

BACH NOTES



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

CONFERENCE REPORT: “J. S. BACH AND THE CONFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE OF HIS TIME” UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, 7–10 APRIL 2016

The American Bach Society held its biennial meeting on the University of Notre Dame’s grand campus in South Bend, IN, 7–10 April 2016. The program, “J. S. Bach and the Confessional Landscape of His Time,” covered many topics: various composers and compositions; 18th-century happenings in cities and at courts; confessional divides, personal conflicts, and more. Also featured were excellent concert performances by Notre Dame faculty, students, and musical guests.

Friday morning opened with a keynote address by Notre Dame Professor of History **Mark Noll**. Noll’s address, “Bach in Time: Then and Now,” mused about an imaginary meeting, in late July 1738, of Sebastian Bach and John Wesley, the latter passing through Leipzig on pilgrimage. Noll scripted for us Wesley’s reaction to the extant cantatas for the 9th Sunday after Trinity, all of which are on the



topic of condemnation. Noll pointed out that Bach and Wesley’s different musical views echoed their confessional disparities and explained why promotion of Bach’s works in England fell to Wesley’s younger relatives.

Derek Stauff began Friday’s first session by examining use of the word “Elend”: its etymology and its significance in selected cantata passages. Stauff hypothesized that themes of exile, warfare, and suffering performed “confessional work” in additional cantatas. **Christine Blanken**’s discussion of a printed libretto cycle by Christoph Birkmann followed. She explored Birkmann’s connection to Johann Abraham Birnbaum, famous

defender of Bach, Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Leipzig. Blanken also illuminated lesser known aspects of Birnbaum’s career, hypothesizing that he could have compiled libretti for Bach, or even served as a librettist himself.

In the second session, **Mark Peters** proposed that an emphasis on God’s mercy distinguished Lutheran Magnificat settings from Catholic ones. Situating works in the context of commentaries from Luther onwards, Peters argued for a particularly Lutheran division of movements, emphasized by different compositional choices. **Daniel R.**



Craig Cramer, Paul Walker, and doctoral student recitalists

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Melamed's presentation followed. In it, he drew attention to Johann Christoph Altnickol's two Sanctus settings (1748): analyzing their transmission and style, and indicating that their *cantus firmi* came from the Vopelius *Gesangbuch* used liturgically in Leipzig. Melamed situated these settings in the context of Bach's interest in older musical styles, also arguing that "Choral 4. Voci in unisono" on the first Sanctus's *cantus firmus* allowed a similar marking in BWV 80/5 to indicate performance at the unison.

Friday's third session began with **Michael Maul's** portrait of Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, upholder of orthodox Lutheranism and would-be converter of the unfaithful. Of those unfaithful, two particular ex-Cistercians and their

peregrinations were the centerpiece of Maul's paper. Maul argued that their public renunciation of Catholicism in Weimar gave the Duke a valuable propaganda victory. Since one of the monks became the court chapel's best-paid member, Maul concluded that he was the Duke's special conversion trophy. **Mary Greer** then examined Calov Bible annotations, various texts, and the same Duke's relationship with Bach. She forwarded the hypothesis that Bach's copy of the Calov demonstrates a Weimar connection to the genesis of BWV 225.

Tanya Kevorkian opened Saturday's first session with records of a 1754 conflict between a Leipzig Türmer, "musical tower guard," and his assistant. The record includes details of the everyday duties of town musicians. Kevorkian discussed

religion's role in TÜRNER life, arguing that, though confessional differences existed, Guild rules for behavior and morality were more direct influences on TÜRNER. **Gary Sampsell** then introduced a previously unstudied Leipzig mandora manuscript, carefully situating it in the context of Leipzig's secular musical culture in the time of J. S. Bach. Attendees were left humming "Ein edles Herz ist stets vergnügt," thanks to Sampsell's recording of three versions of the tune found in the manuscript. **Joyce Irwin** closed the session with an examination of confessional debates regarding dance in church music. Her presentation culminated in her analysis of Johann Gottlob Carpzov's orthodox Lutheran approach, which endorsed dance in a Christian context, which allowed dance provided it was undertaken without worldly intent. Since Carpzov's career at St. Thomas's overlapped with Bach's, Irwin argued for the relevance of Carpzov's approach in understanding the use and performance of dance rhythms in Bach's music.

