

JOHANN JOSEPH FUX

(ca. 1660–1741)

Laetare turba

E 80

Notes on the work

Edition: Ramona Hocker

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NOTES ON THE WORK

Johann Joseph Fux, “Laetare turba” (E 80 / FuxWV IV.4.59)

Context

Johann Joseph Fux’ “Laetare turba” belongs to the genre of soloistic offertory motets composed to a non-liturgical, free poetic text.¹ The anonymous author does not work with any obvious allusions to pre-existing Bible or plainchant texts. Its contents and the music set to it place the affect of “joy” in the foreground. The short, lightly scored work was intended for use in the liturgy, and was not, as will presently be seen, connected to any special occasion or performed in any one location.

E 80 can be traced in five sources, of which three have been preserved (see the Critical Commentary). Although the copyist of the sources in Meiningen and Český Krumlov (Krumau) can be localized in Vienna, no copy of the work is preserved there. A Viennese origin of the work is nevertheless highly likely. Only the copy of the score from the holdings of Duke Anton Ulrich of Saxe-Meiningen is dated; the year 1727 noted on the flyleaf therefore represents only a *terminus ante quem* for the piece.² The sources thus offer insufficient information for establishing possible contexts of origin and performance.

The recitative, which refers to the ascent into heaven of a saint, points to a canonization or its anniversary. The text refers to the life of no specific saint, with the exception of the name that can be inserted at will – some sources show what is effectively a blank at this spot. The motet can therefore be (re-)used for various saints’ days. The recitative names “Aloysius” only in the copy of the score – a reference to the Jesuit Aloysius Gonzaga, who was canonized in 1726; but the score was produced as a collector’s item and would not have been performed at the Protestant court of Meiningen, and so it can be assumed that the copyist took the text word for word from the (Viennese) original.

The canonization, requested by the Jesuits, granted in 1725, and carried out on December 31, 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII, applied to two Jesuit saints simultaneously: Besides Aloysius, the Polish nobleman Stanislaus Kostka was made a saint.³ From the beginning the two were honored and worshiped as “twins”, for their life stories exhibit certain parallels. They were both of noble birth, entered the Jesuit order against the will of their fathers, lived ascetic, chaste, penitential lives, and died young in Rome. In addition, Aloysius was born in the year of Stanislaus’ death. The Habsburgs were connected to both saints, as the house of Gonzaga had provided two empresses (Eleonore, second wife of Emperor Ferdinand II and Eleonore, third wife of Emperor Ferdinand III) and Stanislaus had studied two years in Vienna, where after experiencing miraculous visions, he resolved to enter the Jesuit order. Both Joseph I and Charles VI actively advanced the process of their canonization with letters to the Pope.

The Jesuits celebrated its successful conclusion in the summer and autumn of 1727 with eight days of processions, high Masses, sermons and theatrical performances. The *Wienerisches Diarium* gives extensive reports on the observances that took place especially in the Jesuit churches of Vienna (*Professhaus*, university church, St. Anna), but also in several others in the order’s Province.⁴ The procession in which the imperial court participated⁵ and the tribune of honor erected in the *Professhaus* receive special, detailed

1 See Rudolf Walter, “Die Kompositionen von Johann Joseph Fux zum *Offertorium*”, in *Johann Joseph Fux and the music of the Austro-Italian Baroque*, ed. Harry White, Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1992, pp. 231–261.

2 See Lawrence Bennett, “A little-known Collection of early-eighteenth-century Vocal Music at Schloss Elisabethenburg, Meiningen”, in *Fontes Artis Musicae* 48, No. 3 (July–September 2001), pp. 250–302, here p. 260.

