

On the eve of the Zelenka Conference in Prague in 2017, I sat with Wolfgang Horn for two and a half hours to discuss Zelenka. At that time, I was preparing my PhD thesis (now completed) at the University of Melbourne,¹ and I wanted to understand the posthumous fate of Zelenka's music and his reputation. Since I began researching Zelenka in 2010, I have become completely unconvinced by arguments that Zelenka lived a miserable life in Dresden, that he was a hypochondriac, a recluse, and so on. I wanted to understand why people spoke and wrote about Zelenka this way, given that so little evidence exists to support these speculations. This meant I had to piece together the story of Zelenka's reputation and his music during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which I did by conducting extensive archival research in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and the UK (in person), and elsewhere via the internet. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with scholars and musicians who had been involved in the emergence of Zelenka studies during the last two decades of the twentieth century. These interviews were discussed in the last two chapters of the thesis. I was thrilled when Wolfgang Horn agreed to be interviewed; I didn't know, at that time, that the reflections I was documenting would be among his last.

Each of the interviews I undertook for that study was subjected to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which is a method that facilitates the extraction of underlying themes from interview transcripts.² The method is mainly used in psychology in order to understand how people make sense of their own experiences, but it can be applied in other disciplines, and in the thesis I applied it historically. In one sense, the aim of this paper is to discuss the findings of the analysis of my interview with Horn, as a way of reflecting on his contribution to the field of Zelenka studies. But these findings are based on the ideas and themes I believe I can discern from the transcripts. And when I found out that Horn had died the week I submitted the thesis, these changed: his words came to mean something new. When I received the email informing me of Wolfgang's death I cried, and this reaction surprised me: I barely knew him! I had met him on one or two occasions prior to our interview in 2017 and, certainly, a couple of hours together talking about Zelenka does not, in any way, amount to a long, meaningful friendship.³ Since his death, I have looked on the transcript of our interview with different eyes, so

¹ Frederic KIERNAN, *The Figure of Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745) in the History of Emotions* (PhD diss., University of Melbourne, 2019), <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/228873>. The research undertaken for that thesis and for the current paper was generously supported by the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, CE1101011.

² Jonathan A. SMITH, Michael LARKIN, and Paul FLOWERS, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* (Los Angeles and London: SAGE, 2009).

³ For the original analysis of the interview, see KIERNAN, *The Figure of Jan Dismas Zelenka* (↵ note 1), esp. chapters 6 and 7, pp. 171-233.

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Abstract

This paper uses the late Wolfgang Horn's own reflections about his relationship with the music of Jan Dismas Zelenka as a lens through which to consider broader questions about the nature of the Bohemian composer's music, its reception history, and music historiography. Based on an interview conducted with Horn during the Zelenka Festival in Prague, October 2017, it considers Horn's legacy as a driver of, and witness to, the rise of Zelenka studies in the 1980s, and the impact of this German scholar on our understanding of Zelenka today. It is not the aim of this paper to present and discuss systematically all the themes that emerged in the analysis of the interview with Horn; readers are referred to the author's PhD thesis for those findings. Rather, this paper uses that interview as the basis for something of a eulogy for an esteemed member of our scholarly community: a reflection on Horn's contribution to the field of Zelenka studies and the personal and intellectual questions that his death raised for the author. Because of this, the somewhat informal tone of the spoken paper—presented at the Zelenka Conference in Prague, October 2019—has been retained in this written version.

Key words: Zelenka, Jan Dismas; Horn, Wolfgang; Baroque music; history of music

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the other aim of this paper is to attempt to explain what I mean by that, and what I think this tells us about the nature of music historiography.

Many readers of this paper will already know who Wolfgang Horn was, and what his major contributions to Zelenka studies were, but perhaps some will not; for this reason, I will weave in some key points from Horn's biography into the discussion of our interview. He was born in Stuttgart in 1956, and by the late 1970s he was completing a *Magisterarbeit* in Tübingen, writing a thesis about the early keyboard sonatas of C. P. E. Bach. This was published as a book in 1988 after a fairly long period of revision, and at the time of our interview Horn still considered this book to be his best.⁴ During the late 1970s he also got to know Thomas Kohlhase, and it was through this connection with Kohlhase that Horn became acquainted with Zelenka. According to Horn, a mathematician friend of Kohlhase had said to him,

Oh, there's an awfully interesting composer who nobody knows, and his name is Zelenka, and he has written funny pieces for two oboes and bassoon. Well, just listen to them.⁵

Horn said this was the beginning of a story in which he became involved a few months later.

