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Bach's B Minor Mass: an incarnation in Prague in the 1860s and its Consequences

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14 | Bach's B-minor Mass: an incarnation in Prague in the 1860s and its consequences

JAN SMACZNY

The reception of Bach's music throughout Europe is still imperfectly known. While the progress of editions and performances in western European countries, such as Germany and England, is fairly well researched, Bach reception in central and eastern Europe has only recently begun to be investigated. This chapter explores Czech Bach influences and is representative of the kind of research that is currently being undertaken with regard to other areas in Europe.

Interest in Prague as a musical city in the nineteenth century has, inevitably, focused largely on its being the centre of the so-called Czech national revival, dating principally from the opening of the Provisional Theatre (Královské Zemské České Divadlo – Royal Provincial Czech Theatre) on 18 November 1862 with its mission to perform opera and plays solely in Czech. The fact that the revival was vested largely in the creation of a repertoire of nationally inspired operas, alongside music cultivated by various choral societies, notably Hlahol ('Sound', founded in 1854), has tended to overlay the extensive nature of other musical activities in the city. Understandably, the sheer novelty of much that was going on, notably the much-heralded appearance of Wagner as a conductor on 8 February 1863, has claimed the major part of attention in musical literature. The fact that there was a flourishing interest in pre-Classical music has not entirely escaped attention in Czech musical scholarship,¹ but in the Anglophone literature there is very little acknowledgement of this state of affairs.

It might seem rash to claim that mid-nineteenth-century Prague was home to a 'Bach cult', but an examination of pre-Classical repertoire performed in the city indicates that his music was a very firm presence from the early decades of the century. Recent research has revealed not

¹ An early appraisal of the activities of the Prague Organ School is to be found in Karel Hoffmeister's centenary study, 'Sto let varhanické školy pražské' [One hundred years of the Prague Organ School], *Hudební výchova*, 12/6–7 (1931), 81–93. More recently, Jaroslav Bužga has examined the nineteenth-century context for interest in earlier music and the collecting of MS sources in 'Bach, Zelenka a Česká hudba 19 století' [Bach, Zelenka and nineteenth-century Czech music], *Hudební věda*, 19/1 (1982), 49–60.

only a profound reverence among key figures in the Prague Organ School (Varhanická škola v Praze), but that in 1845 a performance of the second 'Kyrie' from the B-minor Mass was given.² The starting point for this study was rather less an investigation into the incidence of Bach performance in Prague in the mid-nineteenth century, but a desire to contextualise the Czech composer Dvořák's musical experience particularly with regard to pre-Classical repertoire.³ In establishing the level of performance of early music in the period dating from September 1857, when he arrived in Prague in order to study at the Organ School, to 1865 (educationally a critical period in Dvořák's development since it marked his first encounter with a broad range of repertoire), it became abundantly evident that the music of J. S. Bach was by far the most frequently encountered by any pre-Classical composer (see Table 14.1).⁴

A major nexus for the propagation of the music of J. S. Bach in the period under examination was the Prague Organ School. In general, musical education in the Czech lands was remarkably well developed through the later seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, Charles Burney noted on more than one occasion in *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces*,⁵ and in rural centres this state of affairs continued with sporadic distinction well into

² See T. Kovačević, 'Bach Reception in Prague: An 1845 Performance of the Second Kyrie from the B minor Mass', *Understanding Bach*, 5 (2010), 23–48; www.bachnetwork.co.uk/ub5-2010.html (accessed 21 December 2010).

³ A first exploration was in my paper delivered to the sesquicentenary Dvořák conference in Dobříš, 1991, published as 'Dvořák and the *seconda pratica*', in M. Ottlová and M. Pospíšil (eds.), *Report of the International Musicological Congress, Dobříš 17th–20th September 1991* (Prague: Centre for Musicology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, 1994), pp. 271–80. My further work on the performance of early music in mid-nineteenth-century Prague and Dvořák's experience of it was presented in two papers: 'Dr Dvořák Steps off his World of Baroque Certainty', Society for Musicology in Ireland, second annual plenary conference, Queen's University, Belfast, 2004; and 'Dvořák and Early Musics', Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, 2004, published as 'Dr. Dvořák Steps off his World of Baroque Certainty: Dvořák and Early Music', in J. Gabrielová and J. Kachlík (eds.), *The Work of Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)* (Prague: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2007), pp. 310–23.

