Introduction

Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* (1926; revised 1927) dates from towards the end of the final, exultant phase of his compositional career. Begun when he was seventy-two, this Mass constitutes the peak of a remarkable sustained burst of creative energy encompassing the eight years following the First World War, a period in which he also completed three operas – *Kát'a Kabanová* (1919–21), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1921–3) and *The Makropulos Affair* (1923–5) – as well as the Sinfonietta (1926) and several chamber pieces. After a short break the Mass was followed by two further major works: *From the House of the Dead* (1927–8) and the Second String Quartet (1928). This late flowering of Janáček's old age helped him to achieve a degree of international fame that would have seemed incredible to him ten years earlier.

The composer's rapid rise to prominence and astounding productivity in his last decade owed much to the enthusiastic reception of the 1916 Prague premiere of his opera *Jenůfa* (1894–1903). First performed in Brno (his home town) in 1904, this opera took twelve years to reach the more cosmopolitan Prague stage. During his frustrating wait for recognition, a disillusioned Janáček finished only a modest number of works. The 1916 premiere precipitated a sudden improvement in his fortunes. Universal Edition acquired the rights outside Czechoslovakia for the score of *Jenůfa* and initiated performances in Vienna and several German cities. Equally importantly, Max Brod (1884–1968), the leading Prague-based German novelist and critic, wrote an extremely complimentary review of the opera and translated its text into German. Brod became a zealous promoter of Janáček's music, translating the song cycle *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* (1917–20) and all the composer's subsequent operas apart from *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* (1908–17). Buoyed up by his belated success, Janáček now completed several projects started half-heartedly before the War and embarked on a whole series of fresh ones.

Other factors that contributed to Janáček's Indian summer of concentrated compositional activity were his new mood of optimism engendered by the recently acquired independence of his country and his friendship with Kamila Stösslová (1892–1935), the wife of an antique-dealer in Písek, Bohemia. Janáček probably met Kamila, thirty-eight years his junior, for the first time in the Moravian spa town of Luhačovice in 1917. He rapidly became enamoured of her and, though she did not reciprocate his feelings, he wrote to her regularly for the rest of his life. In his more than 700 letters to Kamila he ascribes to her the inspiration of several of his works including the *Diary* and *Kát'a*.

The *Glagolitic Mass* is undeniably one of Janáček's most renowned non-operatic works, but church music in general forms only a minor part of his oeuvre. In addition to a few Czech hymn harmonisations and some organ pieces, he wrote about a dozen small-scale sacred compositions with Latin texts and four in the vernacular, the slightly more substantial *Moravian Our Father* (1901; revised 1906), and three masses. Of the masses, the first (c. 1872) is lost and the second (1907–8) is an unfinished didactic setting in the *Missa brevis* style. Thus the *Glagolitic Mass* is Janáček's sole major composition with a sacred text. Furthermore, this work, with its large orchestra and substantial proportion of purely instrumental movements and interludes, is designed for the concert hall, not for liturgical use.

One reason why Janáček's cultivation of music for the church was so limited was his attitude towards religion. Despite having spent some of his formative years in an Augustinian monastery, he was agnostic as an adult. He expressed scepticism about the existence of God many times, declaring in print that he would make up his mind only when he could see for himself (p. 120), and he refused extreme unction on his deathbed. Unsurprisingly, therefore, he was drawn most frequently to texts on erotic, natural or patriotic themes.

Janáček's neglect of sacred music was also a manifestation of the decline of liturgical composition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this period church music became increasingly the province of minor composers, while the relatively few settings of sacred texts by important figures such as Liszt and Verdi were conceived as grand works for concert performance. The gulf between church music and contemporary mainstream developments was widened further by the Cecilian movement. The aims of this movement included the promotion of a strictly functional role for ecclesiastical music, a return to the *a cappella* polyphonic style of the sixteenth century and the banishing of orchestral instruments from

churches. Cecilian principles were expounded by prominent clerics and musicians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but they were not put into practice until the second half of the nineteenth. The German church musician Franz Xaver Witt (1834–88) was mainly responsible for the implementation of Cecilian reforms in German-speaking countries and the dissemination of the movement's theoretical precepts further afield. In 1869 he was the principal founder of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Cäcilienverein, an organisation which was awarded the sanction of the Holy See the following year, and which encouraged the setting up of many sister societies throughout Europe. Despite the less extreme stance adopted towards instrumental participation in the liturgy by a later leader of the movement, Franz Xaver Haberl (1840–1910), Cecilianism exerted a stranglehold on Catholic church music well into the twentieth century, an ascendancy that was reinforced in 1903, when Pope Pius X's *Motu proprio* discouraged the orchestral mass.