Together with Kohlhase, Horn established a research relationship with the musicologists at the Saxon State Library in Dresden, especially Wolfgang Reich and Ortrun Landmann. Horn recalled that after Kohlhase had written to Dresden, a verbal contract was made whereby Reich and Landmann would provide microfilms of Zelenka's music to the researchers in Tübingen, along with a list of books that Kohlhase and Horn should provide in return—books that were not available in the German Democratic Republic. Horn observed that this arrangement functioned very well, because, in his words, “one hand washed the other”.⁶ By 1978 or 1979, they had almost every work by Zelenka on microfilm in Tübingen, and with this, a more-or-less clear overview of Zelenka's whole repertory.

Horn's job, initially, was to go through the very long rolls of film, cut them where each new piece or section began, and put them into boxes. He also wrote down everything that he had seen in some kind of preliminary catalogue of Zelenka's works. Horn joked that this process was not very good for his eyes, nor for his relationship with Zelenka's music, because he had no microfilm reader at home, so he had to hold up each piece of microfilm to the window in order to read the music on it by the light. This was painstaking, foundational research, and it was necessary because, at this time, there was no works list, nor any comprehensive documentation of the context in which the works were composed. Horn was aware that Landmann was preparing a catalogue of musical sources at the Saxon State Library—and he expressed great admiration for the meticulousness of her work—but this catalogue did not appear until 1983, and by then research in Tübingen was well underway. One imagines that Landmann's catalogue surely served as a foundation for the thematic catalogue of Zelenka's music published by Wolfgang Reich in 1985.⁷

This early research in Tübingen led to several strands of activity. The first of these was a publishing plan for the series *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, which would include editions of the big, late masses of Zelenka interspersed with other works such as the litanies and the late *Miserere* (ZWV 57); and the second was to edit the smaller works such as the psalms and Marian antiphons for Carus Verlag. Horn's very first edition of a work by Zelenka, a Magnificat setting, was published by Carus in 1980.⁸ This work was chosen first because Bach's Magnificat was so well known, so a receptive audience already existed. As Horn put it, “with other composers, you need not explain what a Magnificat is, but you must explain what a *Laudate pueri* is”.⁹ Their publishing strategy thus hinged on the marketplace, and the way Bach's dominance in the marketplace had shaped audience expectations.

Carus Verlag was, at that time, a very young publishing house—an offshoot of Hensler Verlag—and it was then being run by Günther Graulich, whom Horn described as the “managing editor and soul” of the business.¹⁰ According to Horn, Graulich and his wife ran the publishing

⁴ Wolfgang HORN, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: Frühe Klaviersonaten: Eine Studie zur „Form“ der ersten Sätze nebst einer kritischen Untersuchung der Quellen* (Hamburg: Karl Dieter Wagner, 1988).

⁵ Wolfgang Horn, interviewed by Frederic Kiernan, Prague, 5 October 2017.

⁶ Horn, interview (↪ note 5).

⁷ Wolfgang REICH, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke* (ZWV) (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, 1985).

⁸ Jan Dismas ZELENKA, *Magnificat in D*, ed. Wolfgang HORN (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 1980).

⁹ Horn, interview (↪ note 5).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*



**Wolfgang Horn and
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Michaela Freemanová
(† 15. 6. 2017)
at the Zelenka Prague
Conference,
15 October 2015**

house from two desks in their basement, as a rather “improvised project”,¹¹ putting out one edition after another. Horn recalled with laughter that Carus was always a little bit angry that they sent the attractive pieces to *Das Erbe deutscher Musik* while Carus got the leftovers, or the “junk food”, as Horn put it.¹²

During the early- and mid-1980s, Horn also worked on his doctoral dissertation, which was supervised by Georg von Dadelsen. His doctoral research involved two trips to Dresden with Kohlhase in the early 1980s, and Horn recalled these trips very fondly in our interview. This was partly because he was aware of how different things are now, politically: he recalled how Dresden was, at that time, “a far-away land. It was farther away than France or Italy or Great Britain, because there was this Iron Curtain.”¹³ He said these memories were important to him because “it was very special and it’s just not there anymore”.¹⁴ Horn’s dissertation was accepted in 1986, and published in 1987 as *Die Dresdner Hofkirchenmusik 1720-1745: Studien zu ihren Voraussetzungen und ihrem Repertoire*.¹⁵ This book is one of the foundational texts in the field of Zelenka studies.