⁴ I am very grateful to Dr Karl Stapleton (University of Cardiff) for providing access to statistics relating to concert life in Prague in this period and related press sources; see also the database *Prague Concert Life, 1850–1881*, Cardiff University, www.cf.ac.uk/music/news/2007PragueConcertLife.html (accessed 30 April 2012). Both Table 14.1 and Table 14.2 run from Dvořák's arrival in Prague to study at the Organ School until the end of 1865.

⁵ C. Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces. Or the Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music*, 2nd rev. edn (London: T. Becket, J. Robson and G. Robinson, 1775); see also P. A. Scholes (ed.), *Dr Burney's Musical Tours in Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

Table 14.1 Compositions by J. S. Bach performed in Prague between September 1857 and the end of 1865

Unspecified concerto for two keyboards
 Unspecified fugue for five voices (organ; ?'St Anne' BWV 552/2)
 Unspecified prelude and fugue in G minor (BWV 542; arr. H. Schellenberg for four hands and pedal)
 Unspecified 'Great prelude and fugue' for five voices in E-flat (organ; probably 'St Anne')
 'Great prelude and fugue' in A minor (?BWV 543)
 Chaconne in D minor from Violin Partita No. 2 (BWV 1004/5)
 Prelude and fugue in D minor (?Tocatta and fugue; BWV 538)
 Gavotte in D major for keyboard (?transcription of BWV 1012/5–6)
 Final chorus from cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* (BWV 21/11)
 Unspecified organ works (various)
Credo from Mass in B minor (BWV 232^{II})^a
 Unspecified fugue in C minor (keyboard; ?WTC I/2)
 Arrangement of Prelude in C major (WTC I/1; arranged by J. Goltermann)
 Unspecified 'Great Fugue' (organ; ?'St Anne')
 Concerto in A minor for pianoforte, violin, flute and string quintet (BWV 1044)
 Unspecified works for violin and pianoforte
 Unspecified gavotte
 Chorale prelude *Durch Adams Fall* (organ; BWV 637)
 Chorale prelude *Christe, du Lamm Gottes* (BWV 619)
 Unspecified fugue in B minor (keyboard; ?WTC I/24)
 Passacaglia in C minor (BWV 582); also in an orchestral arrangement by Esser
 Unspecified prelude and fugue (?WTC I)
 Unspecified extracts from Mass in B minor
 Unspecified sarabande and gavotte
 French Suite No. 5 (BWV 816)
 Chorus and chorale from *Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen* ('Ascension Oratorio', BWV 11)
 Cantata *Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde* (BWV 53; spurious)
 Unspecified prelude and fugue in C minor (organ)
 Fugue in A minor (WTC II/20)
 'Introductio' from St Matthew Passion (BWV 244)

Note: WTC = *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

^a See pp. 290–1 below for details of concert.

the nineteenth century. Dvořák himself, recalling his own experience of a provincial musical training, attested that 'in Bohemia every school-teacher is bound to know sufficient music to give instruction in it' and also gave clear evidence of the conservative nature of his early musical

education: 'I used to read whole Masses from old copies written with a "figured bass".'⁶ The main drivers of musical education at the lowest level were well-schooled local cantors whose initial, fairly modest, training was reinforced by a substantial network of Jesuit seminaries throughout Bohemia and Moravia. The disjunction in educational continuity created by the expulsion of the Jesuit order from the empire by Joseph II in 1773⁷ took nearly two generations to work through the educational system, resulting in a general impoverishment of the musical infrastructure in Bohemia and Moravia, particularly where church music was concerned. Where once the Jesuit seminaries had provided a more or less seamless point of transition for composers such as Jan Ignáz Brenntner, František (Franz) and Jiří (Georg) Benda, and Antonín and Leopold Koželůch from the schoolroom to a professional career, by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, no such facility existed. A significant indicator of this slow collapse in musical education is the fact that the emigration of musicians from Bohemia in the first five decades of the nineteenth century was markedly less than through much of the eighteenth century, a time when excellently educated Czech musicians were to be found in all parts of Europe and even beyond.⁸

The concert in which the *Credo* of the Mass in B minor was given

According to the *Prager Morgenpost* the concert, held at 4.30 p.m. on 28 February 1861 in the concert hall on Žofín (Sophia) Island, included the following works:

Part I:

1. Overture in C major (Orchestral Suite No. 1, BWV 1066);
2. Unspecified recitative and aria from the 'Passionmusik nach dem Evangelium Mathias von Joh. Sebastian Bach' (? 'Er hat uns allen wohlgetan' and 'Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben');
3. Sinfonia in D major by Philipp Emanuel Bach [*sic*].

