

BACH



NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

MODERNITY'S DIALOGUE WITH BACH— A REVIEW OF JOHN BUTT'S BOOK ON THE PASSIONS

When introducing students to the idea of musical analysis, I begin with Martin Buber's analogy of the tree from his *Ich und Du* (*I and Thou*, 1923), discussing first Buber's approach to the tree and his relation to it in its exclusiveness and then the implications of such an approach for our encounter with a musical work. Buber writes:

I contemplate a tree. I can accept it as a picture: a rigid pillar in a flood of light, or splashes of green traversed by the gentleness of the blue silver ground. I can feel it as movement: the flowing veins around the sturdy, striving core, the sucking of the roots, the breathing of the leaves, the infinite commerce with earth and air—and the growing

itself in its darkness. I can assign it to a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life. I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it only as an expression of the law—those laws according to which a constant opposition of forces is continually adjusted, or those laws according to which the elements mix and separate. I can dissolve it into a number, into a pure relation between numbers, and eternalize it. Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition. But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me.¹

From Buber, I continue with my students to Billy Collins, who I believe implies the same kind of approach, applied specifically (if rather more playfully) to an artwork, in his "Introduction to Poetry":

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide
or press an ear against its hive.
I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,
or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

¹ Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970, 57-58.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.
But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.
They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.²

Buber and Collins both call us to engage an object on its own terms, as itself, while remaining ourselves. In so doing, we open ourselves up to wonder, to delight, and to new understanding. We as musicologists have often been guilty of attempting to "torture a confession" out

² Billy Collins, "Introduction to Poetry," in *The Apple That Astonished Paris* (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 2006 [1988]), 58.

JOHN BUTT



**Bach's Dialogue
with Modernity**

Perspectives on the Passions

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The American Bach Society

of a musical work “to find out what it really means.” What would happen if we instead approached a composition with the reckless abandon and irreverence Collins describes here? One example of what this could look like in Bach studies is found in John Butt’s *Bach’s Dialogue with Modernity: Perspectives on the Passions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Butt’s essay into the nature and history of modernity and its interweavings with J. S. Bach’s Passions is an intellectual tour de force that is both highly stimulating and a delight to read. While treating various aspects of Bach’s John Passion and Matthew Passion, Butt engages with such pressing issues as the nature of the musical work, the idea of modernity and the way this idea has been understood in different times and places, and the ways in which a musical work can both reflect and shape larger cultural movements. Butt’s approach in this “rambling monograph” (p. x) is much closer to dropping a mouse into the Matthew Passion and watching him probe his way out, or waterskiing over the surface of the John Passion and waving at Bach’s name on the shore, than it is to any traditional survey of a musical work.

Butt in no way attempts a systematic analysis of Bach’s two Passions (p. 293), but rather unfolds—in the spirit of both Martin Buber and Billy Collins—multiple possible meanings for, and understandings of, these works. He opens up new ways for scholars, performers, and listeners to engage them in the twenty-first century. While Butt employs careful and detailed musical analysis, such analysis is never an end in itself but rather a means by which we can enter into a relationship with a musical work: engaging it, admiring its beauty and craftsmanship, learning from it, learning what others have learned from it, seeking to understand its meaning to Bach, to Bach’s audiences, for nineteenth-century Romanticism, for twentieth-century responses to modernity, and seeking to find out what it can mean for us today. To borrow language from art historian Michael Baxandall, Butt recognizes that what we as scholars, performers, and listeners are most often really concerned with is the effect of the artwork on us, and it is here that we “locate the sort of interest the [artwork] really has for us.”³ In some way, what Butt seeks to achieve in *Bach’s Dialogue with Modernity* is an account of the effects of the John and Matthew Passions throughout their histories and into the present. In his Afterword, Butt summarizes his goal for the volume thus: “What I have been attempting to examine is the way this music as it survives in notation is the product of broad historical conditions and, with such conditions in mind, opens up the potential for various forms of hearing and reading” (p. 296).

Such an approach thus seeks to explore the musical work from all possible perspectives and gain the fullest sense of its mean-

³ Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Invention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 6.

ings and effects. In his continuing discourse on the tree, Buber explains that all the other modes of approaching it—visual, biological, analytical, reductive, etc.—do not lose any of their meaning or validity as a result of relation:

This does not require me to forgo any of the modes of contemplation. There is nothing that I must not see in order to see, and there is no knowledge that I must forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and instance, law and number included inseparably fused. Whatever belongs to the tree is included: its form and its mechanics, its colors and its chemistry, its conversation with the elements and its conversation with the stars—all this in its entirety. The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood; it confronts me bodily and has to deal with me as I must deal with it—only differently. . . . What I encounter is . . . the tree itself.⁴

In encountering a musical work after this manner, we do not ignore certain kinds of knowledge in order to get at some (unattainable) musical essence. Neither is our experience of the music wholly subjective: this “is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood.” Rather, the music is real, and we engage every possible kind of source in order to encounter it as fully as possible. As Leo Treitler explains: “The analysis of music, like the analysis of anything, is best conducted in the context of all the information that relates to it.” And he goes on to argue for “a sympathetic and canny, yet irreverent, approach to evidence of every cast.”⁵

In seeking to employ “evidence of every cast” to reshape our understanding of Bach and of the John and Matthew Passions, Butt engages a wide variety of approaches including musical analysis, compositional process, historical music theory, historical theology, reception history, the study of cultural contexts, and performance practice. His writing reflects a masterful understanding of previous research on Bach’s Passions, and his work engages the writings of Elke Axmacher, Karol Berger, Eric Chafe, Laurence Dreyfus, Alfred Dürr, Tanya Kevorkian, Robin Leaver, Michael Marissen, Daniel Melamed, Joshua Rifkin, Christoph Wolff, and others. Butt further brings into the dialogue about Bach’s Passions writers not often considered in relation to Bach, including historical figures such as Augustine, M. M. Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, René Descartes, Michel Foucault, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Thomas Hobbes, Plato, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, William Shakespeare, and Benedict de Spinoza, and current thinkers such as Carolyn Abbate, Jeremy Begbie, Hans Blumenberg, Daniel K. L. Chua, Stanley E. Fish, Jürgen Habermas, Frank Kermode, and Charles Taylor.