The musical activities of the Cecilian movement clearly helped to deter Janáček from writing regularly for the church, but the text of his *Glagolitic Mass* is to a certain extent a product of the Czech strain of Cecilianism. In the Czech lands the movement's leading pioneer was Ferdinand Lehner (1837–1914), who founded a periodical entitled *Cecilie* in 1874. In addition to historical studies, catalogues of sacred polyphony etc., this publication printed short compositions in the restrained Cecilian style by such composers as Josef Cainer (1837–1917), Josef Foerster (1833–1907) and his son Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951). From the initial stages, Czech Cecilianism assumed a patriotic orientation. In particular, it became associated with research carried out by scholars of linguistics into the first liturgical language of the Czech lands, Old Church Slavonic, and its two scripts, Cyrillic and Glagolitic. This language had been introduced into what is now Moravia by the ninth-century missionaries Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius, but had been supplanted in the West Slavic region by Latin when the Roman rite was imposed on that part of Europe after Methodius's death in AD 885. Modern study of Old Church Slavonic began with the Czech scholar Josef Dobrovský's *Institutiones linguae slavicae dialecti veteris* (1822), but it was not until the Croat Vatroslav Jagić published his important editions of two major Old Church Slavonic codices in 1879 and 1883 that it was finally possible to separate this language from later accretions. Jagić's first edition coincided with one of the earliest manifestations of the rise of Czech 'Cyrillism' (as the nationalistic reinterpretation of Cecilianism has been labelled): the establishment

in 1879 by Lehner in Prague of a music society called the Ecumenical Cyrillic Union. In the same year the journal *Cecilie* was renamed *Cyrill* (later *Cyril*), though its musical content changed little in style.

As knowledge of Old Church Slavonic increased and the influence of Cyrillist ideas spread throughout Bohemia and Moravia, scholars began to compile missals which, while adhering to the format of the Roman Catholic rite, were mainly written in a later Croatian variant of Old Church Slavonic employing Glagolitic characters. In the early years of this century transliterations into Latin letters of the Ordinary of the Mass from these missals had become available in printed editions. The transliterations soon began to interest composers influenced by Cecilian/Cyrillist ideals. For example, in c. 1920 Karel Douša (1876–1944) wrote his *Missa glagoljskaja* Op. 21a for unaccompanied mixed chorus; and in 1923 J. B. Foerster produced his *Glagolská mše* Op. 123 for chorus and organ. Both these works are designed for liturgical use and are Cecilian in their modest scope and understated idiom. Their performance in church was made possible by a Papal edict in 1920 permitting the celebration of the Roman rite in Church Slavonic in certain Czech churches on major feast days, such as those of St Wenceslas (28 September) and Sts Cyril and Methodius (7 July).

Janáček's composition of a *Glagolitic Mass*, which post-dates those of Douša and Foerster, is therefore on one level a consequence of the patriotic linguistic and liturgical researches connected with the Cyrillist movement. That Janáček shared the partly nationalistic motivation, if not the musical objectives, of the Cyrillists is also evidenced, for example, by the specifically Czech inspiration behind his first five operas. Another influence on his decision to set a Church Slavonic text was his espousal of the pan-Slavic concept of a union of all the Slav peoples, an idea which was admittedly always more important as a symbol than a concrete political aim. From the days of his youth Janáček regarded Russian as the key modern Slav tongue, and he studied it throughout virtually his entire adult life. Moreover, he based several instrumental works and his operas *Kát'a* and *From the House of the Dead* on Russian literature. But since Church Slavonic in its earliest form was close to Proto-Slavic, the common ancestor of all living Slav languages, this was in principle an even more satisfactory linguistic medium for the expression of Janáček's pan-Slavic sympathies.

