

# Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745)

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Zelenka's entire oeuvre only runs to some 150 compositions, of which up to now the few instrumental works (six trio sonatas, ZWV 181, and nine works for concertante chamber orchestra, ZWV 182–190) have been the only ones to become reasonably well-known. The remainder of Zelenka's oeuvre consists of liturgical and sacred compositions (masses and requiems, psalms, magnificats, hymns and antiphons for vespers and compline, lamentations, responsories, settings of the Miserere, cantatas and oratorios for Easter week, litanies, motets, settings of the Te Deum, etc.) and also a few secular vocal works. Most of the church music was written between 1721 and 1733, when a comprehensive repertoire of sacred music had to be compiled for the Roman Catholic Dresden court church, which had only been established in 1708. Zelenka made a major contribution to this repertoire, of both his own compositions and those of others. This is evident from his extensive "Inventarium rerum musicarum", a record which he kept between 1726 and 1739. (Cf., on Zelenka's life and work, "Zelenka-Dokumentation", 2 vols., Wiesbaden 1989.)

## Mässa

While modest in their small instrumentation, with four vocal registers (chorus and soli), oboes (sections of 1st and 2nd), a string section (1st and 2nd violins, as well as violas), and a general bass section (violoncelli, bassoons, bass viols, and organ), Zelenka's later masses are characterized by a pulsating, visionary force, and by a generous architecture. Zelenka's more than twenty settings of the Mass, dating from 1710 to 1740/41, are formally and structurally typical of their time, "number masses" in the "mixed style". This means that the five movements of the *Ordinarium Missae*, naturally above all, the *Gloria* and *Credo* with their lengthy texts, are sub-divided into shorter sections (numbers) which are varied in scoring and character, some in the older and others in the newer style. The old and the new are not always kept separate from one another, though: they also encroach on each other's territory. Motet-like and fugal pieces are in the older church style of the 16th and 17th centuries, while multi-section choral concerti and concertante fugues, with sensitive or virtuosic arias and solo ensembles, follow the then modern concerto and opera style, with its characteristic ritornelli. Nevertheless Zelenka achieved in his late Masses such balance of form and structural technique, and such profundity in the musical interpretation of the words of the Mass, that his *Missae ultimae* stand out from the typical products of their time as fascinating manifestations of an entirely self-sufficient artistic will rooted in an unshakable faith which suggests the content and mysterious symbols of this faith.

The "mixed church style" was described by Johann David Heinichen, Hasse's predecessor as Dresden Court Music Director till his death in 1729, in the second edition of his composition tutor "Basso continuo in music" (Dresden 1728) and generally followed by his contemporaries. In modern church music, specifies Heinichen, traditional writing (or contrapuntal techniques such as motet and fugue) and contemporary "taste" (manifested in concerto and aria) should alternate in a manner befitting the character of the text and its liturgical function.

Accordingly, Zelenka's late masses and litanies alternate independent, contrasting movements set for a variety of voices and written in a variety of styles, old and new, in diverse but related keys. Zelenka also rounds off the complete cycles of movements with a true economy of composition that is at the same time musically satisfying: in the last movement of each work – the *Dona nobis pacem* of the masses or the *Agnus Dei* of the litanies – he brings back music from the opening, generally in unaltered form, while "parodying" it textually (that is to say, setting it to the new text and making it fit

the new text's rhythm) in the *Dona nobis pacem* movements it is generally the last (third) or first *Kyrie* movement (ZWV 17, 18 and 21) or – as unexpected as the *Gratias agimus tibi* of the *Gloria* as *Dona nobis pacem* in Bach's Mass in B minor – the *Cum Sancto Spiritu* fugue in ZWV 19. The three late litanies ZWV 151–153 make use of their opening *Kyrie* – *Christe eleison* as a closing *Agnus Dei*.