In Saturday's second session, **Traute Marshall** re-evaluated long-assumed venues for the famous Celle Court Kapelle. Marshall pointed out drawbacks to previously suggested locations: Bach might not have had time to travel to Celle,

and records exist not of the Kapelle visiting Lüneberg castle but rather of Lüneberg supplying music for Duke Georg Wilhelm. Marshall argued that the Duke's Ebstorf estate could have held these Kapelle performances, since Ebstorf, a ducal hunting seat, hosted many noble guests. **Barbara Reul** followed with an examination of an Anhalt-Zerbst *annus*

horribilis: the deaths of two co-rulers and their sister between November 1746 and May 1747. Commemorations of these losses demanded memorial texts and musical performances. With no surviving scores available, Reul used archival material





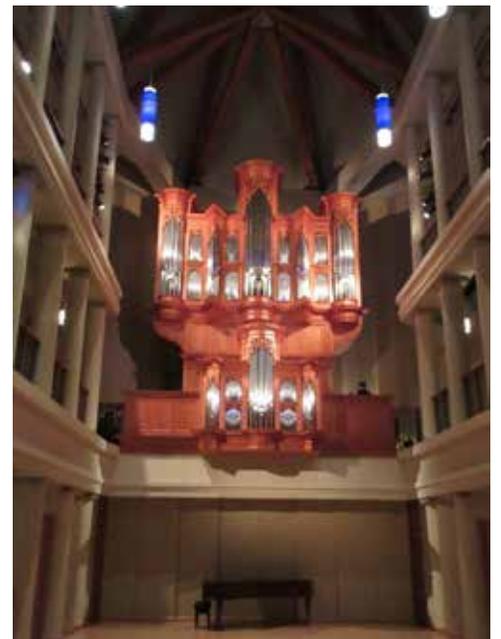
to reconstruct the music of this year, situating composers, librettists, and audiences in various venues.

Ellen Exner began Saturday's third session by using C. P. E. Bach's baptismal record as a window into the relationship of the Bach family and Georg Philipp Telemann. After detailing the contemporary expectations of a godparent, Exner argued that Telemann took his responsibilities as godfather seriously. Evidence cited included Telemann's performing a C. P. E. Bach cantata in Hamburg for Easter, 1756—perhaps to endorse his godson as successor. **Steven Zohn** continued the Telemann theme, exploring the use of music at court entertainments via certain secular works of Sebastian Bach and Telemann. Zohn considered these functions as recorded in art, drawing attention to the placement of musicians. Looking more closely at Telemann's *Musique de table* (1733), Zohn suggested that Telemann organized his "musical menu" to mimic French table service, thus achieving an apotheosis of *Tafelmusik*.

In the final session, **Ruth Tatlow** explored Lutheran proportional beliefs with regard to the ratios of acoustics in harmony and their use in symbolizing the divine. Tatlow moved through writings of Werckmeister, Walther, Fux, and others, while suggesting possible musical examples from Kuhnau to various Bachs. To flesh out her argument, she turned to the *Musical Offering* for evidence in support of her hypothesis that belief in the use of symbolic proportions formed an important

part of Sebastian Bach's technique. **Michael Marissen** closed out the paper sessions with a meditation on Bach's instrumentation choices, asking what significance might attach, for example, to Bach's use of the recorder in BWV 182/5—a designation which persists through the work's subsequent revisions. He argued that Bach wished to retain the humble connotation of humility with this instrumentation. Describing sonic effects in the *St. Matthew Passion's* opening chorus, "Kommt, ihr Töchter," Marissen called for greater attention to the possible symbolism of these choices.

Numerous musical performances were featured at the meeting. Attendees enjoyed a virtuosic welcome Thursday evening, with Craig Cramer, Professor of Organ at Notre



Dame, playing the 2004 Fritts Organ. In Böhm's "Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele," especially, Cramer demonstrated the instrument's dazzling colors. His doctoral organ students offered a Friday afternoon concert, displaying impressive technique. Pomerium's evening program of motets included sensitive direction by Alexander Blachly and excellent vocal balance. Saturday's concert of Sebastian Knüpfer's Latin Psalm concerti featured Notre Dame's Concordia Ensemble and the Ensemble Ritornello (DMA candidate Caleb Wenzel conducted admirably). Interwoven with the concerti were instrumental works of Samuel Scheidt, featuring Bruce Dickey on cornetto.