3 The description is based on Maria Pötzl-Malikova, “Berichte über die Feierlichkeiten anlässlich der Kanonisation der Heiligen Aloysius Gonzaga und Stanislaus Kostka in der österreichischen Ordensprovinz”, in *Die Jesuiten in Wien. Zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der österreichischen Ordensprovinz der Gesellschaft im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen zur Kunstgeschichte 5), edd. Herbert Karner and Werner Telesko, Wien: ÖAW-Verlag 2003, pp. 157–164. – See also the regular reports in *Wienerisches Diarium*, already starting with [September 12, 1725](#).

4 The multiply transmitted *Missa* L 7 by Fux bears the title “*Missa S. Aloysij*” in a copy kept by the Prague Knights of the Cross with the Red Star (CZ-Pkříž XXXVI A 81); it is possible that a differently titled mass by Fux was used for a celebration in honor of St. Aloysius in Prague and named accordingly. – A copy of this mass has also been preserved in the collection of Duke Anton Ulrich of Sachsen-Meiningen, but only under the title “*Missa à 4*”. See Bennett, “A little known Collection”, p. 260.

5 Charles VI, his wife Elizabeth Christine and the Archduchess Mary Magdalene took part in such a procession, which was by no means usual – normally this high attendance was reserved for the Corpus Christi procession. See Pötzl-Malikova,

descriptions.⁶ As so often is the case, the *Diarium* gives only a little vague information about the music; we can be certain that at the high Mass and the *Te Deum*, large-scale, solemn works with trumpets were heard. The procession will have been escorted, as was usual on high feast days, by several bands of trumpets and tympani. “Impressive vocal and instrumental music” was heard in the evening on the illuminated tribune at the *Professhaus*.⁷

A performance of “Laetare turba” as offertory motet at one of these services seems natural and plausible, but the question arises as to how it would have fit into the celebrations specifically dedicated to two saints. In the media as in art, the “twin saints” are always portrayed either together or opposite each other. E 80 would have to be complemented by another piece taking Stanislaus as point of departure – in other words, the offertory would consist of two motets. Moreover, the textual theme of the present motet treats only of the “ascension” of the blessed, while specific characteristics or attributes – in the case of Aloysius, chastity, zeal, love, the blazing fire or bright light of the Sun and of the Faith, as well as the symbolic lily – go unmentioned. The model of the Meiningen score probably took a previously existing motet, rewrote the text, and altered it for soprano for a possible performance as part of the eight-day celebration in honor of Saint Aloysius.⁸ It is striking that the canonization took place during Duke Anton Ulrich’s stay in Vienna; it is possible that he heard a Jesuit performance of this motet by Fux and then commissioned a copy. The other five motets in the Meiningen manuscript Ed 126t may also have had a similar origin. A non-liturgical performance could have taken place in front of the tribune; under such circumstances it seems quite possible that each saint was commemorated separately. Because of the great need of music for the eight days of celebration, it would have been natural to adapt pre-existing, textually and musically appropriate pieces.

The Music

The scoring of “Laetare turba” with solo voice (tenor/soprano), two concertante violins and continuo corresponds to the “stile mediocre”.⁹ Recitative and second aria have continuo accompaniment, while the outer movements use the full forces. Fux forgoes an expansion of volume through the use of additional voices in the final movement.

In his setting, Fux emphasizes the theme of joy, which appears again and again in the text. Proclaimed in the first aria in dance-like 3/4 time, it opens the entire motet like an epigram. The invitations to herald the happy occasion – “laetare”, “concine” and “plaudite” – are underlined by melismas and repetitions; they express a never-ending jubilation finally culminating in the *Alleluia*. In his sacred compositions, Fux places high value on the text and its understandability in his conception of church music, there is no place for unmotivated dramatic or virtuoso effects. In this sense, his coloraturas are employed purposefully and without exaggeration, such that propounding the text always has first priority.¹⁰

Formal construction

As Rudolf Walter has pointed out, the aria-recitative-aria and *Alleluia* of “Laetare turba” largely follows the form of the Italian solo motet, “welche aus zwoen Arien und zweyen Recitativen besteht, und sich mit

“Berichte über die Feierlichkeiten”, p. 159. – See also the entry in the ceremonial protocols for August 3, 1727 ([fol. 235v](#)).