The arrangement of choruses and arias, while dependent on their text, is typical of the genre and the period: the five elements of the Ordinary of the Mass (*Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*) begin and end with choruses (choral fugues at the end) except for the *Agnus Dei*, which may also open with an aria or with a duet. As a rule, the parts of the *Ordinarium* begin with choruses sung by a large group, either as a short introduction, or as a longer “concertante” chorale or choral concerto. The passages describing the second person of the Trinity (Christ), such as *Christe* and *Benedictus*, are mostly set as arias. The emotional emphasis given to central articles of faith such as Christ's incarnation (*Et incarnatus est*) and redemptive death (*Crucifixus*) in the *Credo* is equally characteristic of the genre and period, as is the Baroque taste for pictorial, imitative representation of movement (high “in excelsis” and low “et in terra”; falling on “descendit” and rising on “resurrexit” and “ascendit”), of the heavenly rejoicing of the angelic choirs (*Gloria* and *Osanna*), of guilty sinners anguish (*Qui tollis* and “miserere”) and impending damnation (“judicare vivos et mortuos”) or eternal life (“resurrectionem mortuorum – et vitam venturi saeculi”).

The points in the text which are related to Christ, such as *Christe eleison* (in the *Kyrie*), *Et incarnatus est* (in the *Credo*), *Benedictus* (in the *Sanctus*) or *Agnus Dei* are often emphasized through arias in the sensitive gallant style. The key statements of faith, such as those about God becoming man and about the redeeming death of Christ (*Et incarnatus est* – *Crucifixus* in the *Credo*, but also *Qui tollis peccata mundi* in the *Gloria* and the *Agnus Dei*) are emphasized in the arias chorales in question by means of tempo, tonality, and harmony (chromatic), melodic development and character, as well as various figures (such as *Chiasmus*, *Exclamatio*, and *passus durlusculus*, etc.).

Compared with his works from his early and middle periods (until approximately the mid 1730s), all of the types of movements are much longer. This is equally true for the sensitive gallant arias, with their long complex *ritornelli*, as for the motets, the fugues, or the concertant movements. The fugues are often double fugues or fugues with a consistently maintained counterpoint. They gain a polyphonic quality and a visibly simplified form, as well as a virtuosity (especially in the final fugues of the movements of the *Ordinarium*) and an expressiveness (for example, in the *Crucifixus* fugues). The various types of movements, which previously had been clearly divided into separate pieces, permeate each other in Zelenka's later works. *Ritornelle concerti* and fugues, for example, blend in an unusual combination – as in the final *Gloria* movement of the *Missa Dei Filii*, or in the end of the *Credo* of the *Missa Omnium Sanctorum*.

Zelenka's most important church compositions are those from the last years of his life, 1736–1744, which include the *Missae ultimae* ZWV 19–21, dating from 1740/41, and two Marian litanies ZWV 151/2, written in 1741/44 (published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden). What are regarded as the climactic achievements of Zelenka's life's work as a composer are the late *Missae ultimae*, which he himself called his “last Masses”, dating from 1740/41. Zelenka planned this cycle of six masses apparently as an “independent work of art” not intended for the liturgy of the Dresden court church. According to the catalogues of the court church (*Hofkirche*), only draft scores existed in Dresden, but no actual performing material. There are no references to the numbers 3 to 5 of the cycle. And since Zelenka's works are well maintained and documented, it is improbable that they could have gotten lost. It is much more likely that Zelenka was not able to completely carry out his ambitious plan, no doubt because of his poor health. The cycle of six masses remained a three part torso (Nr. 1, 2, and 6, – ZWV 19–21) and the second mass (ZWV 20) is incomplete. The three works that have come down

to us are no. 1: *Missa Dei Patris* (Mass in honour of God the Father), ZWV 19; no. 2: *Missa Dei Filii* (Mass in honour of God the Son) ZWV 20 and no. 6: *Missa omnium sanctorum* (Mass in honour of all saints), ZWV 21. To the title of the sixth Mass – *Missa: Ultimatum Sexta dicta: Missa Omnium Sanctorum* – Zelenka added after the word “Sexta” the remark *et forte Omnium Ultima*, meaning “and perhaps the last of all” (my Masses). Evidently Zelenka, who had been seriously ill since 1739 if not earlier, was able to complete only the three Masses which we know. They were probably not performed during Zelenka’s lifetime. And yet these are works conceived on a large scale, full of ideas and variety, virtuoso in style and containing splendid choruses, be they fugal, concertante or in motet style. They are settings of the *Ordinarium Missae* (*Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*), modestly scored for four voices (soli and tutti), oboes, strings and basso continuo, with grand, finely balanced architecture, and marked by high musical aspiration in both concept and content.