In-person discussions over convivial meals, compelling performances, and special tours also made this meeting memorable. Paul Walker and his colleagues at Notre Dame deserve particular thanks for such generous hospitality.

Text and photos by
Suzanne Bratt

ABS Yale 2018

The ABS will meet again at Yale University from 26–28 April 2018. The theme will be "Bach Re-Worked—Parody, Transcription, Adaptation." The meeting will include performances by the Yale Voxtet, the Yale Schola Cantorum, and conductors Masaaki Suzuki and David Hill. A call for papers and performances will be published in early 2017.



Cross Campus, Yale University

Scheide Grant 2016

Every year, the American Bach Society awards the William H. Scheide Research Grant. The grant is intended to provide support for research projects on Bach or figures in his circle. The recipients can use the funds to cover the costs for travel to archives and libraries, acquire reproductions of primary sources, or for similar purposes. This year's recipient is Michael Eisenberg, who received the grant for his research on "Virtuosity in Transmission: Engraving in the Opus of J. S. Bach and His Circle."

Michael Eisenberg is an independent scholar with a research focus on engraved music history. He has served on the faculties of Queens College CUNY, Columbia University, and Fordham University. He was a National Endowment for the Humanities 2014 Summer Fellow in Germany for Bach research and performance and a 2009/2010 Fulbright



Scholar in Italy for writing and research on Baroque engraved music. As an historical keyboardist, he has garnered acclaim for his interpretations of repertoire ranging from the sixteenth century to works by living composers and has performed and lectured on the Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series, Metropolitan Opera Guild, and Lincoln Center Institute rosters.

Eisenberg's research project undertakes a collation of engraved keyboard sources of G. P. Telemann, J. S. Bach, and contemporaries currently conserved at repositories in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, and Rostock. This study aims to establish engraving's relationship to the mediation of a progressive new aesthetic of instrumental virtuosity in the North German Baroque. The study also examines the emergence of a skilled sector of music engravers in northern Germany in the eighteenth century and the resulting impact on keyboard techniques and innovation. The appearance of highly florid

instrumental writing during the Baroque brought about a radical rupture in the aesthetics of virtuosity. However, scholarship has repeatedly neglected the critical role copper engraving played in disseminating this innovative musical idiom. Copper engraving supported the development of this virtuoso aesthetic with its limitless range of semiotic possibilities. Beyond facilitating the transmission of a more idiomatic instrumental language, engraving allowed composers such as G. P. Telemann and J. S. Bach, who were active in the publishing of their own music, to interpolate their own creative vision into how they adapted the medium to music publication. Eisenberg's project considers how this circle of composers proactively shaped the landscape of engraved music publication in part to memorialize their own instrumental aesthetics.

Scheide Prizes 2016

The William H. Scheide Prize, a sum of \$1,000 to be awarded biennially, honors a publication of exceptional merit on Bach or figures in his circle by a scholar in the early stages of his or her career (normally no more than ten years after the PhD) who is professionally active in North America. Eligible publications include books, articles, or editions that have appeared in the previous two calendar years.

This year, we awarded two prizes to two highly-deserving younger scholars. Carolyn Carrier-McClimon receives the prize for her article "Hearing the 'Töne eines Passionsliedes' in J. S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio: The Nineteenth-Century Critical Reception of BWV 248," published in *Bach: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* in 2014. The Scheide Prize Committee saw in her article an important contribution to the reception of Bach's sacred vocal works in the nineteenth century, which provides new insights into the Sing-Akademie, into Bach reception in nineteenth-century Germany, and into understandings of the *Christmas Oratorio* and the *St. Matthew Passion*.

The second recipient is Bettina Varwig. Her article "Beware the Lamb: Staging Bach's Passions" was published in 2014 in the journal *Twentieth-Century Music*. The well-researched article provides a detailed analysis of problems such as reception, poetic language, theological content, and realism/personification in the staging of violence in Bach's Passions.