6 Appendixes to *Wienerisches Diarium* no. 64 of [August 9, 1727](#), no. 65 of [August 13, 1727](#), no. 66 of [August 16, 1727](#) and no. 67 of [August 20, 1727](#).

7 *Wienerisches Diarium* no. 64 of [August 9, 1727](#), p. [6f.] concerning August 9, 1727. A Latin poem by Franciscus Pankl is printed in this report, too. – The Chronicle of the Jesuits for the year 1727 also mentions music only in general terms, both for the celebrations held in Vienna and elsewhere. See *Litterae annuae provinciae Austriae Societatis Iesu a. 1727*, A-Wn Cod. 12121, fol. 3v–47r: Caput IX (celebrations in honor of the Saints Aloysius and Stanislaus), especially fol. 41r–45r with the report from Vienna.

8 See the Critical Commentary for the reasons from a musical perspective.

9 Stylistic categories after Kilian Reinhardt, *Rubriche Generali* (1727; [A-Wn S.m. 2503](#)), see also Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, *Kirchenmusik am Hofe Karls VI. (1711–1740). Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Zeremoniell und musikalischem Stil im Barockzeitalter* (Studien zur Landes- und Sozialgeschichte der Musik, Bd. 1), München / Salzburg: Emil Katzbichler, 1977, pp. 146 and 155–160 (concerning the motets).

10 An interesting counterexample is the solo motet “Gaude, laetare turba fidelis” (ZWV Z 168) by Jan Dismas Zelenka ([D-DI Mus. 2358-E-35](#)).

einem Halleluja schließt [...]”,¹¹ as it is described by Johann Joachim Quantz – although in this case, the opening recitative is lacking.¹² Fux does not commence with an instrumental introduction, but rather puts, as a kind of substitute for the recitative, the main vocal theme on the text “Laetare” over a stationary *F* at the beginning like a motto, before the instrumental ritornello begins.

The opening strophe, consisting of four verses of eight syllables each, is treated twice; the second traversal is similar in ductus to the first, but the motifs are mostly new. The first pass begins with the repeated and melodically extended “Laetare”-motto above a scalewise descending bass, before the complete first verse is sung. The second verse leads to the dominant C major (bars 22, 26). After a five-bar section from the ritornello comes the repeat of the strophe, where the text is presented cohesively and without interruption. Here Fux returns to the home key *F* major (cadence at the end of the strophe, bar 58). In what would appear to be the final ritornello, voice and instruments appear together for the first time, creating an increase in volume. After the cadence (bar 68), Fux adds a final instrumental passage that recalls the voice’s opening motto and thereby rounds off the form.

The seven-bar recitative begins in narrative fashion with small intervals over three bars of a single bass note, while the text explains the reason for the feast day. The static mood is brought to an end with a third inversion seventh chord and the high note *e_b*, in order to emphasize the word “Deo”. Then the bass departs from its long *B_b* and paints the celebration of the saint’s ascension into heaven with an upward scale that also serves as a basis for the sixteenth notes of the vocal line as they circle ever higher.

The following continuo aria, “Mortales plaudite” (*B_b* major), in da capo form begins with a prelude of two bars and a half that anticipates the first notes of the vocal theme. The second, cadential section of the ritornello separates the two traversals of the text; a shortened version of the same is used to close the A section (bars 105–107). The five verses are divided with two to the A section and three to the B section; in both sections the text passes more than once (both A sections: twice per strophe; B: the strophes once, with a closing repetition of the two final verses). Whereas the two text-traversals in the A sections are barely related musically, the text repetition in the B section calls forth varied but clearly recognizable motivic connections. The parallel between the third and fourth verses (“Mundum contemnite / coeli concinite”) is reflected in the retained motif of the vocal line (bars 108 ff. and 111–113); but the bass line has a different melody, thus preventing a small-scale parataxis in the harmonic realm. Multiple repetitions lend an almost ostinato character to this short, single-bar motif, underlining its invitation to expressions of joy. It recalls the beginning of the ritornello especially in terms of rhythm, and thus the first vocal motif as well (“Mortales plaudite”).

