

JOHANN JOSEPH FUX

(ca. 1660–1741)

Missa in C K 47 (FuxWV IV.I.21)

Remarks on the Work

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REMARKS ON THE WORK

Johann Joseph Fux, Missa in C (K 47 / FuxWV IV.1.2I)

The Missa in C (K 47) by Johann Joseph Fux, presented here for the first time in a modern practical edition, is a solemn setting of the five Ordinary movements Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus/Benedictus and Agnus Dei. A variety of sonorities and a particularly clear and comprehensible articulation of the text characterize this composition. In the tutti, the vocal parts are supported by winds and strings *colla parte*, which in Fux's time also helped compensate for possible timbral weaknesses of the choir and made the work performable despite very limited rehearsal time. The *colla parte* instruments are not obligatory and can be omitted if necessary; they serve primarily as support and, in large rooms, as tonal reinforcement. In the case of changes in scoring, it is important to maintain a balance between the parts in accordance with Baroque aesthetics, i.e. reductions in one part must be reflected in the other parts, including the basso continuo.

The modern performance materials were edited during a practical course with students at the Gustav Mahler Private University for Music (Klagenfurt) and used in the subsequent performances with soloists, choir, and orchestra of the GMPU.¹

Genre and performance contexts

With a length of nearly three quarters of an hour and an instrumentation that includes two trumpets and timpani, Fux's Missa K 47 is in the genre of solemn masses in concertante style, belonging to the highest category in the hierarchical system established by ceremonial and liturgy.² Solemn masses were heard in pontifical services as well as in the *Toison* services celebrated with the participation of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, held on high church feasts as well as on political or dynastic occasions such as victory celebrations or baptisms.

The first performance date listed on the cover (26.12.1726) was probably not the premiere; the work was presumably composed much earlier, but the original occasion for the composition of K 47 cannot be reconstructed. A total of eight performance dates are documented for the years 1726–1731 (see below and the introduction to the Critical Report). The performances of the Missa K 47 took place primarily on high church feasts such as St. Stephen's Day and Pentecost, which in the cases documented here are often connected with important courtly events – such as the swearing-in of the new rector and the deans of the university at the Immaculate Conception of Maria or the anniversary of the consecration of the chapel of the Favorita. On five occasions, K 47 was performed in its entirety; on the other documented dates, the work was performed only in part (only Kyrie, Gloria, or all movements except the Credo), probably in combination with plainsong or other – probably shorter and simpler – polyphonic settings.

The following table, based on the performance dates given on the Kyrie/Gloria and Sanctus/Agnus Dei covers and in the *Wienerisches Diarium*, provides an overview of the known details of the documented performances of K 47:³

1 For further details, see the introduction to the Critical Report; a cross-section of the performance in Klagenfurt Cathedral, available online, gives an impression of the music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLQ74Usq8Fo&pp=ygUTZ21wdSBrbGF-nZW5mdXJoIGZ1eA%3D%3D> The two alternative Crucifixus settings were recorded in the course of the rehearsals: https://epub.oeaw.ac.at/konzert_008

2 See Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, *Kirchenmusik am Hofe Karls VI. (1711–1740). Studien zum Verhältnis von Zeremoniell und musikalischem Stil im Barockzeitalter* (Studien zur Landes- und Sozialgeschichte der Musik 1), Munich/Salzburg: Katzbichler, 1977, pp. 173–180.

3 The cover of the Credo has no performance dates. The festivities are added according to the calendar compiled by Riedel, *ibidem*, pp. 235, 259, 260, 271, 288, 289, 304. In addition, the corresponding reports in the *Wienerisches Diarium*, as far as available in digital form, were consulted.