Carolyn Carrier-McClimon

Carolyn Carrier-McClimon is a PhD candidate in Musicology at Indiana University, where she served as Associate Instructor of Music History. She received a BM in piano performance from Furman University and an MM in piano performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She currently serves on the Furman faculty, teaching music history and theory, performing as a collabora-

tive pianist, as well as moonlighting as music director in the theatre department. Carrier-McClimon specializes in music of the nineteenth century and is currently working on a dissertation about Robert Schumann's album leaves, Romantic memory, and commemoration.

Dr. Bettina Varwig is a Senior Lecturer in Music at King's College London, where she also gained her undergraduate degree. She completed her PhD at Harvard University in 2007, followed by a Junior Research Fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford, and a



Bettina Varwig

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Cambridge. Her first book, *Histories of Heinrich Schütz*, appeared with Cambridge University Press in 2011. In 2013, she received the Jerome Roche Prize of the Royal Musical Association for her article "Metaphors of Time and Modernity in Bach," *The Journal of Musicology* 29/2 (2012), 154–190. Her current research concerns the intersections of music and physiology in the early modern period.

In Memoriam: J. Reilly Lewis (15 September 1944–9 June 2016)

In 1981, upon graduation from a parochial college in the Midwest, and as a modest Bach student with a great deal to be modest about, I settled for a brief time in Washington, DC. I'd grown up in the provinces, literally, and so whatever familiarity I had with Bach's ensemble music came from my handful of recordings by Karl Richter, Gustav Leonhardt, and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Even if there had been concerts of Bach's choir-and-orchestra music to go to during my youth in semirural Canada, I wouldn't have been able to afford them.



Photo © Shannon Finney

What a fantastic thrill it was to discover in Washington, then, that a recently formed group was putting on an annual series of free concerts devoted to this repertory. These events were life-changing for me, and likewise, I came to learn, for many others. The group was the Washington Bach Consort, and at its helm stood one J. Reilly Lewis, brilliant organist and conductor – and a somewhat mad character marveled at for, among other things, his dashing around our nation's capital on a black BMW motorcycle.

Reilly had grown up in a military family before attending seditionary Oberlin College in the mid-1960s. Powerfully disparate energies gave momentum to his post-graduate training as well. He studied organ, harpsichord, and conducting first with Helmut Walcha in Germany and Nadia Boulanger in France, and then with Anthony Newman in America, at Juilliard. But like all truly talented performers, Reilly apparently had no trouble finding his own voice. His ebullient music-making, both solo and with the Bach Consort, developed into an exquisitely balanced middle way between the nigh pietistic solemnity he'd encountered in Walcha and the out-and-out beatnikish contrariety in Newman. Clearly addicted to concertizing, Reilly was quick to expand his myriad musical activities in a host of directions, including most prominently a decades-long tenure as director of the Cathedral Society Choir at the Washington National Cathedral.

As a young college graduate I was too shy to introduce myself to this great man, and so I did not become personally acquainted with him until many years later, when I'd made strides as a budding music history professor at Swarthmore College. Reilly sought me out as a regular lecturer who might, it was hoped, properly edify the Bach Consort's pre-concert audiences without putting them to sleep.

By this time the Consort had grown much more professional, and had also moved to the use of period instruments and to the

hiring of top-flight soloists. The group was well on its way toward having performed all of Bach's vocal and instrumental works. Not long after, in association with his monumental achievement of completing live performances of Bach's entire 215-cantata cycle, the Library of Congress welcomed Reilly's full run of concert tapes and program notes into its permanent collection.

Although Reilly participated in many commercial recordings, he produced alas only four with the Bach Consort: the C. P. E. Bach and J. S.

Bach Magnificats; the complete J. S. Bach motets; the solo cantatas BWV 51, 209, and 210, with soprano Elizabeth Futral; and the F-Major and G-minor Masses, along with the little-known Kyrie in F Major, BWV 233a (Helmuth Rilling, so far as I know, is the only other conductor to have recorded this gem).