Horn’s doctoral thesis was initially supposed to focus on Zelenka specifically, as a transmitter of Italian Catholic church music north of the Alps, but in the early stages of his research Horn quickly realised that he didn’t think this was true, and he also disliked the idea of undertaking a study that appeared to have a pre-determined outcome. In Zelenka’s music, there was too much else going on to merely place him in this category alongside Heinichen and Hasse. Horn recalled that he and his colleagues “thought the music mirrored a special kind of man, a kind of man who is, as an artist, more interesting and more self-contained, self-related than Heinichen”.¹⁶ Horn continued:

Heinichen’s music is fluent, but it’s always so predictable, and predictability for me is a sign of quality and not of high quality ... I think I can say we thought of Zelenka as one of [the] few really original Baroque composers.¹⁷

¹¹ Horn, interview (↵ note 5).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Wolfgang HORN, *Die Dresdner Hofkirchenmusik 1720-1745: Studien zu ihren Voraussetzungen und ihrem Repertoire* (Stuttgart: Carus Verlag, 1987).

¹⁶ Horn, interview (↵ note 5).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Horn identified Zelenka's use of chromaticism, especially in fugues, as being particularly striking, as well as his use of concertante choirs, especially at the beginning of the Gloria. But the dilution of focus in Horn's dissertation from Zelenka specifically to the wider context of the Dresden Catholic court church was also a reflection of the fact that Zelenka was, during the 1980s, not perceived as being an appropriate topic for a doctoral study on his own. This was partly because Zelenka was not considered then to be a composer of the "first order", a term Horn used somewhat ironically. Horn also produced a substantial manuscript on Zelenka's masses, but this was rejected by publishers for the same reason. Such a book would have been quite an achievement in the 1980s or 1990s, but at the time of our interview Horn considered the manuscript outdated.

The collaboration between Horn and Kohlhase in Tübingen with Reich and Landmann in Dresden also led to the publication of the foundational two-volume sourcebook *Zelenka Dokumentation: Quellen und Materialien*,¹⁸ whose meticulous organisation, description and cross-referencing of the sources have rendered it an enduring necessity for Zelenka researchers, even if many new sources have since emerged. Horn was lead editor on this publication, which appeared in 1989. After this, Horn's research spread in various directions beyond the realm of Zelenka and the Dresden court: for his *Habilitation* he wrote a thesis about the Renaissance music theory of Gioseffo Zarlino,¹⁹ and he published articles and *MGG* entries on various other baroque composers and theorists. He also undertook several studies on more critical issues in musicology, such as the relationship between music and science, and the so-called "cultural turn".

Horn's ability to discuss such a wide range of musicological and cultural issues at a sophisticated level allowed him to consider Zelenka and his music from multiple perspectives. This was one of the things that impressed me most about him. Before our interview I already knew that he had an intimate knowledge of basically every bar of music that Zelenka wrote. But our conversation revealed him to be a highly sensitive and perceptive man who was very attuned to the ways that music and life were connected, and who cared greatly about making sure these things were understood properly. He was offended by reductive explanations of why Zelenka's music mattered, since, for him, rather more complex and difficult explanations were needed. Horn went into great detail about one developing trend in music theory, stating

