

SOME THEMATIC UNITS CORRELATED WITH THE TEXT  
OF THE QUI TOLLIS PORTION OF MOZART'S  
MASS IN C MINOR, K. 427

by 3235N.e

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1961

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A MASTER'S REPORT  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree

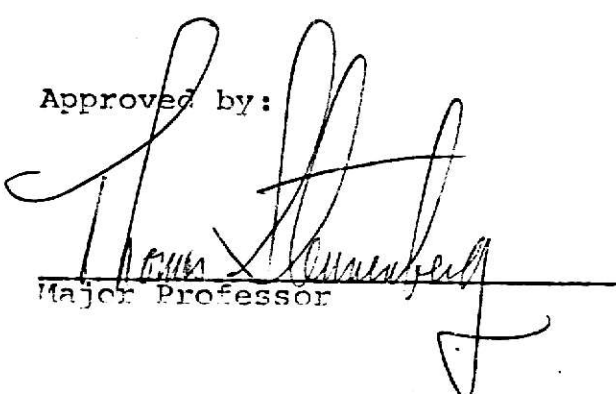
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to study some of the formal features of the Qui Tollis section of Mozart's Mass in C minor, K. 427. This has been done by correlating some of the different melodic features with the various phrases of the text.

Mozart conceived the C minor Mass as a "cantata mass." This type of Mass is characterized by considerable expansion of the individual sections; rather than treating each section as an entity the various sections of the Mass (in this case the "Gloria") are split into a number of autonomous sections.<sup>1</sup> This study was made to investigate some of the techniques employed by Mozart to maintain the long line of musical thought which characterizes this relatively short "Qui Tollis" portion of the "Gloria" text.

Mozart wrote the C minor Mass as the fulfillment of a

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Braunstein, "Mozart Mass in C Minor, K. 427." (New York, Vox Productions, Inc., 1961). Record notes.

vow made at the time of his marriage to Constanze Weber.<sup>2</sup> The work was begun during the Summer of 1782 and completed in May, 1783 in Vienna.<sup>3</sup> Mozart conducted the first performance of the Mass in the Church of St. Peters Abbey in Salzburg on October 26, 1783 with Constanze as one of the two soprano soloists.<sup>4</sup>

#### MATERIALS

The score used in this study was edited by Alois Schmitt in 1901 for Breitkopf, Dresden, Germany. It is available to the U.S.A. through Associated Music Publishers, Inc., New York.

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<sup>2</sup>Otto Jahn, Life of Mozart, trans. Pauline D. Townsend (London, Novello, Ewer and Co., 1882), II, p. 265, pp. 314-315.

<sup>3</sup>C.B. Oldman, "Mozart," Groves Dictionary of Music, ed. Erich Blom, (5th ed.), V, p. 961.

<sup>4</sup>Otto Erich Deutsch, Mozart, A Documentary Biography (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 219.

SOME MELODIC MATERIALS  
CORRELATED WITH THE TEXTUAL PHRASES

Mozart has employed four lines of text in this fifty-six bar composition for double choir and orchestra.

The Latin text is as follows:

Qui tollis peccata mundi  
miserere nobis,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram,  
qui sedes ad dexteram patris.

The English translation is as follows:

That takest away the sins of  
the world,  
have mercy upon us,  
receive our prayers, Thou that  
sittest  
at the right hand of God  
the Father.

Mozart associates certain melodic materials with certain lines of the text and establishes a formal structure which can be studied by correlating the different melodic materials with the different lines of the text.

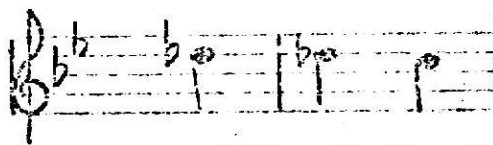
Mozart's first melodic material is set to the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi"--and the last line of the text--"qui sedes ad dexteram patris."

Ex. 1



Mozart uses this melodic material on the same plane (d natural to e flat etc.) seven times throughout the composition. He states it three times in the opening section (mm. 1-15) and twice in a middle section (mm. 18-28) to settings of the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi." He then repeats it two more times in settings of the last line of the text--"qui sedes ad dexteram patris"--in a section toward the end (mm. 32-44). He maintains a long line of musical thought through these "qui tollis. . ." sections and the "qui sedes. . ." section by treating this melodic material contrapuntally in both choirs; and extends these textual sections through spans of episodic development by employing a melodic figure which he extracts from the original melodic material.

