

## The Visit of Members of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* to Bautzen: May 1733

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This paper discussed a well-documented performance of a Te Deum given in the presence of Saxon Elector Friedrich August II on 19 May 1733 in the historic capital of Oberlausitz (Upper Lusatia), Bautzen, which until 1868 had the official name of Budissin. It took place when members of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* travelled there to participate in a musical event associated with the *Erbhuldigung* (act of hereditary homage) undertaken by the new elector following the death of his father, August II ‘The Strong’. The components and internal proportions of the orchestra heard on this occasion demonstrated the advanced nature of the instrumental section of the Dresden *Hofkapelle*, and they matched almost exactly the description of the Viennese Classical orchestra given by John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw in *Grove Music Online*.<sup>1</sup> The elector’s concern in arrangements for this performance planned for Bautzen, as well as his previous involvement as early as 1731 in the selection and engagement of new players for the Dresden court orchestra, were demonstrated with documentation held today in both Dresden and Bautzen.<sup>2</sup>

On 20 April 1733, after the death on 1 February of August II, his son and successor began tours of homage. Following visits to Leipzig, Wittenberg, and Torgau, Friedrich August II travelled to Bautzen. The visit is fully described in the publication for 1735 of the *Königl. Polnischer und Churfürstl. Sächsischer Hof- und Staats-Calender (HStCal)*. There, on 19 May, a civic reception was held for him, after which the elector entered the St Petri Dom where a Te Deum was sung by a group of vocalists accompanied by instrumentalists from the Dresden *Hofkapelle*.

<sup>1</sup> ‘The orchestra for which the Vienna masters composed has come to be known as the “Classical” orchestra. The term may usefully be extended to include orchestras from about 1740 until 1815 or even later. ... a typical orchestra included violins, violas, cellos and double basses, a pair of oboes, a pair of horns, one or two bassoons and keyboard continuo. Trumpets and timpani were optional. Violins were divided into two sections of approximately equal size; violas (except in France) were consolidated into a single section [...] Cellos, double basses, bassoons and keyboard usually played the same *basso* line.’ *Grove Music Online*, Orchestra: § 6 The Classical orchestra (1740–1815) (accessed 12 December 2013).

<sup>2</sup> The assistance of archivists from the Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden (D-Dla), the Zentralabteilung Archiv-Bibliothek-Kunst, Bischöfliches Ordinariat Bautzen (D-BAUd), and the Bautzen Stadtarchiv is acknowledged with gratitude.

Members drawn from the court's ensemble of trumpets and timpani who travelled to Bautzen for the *Erbhuldigung* also played for this event.

In advance of the performance, the Dresden *Kapellmeister* at that time, Jan Dismas Zelenka, and the *Hofkapelle* concertmaster, Johann Georg Pisendel, arrived in Bautzen on 11 May. A letter of introduction addressed to Johann Josef Ignaz Freyschlag von Schmidenthal (Dean of the Collegiate Convent of St Petri and Apostolic Administrator of Oberlausitz) from Fr Franz Nonhardt SJ (Father Superior of Dresden's Catholic court church) introduced the '*Generosus ac Virtuosus D'nus Capelle Magister*'. These musicians had been sent from Dresden for three days to investigate the performance space in St Petri, an interdenominational place of worship where Catholics held their services at the eastern end of the building while the Lutherans worshipped at the western end – an arrangement that continues today. The visit and inspection resulted in the recommendation by Zelenka and Pisendel to the Bautzen town council that alterations to the Catholic end of the *Dom* that would be necessary for the planned performance; changes that already had been debated (but opposed) by the council.

Procrastination on the proposed alterations led to a letter being sent from the elector to the Bautzen town council, with the polite but firm request that action be taken immediately for space to be prepared for the musical performance of the Te Deum at which he himself planned to be present on 19 May. The Bautzen council then agreed to the alterations, which must have involved an extension being made to the choir loft at the eastern end of the *Dom*. This temporary structure was to be removed immediately after the event.

On 18 May 1733, thirty musicians – twenty-one instrumentalists and nine singers, plus the *Hofkapelle* servant – travelled to Bautzen for the performance to take place on the following day. The group of instrumentalists comprised six violinists (including concertmaster Pisendel), two viola players, two cellists, one contra bass player, two oboists, two bassoonists, two horn players (the Schindler brothers), two flautists (Buffardin and Quantz), an organist, and a theorbo player (Sylvius Leopold Weiß).<sup>3</sup> These instrumentalists accompanied a vocal ensemble of two male sopranos, three male altos (including four young castrati who had arrived in Dresden in 1730 from Italy where they had been trained at the expense of the Dresden court), two tenors, and two bass singers. Zelenka himself sang (he must have sung a *ripieno* tenor part), and he almost certainly would have directed the performance from that position.