Fux leads the listener to a different key for each text repetition. This creates a clear tonal organization in four parts, marked by cadences, which corresponds to that of the text: The first passage in the A section departs relatively quickly from the home key *B_b* major to the fifth degree of the scale; the recapitulation of the text returns to the tonic. The harmonically less compact B section makes way for minor keys and cadences on the VIth (*G* minor) and the IIIrd (*D* minor) degrees. The multiple repetitions of the second verse and the re-iterated cadences serve – especially in the da capo – to create a feeling of finality and to fix the home key.

The closing “Alleluia” (*F* major) exhibits – possibly as a result of the extreme brevity of the text, which does not point to a given form – the most musically advanced organization. Fux expands its tonal spectrum beyond that of the first aria, centered on the tonic and dominant, or the da capo aria with its B-section explorations of the IIIrd and VIth degrees of the scale, and here includes a section in the subdominant (*B_b* major); by contrast, the key on the dominant is largely avoided. The initial instrumental ritornello is laid out in two parts through a cadence on the dominant midway through, and a return to the tonic at the end. The vocal motto, which recalls the opening of the ritornello, is answered by an instru-

11 See Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, Berlin: J. F. Voß, 1752, VIII. Hauptstück, note to 19. §, p. 288. See also Peter Cahn, “Zum Typus der Motette ‘a voce sola’ im späten 18. Jahrhundert”, in *Die Motette. Beiträge zu ihrer Gattungsgeschichte* (Neue Studien zur Musikwissenschaft Bd. V), Herbert Schneider in collaboration with Heinz-Jürgen Winkler (edd.), Mainz et al.: Schott, 1991, pp. 269–281, here p. 270f.

12 See Rudolf Walter, “Bemerkungen zu den Kompositionen von Johann Joseph Fux zum *Offertorium*”, in *Johann Joseph Fux and the music of the Austro-Italian Baroque*, ed. Harry White, Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1991, p. 231–261, here p. 244.

mental cadence on the tonic (bar 128), such that the move to C major is shifted to the first vocal strophe. The expansion of the tonal space is ongoing, and in both vocal and instrumental passages, the following keys are touched upon: D minor (bar 133 ritornello and bar 138 voice), A minor (bar 141 ritornello), G minor (bar 142 voice). After the home key (cadences in bars 143 and 146), the expected closing ritornello surprises not only by the way it is put together (see below), but also harmonically through the use of the IVth degree (B-flat major), avoided until now. With what might be called an insert that does not lead to the dominant (and cadences again), Fux achieves a delay, and at the same time strengthens the definitive ending. The final section thus becomes a pendant to the beginning, which defined the tonic with its ritornello and motto.¹³ Unlike the first aria, the last movement – and so the entire motet – ends in a “tutti”. In this fashion, Fux manages an effective sense of climax with the means at hand.¹⁴

The concertante in competition and cooperation: voice and instruments

According to Peter Cahn, the lineup of movements in E 80 corresponds to that of Vivaldi’s solo cantatas, except for the fact that this composition is generally more oriented towards the trio sonata than the solo concerto, as in Vivaldi’s case. He says further that, in this sense, both outer movements present a synthesis of trio sonata and motto aria, and that the influence of Corellian trio sonatas can be seen most especially in the frequent use of imitation and prepared dissonance.¹⁵ With these considerations as background, let us now examine thematics and the interrelationships of vocal and instrumental layers more closely.

The outer movements of E 80 are based on the same principle, namely the concertante alternation of instrumental and vocal sections.¹⁶ This consecutive layout not only provides clear organization, but also allows a dramaturgical use of simultaneity of both layers for an effective closing.

