



COMMUNICATION: CONFERENCE

Reassessing Haydn's Sacred Music

Haydn-Haus Eisenstadt / Haydn Museum Eisenstadt, 12–14 June 2023

Janet K. Page

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, USA
jpage2@memphis.edu

Scholars from Austria, Germany, Britain, Slovenia, the United States and Japan gathered in June 2023 at the Haydn Museum Eisenstadt for the conference 'Joseph Haydn & Die Sakralmusik / Reassessing Haydn's Sacred Music'. Organized by Walter Reicher and Michael E. Ruhling, and co-sponsored by the Internationale Joseph Haydn Privatstiftung Eisenstadt and the Haydn Society of North America, the conference celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Privatstiftung.

The meeting began with a keynote address by Otto Biba, the retired director of the Archiv, Bibliothek und Sammlungen der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien. His address, 'Joseph Haydn's Kirchenmusik: Gattungsspezifische Voraussetzungen und Normen, Regularien und Traditionen' (Joseph Haydn's Church Music: Genre-Specific Premises and Norms, Requirements and Traditions), provided an excellent starting-point, to which discussion returned throughout the conference. He asked us to consider what is securely known about Haydn's church music, what is invention and what needs reassessing and further work. Haydn's church music especially needs to be better understood in its context – church music had rules and conventions, which the composer followed, as did his contemporaries, but at the same time the styles characteristic of sacred and profane music were not so very different. We were asked to seek a better understanding of Haydn's purpose, and of the constraints under which he worked, in writing church music, but also to recognize that these factors did not lessen the composer's artistry.

One theme of the conference was the spiritual and intellectual context of Haydn's music. Jakob Johannes Koch (Kulturreferent der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Bonn) spoke on 'The Musicliturgical Signatures in the Context of Haydn's Oeuvre and Impact' (panel 1, 12 June). Koch explained his term 'musicliturgical' as denoting the 'inseparable reciprocity of liturgy and liturgical music' and stressed the importance of considering Haydn's faith as the context for his sacred works. Haydn was steeped in church practices, from those of the cathedral to those of the parish church, and he lived through a time of change, during which the church reforms of Maria Theresia and Joseph II aimed to simplify worship and make it more accessible and edifying, while the Catholic Enlightenment promoted moral instruction and personal involvement. After the 1790s elaborate music was available again, to those who could pay for it. Michael E. Ruhling (Rochester Institute of Technology), in the same session, discussed 'The Catholic Enlightenment, Muratori, and the "Sensuous" Voice in Haydn's Sacred Music'. He focused on the thought of Lodovico Muratori (1672–1750), one of the major figures of the Catholic Enlightenment, who promoted a balance between the rational and the sensuous as a means of reaching a proper understanding of the mysteries of faith. Haydn drew on Muratori's ideas by writing particularly expressive music for parts of the mass related to the incarnation. Discussion following this paper focused on Haydn's sensitivity to text and on terminology for discussing this facet of his music – would 'sensual' be better? A paper by Dexter Edge (independent scholar, *Mozart: New Documents* www.mozartdocuments.org) in panel 2 addressed issues of both context and reception, the latter another prominent theme of the conference. Edge's paper, read by me (Janet K. Page, University

of Memphis) in his absence, examined the frequent use of the liturgical text *Stabat mater* in Vienna from the early eighteenth century on, in the context of the city's strong Marian cult, and explored Haydn's acquaintance with the text through his work as a supplementary chorister at court in the mid-1750s. The paper further traced the early reception of Haydn's own setting of the *Stabat mater*, HXXa:1, focusing on reviews and other material not treated in detail in the Complete Works volume edited by Marianne Helms and Fred Stoltzfus (Munich: Henle, 1993).