Of course, Janáček's Mass is very different in scale and musical conception from its Cecilian counterparts. Its starting-point is the nineteenth-century concert mass with vocal soloists, large chorus and full orchestra, as exemplified by Liszt's *Missa solemnis* (1855; revised 1857–8) and

Hungarian Coronation Mass (1867). Like Verdi's Requiem Mass (1874), its style is dramatic, even operatic in places. Furthermore, it is much more significant historically than the earlier Glagolitic masses: its early performances outside Czechoslovakia meant that it played a part in the general European revitalisation of sacred art music, for both concert and liturgical performance, by prominent composers after the First World War, a rejuvenation which embraces such works as Vaughan Williams's Mass in G minor (1920–1), Poulenc's Mass (1937), Kodály's *Psalmus hungaricus* (1923), *Budavári Te Deum* (1936) and *Missa brevis* (1942–5), and Stravinsky's Mass (1944–8). Above all, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* surpasses its predecessors in terms of sheer imagination. Its highly original musical language and its unique combination of elements from West and East European liturgical traditions have earned it justified and widespread acclaim as a masterpiece of the twentieth-century choral repertoire.

I

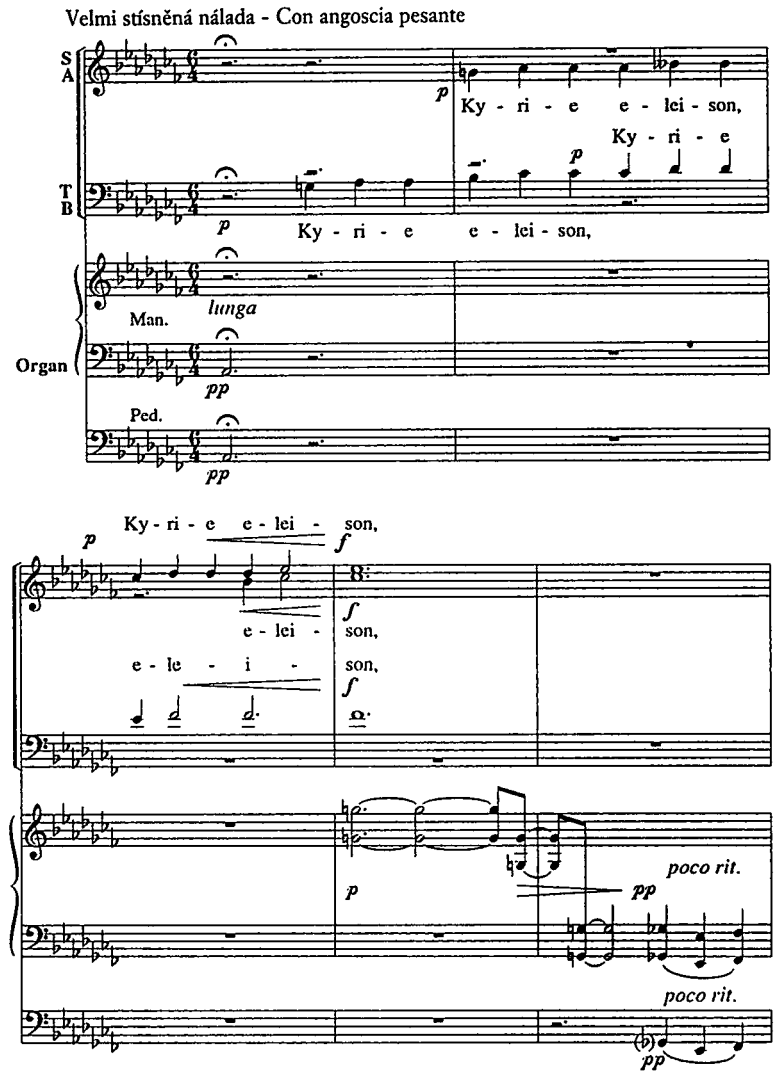
Genesis and reception

Composition and revision

The origins of the *Glagolitic Mass* go back to before the First World War, as do those of some of Janáček's other late works – for example, the String Quartet No. 1.[1] In 1907–8 the composer began to draft a Latin Mass in Eb for mixed chorus and organ. He dictated this unfinished piece to his composition pupils at the Brno Organ School in spring 1908 as an example of how to set a sacred text. Janáček wrote only a Kyrie, an Agnus and about two-thirds of a Credo. He then put the work aside, returning to it in 1926, when he reused much of it in the first draft of the *Glagolitic Mass* and afterwards destroyed his score of the earlier piece.