⁶ From an interview with the *Sunday Times*, 10 May 1885, repr. in D. Beveridge (ed.), *Rethinking Dvořák* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 281–8.

⁷ This was part of a general ban on religious orders in the Austrian Empire.

⁸ See J. Racek, *Česká hudba* [Czech music] (Prague: State Publishers, 1958).

Part II:

'Credo aus der hohen Messe in h moll von Joh. Sebastian Bach ...' (in addition the participation of four soloists – two female, two male – is mentioned).

[At the end of the notice is a sentence stating that all the pieces were being heard there for the first time.⁹]

Stepping into this gap came the Prague Organ School, which opened its doors in 1830.¹⁰ From its inception, the Organ School was the major provider of the most traditional sort of musical education in Bohemia. The founders had been led by a member of the aristocratic Schwarzenberg family, and much of the funding for the school came from the Habsburg state. The Organ School's aims were fundamentally conservative, having been born of a desire to prevent a further fall in standards as the result of dwindling patronage and an invasion of secular styles into the music of worship. Notwithstanding these high ideals, the school's facilities were modest: situated in Konviktská street in the Old Town in Prague, it possessed only three small organs in rooms barely adequate to house them.

In defence of its mission to protect musical orthodoxy, the Organ School followed an essentially eighteenth-century approach to technical musical education. Textbooks included Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*,¹¹ and the curriculum had a distinctly retrospective quality. In the second year at the Organ School (1858–9), Dvořák studied figured bass, church modes, modulation, the improvisation of preludes and interludes, chant and hymnody, fugue and canon. Sonata form, orchestration and the more contemporary developments in composition were not part of an academic diet designed to preserve a dogmatically old-fashioned image of what was appropriate musically in church. The staff in Dvořák's time as a student, under the leadership of Karel Pitsch, included teachers of distinction. Theory was taught by František Blažek, whose textbook on harmonic practice (published in 1866 and reprinted in 1878) was widely used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The composer Josef Zvonař was responsible for teaching on the subject of church music, and Josef Foerster, organist of St Vitus Cathedral from 1887 until his death in 1907 and choir

⁹ *Prager Morgenpost*, 2 March 1861.

¹⁰ Dvořák studied there for two years from September 1857.

¹¹ See J. Ludvová, *Česká hudební teorie novější doby 1850–1900* [Czech musical theory in a newer age, 1850–1900] (Prague: Academia, 1989), p. 37; interestingly, Dvořák possessed a copy of Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, although it is not clear when he acquired it (his copy was presented to the Dvořák memorial archive in Zlonice by his grandson Antonín in 1979).

Table 14.2 Other pre-Classical composers featured in concert life in Prague between September 1857 and the end of 1865

Astorga, E.	Handel, G. F. ^a	Rossi, L.
Bach, C. P. E.	Hasse, J. A.	Scarlatti, A.
Bennett, J.	Holan, V.	Scarlatti, D.
Bixi, F. X.	di Lasso, O.	Schnabel, J.
Caldara, A.	Leo, L.	Stradella, A.
Cimarosa, D.	Lotti, A.	Thibaut IV (King of Navarre)
Donato, B.	Marcello, B.	Tuma, F. I. A.
Dowland, J.	Muffat, G.	Veracini, F.
Durante, F.	Palestrina, G.	Von Wolkenstein, O.
Frescobaldi, G.	Pergolesi, G. B.	Zelenka, J. D.
Gabrieli, G.	Praetorius, M.	
Goudimel, C.	Rameau, J. P.	

^a Handel, with some fifteen works specified, approaches Bach most closely in terms of number of performances. Oratorios given included *Israel in Egypt* and *Solomon*; there were numerous excerpts from other operas and oratorios including *Hercules*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Messiah* and *Rinaldo*.

master at St Adalbert's Church from 1863 to 1888, including the period when Dvořák served as organist (1874–7), taught the organ.¹² Both men were early-music enthusiasts. Zvonař gave public lectures on and concerts of early repertoires,¹³ and Foerster was a vigorous champion of Gregorian chant and early polyphony (see Table 14.2).