⁴ Buber, *I and Thou*, 58-59.

⁵ Leo Treitler, “Music Analysis in a Historical Context,” in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 78.

In engaging such a wide array of authors and ideas, Butt not only writes from firmly within the field of Bach research but also broadens the discussion of Bach's Passions by bringing in authors from other fields both within musicology and outside of it. Butt does service both to Bach studies and to the academy more broadly by placing the Passions within dialogues about the nature of the musical work, the nature of history, the history of culture, and the nature of modernity. Butt indicates, both in explanation and in practice, that his primary concern is not with the particular authors who may have influenced Bach's own thinking in his composition of the Passions (although he does consider these, as well), but rather with the broad range of thinkers with whom we may fruitfully dialogue today around the works in order to better understand Bach, the Passions, Western culture, and ourselves. In fact, I feel that a more accurate title for the volume—and one which any publisher would wisely shun—would be “Modernity's Dialogue with Bach.”

Butt's starting point may be seen as reflecting Baxandall's summary of what it means to consider an artwork historically: we consider the physical object itself, which in the case of a piece of music takes place in physical and temporal performance; we also “treat it as something with a history of making by a painter” (composer) “and a reality of reception by beholders”⁶ (scholars, performers, listeners). Butt carefully considers all three aspects in relation to Bach's Passions: the works themselves, the history of their creation and first performances, and their historical and ongoing receptions. And he does this all within the framework of emerging ideas of modernity, especially during Bach's lifetime and shortly afterward, that blossomed to the height of modernity (and of reception of Bach's Matthew Passion) in the nineteenth century.

A question that Butt continually raises throughout the volume is if there is something inherent in Bach's composition of the Passions, and especially the Matthew Passion, which reflected the growing influence of modernity, or if Bach essentially composed as a pre-modern and then the Passions subsequently grew in favor and stature under the influence of modernity. Butt's analysis of the role of Bach's Passions within modernity must be read in counterpoint with Karol Berger's *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). Both volumes engage Bach's Passions around ideas of modernity and musical meaning, and Butt dialogues with Berger's volume both directly and indirectly in his own work. While many of the conclusions of the two volumes are complementary, Butt argues for an earlier and more complex view of modernity's origins and of Bach's interactions with them. Berger, in keeping with prevailing views of the history of modernity, views modernity's origins “in the political, economic,

social, and cultural developments of the late eighteenth century” (p. 5) and thus discusses Bach as a pre-modern. And although Butt recognizes that modernity as we now think of it did not fully emerge until after Bach's time, he stresses instead those developments within Western culture that could be seen as prefiguring modernity.

While he admits that “Much about Bach's known life implies that his worldview and attitudes were primarily those of a pre-modern” (p. 52), Butt clearly aims to demonstrate that many of the ideas we associate with modernity were in fact present in Bach's world—in the plays of William Shakespeare, in the developing genre of the novel, in the devotional practices of Pietism, and in the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, for example. He does not go so far as to claim that Bach was necessarily influenced by these ideas (or in some cases even aware of them), but Butt does argue that a burgeoning sense of modernity was available to Bach and was perhaps reflected in his compositions to some extent. And whether or not Bach intended such, or whether his original audience heard them as such, is largely inconsequential to Butt's argument: “One of the central aims of both this chapter [Chapter 3] and the study as a whole is to suggest that original meanings and uses—whether intended or not—cannot alone explain either the significance or the quality of Bach's Passions within the broader culture of musical modernity” (p. 160).

After the Introduction outlines the broad scope and framework of the study and Chapter 1, “Bach's Passions and the Construction of Early Modern Subjectivities,” presents Butt's fundamental arguments related to the interactions of Bach's Passions with ideas of modernity, the remaining chapters explore interweaving issues related to the Passions: their construction, their reception, their meanings, and the ways in which modernity has dialogued with them. Chapter 2, “Bach's Passions and the Textures of Time,” presents Butt's most direct interaction with Berger's *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow*. Butt analyzes both individual movements and each Passion as a whole within conceptions of time present during Bach's lifetime, with particular emphasis on the ways in which Bach manipulates the listener's sense of time in the Passions. Butt's estimation of the differences in the treatment of time between the two Passions is particularly interesting: he argues that the John Passion presents a stronger sense of cyclic, recurring time, while the Matthew Passion offers a stronger sense of linear, passing time within a broader, circular sense of time (see esp. pp. 103-11). On the basis of these differences, Butt argues that one of the reasons the Matthew Passion became so important within nineteenth-century modernity was its sense of progressive, and even subjective, time.

In Chapter 3, “The Hermeneutic Perspective—Negotiating the Poles of Faith and Suspicion,” Butt focuses on a concept he labels as “meaningfulness” that he sees as strongly present

⁶ Baxandall, *Patterns of Invention*, 7.

in Bach's Passions. The focus here is essentially on the ways in which the Passions have been and are received—not necessarily in any one time or place, but rather by the individual listener. Butt clarifies “meaningfulness” as something distinct from a specific meaning or message of the text as conveyed musically; he explains rather that “Bach's Passions seem to invite a quest for significance that goes beyond merely presenting the text convincingly,” that “this music has proved so conducive to the quest for meaning, inviting the attentions of the sort of individuals who find something of themselves in an art form that seems predisposed to converse with them” (p. 147). This fascinating chapter not only proves important for our understanding of Bach's Passions, but also can serve as model for the historical study of any artwork.