The report of the elector's visit published in the *HStCal* for 1735 states that, following the civic reception, His Royal Highness was welcomed at the entrance to St Petri with a speech given in Latin. Preceded by knights and clerics and

<sup>3</sup> In a report of the history of *Erbhuldigungen* held in Bautzen, Dr Rüdiger Laue published a facsimile reprint of the list of instrumentalists and singers sent from Dresden for the events of 1733. This report is given in the program notes for 'Lausitzer Musiksommer' (Bautzen, 2010), published as 'Music bei Huldigungen der böhmischen Könige und sächsischen Kurfürsten in der Oberlausitz als Ausdruck der sichtbaren und hörbaren Macht'. Birgit Mitzscherlich from the Archiv-Bibliothek Kunst, Bischöfliches Ordinariat Bautzen (D-BAUd) kindly brought this report to the writer's attention.

followed by his ministers and *Cavaliers* from the Dresden court, he was led through the Lutheran end of the *Dom* where a chair had been placed for him below a baldachin. He chose not to sit there. Instead, he moved ahead to the Choir at the Catholic end of St Petri where he listened to the *Te Deum laudamus* accompanied by trumpets and timpani and ‘the pleasant *musique* of the *Capell musicorum* and castrati from Dresden’. This report of the *HStCal* suggests that the new elector had resolved to assert his change of confession in the presence of the Lutheran people of Oberlausitz because he, as his father before him, had converted from Lutheranism to Catholicism. Thus, this elector was an eligible candidate in the elections to the Polish crown that were soon to be held. (Only a Catholic could be elected to the non-hereditary position as King of Poland.) The *HStCal* report confirms that a structure had been built at the Catholic end of St Petri to accommodate the thirty musicians required for the *Te Deum* performance. It was removed the following day.

A surprising feature of the instrumental ensemble to perform on this occasion was the inclusion of a number of players who only recently had been admitted to the *Hofkapelle*. Exactly one third of the instrumentalists who travelled to Bautzen were relative newcomers. At the wish of Friedrich August, they had been employed in 1731, and it is almost certain that the prince would have been advised and prompted by Johann Adolph Hasse, who in that year was based in Dresden to conduct performances of his opera *Cleofide*. An undated memo from c.1731 in the prince’s hand shows that due to some positions within the ensemble of French dancers and actors of the Dresden court becoming vacant, as well as the departure of the male soprano Andrea Ruota, the sum of 2500 plus 500 *Thaler* had become available to the *Hofkapelle*. The memo proposed that this money could be employed to engage a group of new musicians because most of the players were now elderly and incapacitated. (*Ces 2500 Thaler pourois etre employes a mettre l'orchestre en etat qu'il en a grand besoin la pluspart etant invalide*). In short, by 1731 the *Hofkapelle* was badly in need of new blood! Included among the instrumentalists named by the crown prince were three players from the ensemble of Count Wackerbarth. Decisions taken by the prince in 1731 gave the Dresden court an ensemble within the *Hofkapelle* the constitution and internal proportions of which were those of a classical orchestra—an ensemble for which countless symphonies were to be written by a coming generation of composers.

The paper proposed the identity of the *Te Deum* performed on this occasion. In accordance with the role and duties of a Dresden court *Kapellmeister*, this should have been a work from the pen of the holder of that position. In 1733 the incumbent was Jan Dismas Zelenka, as the superior of Dresden’s court church unequivocally stated in the letter to the Dean of the Collegiate Convent of St Petri. Already, Zelenka had made two settings of the Ambrosian Hymn: ZWV 145 from c.1724, and ZWV 146 from 1731—a work entered into Zelenka’s *Inventarium* with the comment: ‘à 2 Cori: NB in P. Choro sunt 2 C.’. It was suggested that the later setting (ZWV 146) was the work performed during the *Erbhuldigung* in May 1733, especially as its scoring is for two choruses and (with one exception) the required instrumentation agrees with the musicians sent to Bautzen. Despite Zelenka’s statement ‘à 2 Chori’ this is not a usual polychoral

work. Chorus I comprises SSATB vocal soloists (two solo sopranos and an alto are required only in one movement which is set as a vocal trio for SSA) while Chorus II consisted of ripienists. Moreover, while twenty-six performance parts (now missing in Dresden) were once held for the earlier *Te Deum* (ZWV 145), the score of the 1731 setting was accompanied by 36 parts,<sup>4</sup> a number approximating the instrumentalists and vocalists together with trumpeters and a timpanist from among the Dresden court's trumpet ensemble. It could be argued that for the 1733 performance two horns replaced two of the four trumpets required in the original setting. Knowing the elector's love for this instrument (throughout the 1720s the horn players Tobias Butz and Joseph Götzl had served in his personal court), it is quite possible that Zelenka altered the scoring to allow the Schindler brothers to take part in this event.

Finally, it was noted that later that year, on 21 December 1733, members of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* again set out on a journey for the coronation in Cracow of Friedrich August II and his wife, Maria Josepha, as king and queen of Poland. Upon arrival in Bautzen, however, the musicians learned that their journey was not to continue: the Polish magnates had offered their own players for the coronation ceremonies. Nevertheless, before returning to Dresden, members of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* performed instrumental and vocal *Tafel musique* for Maria Josepha on 27 December. They were heard again when she attended a service at St Petri on the following morning.

In conclusion, the quality of musical taste demonstrated by Elector Friedrich August II (soon to become August III, King of Poland) was noted. His involvement in bringing new players into the *Hofkapelle* in 1731, and the lengths to which he went to secure an appropriate performance space for his musicians in St Petri *Dom* of Bautzen, reveal enlightened musical support and attention to detail at the highest level at the court of Dresden—a well-informed patronage that raised his *Hofkapelle* to rank so highly among the musical establishments of Europe. This quality of patronage made the elector a most worthy recipient of the *Missa* (BWV 232<sup>1</sup>), a work that was dedicated to him by Johann Sebastian Bach within a matter of weeks after this visit to Bautzen.

*When additional documentation becomes available a fully referenced transcript of this paper, authored by Janice B Stockigt and Jóhannes Ágústsson, will be submitted for publication.*

<sup>4</sup> These performance materials are missing from Dresden. Three parts for the chant 'Salvum fac', however, remain with the score today: D-DI, Mus. 2358-D-48.