In the first movement, there is no direct relationship between ritornello and vocal motto. The instruments come into play with filler (bar 16 ff.) and ritornellos at the pre-destined places, namely the borders between verses and strophes. The latter demand their own space, causing longer breaks in the presentation of the text (bars 21, 25). The later ritornellos recall material from the first. Vocal passages – especially the second, uninterrupted traversal of the text (bar 41 ff.) – come in the guise of an aria with continuo accompaniment. The ritornellos remain in the key in which the voice previously arrived, and are in this sense inserted into the vocal framework.¹⁷ However, at certain moments the two layers are immediately interdependent: The opening ritornello, with its abrupt shift to the dominant, is built harmonically on the back of the introductory vocal motto and the tonic key that was fixed into place there. The voice is integrated into what ought to be a closing ritornello, coming after the final tonic cadence that ends the second exposition of the text – supported by the bass, it takes a deceptively cadential *A* to avoid too strong an ending. The first violin continues to take the lead, while renunciation of rhythmical filler in the second violin and modification of the bass line (which previously has been emphasizing the sequences) could be seen as concessions to the rather static vocal line. The voice gains melodic substance only when

13 On the function of the motto and the design of the beginning and end see Norbert Dubowy, *Arie und Konzert. Zur Entwicklung der Ritornellanlage im 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Philosophische Fakultät, Studien zur Musik Bd. 9), München: Wilhelm Fink, 1991, pp. 124–130.

14 As Walter notes, purely instrumental conclusions are rather rare in Fux’s offertory motets. See Walter, “Bemerkungen zu den Kompositionen von Johann Joseph Fux zum Offertorium”, p. 244. – Such a ‘tutti effect’ achieved by combining instruments and vocal part is found in many contemporary solo motets; see the works edited in *Johann Joseph Fux: Motetten und Antiphonen für Sopran mit Instrumentalbegleitung*, edd. Hellmut Federhofer and Renate Federhofer-Königs (J. J. Fux. Sämtliche Werke vol. III/1), Graz: ADEVA, 1961 and in *Geistliche Solomotetten des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Camillo Schoenbaum (Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich vol. 101/102), Graz / Wien: ADEVA, 1962.

15 See Cahn, “Zum Typus der Motette ‘a voce sola’”, p. 274f. – On Corelli see Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli und seine Zeit*, ed. Birgit Schmidt, Laaber: Laaber 2009, concerning the trio sonatas see pp. 112–157 and pp. 200–217 on the concerti grossi.

16 Comparisons with other solo motets by Fux or from the Viennese context show (see the editions cited in note 14) that the relatively consistent retention of a vocal-instrumental scheme (successively alternating, simultaneously enveloping, intermittent or dialoguing) cannot be regarded as standard, for many compositions are characterized precisely by the diversity of instrumental-vocal interaction.

17 This is also true for the second aria: Except for the initial ritornello, which restores the skin tone in the da capo, the short instrumental passages confirm the preceding vocal cadenzas. – Basics on the ritornello principle are explained in Dubowy, *Arie und Konzert*, especially pp. 100–116 and 195–200.

the instruments suddenly break off (bar 65). Here too, the continuo proves itself an active partner, and comes to its cadence only at the end of the verse's extended melisma. This situation differs from the last movement, with the instruments having the final word – the temporary combination of both layers is only part of a longer closing procedure. In the instrumental coda, the vocal and the instrumental parts are united in yet another way, within the first violin picking up the vocal theme that was developed from the motto. For the very ending, it takes over the soloist's independent cadence formula (including the dotted closing figure) from the preceding shared ritornello.