In Chapter 4, “The Voices We Hear and the Construction of Narrative Authority,” Butt engages the Passions around three closely related ideas: of voice and how this is realized in the Passions in light of Bach's scoring, of narrative theory and authority, and of the ways in which such senses of voice and narrative relate to Eric Chafe's concept of “tonal allegory.” Butt's conclusion for the chapter is both insightful and provocative. He asserts that Bach's Passions “[challenge] us to hear further and imagine alternatives to our initial assumptions.” He continues:

Bach's music sits on the cusp of change from a type of music that is designed to confirm a specific identity and set of beliefs through its rhetorical purpose, to one that works dialectically in pitting different forms of authority against one another without bringing total closure. . . . In the Passions we are confronted with supremely human voices that miraculously seem to join our present to the scriptural past. But there is also a chance that this sort of music might lead us towards a state of mind or attitude that we had not anticipated. (p. 239)

Butt develops this idea further in his final chapter, “Between Rhetoric and Dialectic—Bach's Inventive Stance,” arguing for a shift in the eighteenth century from a focus on the rhetorical in music to a focus on the dialectic and placing Bach's Passions on the cusp of this shift. In particular, Butt argues that certain movements in the Passions—as well as among Bach's other works—reflect a more pre-modern, rhetorical conception (focused on sameness of musical material), while others reflect a more modern, dialectical conception (focused on dualistic musical material). Butt states that the shift is not strictly chronological for Bach, but that the different types of pieces exist side by side in the Passions. Butt's conclusion is once more worth quoting at some length, for it summarizes well his overall argument and serves as a conclusion for the way he sees Bach's Passions as acting within the history of Western culture:

Bach's contribution is to offer us the sense of an order that lies just out of the reach of fully modern sensibilities, one that sets up some keen expectations of fulfillment but which somehow seems to retain a sense of openness and unexpectedness. This is music that was surely intended to invite us to adhere to the implications of its text and religion, but which, because of its dialectical nature—indeed, its very evangelical purpose of not just moving but also changing the listener—can slip its historical moorings and perform any number of roles within a broad history of reception. (p. 292)

The effusiveness of this review reflects my joy in reading *Bach's Dialogue with Modernity*, as well as my belief in the potential it holds for understanding Bach, Bach's Passions, and Bach scholarship. But *Bach's Dialogue with Modernity* does require a receptive reader (just as Butt argues that Bach's Passions require a receptive listener): there are many individual points in the book that I question, and I found myself at times setting aside my disagreements at least temporarily in order to seek to grasp Butt's larger meanings. The positive nature of this review does not imply that I am in wholehearted agreement with Butt, but rather than I find much in his work which I believe can stimulate fruitful dialogue that is surely worth pursuing.

Bach's Dialogue with Modernity is a book that we as Bach scholars might be tempted to ignore. In his Preface, Butt bluntly states: “This book is hardly traditional Bach scholarship,” and it is clear that he is not writing only for Bach specialists (p. vii). Furthermore, this is a challenging book to read due to the nature of its language, of its organization, and of its ideas. But rather than dismissing *Bach's Dialogue with Modernity* because we cannot easily classify it, I hope that we as lovers of Bach's music will rather read it, enter into dialogue with it, and learn from it, and with it, new ways of engaging Bach's Passions both today and into the future. As Butt argues, “The value of this music lies, I claim, not in any universal revelation it might offer . . . , but in the way it can imply a powerful dynamic relating to the modern condition” (p. 293). These words resonate with Alexandr Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Lecture of 1970: “Those works of art which have scooped up the truth and presented it to us as a living force—they take hold of us, compel us. . . . And in that case art, literature might really be able to help the world today?”⁷ If, like Solzhenitsyn, we answer this question in the affirmative, it seems that our love of Bach's music, and our study and performance and hearing of it, may in fact hold more challenge, more import, and more potential than we have hitherto realized.

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⁷ Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, “Nobel Lecture,” The Nobel Prize in Literature, 1970. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1970/solzhenitsyn-lecture.html>

CHALLENGING VIRTUALITY: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Bach scholarship has been at the cutting edge of musicology for generations. The pioneering ambition of the Bach Gesellschaft, to publish all of Bach's works in a complete edition, set a scientific precedent. A century later it was Bach researchers again who led the way in establishing the standard for modern editorial techniques. Yo Tomita continued the time-honoured tradition by leading musicology into electronic publication with the Bach Bibliography.* It went live in 1997 when many of us were still trying to get our minds around the concept of Internet communication, just six years after Howard Rheingold published *Virtual Reality: Revolutionary Technology of Computer-Generated Artificial Worlds and How it Promises to Transform Society* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991). Twenty years have passed since then, and I am concerned about how virtual technologies might inhibit the future shape of Bach scholarship.

The vision to publish Bach's works and make them known throughout the world has been stable for generations,* and with encyclopaedic recording projects, the completion and now revision of the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* and the ongoing search for Bach documents,* it is still current. Assuming Bach studies follow the trends set by Mozart studies,* it is only a matter of time before the N.B.A. and Bach documents are available digitally. When that day arrives, anyone, anywhere will have access to a wealth of Bach sources at anytime. The old vision will be fulfilled. What shape will Bach studies take then? Will there be such a thing as Bach studies at all? What is the future vision for our discipline, and how can digital technology be harnessed to serve it?