The Latin Mass has been preserved owing to the endeavours of Vilém Petrželka (1889–1967), a Czech composer who had been a Janáček pupil in 1908. Just before Christmas 1942, fourteen years after Janáček's death, Petrželka reassembled the work from his own transcript and those of some fellow ex-students of the composer, and at the beginning of 1943 he completed the Credo. Petrželka then orchestrated all three movements. In 1946 Hudební matice of Prague published the individual parts for Petrželka's completion of the choir and organ version. The full score, in preparation when Hudební matice was closed down in 1949, was eventually issued jointly by Supraphon of Prague and Bärenreiter of Kassel in 1972.[2]

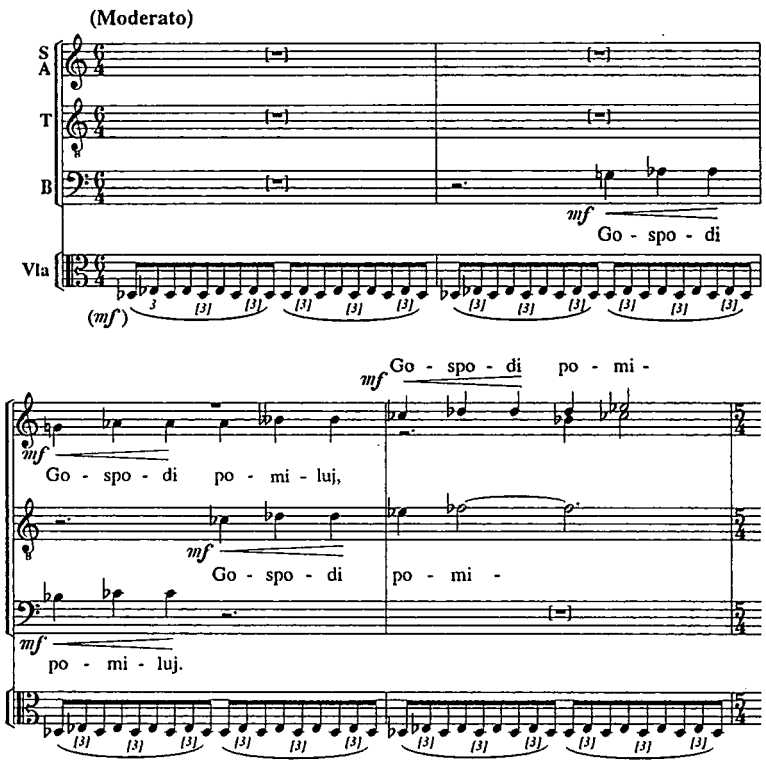
Examples 1 and 2 demonstrate the close relationship between the Latin and Glagolitic masses. They show bb. 1–5 of the printed score of the 1908 Kyrie and a transcription of the corresponding section of the initial draft of the 1926 'Gospodi'. Although Example 2 contains a motive (in the two solo female voices in the last three bars of the excerpt) not employed in the 1908 Kyrie and already identifiable as the principal motive of the published 'Gospodi' of the *Glagolitic Mass*, it does incorporate all the music in Example 1 with minimal alterations. In fact, the entire 1908 Kyrie



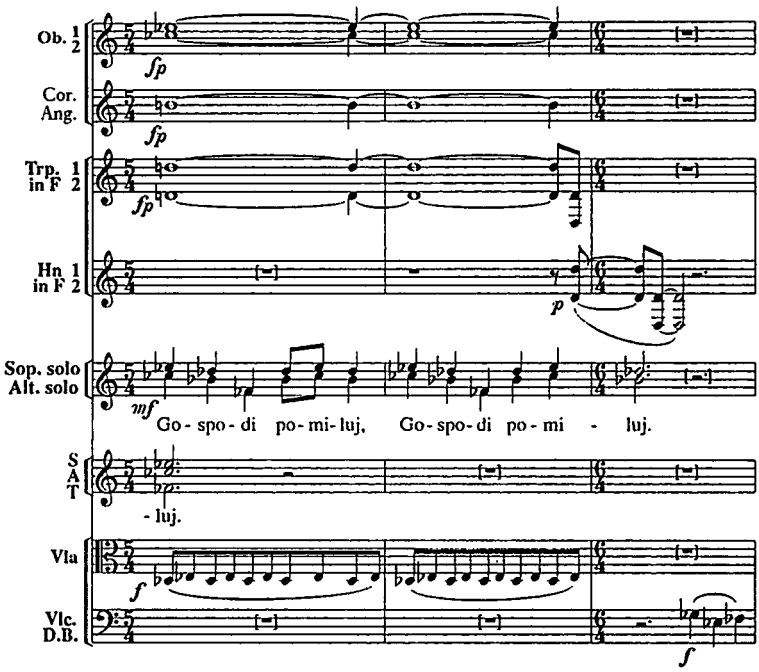
Ex. 1

provides the framework for the first draft of the expanded 1926 movement. Many ideas from the 1908 Credo and a substantial part of the Agnus were also reused in the initial drafts of the equivalent movements ('Věruju' and 'Agneče') of the later work.