The programmes of the Organ School's graduation concerts, avidly covered by Czech musical periodicals of the day such as *Dalibor*, indicate that Bach was axiomatic to the graduating organists' repertoire. When Dvořák gave his graduation exercise on 30 July 1859 the critic of *Dalibor* recorded that he played Bach's A-minor prelude and fugue (probably BWV 543) 'excellently' alongside two of the composer's own graduation exercises, a prelude in D major and a fugue in G minor (B 302, Nos.1 and 5).¹⁴ In addition, Dvořák took part in a duet arrangement by Hermann Schellenberg of Bach's Fugue in G minor for organ (BWV 542; see

¹² According to an account in the Prague musical periodical *Dalibor*, 4/7 (1 March 1861), 53, Pitsch was key in developing Zvonař's admiration for Bach (see also Kovačević, 'Bach Reception in Prague').

¹³ One given on 12 March 1864 included repertoire ranging from von Wolkenstein to Hasse and Bach. For a list of pre-Classical composers performed in Prague in the period 1860–5, see Table 14.2.

¹⁴ *Dalibor*, 2/21 (20 July 1859), 167, and 2/22 (1 August 1859), 176.

Table 14.1). Dvořák seems to have retained a veneration for Bach throughout his career, citing him when describing his own religious beliefs in relation to the completion of his Mass in D major (Op. 86, B 153): 'Do not be surprised that I am so religious; an artist who does not have this [belief] could not write such a work. Do we not have enough examples in Beethoven, Bach, Raphael ...?'¹⁵ And when writing to his daughter, Otilie, from New York, he cautioned her to practise much, '... especially Bach ...'.¹⁶

More pertinently, there is also evidence that the B-minor Mass was very much a part of Dvořák's musical experience since he made an interesting comparison between a performance he heard of the work in Leeds with, presumably, other occasions on which he had heard it. This occurred during a lengthy visit to England, between 1 October and 7 November 1886, when he conducted the premiere of his oratorio *St Ludmila* at the Leeds Festival (15 October) and gave two further performances in London (29 October and 6 November). On the two days before the Leeds premiere of *St Ludmila*, he heard Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (13 October) and the B-minor Mass (14 October), conducted by Sir Arthur Sullivan. The performance of the latter was widely admired at the time,¹⁷ and it clearly made a major impression on Dvořák since he wrote to his friend Emanuel Chvála in unusually excited terms: 'Now something about the performance. It was magnificent! I have never heard anything like it. The sound, the power, the gentleness was captivating! I've never heard Bach's B minor [Mass] that way before and I will never forget it!'¹⁸

While the graduation programmes of the Organ School grew more imaginative, eventually incorporating accompanied items, Bach remained an enduring part of the aspiring organists' repertoire, as the programme advertised in *Dalibor* indicates:

Caldara: unspecified motet for three voices

Mozart: unspecified 'Hymnus' for four voices and organ in D major

(probably *Ave verum*, K. 618)

Astorga: duet from an unspecified *Stabat mater* setting;

F. X. Brixi: 'Quoniam' with fugato 'Amen' from an unspecified Mass in B-flat major;

¹⁵ Letter to Josef Hlávka, 17 June 1887; see M. Kuna (ed.), *Antonín Dvořák: Korespondence a dokumenty* [Antonín Dvořák: correspondence and documents] (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1988), vol. II, pp. 251–2.

¹⁶ See Kuna (ed.), *Antonín Dvořák*, vol. III, pp. 380–1. ¹⁷ See Chapter 13 above, pp. 284–6.

¹⁸ See Kuna (ed.), *Antonín Dvořák*, vol. II, p. 196.