Throughout the 1990s Bach scholars welcomed online research resources, such as Zedler's dictionary (from 1997) and an increasingly wide variety of seventeenth and early eighteenth century German books.* Publication of the much discussed Göttingen Bach source catalogue and Bach Digital were eagerly anticipated.* It was a decade full of promise. But in the first decade of the twenty-first century excitement turned to anxiety as social media exploded,* and Bach chat rooms buzzed with amateurs desperate to discuss their experience of Bach's music. Uninformed, opinionated, and sometimes vitriolic exchanges sullied the forums, discouraging engagement by serious scholars. Was this a foretaste of open access research? When Wikipedia was born, in January of 2001, its invitation for anyone, regardless of educational qualifications, to make a written contribution seemed outrageous. How academics despised it! And yet time has shown that, in spite of the original prejudice of scholarly elitism, such new educational paradigms can gain acceptance in a short space of time, even to the extent of active sponsorship by a venerated establishment.*

Parallel to the monolithic output of the central Bach archives, there has been a wide variety of Bach research undertaken by individuals studying at institutions of higher education, where quality control is guaranteed by university guidelines, and facilitated by expert tutors. Statistics compiled from entries in Yo Tomita's Bach Bibliography with 'Bach' in the title show that, despite financial cuts and changing priorities in musicology, there has been a stable interest in Bach research at the university level over the past forty years.¹ Of the 565 theses (an average of 141 per decade) published between 1970 and 2009, 170 appeared between 2000 and 2009.* Of the 170 Ph.D./DPhil theses (an average of 42.5 per decade) published between 1970 and 2009, 42 were published between 2000 and 2009. Practically orientated D.M.A. theses with 'Bach' in the title have continued to increase in popularity since the degree was introduced in 1950s. Will the 24/7 availability of Bach resources inspire a continuation of this trend in university Bach research? Traditionally it has been the reader with access to specialist libraries, rather than the general public, who could

Dissertations and Theses with 'Bach' in the Title Completed Since 1950

Decade	Ph.D/ D.Phil.	English	German	Other	M.A./ M.Mus.	English	German	Other	D.M.A.	TOTAL
1950-59	8	8	0	0	7	1	6	0	0	15
1960-69	24	20	4	0	19	14	3	2	6	49
1970-79	41	26	15	0	43	29	4	10	13	97
1980-89	50	35	12	3	54	40	12	2	22	126
1990-99	37	20	13	4	84	62	9	13	51	172
2000-09	42	32	4	6	75	66	2	7	53	170
TOTAL	202	141	48	13	282	212	36	34	145	629

¹ The Tomita Bach Bibliography does not claim to be exhaustive and the statistics in the table should be taken as a guideline rather than as definitive.

consult scholarly Bach publications. This privilege created a silent and invisible quality control over Bach research, a control that will disappear once all Bach resources are digitised. How will this affect the quality of discussions about Bach? Will it stimulate more engagement by amateurs? Will it result in an ‘abuse’ of the resources? Will it enrich Bach interpretation? We cannot know, but one thing is clear: new technology will bring both risks and possibilities.

The challenge of virtuality is not unique to our times. Bach himself had to face the destabilising effect of new technologies, not least when he heard about the potential of electricity. In 1734 a six-column description of electrical force was published in Halle and Leipzig.* Bach and his contemporaries could read of Gray’s flying boy and many other experiments completed in England ‘three years ago’ involving the movement of physical objects by invisible electricity.* The author concludes that Gray’s results cannot be explained and that further experiments must be undertaken until the properties of electrical forces can be understood more exactly.* Bach could neither predict how electricity would transform society, nor how it would change music publishing and copying procedures. He could no more imagine an electric photocopier or laser printer, than we can imagine a building printer.* Nonetheless, the prospect of this new virtual force may have influenced the decisions Bach made in his final fifteen years of life. Thoughts of electrical power may even have affected the decisions he made about how to transmit his compositions, which to leave in fair copy and which to publish. With the benefit of hindsight, and in the light of technological developments, we can judge which of Bach’s decisions were farsighted.

Courage and prescience are required if Bach scholarship is going to rise to the challenge and maximise the possibilities of increased digitisation and connectivity. Every eighteen months processing speed and computational potential double, proving the veracity of Moore’s law.* It is mind-blowing to see how the integrated Internet of Things* will affect every area of our daily lives, with low levels of intelligence granted to passive objects.* How will all this affect how we learn? Technology of the twenty-first century is destabilising the centrality of the traditional publication-orientated archive in favour of location-less repositories of information and data. How can we embrace the challenge of technological developments for the benefit of Bach scholarship? How can we stimulate growth in Bach research based on easily accessible digital resources? What structures will encourage quality control in a digital age? Shall we dream into existence the first Virtual World Bach (V.W.B.) academy, where Bach experts guide future generations in their use of Bach documents? If so, what form would such a V.W.B. take? Progress will not wait for Bach studies to catch up. Prejudice and fear must be overcome. Now is the time to brainstorm ideas and challenge

virtuality rather than be challenged by it. Let us discuss how to enable Bach’s music, in its widest sense, to be an enriching cultural force in tomorrow’s transformed society.

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[In the spirit of the subject matter, discussion of this article will be on Twitter @ Tatlow #futurebach. Remember to use #futurebach in all comments and questions.]

* indicates a hyperlink reference in the digital version.

**THE ABS BIENNIAL MEETING:
BACH AND THE ORGAN
PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The American Bach Society will hold its biennial meeting September 27-30, 2012, at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, in conjunction the annual Eastman-Rochester Organ Initiative (E.R.O.I.) Festival. The topic of the conference, “Bach and the Organ,” has been chosen because many of the concerts presented by E.R.O.I. will feature the baroque organ—a reconstruction of an organ built by Adam Gottlob Casparini in 1776—that Eastman recently installed in nearby Christ Church. The official ABS portion of the program includes a keynote address by Peter Williams and fourteen papers selected in the usual manner.