Papers in panel 3 (13 June) focused on the reception of Haydn's music. Mikhail Kuchersky (Folkwang Universität der Künste) delivered 'Einblicke in die Kontexte der Kirchenmusik am Hofe des Fürsten Nikolaus II. Esterházy nach Haydn's Dienst in Eisenstadt: Anmerkungen zum Kapellknabeninstitut unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tätigkeit Johann Nepomuk Fuchsens' (Insights into the Contexts of Church Music at the Court of Prince Nikolaus II following Haydn's Service in Eisenstadt: Remarks on the Music Training School for Boys, with Special Attention to the Activity of Johann Nepomuk Fuchs). For this paper he drew on archival documents in order to examine the performance of Haydn's sacred music in the reign of Nikolaus II Esterházy (1803–1810). During this era there were performances of both Joseph and Michael Haydn's music by Esterházy musicians at the family's estate at Schloss Pottendorf, and there was a music-training school for boys in Eisenstadt, whose workings Kuchersky described in detail. Comments following the paper focused on the musical activities of the boys (they sang soprano and alto parts, but not as a choir) and on Fuchs's and the prince's roles in selecting music. James Armstrong (emeritus, College of William & Mary in Virginia) discussed 'Joseph Haydn's Church Music in Esterházy Religious Practice' in the years after 1800, as revealed in documents located in the Esterházy archive, especially repertoire lists made by the singer Johann Bader. Masses and other pieces by Haydn were performed on name days, high feast days (for which Kapellmeister Fuchs chose Haydn's music nearly half the time), during the Forty Hours Devotion, when the princely family returned from travel, on special civic occasions and also in concerts. Discussion addressed the issue of performing church music in concerts, with Biba suggesting that these were more like devotional *Hausmusik* than public concerts.

Two papers in panel 4 likewise focused on reception. Marko Motnik (Muzikološki inštitut Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti / Institute of Musicology at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts) spoke about 'Haydn und die Philharmonische Gesellschaft zu Laibach: Die frühe Überlieferung von Haydn's Kirchenmusik im heutigen Slowenien' (Haydn and the Philharmonic Society in Ljubljana: The Early Transmission of Haydn's Church Music in Present-Day Slovenia). While early sources of church music by Haydn survive somewhat sporadically in that country, some are preserved in places such as Ptuj and Celje. The Philharmonic Society in Ljubljana named Haydn an honorary member in 1800 and received from the composer himself a copy of his *Missa in tempore belli* (in Johann Ellsler's hand); the Society's catalogue lists many pieces by Haydn, and the Society held a yearly *Cäcilienfest* in the Church of St James (Cerkev sv. Jakoba) at which masses were performed. Molly Cryderman-Weber (First Presbyterian Church of Stockbridge, Michigan), in a recorded presentation – 'Coming to America: Haydn's Hymn Tunes in the American Presbyterian Church' – provided an overview of the use of tunes by Haydn and his contemporaries in American Presbyterian hymnals, placing them in the context of Lowell Mason's 'better music' movement and American involvement with the 'ancient music' movement. Cryderman-Weber focused on 'Austria' (The Emperor's Hymn), which was heard in America as early as 1797, tracing the tune's use in Presbyterian worship from the late eighteenth century to the present day.

Another thread that wound throughout the conference was the influence of Haydn's predecessors on his music and how knowing more about his musical background could promote deeper understanding of his composing practices. Papers included an exploration by Ryuichi Higuchi (emeritus, Meiji Gakuin University) of the influence of J. S. Bach on Haydn's late masses (in panel 2). Haydn very likely knew the B minor Mass, from a copy (Inv.Nr: B40 Esterhazy

Privatstiftung) that was probably brought to Vienna in 1777 by Gottfried van Swieten and came to the Esterházy archive in the nineteenth century. The complex fugues in the *Harmoniemesse* of 1802, with their chromatic qualities, may reflect acquaintance with Bach's music. In the same session, James S. MacKay (Loyola University New Orleans) examined the influence of Haydn's training, especially through Johann Joseph Fux's influential treatise. MacKay described Haydn's command of Fuxian technique and suggested Fux's *Missa Purificationis* as a model for the 'Baroque-tinged' counterpoint of the *Missa Cellensis*, HXII:5, of 1766. My own paper, 'Mater dolorum Settings by Georg Reutter Jr. and Gregor Werner, as Reflected in Music by Joseph Haydn' (panel 4), explored the music of these predecessors of Haydn through their settings of Heinrich Rademin's well-known oratorio text *Mater dolorum*. I focused on the types of slow movements employed in these oratorios and related these types to Haydn's music, using as examples the *Stabat mater* and *Die Sieben Letzten Worte*.

