



Newly Discovered Treasures from Colonial California: The Masses at the San Fernando Mission¹

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IN 1769, Junípero Serra (*b* Petra, Majorca, November 24, 1713; *d* Carmel, California, August 28, 1784) departed from Mexico City on an overland journey through Baja California to San Miguel Bay (now called San Diego) where on July 16, 1769, he founded the first of twenty missions that were to dot the California landscape.

Already by September 26, 1773, Indians at nearby Rincón (four miles north of the San Diego presidio) were singing the *alabado* taught them that month by Serra and his colleagues (Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, Vol. II, Part I [San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1912], 128). In his first report to the Mexico City viceroy dated December 10, 1773, Fray Francisco Palou wrote that what most attracted the indigenes to San Diego Mission was "their fondness for hearing the neophytes sing" (Francis Weber, *The Proto Mission, A Documentary History of San Diego de Alcalá* [Hong Kong: Libra Press, 1979], p. 15). Among Serra's

companions, the Mexican-born Fray Ángel [Fernández] Somera (*b* Michoacán, 1741) brought a spinet to San Diego Mission. Left there when in 1771 Somera went north to found San Gabriel Mission, this spinet—by now in bad condition—was played by Pedro Font to accompany himself while singing Mass at San Diego presidio January 14, 1776 (Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions*, Vol. IV: *Font's Complete Diary* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930], p. 204).

To house more Indians, the Mission was moved in August 1774 five miles up San Diego river to its present location. So great continued being the attraction of the Latin music taught Indian neophytes at San Diego that by October 7, 1776, Serra could take pride in a boys' choir at the new location up river "singing the *Asperges* and other things to perfection" (Junípero Serra, *Writings*, ed. Antonine Tibesar [Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955–1966], II [1956], pp. 70–71). On December 23, 1814, two missionaries at San Diego could reply to a questionnaire from the overseas secretary of the Spanish government thus: "they play our [European] instruments with some ability and would be proficient if they had some one to perfect them, for they are very fond of our musical instruments" (Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Diego Mission* [San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1920], p. 183).

¹ This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the Thirty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the College Music Society in San Diego, October 29–November 1, 1992. Some of the early findings were initially presented in a greatly condensed form in the paper, "The Mexican Cathedral Music of Zumaya and Jerusalem: Lost Treasures, Royal Roads, and New Worlds," given as part of the Round Table "Cathedral Music in the Iberian World, 1500–1800" at the Fifteenth Congress of the International Musicological Society, Madrid, April 3–10, 1992.

Not only did the missions serve California indigenes but also they became the spiritual, cultural, and musical centers of Spanish colonial society un-



til their secularization by Governor José Figueroa's decree dated August 9, 1834. Unfortunately, however, very little mission music from the earliest decades has survived. Most of the extant works are homophonic vocal compositions; items involving complex polyphony or orchestral writing are extremely rare. Until now, only one concerted Mass setting (i.e., a setting for voices and orchestra) from that period has been inventoried—the elegant *Mass in G major* by Ignacio Jerusalem presently housed in the Santa Barbara Mission.²

But timed to coincide with the beginning of the Columbus Quincentennial Year a serendipitous discovery at the San Fernando Mission in January by John Koegel expanded the repertoire of concerted masses by a factor of four. In three uncatalogued folders, he found the performance parts for three “numbers” masses in which the various sections of the Ordinary are subdivided into separate autonomous sections that vary in tempo, meter, key, texture, and scoring. Two masses in F-major and D-major are for single choir, and the third is a D-major polychoral setting. Each compares favorably with José de Nebra's masses; flowing melodies, interesting touches in orchestration, and other sophistications abound. The folders contain only performance parts, some of which are missing: there are no accompanying scores. The continuo parts for all three masses—as well as the first violin and soprano parts for the *Mass in F*—have not yet surfaced.

