", and the Italian mottetto was also used. If from the Latin, the name describes the movement of the different voices against one another.

According to Margaret Bent (1997), "'a piece of music in several parts with words' is as precise a definition of the motet as will serve from the thirteenth to the late sixteenth century and beyond. This is actually very close to one of the earliest descriptions we have, that of the late thirteenth-century theorist Johannes de Grocheio." Grocheio was also one of the first scholars to define a motet. Grocheio believed that the motet was "not intended for the vulgar who do not understand its finer points and derive no pleasure from hearing it: it is meant for educated people and those who look for refinement in art."

Later 18th-century composers wrote few motets, although Mozart's well-known Ave Verum Corpus is in this genre.

In the 19th century German composers continued to write motets occasionally, notably Johannes Brahms (in German) and Anton Bruckner (in Latin). French composers of motets included Camille Saint-Saëns, César Franck and Francis Poulenc. Similar compositions in the English language are called anthems, but some later English composers, such as Charles Villiers Stanford, wrote motets in Latin. The majority of these compositions are a cappella, but some are accompanied by organ.

In the 20th century, composers of motets have often consciously imitated earlier styles. Examples include works by **Maurice Durufle**, Charles Villiers Stanford, Edmund Rubbra, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Hugo Distler, and Ernst Krenek. Gregorian Chant experienced a popular resurgence during the New Age music and world music movements of the 1980s and '90s. It became conventional wisdom that listening to Gregorian chant increased the production of beta waves in the brain, reinforcing the popular reputation of Gregorian chant as tranquilizing music.

VI. Ensemble Vocal Stéphane Caillat¹¹

The Paris-based Ensemble Vocal Stéphane Caillat was founded by Stéphane Caillat in 1954 and has been acknowledged as one of France's leading choirs ever since. Its 35 members are committed to high quality choral music. Since 1956 the Ensemble has released over 40 recordings, some of which have won the highest French awards (Grand Prix du Disque, the Palestina Prize). They have also appeared in the major venues in France and abroad.

Audio Links and Discography

Select YouTubes

The Choir of King's College, Cambridge

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwR_dM-1MIU

Winchester Cathedral Choir

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPB7hNk4I9k&feature=related>

Tokyo International Honor Choir, March 13, 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbQejc-oEGM>

Maurice Durufle performs a piece on Organ

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcLeINHIOhw>

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If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in "Ubi Caritas" where you can listen to a sample from each artist, and then purchase/download the song for 99 cents. Or, you can listen to a sample from *Select MP3 Downloads* below, which are cuts from CD Albums - then purchase/download the song for 99 cents.

Mary, Queen of the Universe Shrine Choir

<http://www.amazon.com/Ubi-Caritas-Maurice-Durufle/dp/B0014D0KD4/>

Christ Church Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, Indianapolis

<http://www.amazon.com/Durufle-Ubi-Caritas/dp/B000QWTBWK/>

Norman McKenzie & Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chamber Chorus

<http://www.amazon.com/Durufle-Quatre-Motets-Gregoriens-Caritas/dp/B00150AN5G/>

Maurice Durufle performs a piece on Organ

<http://www.amazon.com/Plein-jeu-1er-couplet-Kyrie/dp/B001KMU3RM/>

References:

The above article about the song “Ubi Caritas” was extracted from these websites. Additional references are also given.

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- ¹ <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Hymni/UbiCaritas.html>
 - ² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubi_caritas
 - ³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubi_caritas
 - ⁴ http://www.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Ubi_caritas
 - ⁵ <http://muweb.alumni.marymount.edu/~jep21166/Cantus/UbiCaritas.html>
 - ⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/d5oqu4>
 - ⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Durufle
 - ⁸ <http://www.requiemsurvey.org/composers.php?id=274>
 - ⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_chant#Liturgical_functions
 - ¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motet#The_motet_since_Bach
 - ¹¹ <http://www.choirs.org.uk/international%20choirs/france.html>
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http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Music/Composition/Composers/D/Durufle_Maurice/
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<http://tinyurl.com/c46jch>