Ex. 2

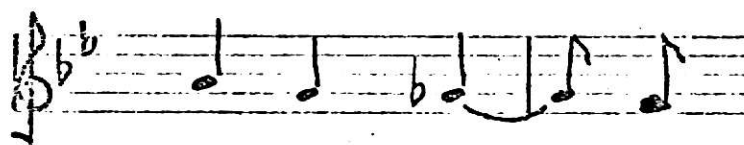


Mozart uses this melodic figure interchangeably with the words "qui tollis," "peccata," and "qui sedes" two times in the first "qui tollis. . ." section, four times in the middle section, and once in the final "qui

sedes. . ." section. However, he uses the rhythmic form of the figure with the same words many more times and thus, the vitality of this melodic figure is greatly enhanced.

Mozart scores the second line of the text--"miserere nobis"--to a short chromatically descending melodic figure in the first "miserere. . ." section (mm. 15-18).

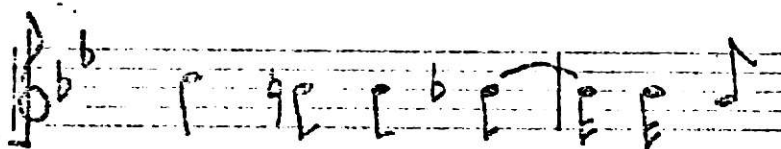
Ex. 3



He uses this figure four times in the first "miserere. . ." section (two times in its entirety, and two times in part with contrapuntal variation).

Mozart scores the third line of the text--"suscipe deprecationem nostram" on a variation of the original "miserere" figure in the "suscipe. . ." section (mm. 28-32).

Ex. 4

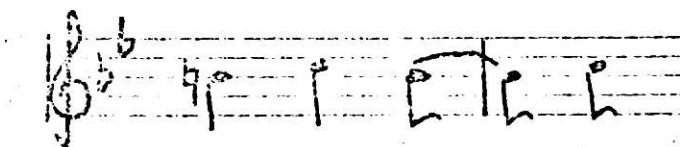


He accomplishes this variation by employing the contrapuntal technique of rhythmic diminution on the middle two notes

of the original "miserere" melodic figure. In this "suscipe. . ." section, like the "miserere. . ." section, he uses the melodic figure four times (two times in its entirety, and two times in part with contrapuntal variation).

Mozart scores the last "miserere nobis" section (mm. 44-56) with a melodic figure which differs from the melodic figure used in the first "miserere. . ." section. However, he maintains similarity and continuity by repeating the rhythmic properties of the first "miserere" melodic figure. His final "miserere" melodic figure consists of the repetition of two notes a half step apart rather than the original four chromatically descending notes.

Ex. 5



Mozart extends this final "miserere. . ." section by scoring two additional variations of this new melodic figure to the complete textual phrase--"miserere nobis." Once again he employs the contrapuntal technique of rhythmic diminution; and thus, the variation of this extension is very similar rhythmically to the variation of the original "miserere" melodic figure used in the "suscipe. . ."

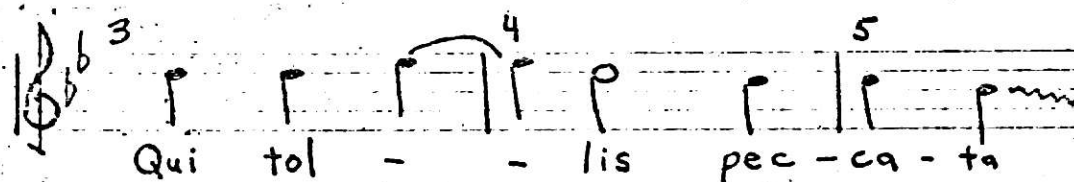




## ANALYSIS

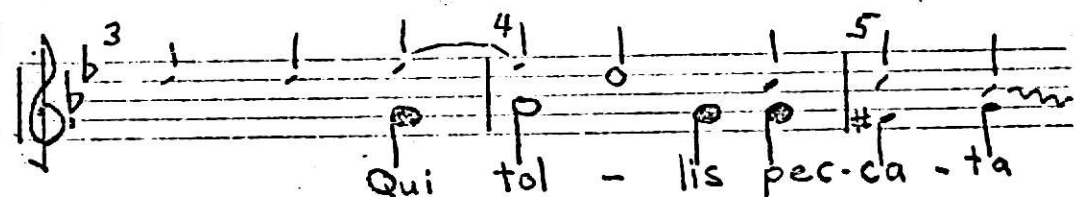
The first choir introduces the central thematic unit in a setting of the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi,"--in mm. 3-5 after a short orchestral introduction.

