

Messe Basse

Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)

Fauré's *Messe Basse* was composed in 1881, whilst the composer was on holiday in Normandy. It is scored for upper voices only, with organ accompaniment. The title means 'Low Mass' or in other words a *Missa Brevis*, containing only the Kyrie, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei. Without the most dramatic sections of the full Mass – the Gloria and Credo – the remaining movements provide the ideal context for Fauré's typically understated style. The graceful lyricism and subtle harmonic shifts are characteristic of much of his writing, found also in his superb songs and piano pieces. In a number of places the Mass hints at the much more famous Requiem, written just seven years later.

programme notes by John Bawden

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