

The *Missa votiva* (ZWV 18) of 1739 by Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745)*

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The *Missa votiva* is among a handful of liturgical works composed late in the life of Jan Dismas Zelenka, the Bohemian musician who arrived at the Dresden court in or about 1711 as a violone player in the celebrated *Hofkapelle* of August II, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. Throughout the 1720s, and whilst still employed as a performing musician, Zelenka composed constantly, and arranged music for the recently established Dresden Catholic court church there. After the death of Dresden *Kapellmeister* Johann David Heinichen (1683–1729), Zelenka became responsible for the direction of music in this royal chapel, a task at which he worked untiringly with neither a suitable title nor remuneration appropriate to his position. In the *Königl. Polnischer und Churfürstl. Sächsischer Hof- und Staats-Calender (HStCal)* for 1732, however, Zelenka was listed in as ‘Contra-Basso & Compositeur.’¹ By 1733 he was entered as a ‘Compositeur,’ a title altered to ‘Kirchen-Compositeur’ in the 1735 edition of the *Calender*.

Zelenka’s *Missa votiva* draws attention to the health of this composer who had experienced at least two major bouts of illness during the 1730s. Years of hard work with almost impossible deadlines must have taken their toll on his well-being. Following the death of August II (on 1 February 1733), Zelenka composed the Requiem Mass (ZWV 46), as well as the Invitatory, three Lessons, and nine Responsories for the Office of the Dead (ZWV 47) for the exequies

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¹ These calendars were published annually in Leipzig during the years covered in this article.

held in April—apparently at very short notice. Perhaps the Dresden court hoped that their new *Kapellmeister* Johann Adolph Hasse would compose this music.² Zelenka's entry in his personal music inventory of the Requiem finishes with a comment indicating that the work was composed in a very great hurry: '*Raptissime compos[itum]*.'³ Soon after the succession of August II's son and heir, Friedrich August II (who came to be titled August III, King of Poland), we first see Zelenka's reference to an illness that seriously diminished his compositional output for almost two years. On 13 July the consort of August III, Maria Josepha, gave birth to Prince Charles (Karl Christian Joseph Ignaz Eugen Franz Xaver). At the conclusion of the *Missa Purificationis BVM* (ZWV 16)—a work almost certainly composed for the mother's churching ceremony on 23 August 1733—Zelenka noted that he was ill at the time of writing the mass that was completed in ten days: '*A: 1733 inchoata est Messa praesens 14 Aug: et finita cum Gratia Divina quamvis aegrotassem 23. ejusdem* [In the year 1733 the present Mass was begun on 14 August and although I was ill, was finished by Divine Grace on the 23rd of the same].' Upon recovery, Zelenka composed four major works between 1735 and 1737: the oratorios *Gesù al Calvario* (ZWV 62) and *Ipententi al Sepolchro del Redentore* (ZWV 63), *Missa 'Santissimae Trinitatis'* (ZWV 17), and a large-scale *Serenata* (ZWV 177) which was performed at the banquet that followed the marriage of Prince Lubomirski and Baroness von Stein. He then became almost silent again, with one composition only known to have been written between 1738 and 1739—a magnificent *Miserere* setting (ZWV 57) from 1738. In that same year Zelenka also heavily revised and reworked a mass by the Viennese organist Johann Georg Reinhardt (1676/7–1742).⁴

In 1739, however, Zelenka emerged from an illness of such gravity that he vowed to compose a mass upon recovery: *Missa votiva* was the result. The autograph inscription on the cover to the score reads '*Vota mea Domino reddam. Psal: 115. Versu 5 ...*.' The fifth verse of psalm 115 is '*Vota mea Domino reddam coram omni populo ejus* [I will pay my vows to the Lord, before all his people].' A Latin note at the end of the score stated that the mass was composed in fulfilment of a vow: '*Missam hanc A[d]: M[aiorem]: D[ei]: G[loriam]: ex voto posuit J: D: Z[elenka]: post recuperatam Deo Fautore Salutem* [J.D. Zelenka offered this votive mass to the greater glory of God after recovering his health with the help of God].' By April 1739 he must have become well enough to revise two more masses for performance by members of the Dresden *Hofkapelle*—the *Missa adjuva nos Deus* by the Milanese composer Carlo Baliani (c. 1680–1747),⁵ and an untitled mass in D by the Viennese musician Georg [Johann Adam Joseph Karl] von Reutter (1708–1772).⁶ *Missa votiva*

² Suggested by Wolfgang Reich in 'Ein ungeliebter Komponist? Zu Jan Dismas Zelenkas Stellung in Dresden,' *Zwei Zelenka-Studien*, Studien und Materialien zur Musikgeschichte Dresdens 7 (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1987) 10–11.

³ 'Inventarium / rerum Musicarum / Variorum Authorum / Ecclesiae servientium / Quas possidet Ioannes / Dismas Zelenka / ...,' MS D-DI Bibl.-Arch. III H b 787d. Reproduced in *Zelenka-Dokumentation. Quellen und Materialien*, ed. Horn, Kohlhase, Landmann and Reich, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: Bärenreiter, 1989) 169–218, especially 51–52.