Ex. 7



The altos imitate the first portion of this central thematic unit at the fifth in mm. 3-4.

Ex. 8



The second choir restates the central thematic unit on the same plane in mm. 5-7 while the first choir finds resolution in a perfect authentic cadence in mm. 5-6.

## Ex. 9

Ex. 9 is a musical score for two staves, I and II, in G major (one sharp). The key signature is G major. The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time (C). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 6, and 7 indicated above the first staff, and measure numbers 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 indicated above the second staff. The lyrics are in Latin: "ca - ta mun - di" (measures 5-6), "Qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta" (measures 8-11), and "Qui tol - lis" (measures 12-13). The melody is simple, with notes on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

The central thematic unit is again restated by the first choir in mm. 8-9. However, it progresses into a section of episodical development beginning in mm. 10-11. This is characterized by the reiteration of a melodic figure which is extracted from the "peccata" portion of the initial "qui tollis peccata mundi" material--the central thematic unit. It is sung simultaneously by the sopranos of both choirs.

## Ex. 10

Ex. 10 is a musical score for a single staff in G major (one sharp). The key signature is G major. The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time (C). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 indicated above the staff. The lyrics are in Latin: "qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta" (measures 8-9), "qui tol - lis" (measure 10), and "qui tol - lis" (measures 11-12). The melody is simple, with notes on a five-line staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

The music of this episodic development section continues through mm. 12-14 to the first beat of m. 15 where the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi"--is completed. Both choirs sing the last word--"mundi"--homophonically through m. 14 and release after the first beat of m. 15. Nevertheless, a strong feeling of forward movement is maintained by the underlying harmonic progression of chords of unrest in the orchestral accompaniment.

The first representation of the secondary thematic unit set to the second phrase of the text--"miserere nobis,"--is immediately introduced by the sopranos of the first choir beginning on the second half of the second beat in m. 15 and progresses through the first beat of m. 16. The sopranos of the second choir then imitate the new melodic figure a half step higher with the same rhythmic placement through the remainder of m. 16 and the first beat of m. 17. The first part of the melodic figure is then restated a whole step higher by the sopranos of the first choir in m. 17 while the second choir responds contrapuntally with the first part of the same figure on the second half of the fourth beat (m. 17) and continues into measure 18. This second section is relatively short, being only four bars long. It is characterized by an ascending line of melodic drift which, while connecting the short three and one-half

count melodic figures together serves as a transition between the first fifteen bar introductory section based upon the central thematic unit and a reiteration of the central thematic unit which is to follow.

## Ex. 11

15 16 17 18

mi-se-re-re, mi-se-re-re no-bis

mi-se-re-re, mi-se-re-re no-bis

The reiteration of the central thematic unit is again set to the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi." It is restated in its original entirety of the first choir in mm. 19-21, and then in part by the second choir in mm. 21-33. The altos avoid the imitative procedure in the second portion--mm. 21-22.

## Ex. 12

19 20 21 22

qui tol - lis pec-ca-ta mun-di

qui tol - lis pec-ca-ta

The music progresses into a reiteration and development of the short melodic figure that is extracted from the "peccata" portion of the central thematic unit. This melodic figure, which was originally stated twice in mm. 10-11, is sung simultaneously by the sopranos of both choirs on the fourth beat of m. 22 and the first and second beats of m. 23. It is repeated on the same beats of mm. 23 and 24. The figure is imitated contrapuntally in inverted retrograde by the altos of the first choir on the second, third, and fourth beats of mm. 23 and 24 respectively.

## Ex. 13

23 24

qui tol - lis, qui tol - lis, pec-ca-ta,

The music progresses episodically through mm. 25-27 to the first beat of m. 28 where this section which encompasses the reiteration of the central thematic unit and its episodical development, set to the first line of the text--"qui tollis peccata mundi" is completed on a higher plane in a manner which is much the same as the ending of the first section (mm. 14-15). Once again the music moves forward with strength due to the underlying harmonic progression of chords of unrest in the orchestral accompaniment.