Friday, September 28

Keynote Address (9:00-10:30 am)

- Peter Williams
“On Bach and the Organ”

Session I (10:30-Noon): The Eighteenth-Century Organist

- Andrew Talle
“The Daily Life of a German Organist around 1750”
- William A. Little
“The Students of Bach: The Curious Case of Mathias Sojka”

Session II (2:30-5:30 p.m.): The Organ in 18th-Century Germany

- Lynn Edwards Butler
“Bach’s Report on Johann Scheibe’s Organ for Leipzig’s St. Paul’s Church: A Reassessment”
- Peter Wollny
“An Unknown Collection of Organ Dispositions from Bach’s Circle”

- Gregory Butler
“The Trost Organ in Altenburg and Bach’s *Clavierübung III* as Manifestations of the Triunophilia of Duke Frederick III of Saxe-Gotha”
- Michael Maul
“Johann Matthias Holzhey’s Fight for a New Instrument: Newly Discovered Documents about Organ Building, Playing, and Networking from Bach’s Thuringia”

ABS Advisory Board Meeting (6 pm)

Saturday, September 29

ABS Editorial Board Meeting (7:45 am)

Session III (9:00 a.m. –Noon): Chorales, Preludes, and Fugues

- Robin Leaver
“What is the Significance of the Manuscript *Choral-Buch* Attributed to Bach in the Sibley Library?”
- Russell Stinson
“Bach and the Varied *Stollen*”
- Ellen Exner
“Lent by me and never recovered?: Lost Homilius Manuscript Found”
- David Schulenberg
“Preludes and Fugues by Bach? Questions of Text, Genre, and Attribution in the Organ Works”

Session IV (2:30-5:30 p.m.): Organ and Harpsichord

- Mary Oleskiewicz
“Keyboards, Bachs, and Berlin: Keyboard Instruments and Members of the Bach Family at the Court of Frederick ‘the Great’”
- Matthew Dirst
“Continuo Practice in the Bach Passions”

The Organist as “Concertist”

- Christoph Wolff
“Did J. S. Bach Write Organ Concertos? Apropos the Prehistory of the Cantata Movements with Obligato Organ”
- Matthew Cron
“Representations of Heaven in the Obligato Organ Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach”

Saturday, September 29

ABS Brunch and Business Meeting (9:30 am)

Members of ABS will also be featured in the opening session of the E.R.O.I. festival on Thursday afternoon, September 27. At 2:30 p.m. Daniel Melamed will act as Respondent in a music history masterclass—a counterpart to the organ masterclass by visiting organist Jacques van Oortmerssen—in which selected students from Daniel Zager’s current doctoral seminar “Sacred Cantatas and Organ Chorales of J. S. Bach” will present their work. At 5:15 p.m. David Shulenberg and George Stauffer will lead a panel discussion of the two new editions of the Bach organ works, published by Wayne Leupold and Breitkopf & Härtel.

E.R.O.I.’s concert schedule has not been finalized as we go to press, but will include a reconstruction of Mendelssohn’s Leipzig Bach concert by Eastman organ professors Hans Davidsson, David Higgs, and William Porter on Thursday evening; a recital by Jacques van Oortmerssen Friday evening; a concert featuring cantatas with obligato organ by Bach and Stölzel Saturday evening; and a recital by Edoardo Bellotti on Eastman’s Italian baroque organ Sunday afternoon. The complete schedule, including registration information, will be posted on the ABS website, www.americanbachsociety.org, when it becomes final.

ABSTRACTS

Andrew Talle (Peabody Conservatory) The Daily Life of a German Organist around 1750

The lives of eighteenth-century musicians are notoriously difficult to reconstruct from available sources. Application letters and audition protocols, employment and account ledgers document extraordinary events, and seldom offer much insight into the matters that concerned professional musicians on a daily basis. Historians have sought to develop a composite picture by amalgamating the details provided in many different sources, but the image that emerges is inevitably diffuse. A detailed account of the life of a single musician over an extended period of time would be a welcome addition to the historical record.

Through recent archival research in Germany I was able to discover an account book kept by an organist active in the mid-eighteenth century named Carl August Hartung (1723-1800). Hartung’s only prior mention in the scholarly literature stems from his having briefly taught composition and theory to the teenage Louis Spohr. The discovery of this previously unknown account book, however, suddenly makes him the best-documented German organist of the century. On 358

pristine pages Hartung recorded nearly every Pfennig he spent and received between the ages of 29 and 42, while serving as an organist in Cöthen (1752-1760) and Braunschweig (1760-1765). Though his life was unique, many of the activities, challenges, and rewards documented in the book were familiar to thousands of other musicians throughout the eighteenth century. In this presentation I will present what is known of C. A. Hartung's biography on the basis of his account book, focusing in particular on his diverse sources of income, his relations with students, colleagues, patrons and family members, and his fascination with the music of J. S. Bach.

William A. Little (University of Virginia)
The Students of J.S. Bach: The Curious Case of Matthias Sojka

The paper consists of two parts. The first, introductory part will review briefly the history of research into the pupils of J. S. Bach, beginning with Bach's obituary and Forkel, and extending down through B. F. Richter, to the findings of Hans Löffler, whose final list appeared in 1953. Almost sixty years have passed since Löffler's death, and his list, although still valuable, is seriously outdated. The emergence of new documents and information over the past six decades warrants a new and comprehensive lexicon of all students of Bach, based on both earlier findings and new materials that have come to light since 1953.

The second and preponderant part of the paper will focus on the Czech organist and composer, Matthias Sojka, who was presumably a student of Bach in the late 1740s. I shall concentrate my remarks on Sojka, since his case ideally illustrates several of the problems that are encountered in evaluating early sources, determining the reliability of manuscripts, both extant and lost, judging the veracity of contemporary eye witness reports, as well as a number of other issues, in which local lore must be weighed against documentary evidence.