Date	Festivity	Place	Parts performed	Report in the <i>Wienerisches Diarium</i>
26.12.1726	St. Stephani Protomartyris	Metropolitan church S. Stephen, Vienna	complete	No. 104, 29.12.1726 [p. 8] : Toison service
21.11.1727	In Praesentatione B.M.V.; Sacrifice of the Emperor	Maria am Gestade, Vienna	Kyrie, Gloria	No. 94, 22.11.1727 [p. 7] : Eve of the octave of S. Leopold
16.5.1728	In Festo Pentecostes	Castle chapel in Laxenburg	complete	No. 40, 19.5.1728 [p. 6–7] Pentecost: ordinary service in Laxenburg; delegation of high personalities attend the high service in S. Stephen
8.12.1728	In Conceptione Immaculata B.M.V. sacrifice of the Emperor Swearing-in of the new rector of the University of Vienna Gradual sonata: FuxWV III.1.39 (K 367/375/402)	Metropolitan church S. Stephen, Vienna	Kyrie, Gloria	No. 99, 11.12.1728 [p. 6–7] Toison service, feast of the Immaculate Conception of Maria, swearing-in of the new rector and the four deans on the defence of the Immaculate Conception
25.7.1729	S. Jacobi Apostoli	Castle chapel of the Favorita	complete	No. 60, 27.7.1729 [p. 7] ordinary service
26.12.1729	S. Stephani Protomartyris (see also 26.12.1726)	Metropolitan church S. Stephen, Vienna	complete	[no digital copy available; procedure similar to 26.12.1726] Toison service
30.7.1730	In Dedicacione Ecclesiae	Castle chapel of the Favorita	Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei	Nr. 61, 2.8.1730 [S. 6] High service with German sermon in the castle chapel of Favorita, in the afternoon vespers due to the following anniversary of the consecration of the Favorita chapel
14.5.1731	Feria 2 post Pentecostem	Capuchin church, Mödling	complete	Nr. 39, 16.5.1731 [S. 6–7] The Emperor and his court went from Laxenburg to Mödling and took part in the prayers in the Capuchin church

Table 1: Known performance dates and occasions for K 47

The overview shows that K 47 was indeed performed at the highest festivities; in addition, the work was heard on occasions such as the second day after Pentecost, when the use of trumpets and timpani was not obligatory, but possible. For these celebrations, Fux's composition also traveled with the court to other performance venues such as Maria am Gestade in Vienna, the castle chapel of the Favorita, or the Capuchin church in Mödling. Moreover, K 47 was apparently used in the late 1720s as an alternative to Fux's similarly disposed *Missa Corporis Christi* (K 10; composed in 1713), therefore demonstrating the interchangeability of similar disposed works within the stylistic framework established by ceremonial and liturgy.⁴

⁴ K 10 was performed on 26.12.1728, together with the *Sonata pastorale* FuxWV III.1.48 (K 395/N 126) as gradual sonata, as well as in the years 1727 and 1730 on the second day after Pentecost. See the calendar in Riedel, *ibidem*, pp. 229–268.

Notes on the Music

The stylistic characteristics required for a mass in solemn style determine the disposition of the work: The natural trumpets and the timpani considerably limit the tonal spectrum, while the temporal extension results in the movements with larger amounts of text (Gloria and Credo) in a distinct subdivision obtained by changes of tempo, time signature, key, texture, and instrumentation, following the formal design of the Venetian *Messa concertata*.⁵ Even within the sections, changes of tempo and texture take place (e.g. Gloria, bar 17 after the half cadence: Andante; imitation for “bonae voluntatis”). In addition to the usual caesura points within the movement (e.g. before “Laudamus” or “Qui tollis” in the Gloria), Fux also separates individual semantic units of the text. Such a transfer of the textual to the musical structure recalls the principles of the motet style with a line-by-line imitative treatment of the soggetti, applied here to the concertante (“mixed”) style. The result is a rather small-scaled structure with clear caesurae between textual-musical units that, unlike the motet style, do not overlap.