Since his training in one of the Jesuit colleges of Prague, he had been a deeply religious composer. At the end of his life, the nearly 60 year old Zelenka summed up his artistic creation in the service of music for the church, to which he assigned the Jesuit saying *Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam*. One finds this motto in nearly all of Zelenka’s writings, mostly at the end in the series of letters already mentioned: A: M: D: G:.

### **Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis in a minor, ZWV 17 (1736)**

#### *Kyrie*

1. *Kyrie eleison I*
2. *Christe eleison (Solo A)*
3. *Kyrie eleison II*

#### *Gloria*

4. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*
5. *Qui tollis peccata mundi*
6. *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus (Solo S)*
7. *Cum Sancto Spiritu I*
8. *Cum Sancto Spiritu II*

#### *Credo*

9. *Credo in unum Deum*
10. *Et incarnatus est*
11. *Et resurrexit*
12. *Et unam sanctam ... Ecclesiam*
13. *Et vitam venturi saeculi*

#### *Sanctus*

14. *Sanctus*
15. *Benedictus (Solo S)*
16. *Osanna in excelsis*

#### *Agnus Dei*

17. *Agnus Dei I (Solo TB)*
18. *Agnus Dei II*
19. *Dona nobis pacem*

Jan Dismas Zelenka’s Holy Trinity Mass is one of his later church music works, composed during the last decade of his life when he had few remaining duties as church composer of the Saxon court at Dresden. It is written for a small ensemble, but displays great breadth of thought and musical invention. Compared with works of the early (until 1709) and middle (1720–1734) periods, there is no mistaking the superior quality of the last five Masses ZWV 17–21 (including the mighty torso of the

*Missae ultimate*, the “last masses” with which Zelenka planned to crown his musical achievement), the C minor Miserere ZWV 57 and the three late Litanies ZWV 151–153 (two Maria litanies and one for All Saints).

This quality is evident in the great and complex architecture of the concertante choral work built up on ritornellos in many parts, in the sincerity of expression and religious depth of his chromatic *Kyrie*, *Qui tollis* and *Crucifixus fugues*, in the formal complexes carrying intellectual, theological and musical ideas over several movements and in the extended and ambitious arias also built up on elaborately structured ritornellos, whose modern, “sensitive” style seems to compete with that of the opera composer Johann Adolf Hasse, who was Court Music Director in Dresden from 1733/34 onwards.

Zelenka’s “Mass in Honour of the Most Holy Trinity” ZWV 17 spreads the five elements of the Ordinary – *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* – over a total of 19 often richly elaborated numbers, remarkable both for their stylistic and compositional richness and for their earnestness, power and expressive vigour. The four great choral fugues gain space and strength from their greater length and characteristic subject matter, while benefiting from their concertante virtuosity, particularly in their effective closing passages. Contrasts in dynamics, tempo and presentation allow a vivid, sensitive interpretation of the text. The extended arias are marked by the asymmetrical design and complicated rhythm typical of Zelenka. The mass’s three arias (Nos. 2: *Christe eleison* for alto, 6: *Quoniam tu solus sanctus* for soprano and 15: *Benedictus*, also for soprano) are complemented by a lyrical male voice duet (No. 17: *Agnus Dei I*), matched by a pair of woodwinds (oboe and chalumeau – a flute-like, but stronger-sounding forerunner of the clarinet), and a simple, united vocal trio (No. 12: *Et unam sanctam ... ecclesiam*). The choral numbers, however, are central: as self-contained short blocks, as tutti introductions to the pieces which follow, as great concerted movements at the start or as fugues at the end of the Ordinary segments.