Lynn Edwards Butler (Vancouver, BC)
Bach's Report on Johann Scheibe's Organ for Leipzig's St. Paul's Church: A Reassessment

In November 1717, Johann Sebastian Bach was engaged to examine the newly rebuilt and enlarged organ at the University of Leipzig's St. Paul's Church. According to contemporary reports, Bach not only declared the organ to be without any major faults but could not praise it enough, noting especially the organ's rare, recently invented stops. Modern scholarship, however, has tended to agree with the assessment of Johann Andreas Silbermann (nephew of Saxony's most famous organ builder, Gottfried Silbermann), who on a visit to Leipzig in 1741 declared: "The tone and workmanship do not accord

with the report of Herr Capellmeister Bach; the Pedal reeds are not worth a damn (kein Teuffel nutz)." Scholars interpret Bach's report, written immediately after the examination, as lukewarm at best and, at worst, as severely critical of Johann Scheibe, the local Leipzig organ builder who moved, rebuilt, and enlarged the organ in a two-phase project in the years 1710 to 1712 and 1714 to 1716.

Scheibe's letters to the University provide a rare, behind-the-scenes glimpse into the circumstances prevailing at the time of Bach's examination. They reveal that Bach's comments were not pro forma—merely following the guidelines and language established by Andreas Werckmeister, for example—but, rather, actively engaged issues then existing between the builder and the University of Leipzig. Drawing on archival materials, my paper will demonstrate that Bach was not so much criticizing Scheibe as acting on his behalf, thus confirming the assertion reported by Forkel that Bach's intervention on behalf of organ builders "went so far that, when he found the work really good and the sum agreed upon too small, so that the builder would evidently have been a loser by his work, he endeavored to induce those who had contracted for it to make a suitable addition—which he in fact obtained in several cases."

Peter Wollny (Bach-Archiv Leipzig)
An Unkown Collection of Organ Dispositions from Bach's Circle

In the late 1990s, the Sächsische Landes- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden acquired a remarkable eighteenth-century manuscript that contains an edited and slightly modernized version of Michael Praetorius' treatise on testing and keeping a newly built organ. The manuscript, obviously intended for publication, is furnished with a preface by the Mühlhausen cantor Johann Lorenz Albrecht (1732–1773) and an appendix with 56 dispositions of organs from Thuringia. A second appendix contains even more dispositions and highly interesting comments of important organs from towns such as Altenburg, Dresden, Eisenach, Freiberg, Halle, Merseburg, and Rötha. While the main body of the manuscript was all written by a single scribe (probably J. L. Albrecht himself), the second appendix is a miscellany of letters and papers in different sizes and written by different hands. In my paper I will give a preliminary overview of this source and try to trace its origins and provenance. Finally, I will focus on the second appendix and try to show that the information presented here was gathered by a person from Bach's immediate circle, who systematically collected material on the important organs in central Germany.

Gregory Butler (University of British Columbia)
The Trost Organ in Altenburg and Bach's *Clavierübung III* as Manifestations of the Triunophilia of Duke Frederick III of Saxe-Gotha

In September of 1739 J. S. Bach played on the recently completed Trost organ in the Schlosskirche in Altenburg and attested to its excellence. Published at the end of the same month, the composer's monumental published collection of organ music, *Clavierübung III*, has always been linked with Bach's performance on that occasion although there is no proof to support such a hypothesis. At the same time, Bach scholars have pointed to the Trinitarian symbolism, some of it overt, which permeates the collection.

The richly adorned cartouche mounted above the key desk of the Trost organ includes a dedication by the Landherr of Saxe-Gotha, Duke Frederick III, headed by the words "to the triune glory of God." Eighteenth-century biographies of the prince make mention of his obsession with the Trinity and the symbolism around it and in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin there is a bibliographic entry for a pamphlet (no longer extant) referring to the triunophilia of the duke ("die dreyfache Fürstenlust") as part of a his birthday celebrations in 1740. In this paper I will link the façade of the Trost organ and a portion of the *Clavierübung III* collection that appears to have existed as a discreet entity independent of the collection as a whole with the triunophilia of the patron for whom both works of art were created.

Michael Maul (Bach-Archiv Leipzig)
Johann Matthias Holzhey's Fight for a New Instrument: Newly Discovered Documents about Organ Building, Playing and Networking of Organists from Bach's Thuringia

The subject of my paper is Johann Matthias Holzhey († 1728), town organist in Schleusingen in southern Thuringia and apparently an ancestor of the south-German family of organ builders. Holzhey so far has not played any role in Bach scholarship and in musicology in general. To be sure, Holzhey neither left any compositions (at least none have come down to us), nor does his name appear in the known Bach documents. What makes him nevertheless an important, if not unique figure among the Thuringian organists is the fact that he left numerous manuscript documents about organ building, organ playing and the networking of organists. These documents originated from his continuous efforts and petitions to his supervisors to have a new organ built in his church, which kept him busy for more than twenty years. Since Holzhey was a student of Johann Michael Bach, his documents are of great value especially for Bach scholarship. And indeed among the

numerous Thuringian organists that Holzhey asked for support for his plans to get a new organ at Schleusingen, we also find the name of the young Johann Sebastian Bach.

Robin Leaver (Yale University)
What is the Significance of the Manuscript *Choral-Buch* Attributed to Bach in Sibley Library?

In September 1936 Eastman's Sibley Library acquired a mid-eighteenth-century manuscript *Choral-Buch* identified on the spine, in a contemporary hand, as "Sebastian Bach's Choral-Buch." Similarly, in a different eighteenth-century hand, the title-page declares: "Sebast. Bach, 4 Stimmiges Chorabuch." Contrary to this information, the melodies appear with figured bass, rather than with fully written-out inner parts. The chorales are given in a sequence similar to that found in contemporary *Gesangbücher* – beginning with the Sundays, festivals, and celebrations of the church year. The anthology was apparently intended as a source of organ accompaniments for congregational singing.

Spitta examined the manuscript briefly and concluded: "The volume exhibits, neither in Bach's handwriting nor in the composition of the chorales, a single trace of Bach's style or spirit." In 1981 Hans-Joachim Schulze examined the manuscript and identified the hand on the spine as that of Carl August Thieme (1721-1795), a pupil of Bach at the Thomasschule between 1735 and 1745. But more recently, however, significant doubts have been raised about this identification. The watermark suggests a Dresden origin, dating from sometime around 1740.