In direct comparison with imitative *stile antico* settings on the one hand and formally closed, thematically coherent settings on the other hand, a small-scaled structure without larger thematic connections, just orientated on the particular textual units, is often suspected of being only a parataxis.⁶ However, such comparisons between different styles are problematic – it must be taken into account that Fux perhaps did not intend larger, thematically unified contexts in such compositions as the *Missa Corporis Christi* or K 47. Instead, he may well have focused on the text presentation or the course of the text: What seems to be deficient from a motivic-thematic perspective, appears from the perspective of the text as a setting closely oriented to it, like a sermon that effectively presents the contents successively, comprehensibly, and rhetorically. On the contrary, the frequent changes allow Fux to set the particular textual elements individually and to trace the contents on a detailed level. Formal connections on a larger level are created primarily by harmony or harmonic relations as well as cadences, rhetorically graduated in strength. Compared to K 10, the movements in K 47, which have large amounts of text, are subdivided even more strongly, for example by changes of tempo, meter, and instrumentation between the first Gloria verses “Gloria in excelsis Deo – Et in terra pax hominibus – bonae voluntatis” or in the Credo within a larger, paratactical section, where the text parts “Et resurrexit” – “Et ascendit” – “Sedet” – “Et iterum” are separated by caesurae, and followed by separate sections for “Et in Spiritum”, “Et unam”, and “Et vitam”.

Generally, Fux follows the established standards for the Ordinarium Missae – but with quite individual traits in detail: He complies with the major and liturgically relevant sections (e.g. before the “Et incarnatus”) as well as with formal and stylistic conventions (three-part Kyrie and Sanctus; two-part Agnus; fugal Kyrie; fugal parts at the end of Gloria and Credo, a cappella style in the „Crucifixus“, trumpet entries in “judicare”, etc.).

That K 47 belongs to the highest class of solemn masses is further mirrored in the polyphonic intonations of Gloria and Credo, usually sung by the priest:⁷ The Gloria begins with a virtuoso coloratura by the bass before the choir joins in the praise, and at the beginning of the Credo each solo voice recites its confession (“Credo”) individually, with the motive rising both in register (bass, tenor, soprano, alto) and in pitch (initial notes c – d – e – f). In the Credo, the collective also takes over the text in a homophonic setting and proceeds successively, tracing it word by word and stopping with a cadence on “Deum” (“Credo in unum, in unum Deum”).

Such compositional emphasis of single words reflects the rhetorical gesture of Fux’s setting. Another example is the passage “Tu solus sanctus, [tu] solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe” in the Gloria (bars 199–209), where Fux isolates the appellation “tu” and accentuates it additionally by the syncopation. The confession to the Catholic Church in the Credo (“Et unam sanctam” in bars 225–238), set as an *accompagnato*, is equally effective in its musical treatment of language. In contrast, the beginning of the Sanctus is determined

5 See Thomas Hochradner, “Kapitel V: Das 18. Jahrhundert”, in: Horst Leuchtmann und Siegfried Mauser (edd.), *Messe und Motette* (Handbuch der musikalischen Gattungen 9), Laaber: Laaber 1998, pp. 189–269, especially pp. 200–202 (“Die Messa concertata und der habsburgische Imperialstil”) and 233–248 (“Missa brevis und ‘Missa longa’. Ein Dualismus und seine Konsequenzen”).

6 See the comments on the *Missa Corporis Christi* (K 10), which is similar to K 47 in style and formal disposition: Riedel classifies this work as “old-fashioned” because it lacks motivic and thematic connections; White states a formal “patchwork” or a “nervous succession of episodes” as well as an old-fashioned declamatory treatment of the text, especially in comparison with Fux’s *stile antico* masses and with his *da capo* arias. See Harry White, *The Musical Discourse of Servitude. Authority, Autonomy, and the Work-Concept in Fux, Bach, and Handel*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020, pp. 230–243, here p. 231.

7 In the *Missa Corporis Christi* (K 10) only the intonation of the Gloria is part of Fux’s polyphonic setting, while the beginning of the Credo is to be sung as monophonic intonation of the plainsong.

by tonal principles: The imitative voices, with their floating syncopations and gently gliding dissonances, convey an echo of the artful celestial *harmonia*.