⁴ D-DI Mus. 2793-D-1. Zelenka revised Reinhardt's Kyrie, Gloria and Credo and added his own settings of the Benedictus, Osanna, Agnus Dei, and Dona nobis pacem. At the conclusion of the score, Zelenka wrote '*... Renovata/1738.*'

⁵ D-DI Mus. 2243-D-1. The score of this mass is so heavily revised by Zelenka that the old card catalogue of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek originally attributed the setting to him (D-DI Mus. 2358-D-29). At the conclusion of Osanna I, Zelenka wrote '*Revisu[m] et accomodata /a J:D:Z: 1739 in Aprili./ Dresda.*'

⁶ D-DI Mus. 2979-D-4. At the conclusion of score Zelenka wrote '*... Renovata fuit haec Missa ... J. D. Z./ Dresdae 1739 in Aprili.*'

was almost certainly the mass heard in the Catholic court church on 2 July 1739 (the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin) when, according to recently recovered sections of the *Diarium* of the Dresden Jesuits, a new mass was 'produced' by Zelenka.⁷

Although the autograph score of *Missa votiva* is held in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek—Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Dresden,⁸ the twenty-three performance parts that once accompanied this source have been missing from Dresden for more than fifty years. (These parts are probably among numerous items from Dresden now kept in the Russian State Library Moscow.)⁹ Eighteenth-century performance materials for the work are also kept in the Prague collection of the Order of the Knights of the Cross with Red Star (CZ-Křiž: Kreuzherren or *Ordo Crucigerorum cum stella rubea*), whose principal church in Prague, St Francis Serafin, stands by the Charles Bridge in the Old Town. These performance materials (CZ-Křiž XXXV D 80, fourteen parts for the complete mass and ten further parts for the Kyrie and Gloria) give an indication of musical exchanges between the church composers of Dresden and music directors (*Regens cori*) of various Bohemian churches and monasteries. Since *Missa votiva* takes well over one hour to perform, its length makes it one of Zelenka's most expansive settings. The Prague performance materials for the complete mass show that through the omission of the Crucifixus fugue, and the addition of the text of the Crucifixus within the previous movement (the *Et incarnatus est*), the Credo had been shortened, possibly for Dresden and certainly for at least one performance in Prague.¹⁰

The scoring of the *Missa votiva* is for four solo voices (SATB—Zelenka would have had the Italian castrati of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* in mind for the solo soprano and alto parts) and a four-part choral ensemble (in which the vocal soloists would have sung), accompanied by a string section of violins I and II with viola, a pair of oboes, and a continuo section comprising organ, violoncello, string bass,¹¹ bassoon, and—if available—theorbo.¹² In 1739 the singers available to Zelenka from the Dresden *Hofkapelle* (as listed in the *HStCal*, 1740) were the castrati sopranos Ventura Rochetti and Giovanni Bindi, and contraltos Nicolo Pozzi and Domenico Annibali. Johann Joseph Götzl was the tenor, and Cosimo Ermini and Johann David Bahn were the basses.

As a model for the *Missa votiva*, Zelenka used the large-scale mass composition that had emerged from Naples known as the 'number' setting, in which the main sections of the mass (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) were further subdivided into movements (or numbers) of contrasting musical style and scoring. Zelenka set his *Missa votiva* in twenty

⁷ 'Sacrum novum produxit D. Zelenka.' See Gerhard Poppe, 'Ein weiterer Faszikel aus dem *Diarium Missionis Societatis Jesu Dresdae* wiederaufgefunden,' *Die Oberlausitz—eine Grenzregion der mitteldeutschen Barockmusik*, Im Auftrag der Ständigen Konferenz Mitteldeutsche Barockmusik 2006, ed. Peter Wollny (Beeskow: Ortus, 2006) 193–204, especially 199.

⁸ D-DI 2358-D-33,1–2.

⁹ In 2005, Dr Karl Wilhelm Geck from the Saxon State and University Library Dresden (SLUB), was among an expert group invited to the Russian State Library Moscow to view a selection of materials which included examples of liturgical music formerly from collection of the Dresden *Hofkirche*. These have been missing from the SLUB since 1946. Reported in *SLUB Kurier* 3 (2006): 6–8.

¹⁰ The Prague sources are discussed by Reinhold Kubik (ed.) in the *Kritischer Bericht* of the publication *Missa votiva in Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, 108 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1997) 239–40.

¹¹ A violone, a contrabass, or both might be used.

¹² A part for theorbo exists with the Prague set of parts for the Kyrie and Gloria.