In the continuo aria ("Mortales plaudite"), the bass anticipates the top of the vocal theme, extended with a typically instrumental cadence formula. In this movement, the purely instrumental passages are concentrated at the formal breaks: beginning, end of the first traversal of the text in the A section (bars 93 ff., only the cadential section of the ritornello), and the transition to the B section, which also functions as the final ritornello (a slightly reduced version of the instrumental opening). The text is thus heard as a whole, without instrumental interruption. The articulation of the sections, as well as the rhymes, are strengthened by the use of the same closing formulas: The end of each verse has a dotted figure (♩ ♪ ♪) which is stretched out at cadences on "victorias" and "glorias" to insure a closing on the heavy beat of the bar. In terms of melody, the voice ends sections with a *clausula tenorizans*, which is also introduced at cadences with a similar set of intervals (leap of a fifth and linear ascent). Only the break to the da capo violates this principle, with its *clausula cantizans* and missing leap of a fifth.¹⁸

The theme of the "Alleluia", first presented in the opening ritornello, was planned contrapuntally in advance. Through imitation at the fourth, the middle of the ritornello opens up to the dominant. The ritornello feeds off of the two-part complex of the first bar, which – in imitation, transposition and *Stimmtausch* (voice exchange) – provides the framework for the entire movement. With its cadential motif and I-V-I structure, it contrasts with the ritornello of the first movement, based on stepwise sequences with appoggiaturas on the interval of the sixth. The voice only picks up the livelier motif with the characteristic long upbeat (♩ ♪ ♪) which began in the first violin.

The final movement is in many ways designed as an opposite to the initial aria: The vocal line takes up the theme from the instrumental exposition, the sung motto comes after the opening ritornello, and the voice is involved in the ending. Due to the dialogue passages, the concertante element here is more in the forefront. The two layers also participate in building the structure, with the instrumental sections not simply remaining in the key reached at the end of a strophe, but aiding in the harmonic development as well.

The common thematic basis of voice and instruments is already made clear in the motto. Even though we are dealing here with the opening ritornello, the first statement of the theme comes from the singer (instead of the second violin) and is imitated a fourth higher by the first violin. After a brief instrumental comment in bar 142, the next small-scale direct dialogue is found in the chain of melismatic sequences from bar 143, where the voice's long notes are filled out with the sixteenth-note *circulatio* of the violin. The voice attests his powers of endurance by carrying his line all the way to the cadence in F major (bar 146). The tonic has been reached, and the instruments have entered with the ritornello, when the singer unexpectedly joins in with the *comes*. The return to the original key which follows the cadence on B♭ (bar 150), is achieved by the singer, accompanied only by the continuo. Its cadence once again signals the entrance of the ritornello – and here too, the singer participates. In this case, however, he does not take the main theme as he did the previous time; his line is instead built into the three-part writing (static repeated notes at first, then parallel with the continuo).

In the outer movements, the disposition of the instrumental writing (two violins and continuo), and its resultant pairing of the upper voices, leads to similarities with the trio sonata.¹⁹ The aspects mentioned by Cahn primarily concern the shaping and voice-leading in the strings. A comparison with Vivaldi's vocal works – for example, the *Introduzione al Gloria* "Longe mala, umbrae, terrores" (RV 629) mentioned by Cahn – shows that Fux uses the instruments more contrapuntally and largely avoids unisoni; in addition,

¹⁸ Fux used the *clausula cantizans* already in the deceptive cadence in bar 113 (repetition in bar 117).

¹⁹ On the trio principle and the treatment of the concertante solo part, see Dubowy, *Arie und Konzert*, pp. 183–195.

their melodies are more singable and the motivic building blocks are less sharply separated from each other. Fux's string writing shows fewer strong contrasts at short distance, and its effect is therefore less dramatic. And yet, with the solo voice, concertante elements force their way into the picture, encouraged by the acoustic contrast between vocal solos and instrumental tuttis, as well as by the very prominence of the singer. And of course, the way in which ritornello-like instrumental sections provide order, the centering of the ritornellos on various degrees of the scale, and the use of changes in scoring for purposes of formal construction are all well-known techniques taken from the concerto and solo aria.

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