Fux follows the conventions and uses the majestic trumpets and timpani in structurally relevant places, as well as symbolically for texts dealing with splendor, power, and domination; but he also allows himself small deviations in individual places. These include the “Domine Deus” section (Gloria, bars 70–90) in K 47, enhanced not by the secularly connotated trumpets, as might be expected, but rather accompanied by the two trombones. They are used soloistically only at this passage, thereby embedding it in a sacred context and giving the appellation a particular dignity. In addition, the quiet, entirely vocal closing of the Agnus Dei/Dona nobis pacem is unusual in the context of a solemn celebration: The mass fades away with restraint, the last silent measure (break) is an explicitly composed reverberation of the plea for peace. Both passages deviate from the standards of a solemn mass in the presence of the highest personalities of the court: Religious celebrations were part of the courtly ceremonial, and the liturgy as well as the music served the purpose of representation. The emperor, legitimized by the grace of God, was always included in the praises and salutations – e.g. “Domine”, “Benedictus” – and represented acoustically by military instruments, the trumpets and timpani functioning as a “sounding coat of arms”. Had these been silent at passages predestined for musical symbolism, it may well have come as a surprise to contemporary listeners and been interpreted accordingly.

Unexpected musical configurations raise questions about possible reasons: Are these decisions purely compositional, within the nonetheless unsurpassed framework of conventions ensuring the functionality of music in the liturgy and in the ceremonial, or did the occasion of the first performance possibly influence the specific musical setting of symbolic text passages?

This question arises in particular for the “Crucifixus” that in K 47 stands out aurally from the other four-part movements due to its double-choir, eight-part vocal scoring. Usually the scoring remains constant within an ordinarium setting, and no analogous occurrences could be discovered in the extant Fux masses; eight-part movements are contained only in compositions intended completely for double choir. In any case, a performance with the ensemble needed for K 47 was possible, since it involves a splitting of the vocal parts, which could be accomplished by the soloists as well as selected ripienists who took over the soli parts only in the “Crucifixus”. The texture with the alternating unaccompanied vocal parts, interacting in the dense eight-part setting, is reminiscent of, for example Fux’s double-choir *Missa Sanctissime Trinitatis* (E 113, e.g. “Et resurrexit”), composed in 1693 or 1695. In the eight-part “Crucifixus” of K 47, Fux combines various techniques of setting, beginning with an alternating declamation that at “sub Pontio Pilato” changes into an increasingly dense texture, richer in affect and enriched harmonically with numerous suspension dissonances. The description of Christ’s burial is based on two long pedal points, with the basses incessantly declaiming the fact “et sepultus est” on one pitch.

It seems, however, that this sonorously amplified setting did not conform to later occasions or to the ensemble available for them, for the complete parts extant in the copy of a Viennese court copyist are supplemented by two short alternative settings, composed for three (SAT) and one vocal soloist (T), respectively, which Fux himself notates directly in single parts on small-format sheets – obviously arising from a short-term need. Why these two alternatives became necessary, and which of them was composed earlier, cannot be deduced from the material. It is striking that the first phrase in the soprano of the three-part setting and in the tenor of the soloistic setting are identical; therefore Fux probably had the other movement at hand when he wrote the second alternative. These two alternative movements, reduced in both length and scoring, though musically quite appealing, form a strong contrast to the original eight-part “Crucifixus” in regard to scoring, sonority, style, and length, and thus more closely resemble the intimate sound of the preceding soloistic “Et incarnatus est”.

The open-work concept of the Baroque era manifests itself in the possibility of not always performing all five ordinarium movements together, as well as in the alternative movements for the “Crucifixus”: On the condition that the liturgical functionality is ensured, whole movements as well as individual sections are interchangeable. The extant part copies from the holdings of the Viennese Court Chapel testify to this openness, but as an up-to-date complete source for the imperial church music, they also reflect in their unity both the original intention and the specific sound that was suited to a most solemn and important occasion.

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