A reiteration of the secondary thematic unit based upon the third line of the text--"suscipe deprecationem nostram"--is immediately introduced by the sopranos of the first choir beginning on the second half of the second beat in m. 28 and progresses through the first beat of m. 29. The sopranos of the second choir then imitate the same figure a minor third higher with the same rhythmic placement through m. 29 and the first beat of m. 30. The first part of the melodic figure is then restated a whole step higher by the sopranos of the first choir in m. 30 while the second choir responds contrapuntally with a fragment of the same figure on the second half of the fourth beat (m. 30) and continues into measure 31. One should note that this "suscipe" figure is a rhythmic diminution of the "miserere" figure previously cited in mm. 15-16 (ex. 5).

This "suscipe. . ." section, like the "miserere. . ." section (mm. 15-18, is only four bars long. It is also based upon the secondary thematic unit, and is likewise characterized by an ascending line of melodic drift which although on a higher plane with somewhat different intervallic relationships, serves the same purposes of continuity and transition to a final reiteration of the central thematic unit.

## Ex. 14

Handwritten musical score for three staves (I, II, and a third staff) in G-flat major. The score shows measures 28, 29, 30, and 31. Staff I has lyrics "Su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe," and "Su-sci-pe de-pre...". Staff II has lyrics "Su-sci-pe, su-sci-pe," and "Su-sci-pe". The third staff has a single note in measure 28 and rests in measures 29, 30, and 31.

The final reiteration of the central thematic unit is set to the last line of the text--"qui sedes ad dexteram patris." It is sung by the sopranos of the first choir beginning on the fourth beat of m. 32 and progresses through



mm. 33-34; once again the altos imitate the unit at the fifth in mm. 33-34. The second choir repeats the central thematic unit in part beginning on the fourth beat of m. 34 and progresses through m. 35 to the first beat of m. 36.

## Ex. 15

Handwritten musical notation for Example 15. The top staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It contains measures 33, 34, 35, and 36. The lyrics are: "qui se des ad dex-te-ra-m". The bottom staff is in G major and 4/4 time. It contains measures 34, 35, and 36. The lyrics are: "qui se des, qui se-des".

The central thematic unit then gives way again to episodical development in mm. 36-37. It passes over one quick restatement of the "qui tollis" fragment (introduced in mm. 10-11, and reiterated and developed in mm. 23-24) in mm. 38-39. However, in keeping with the text the word "qui sedes" is substituted for "qui tollis."

## Ex. 16

Handwritten musical notation for Example 16. The staff is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It contains measures 38 and 39. The lyrics are: "qui se-des".

The music progresses episodically on through mm. 40-43 to the first beat of m. 44. This "qui sedes. . ." section comes to a homophonic ending which is much the same as the endings of the previously cited "qui tollis. . ." sections (mm. 14-15, and mm. 27-28). Once again the orchestra avoids a cadence and moves on into a final variation of the secondary thematic unit.

This final variation of the secondary thematic unit is set to the second line of the text--"miserere nobis." The rhythmic treatment of this variation is the same as the first in mm. 15-16, but the melodic content is different. The new figure consists of the repetition of two notes a half step apart; it is introduced by the sopranos of the first choir on the second half of the second beat in m. 44 and continues through the first beat of m. 45. The sopranos of the second choir then imitate the same figure a whole step higher with the same rhythmic placement in mm. 45-46. It is then repeated with the same rhythmic time span by the sopranos of the first choir a perfect fourth higher in mm. 46-47. The rhythmic time span of the figure remains the same; however, the word "nobis" is added to complete the line of the text. This is accomplished by rhythmic diminution. The sopranos of the second choir repeat this figure in the same manner in mm. 47-48. This section like the first "miserere. . ." section (mm. 15-16) and the

"suscipe. . ." section (mm. 28-31) is characterized by a line of melodic drift which again provides continuity and transition to a climax in m. 50 that finds resolution in a perfect authentic cadence in mm. 51-52.

## Ex. 17

Handwritten musical score for Ex. 17, measures 44-50. The score is written on three staves (I, II, and a lower staff) in G major (one sharp). Measures 44-46 show a vocal line with lyrics "mi-se-re-ra" and a piano accompaniment. Measures 47-50 show a continuation of the vocal line with lyrics "mi-se-re-ra" and a piano accompaniment. The score is handwritten and includes measure numbers 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50.