- J. S. Bach: Chorale Prelude *Durch Adams Fall* (BWV 637);
 J. S. Bach: Chorale Prelude *Christ du Lamm Gottes* (BWV 619);
 J. S. Bach: Great Fugue in B minor (?BWV 544/2);
 J. S. Bach: Passacaglia in C minor (BWV 582).¹⁹

Beyond the confines of the Organ School and its annual graduation concerts there were other opportunities to hear earlier repertoires, including a broader range of music by J. S. Bach. Important in all of this were the activities of the Cecilská Jednota (Cacilien-Verein) conducted by Antonin Apt. Founded in 1840, the St Cecilia Society performed a wide range of orchestrally accompanied choral music. In addition to contemporary repertoire such as Schumann's *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt* (27 November 1858), *Manfred* (20 November 1859) and *Szenen aus Goethes Faust* (6 December 1862) and excerpts from Wagner's *Lohengrin* (12 May 1853) and *Rienzi* (21 November 1855), they performed music by J. S. Bach and Handel.²⁰ A particularly remarkable concert of music by Bach was advertised by the *Prager Morgenpost* on 27 February 1861 for the following day, to be held in the concert hall on Žofín (Sophia) Island (see pp. 290–1), including the First Orchestral Suite, an unspecified recitative and aria from the St Matthew Passion and the *Credo* from the B-minor Mass.

The review of the concert published in the *Prager Morgenpost* on 2 March was extensive and indicated prior knowledge of the B-minor Mass, describing the extract as 'Das "Simbolum Nicaenum" oder "Credo" aus des grossen Meisters wunderbaren hohen Messe in h-moll' [*sic*], and speaking volubly about the activities of the Leipzig Bach-Gesellschaft as well as stating that, as a work of art, the Mass was in certain respects 'eclipsed' only by Beethoven's *Missa solennis*. The *Prager Zeitung* of 3 March 1861 was equally fulsome in its praise of the work's sublimity and 'magisterial greatness', and both reviews praised Apt's direction. The *Prager Zeitung* also identified the aria from the St Matthew Passion as 'Mache dich, mein Herze, rein' (BWV 244/65), noting that the instrumental accompaniment was provided by a flute,

¹⁹ Organ School accompaniment trial and graduation concert, 30 July 1863, *Dalibor*, 6/23 (10 August 1863), 184.

²⁰ For further information on the repertoire performed by the St Cecilia Society see K. Maýrová, 'Činnost hudebních spolků a sdružení z XIX. A 1. poloviny XX. století, jak je dokumentována ve sbírkovém fondu tiskové dokumentace Českého muzea hudby, s akcentací na hudební aktivitu tzv. Cecilské jenoty v Praze' [The activity of musical societies and groups from the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century as documented in the collection of published documents in the Czech museum of music, with emphasis on the musical activities of the Cecilia Society in Prague], in *Miscellanea z výročních konferencí 2001 až 2005* (Česká Společnost Pro Hudební Vědu, 2005), pp. 144–83.

two oboes and bassoon.²¹ It is also clear from these reviews that the orchestral accompaniment to the *Credo* was of an elaborate nature including the use of clarini. The source used for the performance is unclear. It is likely that Apt and his performers had access to Nägeli's editions, published jointly with Simrock, of 1845, or Marx's vocal score, also published by Simrock jointly with Nägeli, of 1834, as both are presently in the holdings of the Prague Conservatoire Library.²² Given the clear knowledge of the activities of the Bach-Gesellschaft, Apt may well have had access to Rietz's edition of 1856 (or its revised version that appeared in the following year) for the *Gesamtausgabe*. However, the surviving material from Apt's time with the St Cecilia Society has now been made available in the collection of the Prague Conservatoire and may well reveal an alternative source for the performance.

One particularly interesting result of this St Cecilia Society performance was its impact on Dvořák. As one of Prague's busiest professional viola players, he almost certainly took part in the concert (his participation in St Cecilia Society events is well documented).²³ Dvořák's knowledge of a range of early music as well as contemporary fare is attested by his pupil and son-in-law, the composer Josef Suk, who recounted, 'Dvořák's knowledge of musical works was truly astounding. Bach, Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart . . . – he knew the works of all these masters in detail.'²⁴ The various points of convergence between Dvořák's style and that of pre-Classical music, notably the work of Handel and Bach, have been documented,²⁵ and are dealt with at length in the present author's paper 'Dr. Dvořák Steps off his World of Baroque Certainty: Dvořák and Early Music'.²⁶ While

²¹ *Prager Morgenpost*, 2 March 1861, and *Prager Zeitung* 3 March 1861; I am grateful to Dr Karl Stapleton for supplying the press material concerning this concert. See also *Prague Concert Life, 1850–1881*.