I don't know if you ever came in touch with this discipline of music theory, music theorists, who do no other things than to analyse music. And there is a fraction of them who call themselves "historically informed". And they have a new kind of method now, which comes from the United States ... which has much to do with the writings of Joseph Riepel. So, these music theorists take from this Riepel harmonic models, which they give names, so that every piece composed by a composer like Zelenka can be reconstructed as a series of this or that model, so it looks like a construction ... *Bauklötze* [building blocks], like children have ... This is a bit of a problem for me, since these music theorists are only interested in construction or reconstruction and everything seems like [it is] made from a cookbook and I don't think they get to the human dimensions of composing by that. They are satisfied when they have identified their blocks, which they have given names. And so, I am a bit afraid that, sooner or later, from this corner comes an analytical study of the music of Zelenka. And I think this would misrepresent Zelenka for me, or at least for people who think of Zelenka as a creative unity ... And so far, there is no big difference between my understanding of analysis and theirs, but they restrict themselves in looking at music as being there to be analysed and nothing more. The culture behind this music doesn't interest them ... They lose, I think, the integrity of the art of composing ... And we should not lose this background of cultural history and I think we should not reduce Zelenka to a person who is sitting at his writing desk and thinking only about harmonic models or things like that. He thinks of so much more, and he thinks in languages which these analysts don't understand. They do not need them. And so I think you're losing a little bit of that, what's interesting in it.²⁰

¹⁸ Wolfgang HORN et al. (eds.), *Zelenka-Dokumentation: Quellen und Materialien*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1989).

¹⁹ Wolfgang HORN, 'Est modus in rebus...': *Gioseffo Zarlinos Musiktheorie und Kompositionslehre und das „Tonarten“-Problem in der Musikwissenschaft*, 2 vols. (Habilitation thesis, Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover, 1995).

²⁰ Horn, interview (≠ note 5).

Horn also knew that discussions about Zelenka's music sometimes revealed cultural points of friction between Czechs and Germans. Nevertheless, he did not shy away from making bold statements about Czech history and Czech culture. He did not speak Czech, despite living the last years of his life only an hour from the Czech border, and he said that he felt ashamed by this. But he reflected on the fact that many of the barriers that had separated scholars in the past were breaking down, and this new-found closeness with other scholars, some of whom he had known for a long time, pleased him immensely.

In his view, these developments were due in large part to changes in research culture. The culture of conferencing, for example, is very different now than it was in the 1970s and 80s. Horn said, for example, that, at that time, "you were alone as a Zelenka scholar".²¹ Susanne Oschmann's dissertation on Zelenka's oratorios was published in the same year as Horn's,²² but the two never got to know each another. The team producing Zelenka editions for Carus Verlag and *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*—Horn and Kohlhase, along with Volker Kalisch, Mathias Hutzel, Reinhold Kubik, Paul Horn (no relation to Wolfgang), and others—functioned productively, and for a long time, in spite of the fact that several of them never met. Horn said "at that time, we wrote letters. We sent parcels. We had no idea that something like the internet would be possible."²³ Some of these relationships lasted, too. Paul Horn wrote to Wolfgang shortly before he died in 2016. In his old age, Paul had retired to Ravensburg, a small town in southern Baden-Württemberg,

from which, according to Wolfgang, "you can see the Swiss Alps on clear days".²⁴ Wolfgang remembered Paul's words, saying "Now, before I reach the real paradise, I live here, in a kind of pre-Paradise".²⁵ Their bond was strong, even though they never met.

This explains something to me about music historiography, about the nature of our discipline. It reminds me that we write history from within history, not from outside of it. Even as we seek to grasp what is stable and objective and factual in our understanding of the events of the past, the process of assembling those facts and organising them into knowledge is always shaped by the social parts of ourselves as people. Our relationships with other scholars are a part of the discipline, and they inform the kinds of histories that we write, and the kinds of things that we let ourselves know.



Wolfgang Horn at the Zelenka Prague Conference, 15 October 2015

²¹ Horn, interview (↵ note 5).

²² Susanne OSCHMANN, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: Seine geistlichen italienischen Oratorien* (Mainz: Schott, 1987).

²³ Horn, interview (↵ note 5).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

So, on the one hand, it makes sense to say that we gather as scholars at the Zelenka Conference because we care about Zelenka and his music. This is a truism: if we were not interested in Zelenka, we would simply hold a conference about something else! But, on the other hand, my interview with Wolfgang, and my reaction to his death, reminded me that music is social glue, even for music historians, and that I care about the members of my scholarly community partly because of Zelenka: because of the aesthetics, because of how beautiful I think the music is, and because I know my colleagues see that too. Wolfgang saw it, and that's why I cried, even though I didn't really know him at all.