The final panel of the conference, on 14 June, was devoted to the musical language of Haydn's church music. Balázs Mikusi (RISM Zentralredaktion, Frankfurt am Main) addressed 'The Aesthetics of Canons in Haydn's Late Masses'. Haydn, perhaps inspired by his connections with England, devoted considerable attention to canons in his later years, and the genre apparently possessed emotional significance for him – he displayed a framed group of his canons in his home. Mikusi examined examples found in the late masses (*Heiligmesse*, *Nelsonmesse*) in the context of theoretical writings of the time. The discussion that followed focused on the canonic traditions known in Vienna. Clive McClelland (University of Leeds) continued his campaign for more accurate terminology in the treatment of eighteenth-century music, here with specific reference to Haydn. His paper 'Come tempesta in mar: Awe and Terror in Haydn's Sacred Music' considered the phrase 'Sturm und Drang', often used to describe aspects of Haydn's music; the term falsely suggests that the composer himself was in emotional crisis, and it ought to be replaced with terms without such connotations. He proposed *ombra* and *tempesta*, both representing topoi with operatic roots, and he explored the characteristics of these topoi and their appearance in Haydn's sacred music throughout his life. In the session's final paper, James Webster (emeritus, Cornell University) spoke on the complex relationship between the 'persona' implied by a work and the actual personality of the composer, with Haydn exhibiting in both a duality between earnestness and humour. Webster also refuted the view that Haydn's late masses lacked propriety, through examining the context of this criticism. He further explored Haydn's tendency to respond to both the immediate literal and the extended meaning of texts, citing examples from the *Theresienmesse* (Crucifixus), *Schöpfungsmesse* (Gloria) and the *Nelsonmesse* (Credo, *Dona nobis pacem*). This setting of the *Dona nobis pacem*, with its 'jaunty, offbeat sixteenth[-note] motive', was memorably characterized by Webster as giving the impression that 'we are dancing through the gates of heaven'. Haydn used stylistic mixture on every level to create musical images of salvation entirely appropriate to the celebration of the liturgy.

On the evening of 13 June the day's presentations were followed by a concert in the small monastery church of the Barmherzige Brüder, a place Haydn knew well. The performers were students at the Joseph Haydn Conservatorium Eisenstadt, led by staff members Gerhard Krammer and Cornelia Gradwohl. The all-Haydn concert included the *Benedictus* from the *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo*, HXXII:7, with its famous organ solo, written for this church and performed on the restored (although not with complete historical accuracy, we were told) eighteenth-century organ. The concert was followed by a reception hosted by the Raiffeisenlandesbank Burgenland at the restaurant 'Die Alm', during which we sampled delicious Austrian cuisine and enjoyed marvellous views of the city and countryside.

The conference concluded with a roundtable, in which all the conference delegates participated. Webster began by observing that he was struck by the broad range of approaches and topics. The ensuing discussion emphasized the need for further work on Haydn's influences from earlier music and on the religious thought, practices and institutions of his time.

Two papers announced in the programme were not given, as the scheduled presenters Harald Haslmayr and Martin Czernin were unable to attend. Papers from the conference will be published in a volume of *Eisenstädter Haydn Berichte* or in *Haydn: Online Journal of the Haydn Society of North America*.

Janet K. Page is Benjamin W. Rawlins Professor of Music at the University of Memphis. Her research focuses on the music of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Vienna, and she is especially interested in women's music-making. Her book *Convent Music and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Vienna* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2014. She has published editions that include the oboe concertos of C. P. E. Bach and music from Viennese convents, among them the first modern edition of music by the Viennese nun-composer Maria Anna von Raschenau. Her edition of Georg Reutter the Younger's *Mater dolorum* will appear in 2024.