²² See Kovačević, 'Bach Reception in Prague', pp. 35–6. For further discussion on these editions, see above, Chapter 9, p. 165, Chapter 12, n. 12, and Chapter 13, nn. 24–5. The inventory of Apt's possessions, also kept in the Prague Conservatoire Library, but without shelfmark, includes the following entry: '[inventory no.] 683 | [no. of copies] 1 | [description] Bach's, Oratorium u Messen | Klavierauszug mit Text'. This must refer to the vocal score edited by Hugo Ulrich published by C. F. Peters in 1864.

²³ See O. Šourek, *Život a dílo Antonína Dvořáka* [The life and works of Antonín Dvořák] (Prague: Státní Nakladatelství, 1954), vol. I, pp. 36–7; see also J. Burghauser, *Antonín Dvořák: thematický katalog* [Antonín Dvořák: thematic catalogue] (Prague: Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, 1996), esp. chronological appendix, pp. 501–4.

²⁴ In O. Šourek, *Antonín Dvořák: Letters and Reminiscences*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsour (Prague: Artia, 1954), p. 138.

²⁵ See J. Clapham, *Antonín Dvořák: Musician and Craftsman* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 251.

²⁶ See details of Smaczny, 'Dr. Dvořák Steps off his World of Baroque Certainty: Dvořák and Early Music' in n. 3 above.

Dvořák had shown considerable confidence in handling conventional Baroque figures such as the *saltus duriusculus* in the (perforce) conservative graduation exercises written for the Organ School (*Preludia a fugy pro varhany* – Preludes and Fugues for Organ, B 302), the appearance of such techniques was not confined to his student efforts. In his *Stabat mater* (Op. 58, B 71), completed in 1877, he made extensive use of Baroque figures in the first and final movements, and the fluid, compound-time setting of ‘Tui nati vulnerati’ (No. 5) seems to owe much to the opening chorus of Bach’s St Matthew Passion; in the one solo aria (No. 9, ‘Inflammatum et accensum’) there is also the use of a clearly Baroque ritornello structure. The oratorio *St Ludmila* also owes a great deal to Baroque models. Where critical reaction was concerned, the focus was on his debt to Handel,²⁷ but there is more than a sideways glance at Bach in the chorus depicting the panic of the heathen Czechs as their idol is toppled by the Christian missionary Ivan: twelve bars after rehearsal letter A in chorus 13, there is an unmistakable reference to the chorus ‘Sind Blitze, sind Donner’ from the St Matthew Passion (BWV 244/27b).²⁸

More specifically, his knowledge of the B-minor Mass had an unexpected effect on a work written at the height of his maturity, the Requiem Mass composed for the Birmingham Festival of 1891. The opening idea of the work, effectively the lead motive for the whole Requiem, is not just used, to quote the composer’s most extensive biographer, Otakar Šourek, as a dramatic ‘remembrance of death’,²⁹ but is a pervasive element in the fabric of the whole work. The theme itself is the same Baroque figure that Bach uses in the second ‘Kyrie’ of the B-minor Mass. Foreknowledge of Bach’s work, which Dvořák certainly had,³⁰ is perhaps less important than the way in which he uses a figure that he may well have encountered during his studies in the Prague Organ School; his use of the figure, in particular in the latter parts of the ‘Agnus Dei’, approaches the sequential, note-spinning manner beloved of his Baroque predecessors.

The extent to which the music of Bach was a powerful presence among performers and composers in Prague in the 1860s, many of them leading figures in the city’s musical life, is now beyond dispute. For Dvořák, the essentially Baroque nature of his education at the Organ School was

²⁷ See *Musical Times*, 27/525 (November 1886), 656.

²⁸ See Antonín Dvořák, *St Ludmila*, vocal score (Prague: Státní Hudební Vydavatelství, 1965), pp. 121–6.

²⁹ It is described as ‘memento mori’ in O. Šourek, *Život a dílo Antonína Dvořáka* [The life and work of Antonín Dvořák] (Prague: Státní Nakladatelství, 1955), vol. III, p. 339.

³⁰ See Kuna (ed.), *Antonín Dvořák*, vol. II, p. 196.

fundamentally reinforced by his early encounters with the music of Bach and his continued exposure to it later in his career. While there is more work to be done on the impact of Bach in Prague, the sources employed and their routes of transmission, there can be no doubt that, like Wagner and other exemplars for composers in the national revival, he has to be seen as being of decisive importance.

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