Although the masses lack ascriptions, at least two of them are by Ignacio Jerusalem, Mexico City Cathedral chapelmaster 1750 to 1769. Coincidentally, Serra himself during three of his years 1758 to 1767 in Mexico City was *vicario de coro* of San Fernando College (Francisco Palou, *Relación histórica*, cap. x). Autograph scores of Jerusalem's Masses in D Major and F Major in the Mexico City Cathedral Archive are signed and dated; the *Mass in D* was completed in 1763 and the *Mass in F* in 1768.³ Stylistic and structural considerations strongly

²For a modern edition of this mass with critical commentary, see George Allen Harshbarger, “The Mass in G by Ignacio Jerusalem and Its Place in the California Mission Music Repertory,” D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 1985 [University Microfilms 8521599]. A concordant version of this mass with an attribution to Ignacio Jerusalem is in the Puebla Cathedral, catalogued as Legajo LXX.

³The *Mass in F-major* dated 1768 is catalogued as Legajo D b 14 and is titled *Misa a 4 con Violines, Oboes, Flautas, Trom-*

pas, y Vaxo. Con Ricursos de Segundo Coro y Organos. The *Mass in D* dated 1763 is catalogued as Legajo D b 13 and is titled *Misa a 4º, Con Ripieno, Violines, Trompas, y Baxo [y oboes, clarines, y timbales]*. Dr. David Hunter and Charla Dain at the University of Texas sent me microfilms that have allowed me to confirm these correspondences.

hint that the third mass in this new treasure trove, the polychoral *Mass in D*, is a Jerusalem composition as well.

This supposition is reinforced by the similarities in paper type and orthography that link the physical features of this manuscript polychoral mass to its companions in the San Fernando Mission. The paper stock is identical for all three works. The sheets are in an oblong format measuring 23 × 31 cm with ten staves on a page being the preferred choice for the polychoral D-major and single-choir F-major masses and twelve staves per page for the single-choir D-major mass.⁴ All sheets have the same general texture and feel, and several of the watermarks recur in each of the three works.⁵ Although various scribal hands are discernible in these compositions, the notational conventions resemble each other very closely.⁶ Given the common paper stock,

⁴23 cm height by 31 cm width. The single-choir *D-major Mass* is on 12-staff paper with the sole exception of the alto part which is on 10-staff paper. All parts for the polychoral *Mass in D* are on 10-staff paper except for two violin parts on 12 staves per page. The *F-major Mass* uses 10 staves per page for the vocal, violin 2, and organ parts: its two oboe and two horn parts are on 12-staff paper.

⁵One watermark that recurs in the paper for each of the three masses is that of a large “CS.” The same is true for a large crescent with some irregular “dimples” on the inside arch. The organ part for the *Mass in F* has one sheet with three crescent moons in a row. The *Mass in D* and the *Mass in F* have the following watermarks: a large “VB”; a flowered shield; half of a dimpled crescent with the large letters “LZ” placed below; and a florid seven-point crown. The two watermarks that do recur in the polychoral *Mass in D* (the large “CS” and the dimpled crescent) are also found in the F-major and D-major masses. Furthermore, the polychoral mass has no watermark that is unique to this source. The general texture, size, and feel of the paper throughout the three masses are identical for all sheets.

⁶All of the parts for the polychoral *Mass in D* are in the same hand, except for the clarion trumpet parts. These trumpet parts have the word “Fin” written at the end, and the page has been cut below that word, apparently to save paper for use elsewhere. Like that trumpet part in the polychoral *Mass*, the last sheets of the *Mass in F* instrumental parts are cut off, leaving only a partial sheet when there would have been a significant number of blank staves after the conclusion of the “Trompa 1ª,” “Trompa 2ª,” “Violin 2º,” and “Organo” parts. The organ part for the *Mass in F-major* has the word “Fin” at the con-



overlapping scribal hands, and the similar notational conventions, the three masses were obviously prepared in the same place at roughly the same time.