The work closes on a final restatement of the text, "miserere nobis." This is accomplished in a coda over a plagal cadence which starts on the third beat of m. 52 and continues through mm. 53-54 to the first beat of m. 55 where the orchestra supplies the remainder of the final tonic harmony through m. 55 and the first two beats of m. 56.

## CONCLUSIONS

Mozart scored the first and last lines of the text-- "qui tollis peccata mundi," and "qui sedes ad dexteram patris"--to melodic material which might be called a central thematic unit. He emphasizes this central thematic unit, which is the longest in lineal content, by stating it seven times (three times in the introduction, two times in the middle section, and two times in the final section) on the same plane throughout the entire composition. He extends these "qui tollis. . .", and "qui sedes. . ." sections with episodic development which is based upon a melodic figure extracted from the central thematic unit.

Mozart moves skillfully from one section based upon the central thematic unit to the next through relatively short transitional sections which are settings of the shorter second and third lines of the text--"miserere nobis," and "suscipe deprecationem nostram." These transitional sections have melodic material which, although different one from the other in varying ways, is nevertheless, quite similar. Thus, one might consider the varying figures of these transitional sections as variations of a secondary thematic unit.

It is then possible to outline the overall form of Mozart's work as follows:

I-a,	(mm. 1 - 15)
II-a,	(mm. 15 - 18)
I-b,	(mm. 18 - 28)
II-b,	(mm. 28 - 32)
I-c,	(mm. 32 - 44)
II-c,	(mm. 44 - 56)

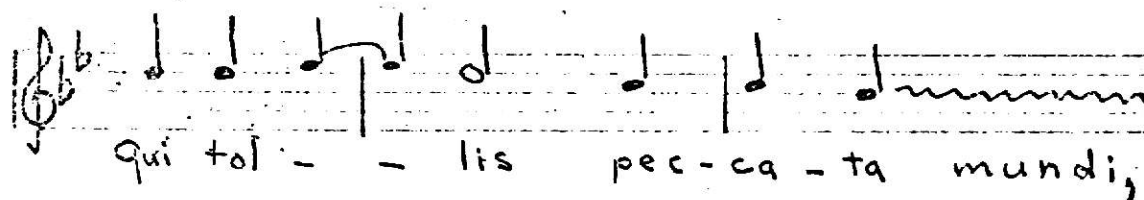
The overall textual form can be outlined as follows:

Qui tollis peccata mundi,	(mm. 1-15)
miserere nobis,	(mm. 15-18)
Qui tollis peccata mundi,	(mm. 18-28)
suscipe deprecationem nostram	(mm. 28-32)
Qui sedes ad dexteram patris,	(mm. 32-44)
miserere nobis.	(mm. 44-56)

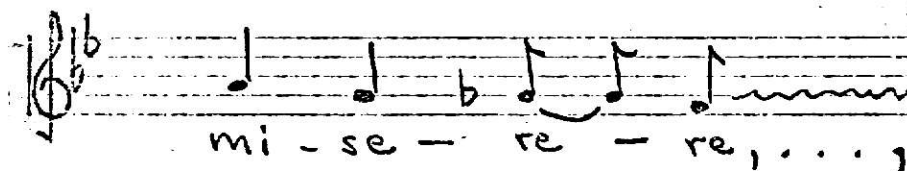
Perhaps the following outline will serve to correlate some of the melodic materials with some of the textual phrases of this "Qui Tollis" portion of Mozart's C minor Mass.

Ex. 18

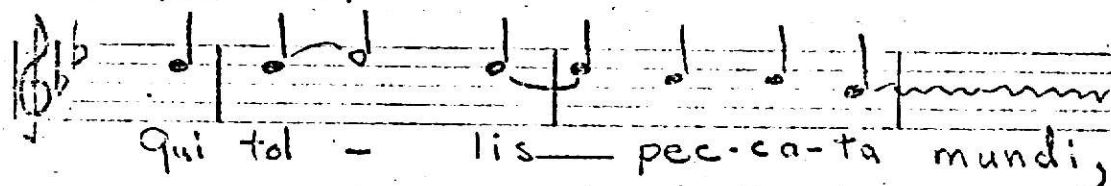
I-a (mm. 3-15)