## **Missa votiva in e minor, ZWV 18 (1739)**

Soli SATB, Coro SATB, Orchestra, Bc

### *Kyrie*

1. *Kyrie I (Coro)*
2. *Christe eleison (Solo S)*
3. *Kyrie II (Coro)*
4. *Kyrie III (Coro)*

### *Gloria*

5. *Gloria (Soli e Coro SATB)*
6. *Gratias agimus tibi (Soli e Coro SATB)*
7. *Qui tollis (Solo S)*
8. *Qui sedes (Coro)*
9. *Quoniam tu solus sanctus (Solo B)*
10. *Cum Sancto Spiritu I (Coro)*
11. *Cum Sancto Spiritu II (Coro)*

### *Credo*

12. *Credo (Coro)*
13. *Et incarnatus est (Solo A)*
14. *Crucifixus (Coro)*
15. *Et resurrexit (Soli e Coro SATB)*
16. *Sanctus (Coro)*

### *Benedictus*

17. *Benedictus* (Solo S)

18. *Osanna in excelsis* (Coro)

*Agnus Dei*

19. *Agnus Dei* (Soli e Coro SATB)

20. *Dona nobis pacem* (Coro)

One of the most impressive and most intellectually profound of Zelenka's late works is a mass in E minor ZWV 18, composed in 1739 and named *Missa votiva* by the composer. It is Zelenka's longest mass, composed as a result of an oath, after his recovery from a serious illness. Like the three masses which followed it in 1740/41 of an incomplete cycle of six *Missae ultimae* ("final masses" which he intended to be the high point of his output), this "Votive mass" did not seem to be intended for services in the Dresden court church, but rather a testimony to music for its own sake and equally to his deep religiousness. As a motto, Zelenka placed a quotation from Psalm 115 at the beginning of his *Missa votiva*: "Vota mea Domino reddam" (I will fulfill my vows to the Lord). He gave the reason for the vow, which he redeemed with the composition of the mass, in a postscript on the last page of the score: "Missam hanc A:M:D:G: [= ad majorem Dei gloriam] ex voto posuit J:D:Z: post recuperatam Deo Fautore Salutem." (Jan Dismas Zelenka composed this mass to the greater glory of God because of a vow, after he had regained his health with the help of God.)

In Zelenka's *Missa votiva*, the five parts of the Ordinary – *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* – are divided textually into a total of twenty separate movements. The mass is written in the "mixed church style". These mostly independent, varied movements for different scorings, and using different compositional techniques as well as the "old" and "new" styles, are in related and contrasting keys, but related to a tonal center. The entire cycle is compositionally "economical" and musically satisfying in that it is rounded off, since the first *Kyrie* movement is taken up again and parodied at the end of the mass at *Dona nobis pacem*, the prayer for peace in the *Agnus Dei*.

Also typical of the genre and period is the text-related disposition of choruses at the beginning and end of the parts of the Ordinary (at the end of the *Gloria*, *Credo* and *Sanctus*: fugues; *Kyrie I* and the parody movement *Dona nobis pacem* combine concerto-like passages with fugal technique) and of arias (for example, *Christe eleison* and *Benedictus*); the emphasis given to the affections (characteristic emotions) of the central doctrines of the incarnation and redemptive death of Christ in the *Credo*, and the Baroque preference for the figurative and manifest shaping of analogies of movement (in excelsis – et in terra; descendit – resurrexit – ascendit); the heavenly rejoicing of the choirs of angels (*Gloria – Osanna*), the remorse of sinful man (*Qui tollis – miserere*) in the face of the Day of Judgement (*Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris*) and the impending damnation (judicare vivos et mortuos) or eternal life (resurrectionem mortuorum – et vitam venturi saeculi). This all largely corresponds with the norm, yet Zelenka's music also stands out in quality. He shows characteristic traits which create a unity and intellectual concentration in form, substance and composition, despite the external variety: for example, the bringing together and grouping of individual movements into larger complexes within the parts of the Ordinary, as in the *Gloria* of the *Missa votiva* with its flawless architecture: two tutti movements, a soprano aria, chorus, bass aria and again two tutti movements form a perfectly balanced sequence of movements. These seven "numbers" are combined through tonal relationships and developments into four contrasting pairs of movements; with this, types of movements and affections are used exclusively to achieve an interpretation concentrated on few basic ideas in the text.