Since Jerusalem is not yet a household name, a short biographical sketch is here in order.⁷ Born in Lecce, Italy in 1710, Ignacio Jerusalem y Stella was violinist at the Coliseo theater in Cádiz when in 1742 recruited to direct the public theater at Mexico City, the Teatro del Coliseo. A spectacular violinist and accomplished composer, he soon won the nickname of "el milagro musical" or "the musical miracle." On May 27, 1746, the capitular acts of the Mexico City Cathedral refer to him as very intelligent regarding everything musical,⁸ and a few days later the capitular acts commend his great dexterity on the violin and musical expertise—while at the same time proclaiming him the sole "composer in this city or even in Spain playing a violin in a theater orchestra, without thereby harming his case for admission into the cathedral."⁹ The chapter then offered him the substantial sum of 300 pesos for his violin playing—"for which he was famous"—and an additional 200 pesos to serve as teacher of the choirboys.¹⁰ In 1750 he applied for the vacated post of *maestro de capilla* and on July 10 went before the board of examiners,

clusion of the "Sanctus." The organ part of the *Mass in D* and the bass vocal part of the *Mass in F* appear to have been written by the same scribe. The same holds true for the "Violin 2" parts of the F-major and D-major masses.

⁷ Biographical information can be found in Alice Ray Catalyne's entry for Ignacio Jerusalem in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 9, (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 611–612; in the thesis by my student Charlotte Tinne, "The *Responsorio Segundo de S. S. José* by Ignacio de Jerusalem" (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 1991); and in Jesús Estrada, *Música y Músicos de la Época Virreinal*, prologue by Andrés Lira (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1973), pp. 123–37. [Because Estrada was no paleographer, his transcriptions of capitular acts cannot always be trusted. ED. NOTE]

⁸ Ignacio Jerusalem, maestro del Coliseo "es muy inteligente en toda música y composición," Actas del Cabildo el 27 mayo 1746. Cited in Estrada, *Música y Músicos de la Época Virreinal*, p. 125.

⁹ ". . . y tratándose sobre su mucha destreza en el violón [= violin] y grande inteligencia en la música, pues es el único compositor que había esta ciudad y que aun en España . . . que tocaba como violón en la orquesta, esto no le perjudicaba . . . que el ingreso en ella," Actas de Cabildo, 15 julio 1746. Cited in Estrada, *Música y Músicos de la Época Virreinal*, p. 125.

¹⁰ "300 pesos por el violón, del que era insigne, y 200 pesos por maestro de los niños infantes." Cited in Estrada, *Música y Músicos de la Época Virreinal*, p. 125.

which however rendered a divided opinion.¹¹ But after Archbishop Rubio y Salinas interceded Jerusalem on November 3 gained the tenurable post. Thereafter he continued teaching the choirboys at the Colegio de Infantes (including two students who received horn lessons)¹² and in the ensuing years composed the numerous liturgical works now extant at Mexico City, Puebla, Morelia, Guatemala City, Cuenca (Spain), and in California.

His masses, Latin psalms, and responsory cycles thus far transcribed are particularly strong compositions. But while writing them he often neglected his more mundane duties, only his formidable musical talents insulating him from punitive actions by disgruntled church authorities who complained—but then looked the other way, conscious that the quality of his works equalled that of excellent European composers active at the time.

He died in 1769—the same year that Junípero Serra established the first California mission at San Diego. Did Serra know him personally? As noted above, he was based at the Colegio de San Fernando in Mexico City from 1758 to 1767, during the last decade that Jerusalem shone brilliantly at the cathedral as *maestro de capilla*. How appropriate, then, that the surviving concerted masses from the California Mission Period are those that were written by Serra's most famous musical coetaneous at Mexico City.