The paper offers a description of the manuscript, an overview of its content, and a discussion of its significance as a possible witness to the practices of the circle of organists who studied with Bach in the 1740s.

Russell Stinson (Lyon College)
Bach and the Varied *Stollen*

This paper addresses an unexplored aspect of Bach's organ chorales, namely, his tendency when arranging tunes in bar form (AAB) to write a varied repeat of the "A" section of the melody, known as the *Stollen*, rather than restating it note for note. In writing bar-form chorales for the organ, Bach takes this tack about a fourth of the time--and in a total of twenty-one different works--which apparently is a far higher percentage than in his vocal compositions. The reason for this discrepancy has to do with chronology and compositional influence, for most of Bach's organ works that include a varied *Stollen* seem to have been written at a very early date and in imitation of the north-German organ school. The latter conclusion is based on a survey of literally hundreds of bar-form

organ chorales by Bach's predecessors and contemporaries. Bach's preference for the varied *Stollen* is at its strongest in his so-called Neumeister chorales, where the variation techniques range from ornamentation to the use of a "migratory" cantus firmus. In the case of the miscellaneous chorale "Herzlich tut mich verlangen," BWV 727, Bach may have varied the *Stollen* to symbolize the chorale text, as Buxtehude does in his setting of "Durch Adams Fall." In "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig," BWV 656, and the much later "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr," BWV 676, invertible counterpoint is employed, in the manner of Johann Gottfried Walther.

Ellen Exner (University of South Carolina)
"Lent by me and never recovered": Lost Homilius Manuscript Found

Sometime before 1944, a rare manuscript of chorale preludes by one of J. S. Bach's students went missing from the private collection of Prof. George Benson Weston of Harvard University. Weston left a note about it on the single prelude he had personally copied out from it among items he later bequeathed to the Harvard Music Library. Somehow, the lost manuscript made its way to the music library at Smith College where it remained relatively undisturbed until 2002.

A formal study of the manuscript (VZOR H753) revealed that it contains several previously unknown chorale preludes by Gottfried August Homilius (1714-1785), many of which call specifically for organ plus obbligato instrument. The scribal hand and paper type indicate that the manuscript was produced in Homilius's immediate circle during his lifetime, rendering the collection a reliable witness to his compositional output and contemporary practice. Although Homilius is not famous among musicians today, his position in eighteenth-century musical life, as the Dresden Kreuzkantor and then Music Director in Dresden, identifies him as one of the most prominent Protestant composers in the German-speaking lands—arguably more prominent in his time than J. S. Bach. Although Homilius's chorale preludes for organ alone are of interest in themselves, the number of obbligato preludes in this collection contribute substantially to the information we have concerning the diversity of practice in chorale prelude among Bach's students.

David Schulenberg (Wagner College)
Preludes and Fugues by Bach? Questions of Text, Genre, and Attribution in the Organ Works

Of eighteen works traditionally designated Bach's "preludes and fugues" for organ, at least seven comprise something other than two distinct, paired movements. Eight or more exist in alternate versions whose chronology or authorship is un-

certain; two are probably misattributed. Serious textual errors have been perpetuated; most editions incorporate anachronistic ornaments and other details.

Originally diverse in genre, these compositions were reworked over the course of Bach's career; the very idea of the two-movement prelude and fugue emerged in the process. Some nevertheless retained echoes of the seventeenth-century multi-sectional prelude; the transformation of certain pieces to conform with the new genre was probably completed only by copyists.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors continued an eighteenth-century tradition of "improving" texts that began with Bach himself. But posthumous embellishment and updating of notation, accidentals, and voice-leading reflected later assumptions about musical style and performance practice. A fuzzy understanding of music history and of Bach's style—originally within the same small circle of Berlin organists—may also have led to the misattribution of two pieces, including the D-minor "toccata and fugue."

Case studies of mistaken readings of text, genre, and authorship show that these were plausible at the time because each conformed with an accepted view of Bach's style, if not of Bach himself. To avoid repeating such mistakes, editing might be viewed as an exercise as much in reception history as in establishing a text; understanding past editorial decisions is an essential part of the process.

Mary Oleskiewicz (University of Massachusetts Boston)
Keyboards, Bachs, and Berlin: Keyboard Instruments and Members of the Bach Family at the Court of Frederick "the Great"

2012 marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of King Frederick "the Great" (1712–1786). This presentation reevaluates Frederick as a keyboard collector and patron of keyboard music, identifies keyboard instruments (extant and lost) on which members of the Bach family may have performed, and illustrates the architectural spaces in which the Bachs or their music was heard.

Frederick studied harpsichord as a youth and collected keyboard instruments throughout his life. As Crown Prince and later king he maintained eight residences; one or more spaces in each were designed as music rooms. The most famous, in the palace of Sanssouci, was completed in 1747, shortly before J. S. Bach's visit.

Frederick furnished each music room with a keyboard instrument. Palace inventories and court records document the makers, types, cost, and precise locations of many instruments, among them fortepianos, harpsichords and spinets which Frederick purchased from various German and English makers. He also inherited several instruments, including the

Schnitger organ built for Charlottenburg.

My presentation will also address Frederick's sisters Amalia and Wilhelmine as keyboardists and patrons of keyboard music at court. Like Frederick, Amalia both commissioned and received dedications of keyboard works by Bach family members; she also commissioned two house organs.