Janáček's revisions of the *Glagolitic Mass* removed literal quotations from the earlier piece. Nevertheless, the published versions of the two works still contain some striking correspondences on various structural levels. For example, the opening *a cappella* phrases of the 1908 Agnus and 1926 'Agneče' are similar: each contains a *crescendo* and ends with a downward fall of a second in an inner part. On a larger scale, both movements juxtapose mainly unaccompanied homophonic choral statements with an intermittent instrumental ostinato.



Ex. 2



Ex. 2 *continued*

According to Petrželka, Janáček said to his pupils when dictating the 1908 Mass: 'Write Latin, but think Czech' (Vogel 1963, 147). This remark suggests that, nearly twenty years before the *Glagolitic Mass* was composed, the possibility of setting a Slavonic Mass text had occurred to him. However, it was not until 1921 that this idea was developed further. Father Josef Martínek, also once a Janáček pupil, writes (Vogel 1963, 317):

> It was perhaps at the beginning of the school year 1921–2 when Janáček . . . said to me that in the holidays he had met Archbishop [Leopold] Prečan . . . in Hukvaldy . . . Janáček told the Archbishop that he had been to a nearby church and that the music there had been feeble . . . To his talk of a decline in church music the Archbishop said: 'Well, maestro, you should compose something worthwhile'. Janáček . . . did not want to set a Latin text: 'If only I could get hold of an Old Church Slavonic one' . . . I told him that this would be easy, since I had the Old Church Slavonic text, in fact two copies of it . . . Both copies were the same, but the text published in *Cyril* [1920], a church music periodical, was

> edited by [Josef] Vajs, an authority on the Old Church Slavonic liturgy. The accented syllables of each word were printed in bold type. I recommended this text to him and lent it to him, so that he could copy it out for himself. The *Glagolitic Mass* was composed to this text.

Even if Janáček acquired a Church Slavonic text in 1921, it was another five years before he began his musical setting. In the intervening period he was busy with *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *The Makropulos Affair*, as well as with his 1924–5 revisions of his early opera *Šárka* (1887–8). He also wrote two chamber works – *Youth* (1924) and the Concertino (1925) – and the Sinfonietta, which was completed on 15 May 1926 (Wingfield 1987b, 100–1).

In June–July 1926 Janáček sketched and drafted his Capriccio for piano left hand and wind. Towards the end of July he put this piece to one side and at last turned his attention to the Church Slavonic text supplied by Martínek. He made some brief sketches and then left for Luhačovice, where he often spent part of his summer vacation. There he wrote an entire draft of the Mass between 2 and 17 August, drawing substantially on his Latin Mass of 1907–8. At this stage the work had seven movements arranged in the draft in the following order: 'Úvod' (Introduction), 'Gospodi' (Kyrie), 'Slava' (Gloria), Intrada, 'Věruju' (Credo), 'Svet' (Sanctus) and 'Agneče' (Agnus). The initial three movements of the draft were written between 2 and 9 August, the next three were finished by 15 August and the 'Agneče' two days after that.

Having completed the draft, Janáček wrote to his wife on 17 August: 'I am still missing from that Mass *the printed Cyrillic text* and many pages of sketches. We found some – but that is not all of them. I have done a lot of work here and I would like to get the rest off my hands quickly when I return.' (Večerka 1957, 64). Obviously, Janáček had departed hurriedly for Luhačovice, leaving some material behind. The reference to a printed text perhaps suggests that he did not return Martínek's *Cyril* copy in 1921, or that he obtained a duplicate in the period 1921–6. The fact that he managed to draft the work in Luhačovice without this printed text indicates that he took his own handwritten copy of it with him – possibly his 1921 transcript – and, indeed, of the two manuscript texts corresponding to the *Cyril* version that have survived, one is in Janáček's hand and seems to date from no later than 1926. In addition, the composer does not appear to have been too inconvenienced by his mislaying some sketches, so either these contained ideas already rejected or he was able to remember their content when he compiled his draft. (Few early sketches for the work are now