The structural model of this movement was almost certainly a mass setting by Domenico Sarro (1679–1744) which, at an unknown time (but probably in the early 1730s), Zelenka revised for performance in Dresden, naming it *Missa Adjutorium nostra in nomine Domini*.¹³ So numerous are Zelenka's alterations to this mass that it was attributed to him in the earliest-known catalogue of the music collection of Dresden's Catholic Hofkirche.¹⁴

Since the nineteenth century, a myth has surrounded Zelenka's final years. Various writers have suggested that despite his considerable talents, his music was ignored by the court and by his peers.¹⁵ This view probably had its basis in a passage published by Moritz Fürstenau in 1862:

Contemporaries describe Zelenka as a reserved, bigoted Catholic, but also as a respectable, quiet, unassuming man, deserving of the greatest respect. It is probable that a secure, firm belief in the tenets of the Catholic church in which Zelenka had been brought up and the rare appearance of manly solemnity and strict morality among the rather frivolous courtly activities, were interpreted as bigotry and reserve. Zelenka, however, seems to have lived a rather lonely and isolated life in Dresden.¹⁶

The recent discovery of a panegyric written by a former court notary, the blind Johann Gottlob Kittel (*Micrander*) and published in 1740 in Dresden in praise of the *Virtuosen* of the Dresden *Hofkapelle*, throws new light on the high regard in which Zelenka was held during his lifetime. The poem gives an account of Kittel's dream in which Apollo called to Parnassus the *virtuosi* of London, Vienna, Paris, Rome, Naples, Madrid, and Dresden for a musical competition: Zelenka is the third of twenty-two musicians named.¹⁷

ZELENKA ward hierauff
von Phoebus auch erblicket,
Der dessen billig Lob, wie folget,
ausgedrückt:
Du hochgepriesener,
vollkommner VIRTUOS,
Dein selbst erworbnr Ruhm
ist Welt-bekannt und groß;

ZELENKA was then
also seen by Phoebus,
who rightly expressed his praise
as follows:
You highly regarded,
perfect VIRTUOSI,
Your fame, all of your own making,
is world-renowned and great;

¹³ D-DI Mus. 2356-D-1.

¹⁴ 'Catalogo (Thematico) [*sic*] della Musica di Chiesa (catholica [*sic*] in Dresda) composta Da diversi Autori—secondo l'Alfabetto 1765,' 3 vols, MS Berlin; D-B [Staatsbibliothek Berlin] Mus. ms. theor. Kat. 186.

¹⁵ See Janice B. Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745): A Bohemian Musician at the Court of Dresden* (Oxford: OUP, 2000) 279–80.

¹⁶ Moritz Fürstenau, *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe der Kurfürsten von Sachsen und Könige von Polen*, 2 vols (Dresden, 1862; reprint with commentary and indexes by W. Reich, 1971), vol. 2, 76–7.

¹⁷ Kittel's poem is kept in the Bibliotheca Ponickaviana (collection of Count Ponickau), Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt Halle (D-HA K. 33 F). I am very grateful to Szymon Paczkowski (University of Warsaw) who first brought this document to my attention. A facsimile edition, with epilogue by Gerhard Poppe, is now published (Beeskow: Ortus, 2008), and the poem may be read on-line at <<http://digital.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/hd/content/titleinfo/10429>>. For this English translation, I acknowledge with gratitude the advice of Christian and Ursula Grawe.

<i>Du kanst zu GOTTES Ehr, die Seelen zu ergötzen,</i>	To honour GOD and delight the soul,
<i>Auf das beweglichste die Kirchen=Stücken setzen,</i>	you do most movingly compose church music,
<i>Die also rührend sind, daß die andächtge Brust</i>	which is so touching that the enraptured breast
<i>Den Vorschmack schon empfindet von jener Himmels-Lust;</i>	receives a foretaste of heavenly pleasures;
<i>Dahero wird Dein Lob nach Deinen Nahmen* grünen,</i>	This is why your praise will green, according to your name,*
<i>Sowohl auf Erden hier, als in den Sternen=Bühnen.</i>	both here on earth and on the celestial stages.

* Zelenka heißt auf Teutsch grün [Zelenka means green in German].

The *Missa votiva* is one of the great masses created by Zelenka during the final years of his life. After writing this work, a grand compositional scheme was commenced in 1740 when he began the composition of a cycle of six masses: the *Missae ultimae*. This project, however, remained unfinished, another sign of ongoing ill health endured for more than a decade. The completed masses are: *Missa Dei Patris* (*Missa ultimarum prima*, ZWV 19); *Missa Dei Filii* (*Missa ultimarum secunda*, ZWV 20); *Missa Omnium Sanctorum* (*Missa ultimarum sexta et forte omnium ultima*, ZWV 21), whose Credo is dated 3 February 1741. Zelenka died in Dresden at the age of sixty-six of ‘Wassersucht’ (dropsy or edema) during the evening of 22 December 1745. He was buried two days later in the Catholic cemetery in Friedrichstadt, a newly developed area adjoining the old town of Dresden. In 1922 the German musicologist Otto Schmid was unable to find the grave.¹⁸

¹⁸ Otto Schmid, ‘Johann Dismas Zelenka’, *Der Auftakt* 3 (1923): 229–32.