

Johann Sebastian Bach's Adaptation of the Kyrie and Gloria from Palestrina's

Missa sine nomine

Provenance and Description of Source Materials

based on the NBA KB II/9 pp. 23-30

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I. Primary Source

A set of parts (only the continuo parts were copied by J. S. Bach); located in the SBB (Berlin State Library, Prussian Cultural Heritage); call number: Mus. ms. 16714.

Little is known about the provenance of this manuscript. It was listed in 1790 in the estate of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach as *I Messe von Pränestino in Stimmen*. The next owner was the SBB.

II. Description

The harpsichord part was used as a folder for all the other parts. On the front (external) page of this part Bach wrote:

Missa | a 6 Voci | due Soprani | Alto | due Tenori | Basso | e | 6 Stromenti Ripieni | di | Praenestino.

This set of parts consists of 15 parts each measuring 33.5 x 20.5 cm with three different types of paper being used. The first type concerns most of the parts including the vocal parts and trombone 1 & 2. A second type was used only for trombone 4 and the third for violone.

A copyist identified only as the main copyist #1 (*Hauptkopist*) copied all the vocal parts (SSATTB) and included all the movements from the Kyrie up to and including the Agnus Dei, but then copied only the Kyrie and Gloria movements for cornetto 1 & 2, and trombono 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The vocal parts were copied directly from a score, but the instrumental cornetto and trombone parts were copied from the vocal parts once they had been completed.

It was mostly likely Bach's idea to add the continuo parts. The relationship between the organo and harpsichord parts is not quite clear. It is however apparent that Bach wrote out the organo part first and then the transposed harpsichord part. He probably wrote out the violone directly from the score since he corrected a transposition error he had made.

All the vocal parts, the colla-parte cornetto and trombones parts as well as the organo part are in Chorton d, while the violone and harpsichord parts are given in Kammerton e.

The vocal and colla-parte instrumental parts are in the same key (d) as the Palestrina original printed versions. However, since the cornetti, trombones, and organ in Leipzig were tuned to Chorton, the parts for the instruments (harpsichord and violone) tuned to Kammerton had to be transposed a second higher to e. The NBA, in its printed version of these movements, maintains the Chorton as its basis, since, among other things, a transposition of these movements to e would have unnecessarily distorted the typical appearance of this music [*Notenbild*] from the end of the 16th century.

There are different explanations given for the occurrence of both an organo and a harpsichord part. Christoph Wolff thinks it is possible that one of them, probably the harpsichord part, could have been used only for rehearsal or that one might have been used for one performance and the other for a different one. Laurence Dreyfus, on the other hand, supports the notion that both could have been used for the same performance.

III. Dating of Bach's Adaptation

Based upon most of the watermarks, the appearance of Bach's handwriting, and the extensive use of main copyist #1, the materials can be dated as originating circa 1742. Since the main copyist copied out all the movements of mass for the vocal parts, but only copied the Kyrie and Gloria movements for the colla-parte instruments (the only two movements for which Bach personally supplied the three continuo parts), it can be assumed that Bach intended to perform only these two movements with instruments. There is, however, no evidence of any performance having taken place.

IV. Printed Versions of Palestrina's Mass

The mass *Missa sine nomine* first appeared in 1590 as the eighth mass in Palestrina's fifth book of masses:

*IOANNIS PERTI ALOYSII PRAENESTINI | Sacrosanctae Basilicae | Vaticanae Capellae | Magistri |
MISSARUM LIBER QVINTVS. | Quatvor, Quinqve, ac Sex vocibus concindendarvm. | Nvnc denvo in Ivcem
editvs | Cvm privilegio Summi Ponificis | Superiorvm permissv. | Romae | Svmptibus Iacobi Berichiae. M.D. XC.
Apvd Franciscvm Coattinvm (RISM A/I/6 P 670).*

It appeared once again in an expanded edition in 1596 (RISM A/I/6 P 658 and P 659).

Later printed versions of the original appeared in the following editions:

1. *Pierluigi da Palestrina's Werke: Erstes Buch der Messen*, ed. by Franz Xaver Haberl, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1880.

2. *Le Opere Complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, Vol. I, *Il Libro Primo delle Messe a 4, 5 e 6 Voci*, ed. Raffaele Casimiri, Edizione Fratelli Scaleri, Rome, 1938

V. Historical Overview of Evidence, Studies and Editions of Bach's Adaptation

Wilhelm Rust mentioned its existence in a list of works by other composers in Bach's hand in the BG 11/1, p. XIV; however, the first careful examination of it was undertaken by Karl Gustav Fellerer in 1927 (*Bach-Jahrbuch 1927*, pp. 123-132). He pointed out Bach's additional instrumentation, but also changes in the original declamation (how words were divided into syllables differently) and tonality (in regard to accidentals). Fellerer ascribes these changes to Bach. Christoph Wolff (*Der Stile antico in der Musik Johann Sebastian Bachs*, Wiesbaden, 1968, pp. 166-172) has more recently proven that these changes were derived from the original printed scores.

A critical edition of Bach's adaptation of Palestrina's Kyrie and Gloria from the *Missa sine nomine* was edited by Diethard Hellmann and published (in the key of e) by Hänssler-Verlag, Neuhausen-Stuttgart, 1988.

The NBA II/9 critical edition (pp. 13-28) contains the printed score of the same but in the key of d. It was published by Bärenreiter/Kassel, 2000.