

ON THE PROBLEMS OF PARODY AND STYLE IN THE  
“ET RESURREXIT” FROM THE MASS IN B MINOR BY  
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

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PARODY SOURCES FOR THE “ET RESURREXIT” CHORUS:  
FACTS AND SUPPOSITIONS

The opinion that the “Et resurrexit tertia die” chorus from the “Credo” movement of Bach’s Mass in B minor (BWV 232) is in fact a parody was first proffered by Friedrich Smend as early as 1956.<sup>1</sup> As in the case of the chorus “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” Smend believed that the passage was an adaptation of the introductory movement from a now lost instrumental concerto by Bach.<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis was grounded mainly on the evidently concerto-like quality of both the mighty choruses. In the wake of Smend’s theory, in the 1950s a growing conviction was felt that Bach’s Mass in B minor was in fact predominantly made up of parodies.<sup>3</sup> To date, only seven

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<sup>1</sup>Smend, “Missa, Symbolum Nicenum, Sanctus, Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem (später gennant ‘Messe in h-moll’)” in *Johann Sebastian Bach, Neue Ausgabe Sämtlicher Werke* [hereafter cited as *NBA*], *Kritischer Bericht*, 2/1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1956), 145–47. The final version of this article is possible thanks to the support of The State Committee for Scientific Research of the Republic of Poland for my research project, “The Polish Style in German Music of the Eighteenth Century: Functions and Meaning on the Example of the Work of Johann Sebastian Bach,” in 2004–2007.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 108–12.

<sup>3</sup>Although—as rightly pointed out by Alfred Dürr—this problem was tentatively recognized as early as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Alfred Dürr’s “Zur Parodiefrage in Bachs h-moll-Messe. Eine Bestandsaufnahme,” *Die Musikforschung* 45 (1992/2): 117.