The so-called *galante* style pervades the masses found at the San Fernando Mission, and Jerusalem's music in general. Sigh motives, "Scotch snaps," slow harmonic rhythm, phrase repetitions (as opposed to chains of sequences), occasional "drumming basses," a preference for homophonic textures, and melodies that exhibit great rhythmic contrast—freely moving from eighth-notes to dotted rhythms to triplet subdivisions—characterize Jerusalem's Latin music. Frequent rests and a hierarchical organizing of the phrases keep his music light and airy. Even when these masses condescend to counterpoint, the writing never becomes angular or "heavy." The fugal "Christe eleison" and "Amen" sections, however rigorous the counterpoint, always sound smooth, elegant, and unforced.

Jerusalem's orchestra consists of a string section—divided into two violin sections plus continuo—an

¹¹ Estrada, *Música y Músicos de la Época Virreinal*, p. 135.

¹² *Ibid.*



independent organ part, and pairs of woodwinds or brass. The copied parts for the *Mass in F* show that the same musicians who played the oboe lines also doubled on flute and *octavino* during the San Fernando Mission performance. Mexico City manuscripts reveal that Jerusalem expected the same doubling abilities from his brass players—for the parts sometimes require the horn players to switch to clarion trumpets for a movement or two during the course of a piece.¹³ At Mexico City the instrumental parts of the *Mass in D*, which has a decidedly martial or military feel to it, include not only clarion trumpets and horns, but also timpany. Long crescendos and an abundance of fanfare motives add to the excitement.¹⁴

As might be anticipated, Jerusalem's violin parts are particularly idiomatic. His two distinct string styles nicely complement each other. On the one hand, he will allocate to the violins fetching melodic passages, rich in rhythmic variety. Steady eighth-notes can suddenly shift to Lombardic rhythms, then give way to a held note or two, proceed to triplets, and then surge in dotted rhythms. In these fluctuating passages, triple stops and wide leaps are not uncommon—and the first and second violin parts often double each other, playing the more dynamic passages in unison. In contrast, when merely accompanying, the two violins now playing thirds or sixths may be assigned vigorous repeated eighth- or sixteenth-notes.

Since he sometimes includes passages only playable *divisi*, Jerusalem clearly requires more than one violinist on a part. Orchestral performance is further implied by the existence of multiple copies of violin and continuo parts for his compositions in the Mexico City Cathedral archive.¹⁵

¹³ Jerusalem's *Dixit Dominus*, for instance, uses horns in the first, third, and fifth movements. The horn players are expected to play *clarines* or clarion trumpets in the extended second movement. Consult Jerusalem's *Dixit Dominus a 4* (Legajo XXI in the Archivo de la Música Sacra, Mexico City Cathedral).

¹⁴ Due perhaps to loss, there is no timpany part at the San Fernando Mission.

¹⁵ Jerusalem's instrumental parts for the "Responsorio Segundo de S.S. José con Violines, Oboes, T[rom]pas & c[ontinuo]," Archivo de la Música Sacra, Mexico City Cathedral, found on Film 3395, Reel 5 at the University of Texas, Austin, as well as those of the aforementioned "Dixit Dominus" include two copies of the "Violin 1^o" parts and two copies of the "Violin 2^o" parts.

Judging from extant performance parts, and assuming that each vocalist had his own part and did not share, the intended size of the Jerusalem Mexico City chorus can be set at twelve vocalists. The number of singers is the same, regardless of whether he writes for a single SATB choir with three on a part, or splits the choir into two unequal groups throughout his polychoral masses—the first choir consisting of four SSAT soloists and the second choir of eight singers in an SATB arrangement, with two vocalists to a part.¹⁶

All four California Mission Period concerted masses exhibit significant musical similarities. The *Kyrie* movements employing full choir divide into three musical subsections, the outer "Kyries" being generally shorter, slower, more homophonic, and less complex than the central "Christe eleison" sections. Fugues or fugal components enter the "Christe" sections of each mass. In no instance, though, do these fugues seem ponderous or obtuse. They are more translucent than opaque, reminding us more of Mozart's counterpoint than of Bach's. The concluding "Kyrie" sections are extremely concise (comprising only three measures in the *Mass in G* at Santa Barbara).