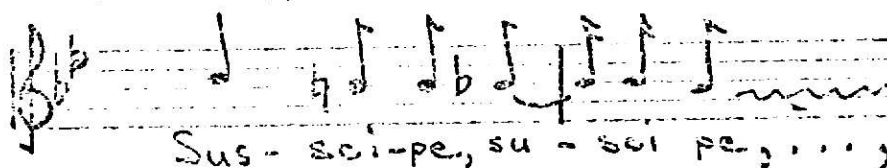
II-a (mm. 15-18)



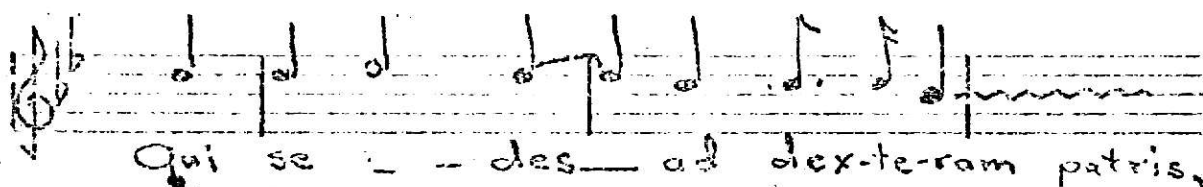
I-b (mm. 18-28)



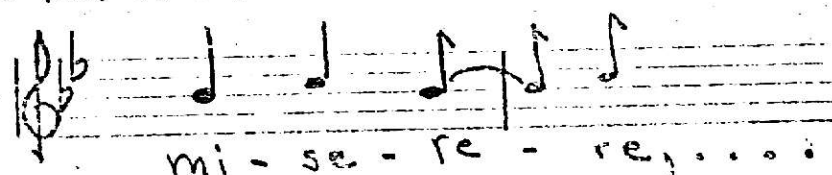
## II-b (mm. 28-32)



## I-c (mm. 32-44)



## II-c (mm. 44-52) Coda.



It seems expedient to list the following deductions:

Mozart identifies certain thematic units with certain textual phrases.

He presents the thematic unit at the beginning of a textual section and imitates the unit contrapuntally in varying ways (often at the fifth).

He associates a central thematic unit with the principal lines of the text--the first and last lines.

He develops a fragment of the central thematic unit in episodic sections which lead to the end of the principal textual sections.

Mozart associates a secondary thematic unit with the shorter second and third lines of the text.

He characterizes these sections based upon the secondary thematic unit with thematic variation, and an ascending line of melodic drift which provides continuity and transition between the principal sections.

Mozart avoids strong harmonic cadences where one textual section ends and the next begins; thus, he maintains a long continuing line of musical thought from the beginning to the end.



#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTERS REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree.

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Music

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

One of the most dynamic factors differentiating choral music from instrumental forms of music is the text--words. Words are conceived and maintained to provide verbal communication. They are products of certain cognitive attributes which, though not entirely separate from, are not totally related to the attributes which govern music. Music--an architecture of sound in time--is for the most part a form of non-verbal communication that is conceived and perceived by attributes of ones cognitive nature, which though impossible to separate from, are not necessarily the same as those which govern ones verbal nature. It follows that one measure of greatness in choral music is dependent upon the composers ability to synthesize the verbal attributes of the text with the non-verbal attributes of the music.

The recognition of such greatness in Mozart's ingenious "Qui Tollis" portion of the Mass in C Minor has prompted this report. An attempt to determine the formal structure of this work has been made by correlating some of the thematic units with some of the textual phrases.

A sequential analysis of the melodic and textual phrases was made first after which a formal outline showing the correlation between the two thematic units and the different lines of the text was made. These

studies served to establish the following deductions:

Mozart identifies certain thematic units with certain textual phrases.

He presents the thematic unit at the beginning of a textual section and imitates the unit in varying ways (often at the fifth).

He associates a central thematic unit with the principal lines of the text--the first and last lines.

He develops a fragment of the central thematic unit in episodic sections which lead to the end of the principal textual sections.

Mozart associates a secondary thematic unit with the shorter second and third lines of the text.

He characterizes these sections based upon the secondary thematic unit with thematic variation, and an ascending line of melodic drift which provides continuity and transition between the principal sections.

Mozart avoids strong harmonic cadences where one textual section ends and the next begins; thus, he maintains a long continuing line of musical thought from the beginning to the end.