All types of movements demand a greater room to be expressed in Zelenka's late masses. This applies to the sensitive, galant arias with their complex ritornelli as well as for the motet-like, concertante or fugal movements. The fugues gain both in virtuosity – such as in the final fugue of the

*Gloria (Cum Sancto Spiritu II)* – and in expressivity – as in the quasi twofold chromatic double fugue in the *Crucifixus* with its chiasmic (motivically cross-shaped) main theme. The fact that Zelenka did not set the preceding *Et incarnatus est* aria with the usual Christmas-pastoral formula but, surprisingly, almost as music of lament, with an expressive *passus duriusculus* in the form of a chromatically falling bass figure over the range of a fourth, has a subtle theological meaning: he combines the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ intellectually with its ultimate purpose, the crucifixion for the redemption of mankind. The different types of movements inform each other. Ritornello-choral concerto and fugue, for example, are unlikely companions as in *Kyrie I* of the *Missa votiva*. Gregorian or Gregorian-style intonations transport memorable basic ideas through the work; the inclusion of these melodies in long note values in all parts intensifies the introductory *Gloria* and *Credo* choral concertos to monumental effect, as in the movement *Credo in unum Deum* of the *Missa votiva*.

## **Missa Dei Patris in C major, ZWV 19 (Missa ultimarum prima, 1740)**

Soli SATB, Coro SATB, Orchestra, Bc

### *Kyrie*

1. *Kyrie I (Coro)*
2. *Christe eleison (Soli SAB)*
3. *Kyrie II (Coro)*

### *Gloria*

4. *Gloria (Coro)*
5. *Domine Deus (Soli SA, Coro)*
6. *Domine Fili (Solo A)*
7. *Qui sedes (Coro)*
8. *Quoniam (Soli STB)*
9. *Cum Sancto Spiritu (Coro)*

### *Credo*

10. *Credo (Soli SA, Coro)*
11. *Et incarnatus est (Coro: SAB)*
12. *Crucifixus (Coro)*
13. *Et resurrexit (Coro, Soli)*
14. *Et vitam venturi saeculi (Coro)*
15. *Sanctus (Coro)*

### *Benedictus*

16. *Benedictus (Solo B)*
17. *Osanna (Coro)*

### *Agnus Dei*

18. *Agnus Dei (Solo A)*
19. *Agnus Dei (Coro)*
20. *Dona nobis pacem (Coro)*

The Latin title of the first of the *Missae ultimae*, with its dedication to God the Father, is a touching proof of Zelenka's deep religious conviction:

*MISSA ULTIMARUM PRIMA dicta MISSA DEI PATRIS, EIDEM MAGNO DEO CREATORI rerum omnium, ac Patri optimo, maximoque, In summa humilitate, In demississima veneratione, in profundissima adoratione, corde contrito et humiliato (quod ille non despicit) consecrata; ab Infima, subjectissima, indignissima sua creatura Joanne Disma Zelenka.*

The translation is as follows:

The first of my last Masses, entitled Mass (in honour of) God the Father, is dedicated to this great God, the creator of all things, the best and most noble Father, in the greatest humility, in the most humble veneration and deepest adoration, with a contrite and fearful heart (may it not be rejected), by his most lowly, most submissive and unworthy creature Johann Dismas Zelenka.

The separate musical numbers within the five movements of the *Ordinarium* are differentiated by their tonalities in several ways: KYRIE C-C minor-C; GLORIA C-E minor-C-G-C; CREDO E minor-C-A minor-C-E minor; SANCTUS C-E minor-C; AGNUS DEI C minor-G-C. Some of the separate numbers of the Mass, twenty in all – four choral concerti (same with solo episodes, Nos. 4, 10, 13, 15) and seven choral fugues (Nos. 1, 3, 9, 12, 14, 17, 20), four shorter choruses of a dramatic or lyrical character (Nos. 5, 7, 11, 19), two trios (Nos. 2, 8) and three arias (Nos. 6, 16, 18) – are linked in pairs or larger groupings, a procedure which not only provides formal solidity, but also brings together heterogeneous musical elements or underlines similarities of subject matter.

