

**James MacMillan (b. Scotland, 1959)**

**Sacred Music Root Tradition:**

Gregorian chant  
Music and texts of the Catholic Church  
Scottish folk music  
British choral music

**Other influences**

Radical modernist techniques; Eastern European sound mass school (Penderecki, etc.);  
Benjamin Britten; British musical avant-garde; the Dominican Order;  
Poet Michael Symmons Roberts; Liberation Theology

**Traditional British Victorian and early 20t c. Choral Style**

Melodic, ceremonial, rich choral voicing; Anglican church style with trebles,  
references to the Renaissance;  
reference to folk song; tonal and post-tonal; can be descriptive of British life and history

**Predecessors**

Howells, Holst, Vaughan-Williams, Britten

**James MacMillan's Signature Contributions**

*Cantos Sagrados* and *The Seven Last Words from The Cross*  
Revival of Catholic church's sacred genres;  
Efforts to develop a corpus of music for the modern Catholic Church  
A syncretic style that mixes all techniques and traditions he is interested in  
Dramatic, narrative, emotional, with strong religious and political views  
Very adept and virtuosic choral writing

**Resources**

Boosey and Haawkes: <https://www.boosey.com/composer/James+MacMillan>  
*MacMillan, James (2019). A Scots Song: A Life of Music. Edinburgh: Birlinn. ISBN 978-1-78027-617-5.*

**Other European composers affected by the syncretism of avant-garde, middlebrow,  
traditional and folk streams; as well as a revival of serious sacred music for choir**

Eriks Esenvalds <https://www.eriksesenvalds.com/>  
Sven-David Sandström [https://www.gehrmans.se/en/composers/sandstrom\\_sven-david](https://www.gehrmans.se/en/composers/sandstrom_sven-david)  
James Whitbourn <http://www.jameswhitbourn.com/>