**Matthew Dirst (University of Houston)
Continuo Practice in the Bach Passions**

Over the last twenty years, "dual accompaniment" continuo has become common among leading practitioners of the Bach cantata repertory. More suggestion than prescription, this idea (as expounded in the literature by Laurence Dreyfus and others) generally results in the realization of rhythmically active bass lines on the harpsichord and sustained lines on the organ, with both instruments occasionally sounding together. Performances of the Bach Passions, in contrast, still rely overwhelmingly on organ as the sole chordal continuo instrument, despite original harpsichord and lute parts for these works and compelling evidence that Bach used the harpsichord regularly in his church music.

The first part of this paper offers a historical explanation for this anomaly, whose roots can be traced back to ideas about Bach, the organ, and continuo practice that became widespread in the early nineteenth century, when the Matthew and John Passions (though not the cantatas) were revived. This significantly expands Dreyfus' (1987) critique of the bias against harpsichord in Bach's sacred music, which he ascribes largely to Philipp Spitta's long influence. The second part of this paper proposes various ways of highlighting, in our own practice, the distinct roles that Bach and his contemporaries assigned to the primary continuo instruments in such music. My principal interest here is the subtle distinction between organ and harpsichord continuo in German concerted music, as suggested by the music itself and as described by writers of this time, including Heinichen, Mattheson, Kittel and others.

**Christoph Wolff (Harvard University)
Did J. S. Bach Write Organ Concertos?
Apropos the Prehistory of the Cantata Movements with
Obbligato Organ**

Bach's cantata movements involving obbligato organ and his harpsichord concertos are well documented by original manuscripts. There exist, however, no musical sources that transmit concertos by Bach composed for organ with orchestral accompaniment. At the same time, one must wonder whether there may not be at least some indirect evidence for such works.

This paper will discuss the implications of a Dresden news-

paper report from September 1724 that describes Bach performing concertos on the new Silbermann organ of the Sophienkirche with instrumental accompaniment. Moreover, a re-examination of the manuscript for the d-minor concerto BWV 1052a, prepared by C.P.E. Bach, suggests that this version of the concerto is not an independent keyboard arrangement by Bach's second son of a lost d-minor violin concerto, but rather an early version of BWV 1052 by the composer himself. A similar case can be made for the concerto BWV 1053 so that the compositional history of J. S. Bach's keyboard concertos appears in a new light.

**Matthew Cron (Sudbury, MA)
Representations of Heaven in the Obligato Organ Cantatas of J.S. Bach**

Among J. S. Bach's surviving sacred cantatas there are eight instrumental movements where the organ takes on an obbligato role. Primarily in concerto form and often found in later harpsichord concertos, these movements are well-known examples of Bach's use of the organ in concerted works. Less well-known are the remaining 25 movements from the extant cantatas where the organ adds an obbligato line to an aria, duet, or chorus. While the use of a concerto movement in an obbligato organ cantata appears to be unique to Bach, there are several hundred arias, duets, and choruses with obbligato organ found in sacred cantatas written by other 18th-century composers. The text and music of these other obbligato organ cantatas provide valuable insight into Bach's use of the organ in concerted works with voices.

This paper will focus on one aspect of the 18th-century obbligato organ cantata: the organ as a representation of heaven. Through an examination of iconography, treatises, and specific cantatas by Bach and his contemporaries, it will be argued that this association of the organ with heaven informs our understanding of Bach's use of the organ in his sacred cantatas.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Quentin Faulkner would like to announce the publication of his new facsimile edition and English translation of **Jacob Adlung's *Musica mechanica organædi*** (1768). This important treatise, which contains numerous supplementary materials compiled by the editor, has been published by Zea E-Books of Lincoln, Nebraska. The digital edition is available at the following website: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/zeabook/6/>. Users may download this pdf e-book and save it in their document files. Among the advantages of this format are the following: 1) by choosing to view two pages simultaneously, users may compare the translation with the facsimile, 2) by using the Reader/Acrobat search function, users may search for specific names, words, or phrases in the translation, and 3) portions of the translation may be highlighted and copied into other documents. The electronic publication may be downloaded free of charge. The paperback printed edition is available for purchase (3 volumes, \$90) at <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/unllib>.

The American Bach Society would like to announce that the deadline for submitting nominations for the **William H. Scheide Prize** has been extended to **May 1, 2012**.

The Scheide Prize, a sum of \$1,000 awarded biennially in even-numbered years, honors a publication of exceptional merit on Bach or figures in his circle by a member of the Society in the early stages of his or her career. Awards normally go to citizens or permanent residents of the United States or Canada. Eligible publications include books, articles or editions that have appeared in

the previous two calendar years. Nominations for publications that appeared in 2010 or 2011 may be sent to [edwardsbutler \(A\) telus.net](mailto:edwardsbutler(A)telus.net). Self-nominations are welcome. Please include the name of the author along with a complete bibliographic citation.

The **Bach-Archiv Leipzig** wishes to announce the **Bachfest 2012**, which will take place this year from June 7-17 in Leipzig, Germany. The theme of this year's festival is "A New Song: The 800-Year Anniversary of the St. Thomas School." Bach's time in Leipzig will be explored from various historical perspectives. Works composed by many of the school's musical leaders, from Georg Rhau (Cantor from 1518-1520) to Georg Christoph Biller (Cantor from 1992 to the present), are included in this year's program. Particular highlights are newly edited works by Johann Kuhnau (Cantor from 1701 to 1722) and Johann Adam Hiller (Cantor from 1789 to 1801). Naturally there will also be performances of dozens of works by J. S. Bach himself, including the cantatas "Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut" (BWV 199), "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen" (BWV 51), and "Preiße dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen" (BWV 215), as well as the Mass in B minor. Among the world-famous musicians appearing at this year's festival are Masaaki Suzuki, Marcus Creed, Ton Koopman, and The English Concert. For the first time this year the festival will also present "B@ch for us," including two concerts by a youth orchestra comprised of students from the Johann Sebastian Bach Music School in Leipzig and the Conservatorio Bologna in Italy. Edifying and entertaining experiences await all who are able to attend.

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