The *Gloria* and *Credo* texts are subdivided in a variety of ways but despite this variety, several compositional tendencies do consistently arise. Elaborate or energetic choral numbers begin and end the *Gloria* and *Credo* texts. The "Domine Deus" and

¹⁶ In Mexico City, the vocal parts are generally divided into two choirs. For Jerusalem's "Dixit Dominus" the first choir parts comprise: *Tiple 1^o*, *Contralto*, *Tenor*, and *Baso Vos*. The "second choir" parts are labelled: *Tiple repiano* [sic], *Tiple Segundo*, *Contra alto repiano* [sic], *Alto Segundo*, *tenor repiano* [sic], *Tenor Segundo*, *Baso Ripieno*, and *Baxo Segundo*. All of the parts bearing the word "segundo" are copied in a different hand. Even so, Jerusalem makes no distinction between the kinds of vocal lines assigned first and second choirs. When the work calls for only a single SATB choir, as in the *Dixit Dominus a 4*, the parts are divided equally among twelve vocalists. *The Responsorio Secundo de S.S. José a 8* has a single copy for the SATB members of the first choir, and two copies of each voice type for members of the "2do Coro." The polychoral *Mass in D* at the San Fernando Mission and the polychoral *Mass in G* at the Santa Barbara Mission place SSAT in the first choir and SATB in the second. Performance resources current in the Spanish cathedrals and chapels of the time permitted even 12- to 16-voice choirs. See Antonio Martín Moreno, *El Siglo XVIII*, vol. 4 of *Historia de la música española* (Madrid: Alianza, 1985), pp. 35, 55-6, 65-6, 68-9, and 101.



“Quoniam tu solus” movements (usually given to a vocal soloist or small group of soloists) are melodically rich. Excursions into minor key areas occur most often in the “Gratias agimus tibi,” “Quoniam tu solus,” and “Et incarnatus” movements. The concluding “amen” of the *Gloria* is either a light-hearted buoyant 3/8 presto section or a brisk fugue. Three of the four masses conclude with a subdued “Sanctus.” Only the *Mass in D* ends with an “Agnus Dei.”

The *Mass in D* at San Fernando is the “brassier” and more martial of the three preserved there. Melodies abound in fanfare motives and echoed phrases—layered over simple tonic-dominant harmonies. In many respects, the work could be considered a “battle mass.” The same fugue heard in the “Christe eleison” movement recurs as the concluding “Amen” of the *Gloria*.

Several sophisticated devices serve to unify the San Fernando *Mass in F*. The ritornelli in the *Gloria* and *Credo* sections frequently grow from the same motivic seeds. Lombardic rhythms or “Scotch snaps” are prominent in both the “Laudamus te” and “Domine Deus” movements. The bonds linking these two movements are reinforced by virtue

of the fact that both movements are for soloists, not full choir.

Of the three masses, the most stunning and beautiful is the polychoral *Mass in D*. Its movements build and grow in direction, with Jerusalem coordinating an increase in surface rhythm, melodic activity, and counterpoint so that the listener is drawn into the piece and then propelled forward with indomitable energy.

In conclusion, these newly discovered masses in California require new histories of musical life in the American colonies. After reading nearly any text on “American” music and examining the pantheon of ordained and “worthy” composers, one would conclude that before 1800 there was no culture west of Boston. The music found at the San Fernando Mission rebuts that viewpoint and irrefutably shows California not to have been a cultural backwater. It is time to add to the names of the British Tans’ur, Knapp, Stephenson, and the “American” Billings and Law the name of Ignacio Jerusalem as that of a much more accomplished composer than any of the Selbys, Grams, or Felsteds known to our New England forbears.