Key sequences and the disposition of tonalities, together with the linking of adjacent numbers, related in form and subject matter, into pairs and groups of numbers, are materials of Zelenka's architectonic musical thinking with which he probes and interprets the words of the Mass. Musical relationships according to subject matter and the tendency to assemble groups of movements into a cyclic entity, and to create a wider unity of the entire work, make these late Masses a special case in music history. Thus the instrumental ritornello of the *Kyrie I* (No. 1), which begins as a fugato, leads into the following chorus marked *Grave*, and also provides the theme for the concertante fugue which forms the principal part of this number. The shorter fugue of the *Kyrie II* (No. 3) is a partially new, more concise piece on the same subject and with similar "Hoquetus" passages towards its conclusion. The *Sanctus* (No. 15) begins with the same solemn music, which with vehemently dotted and powerful triplet figures, symbolizes the majesty of God the Father, just as in the *Adagio* chorus in the *Kyrie*, No. 1; and its concluding *Osanna*, No. 17, is in fact partially a parody of the *Kyrie* No. 3. After this exploitation of similar thematic and motivic ideas in the *Kyrie* and *Sanctus* numbers, Zelenka apparently did not consider the possible return to the music from the *Kyrie* for the concluding *Dona nobis pacem*, although this had been the rule for centuries in settings of the Mass. The final fugue of this Mass (No. 20) is, instead, an exact parody of the fugue which concluded the *Gloria*, *Cum Sancto Spiritu* (No. 9).

## **Missa Dei Filii in C major/G major, ZWV 20 (Missa ultimarum secunda, 1740/41)**

### *Kyrie*

1. *Kyrie eleison (Coro)*
2. *Christe eleison (Solo S)*
3. *Kyrie (No. 1 da capo)*

### *Gloria*

4. *Gloria in excelsis Deo (Soli SATB, Coro)*
5. *Qui tollis peccata mundi (Soli STB)*
6. *Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris (Coro)*
7. *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus I (Coro)*
8. *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus II (Solo A)*
9. *Cum Sancto Spiritu I (Coro)*
10. *Cum Sancto Spiritu II (Coro)*

Of the three "last masses" that came to fruition, the second, the *Missa Dei Filii*, is in fact incomplete. It contains only a *Kyrie* and a *Gloria*, thus it is not a *Missa Tota* with the complete live

parts of the *Ordinarium Missae* (*Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei*). Though it is only a torso, it is still a colossal one, individual for its time. It is unlikely that Zelenka really only intended to write a mass consisting of just the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria*, although this was in fact the standard model in the 18th century in both Italy and Germany.

The *Kyrie* of the *Missa Dei Filii* (i.e. a mass in honour of the son of God) is kept very brief by Zelenka; he then lavishes a wealth of detail on the *Gloria*, making it the most impressive setting of this text to come from his pen. The outer movements, no. 4 *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, with motto-like quotations from Gregorian intonation and no. 10 *Cum Sancto Spiritu* are set on a colossal scale, and are related to each other both in substance and form. The closing fugue no. 10 not only takes up the vehement “*Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te*” from the opening chorus no. 4 as its counter-subject, it also leads in to the radiant and virtuoso ritornello of no. 4 after the striking unisono of the fugue subject. Not only this closing movement, but the work as a whole, demands excellent technique and brilliant virtuosity from all singers and instrumentalists involved.

## **Missa Omnium Sanctorum in a minor, ZWV 21 (Missa Ultimarum Sexta, 1741)**

### *Kyrie*

1. *Kyrie eleison I*
2. *Kyrie eleison II*
3. *Christe eleison*

### *Gloria*

4. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*
5. *Qui tollis peccata mundi*
6. *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus I*
7. *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus II (Solo A)*
8. *Cum Sancto Spiritu I*
9. *Cum Sancto Spiritu II*

### *Credo*

10. *Credo*

### *Sanctus*

11. *Sanctus*
12. *Benedictus*
13. *Osanna*

### *Agnus Dei*

14. *Agnus Dei*
15. *Dona nobis pacem*

L: J: C.; Laus Jesu Christo (Praise to Jesus Christ). Jan (Johann) Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745) wrote this on the title page of his mass in a minor, ZWV 21, and continued *Missa Ultimarum Sexta et forte Omnium Ultima dicta: Missa 00: SSrum di G: D: Z:.* An unusual title, “The sixth mass of the ‘Last Masses’, and perhaps the last of all, called: The Mass for All Saints, by Giovanni Dismas Zelenka.” This hand written document (Musical signature 2358-D-9 of the Provincial library of Saxony in Dresden) is dated 1741, 3 February, which appears at the end of the *Gloria* (page 80), after the series of letters typical for Zelenka’s musical signature, *A: M: D: G: B: M: V: 00: SS: H: AA: P: I: R:* (“*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam; Beatae Mariae Virgini (et) Omnibus Sanctis Honor; Augustissimi Principi in reverentia*”). Judging from the writing of the whole manuscript, the work was done in one draft during a short amount of time – as were most of the other compositions by this musician from Bohemia – thus, obviously, in January/February of 1741.



In his later masses, Zelenka succeeded in taking the musical multiplicity of works, which are divided into up to twenty individual works, and enclosing them into a greater architectural unity through the development of groups of movements. Thus, he also created organic cycles: for example, through the varied sequence of types of movements, through the clear tendency to unify the entire composition (especially noticeable in the *Credo* of the *Missa Omnium principum* of “Introduction and fugue” (in ZWV 21: Nos. 8-9, and Nos. 11a-b) or “Introduction and Aria” (in ZWV 21: Nos. 1-2 and Nos. 6-7). He also achieved this through transitions between the individual movements with harmonic “half cadences” (to the dominant: Nos. 1, 6, and 8). Compare this to the indications about the individual pieces from ZWV 21 in the contents at the beginning of this booklet. But, even independent and musically important pieces can end in the dominant or in the dominant of the following movement, after a modulation, in order to enable a greater unity between these movements, through *attacca* transitions (in ZWV 21, for example, Nos. 10 c, 10 d, and 10 f, as well as 11 b and 14).

The preference for pairs of movements according to the model of “Introduction and fugue” or “Introduction and aria” seems to be especially typical for Zelenka – at least, one does not find them in this particular form in the works of his contemporaries. Sometimes a short introductory movement can, at first, appear less important than the following, more extensive section, both musically and regarding its contents. The introductory massive chorus in ZWV 21, the *Kyrie I* with its *ostinati* instrumental configuration, involves only 15 measures, after which the long *Christe eleison* aria follows with its moving filigree *ritornelli*. It is only the fugue of the *Kyrie II*, which creates the necessary balance and rounds out the three sections of the *Kyrie* to a balanced whole. Another, more frequent manner of arranging movements, aside from such pairs of movements as “Introduction and fugue”, or “Introduction and Aria”, is that of doubling of the text or that of foreshadowing. As an example, the dramatic chorale of 15 measures, the *Quoniam tu solus Sanctus* (No. 6), with its quadruple changes from *vivace* to *adagio* (in the *adagio*, the unison strings play a gesture full of pathos each time), anticipates the text of the following sensitive alto aria (No. 7). In addition, the pair of movements 8 and 9 also have the same text (*Cum Sancto Spiritu*).

Among the plethora of individual aspects which distinguish the *Missa Omnium Sanctorum*, there are a few needing special mention here. As in the All Saints litany ZWV 153 and the Maria litany ZWV 151 (also later works of Zelenka), the *Kyrie* fugue (in ZWV 21: No. 3) is made to relate to the Invocation of Christ. In its text and music, it is also a double fugue, that is, a fugue with the *Kyrie eleison* theme retaining the counterpoint from the *Christe eleison*. As opposed to the other fugues in the aforementioned litany, however, they have a stronger tendency to concert virtuosity, to homophony, and to delineated, in part independent orchestral accompaniment. One of the most unusual movements of the mass cycle ZWV 21 is the short *Benedictus* (No. 12). The solo soprano and alto (during Zelenka’s era in the court chapel of Dresden, the parts were sung by Italian castrati) sing together in unison, and do so *tenuto e forte*, in long sustained notes. They sing a melody that is simple and stereotyped, which certainly reminds one of Gregorian forms (at the beginning, for example, with a typical intonation of the first tone), but seems, in reality, not to be a Gregorian melody. The violins surround this archaic sounding melody, with rich sixteenth note configurations. With this, the *continuo* moves stiffly, with *ostinati*, in interrupted three-eighths motifs. Similar movements are (according to Wolfgang Horn) able to be found in compositions of Viennese masses from that time (for example, from Caldara and others). Zelenka might have gotten to know these during his years of study with Johann Joseph Fux in Vienna between 1716 and 1719. Still, the source and musical semantics of this type of movement remain in the dark.

For the composers of masses, the greatest challenges are the central parts with their longer texts, the *Gloria* and the *Credo*. For his era, and for this genre of numbered mass, Zelenka used an unusual procedure for setting the profession of faith to music in the *Missa Omnium Sanctorum*. This *Credo* is

not only divided into contrasting sections, but also is composed as one unit. Zelenka ties the various sections together, so that their ends and beginnings overlap each other. He also used the big ritornello of the introductory concert *Credo in unum Deum* and the intermediate concert *Et resurrexit* as a purely instrumental connecting link between the solo trio *Et incarnatus est* and the expressive choral fugue *Crucifixu*. It is also used as a long homophonic finale of the concertant fugue which concludes the *Credo*. Thus, in a grandiose manner, it connects both of the most important types of chorales of the catholic sacred music of that era, the old style of the fugue and the modern style of the concert. Before this begins, there is a dramatic motion (“*et exspecto resurrectionem*”) and immediately thereafter, a silence filled with tension (“*mortuum*”): “I expect the resurrection – of the dead.” (After this follows the last fugue “and the life of the world to come, amen”.) In twelve effective measures, Zelenka sets the scene for the text “*Et exspecto ...*” with strong effects and contrasts, as a musical vision of the last judgement. At the same time, he creates a division and in this way prepares for the beginning of the final fugue. The impression of a dramatic, moving scene comes about through quick unison scales of the strings and a continuo in sixteenths, with textual and tonal repetitions as well as dissonant chords full of tension (“*resurrectionem*”), a forte in *vivace*-tempo and character, then suddenly shifting to minor, *adagio* and *piano*, a narrow melodically descending movement of chromatic chords, and the delivery of a repetition of chords with a strong vibrato and pressure of the bow of the strings (“*ondeggianda*”) in eighths (“*mortuorum*”).

### **Litaniae Lauretanae “Salus infirmorum” in F, ZWV 152 (1741/44)**

1. *Kyrie eleison (Soli SAT, Coro)*
2. *Pater de coelis (Solo S)*
3. *Mater divinae gratiae (Coro)*
4. *Virgo prudentissima I (Coro)*
5. *Virgo prudentissima II (Soli SATB)*
6. *Salus infirmorum (Solo A)*
7. *Regina Angelorum (Solo T)*
8. *Agnus Dei I (Coro)*
9. *Agnus Dei II (Coro) like Kyrie*

The two Lauretanian Litanies ZWV 151/2, on the other hand, seem to have been performed in the Dresden *Hofkirche*, probably in the context of votive services. Zelenka dedicated them to the Electress Maria Josepha when she fell ill (the Marian litany ZWV 151 bears the subtitle *Consolatrix afflictorum* – comforter of the afflicted) and when she got better again (the second, ZWV 152 is subtitled *Salus infirmorum* – the welfare of the sick).

*Thomas Kohlhase*