American Bach Society members will also hold in fond memory Reilly's appearance with the Consort in an evening concert of sacred vocal works by C. P. E. Bach for the 2014 conference, "Johann Sebastian Bach and His Sons," held at Kenyon College.

The last time I saw Reilly was on 24 May at a joint book event he hosted in Washington at Kramerbooks & Afterwords for my spouse, Lauren Belfer, and me. Reilly and his spouse, Beth Van Wagoner Lewis, joined us afterward for a magnificent dinner, where Reilly was in top form, brimming with plans for the future, filled with energy and openhearted curiosity, and sparkling with unrestrained humor (much of it riotously scatological).

Three weeks later he died, at home, of sudden cardiac arrest.

Anyone who has interacted with the Washington Bach Consort will tell you that it is as much a personal "family" as it is a professional arts organization. This is to the credit, above all, of its founder and director. Though fiercely driven, Reilly's life goal was not self-promotion. He was tirelessly dedicated to music and to transforming the lives of others through music. In his own words: "I believe in the power of music to create community—to touch, and to heal, and to transform. I've seen people with the most diverse backgrounds come together in one place and be touched by the hand of God through the inspiration—the genius—of Bach or Brahms or Verdi or Mozart. That power to bring people together isn't restricted to music, but music is my language."

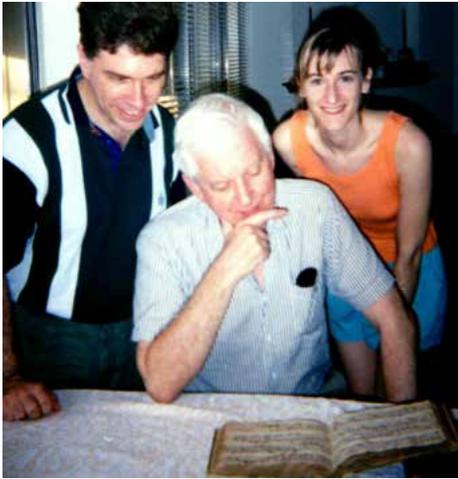
Michael Marissen
Swarthmore College (Emeritus)

In Memoriam: Peter F. Williams (14 May 1937–20 March 2016)

Peter F. Williams, distinguished harpsichordist, organist, musicologist, teacher, and one of the most prolific scholars of our time, devoted his life's work to the study of Johann Sebastian Bach. He passed away at the age of 78, just a few hours after reviewing the proofs of his final, forthcoming book on the composer. Details of his professional biography can be found in other tributes written in Peter's honor (see weblinks at the conclusion of this article). The memorial shared here is instead one by a grateful student to an admired teacher.

Peter's scholarly legacy has overshadowed his immense dedication and contribution to pedagogy. In the classroom he inspired awe (in the most literal sense) and excitement amongst junior researchers. Awe, because his universal knowledge of music, exceeding far beyond Bach and Baroque, was couched in a formidable understanding of philosophy, literature, world history, geography, and ancient texts and languages. Excitement, because everyone knew they were in for the intellectual ride of their life with an incredible mentor, whom no one dared disappoint.

Peter's exacting standards were tempered by his great affection for students and his love of teaching. Humor balanced seriousness: apparently annoyed by a graduate student who always wrote on the same topic, one day he told the charming story of a grammar school class he once taught. A little boy in this class always talked about moles, he told us. So, thinking he could outwit the little boy into writing about something else, the school students were assigned a report about coal mining. However, as Peter explained, the little boy managed to indulge himself and began the essay "The animal most like a coal miner is a mole." Everyone in the seminar had a hearty



Williams, with David Schulenberg and Mary Oleskiewicz. Peter is examining a stolen Bach manuscript recovered by David in Montreal and returned to Germany by Hans-Joachim Schulze.

laugh, and the graduate student understood the wink.

Peter never used email. But unlike the subject of his most famous writings, this organist wrote numerous personal letters – by hand, on old-fashioned, blue aerogram stationery. He wrote to graduate students researching dissertations abroad, and while in Germany I was among the grateful recipients of his correspondence. His letters acknowledged the loneliness one can experience while researching for months in a foreign place, and he shared funny tales about crawling through the Silbermann organs in Germany together with the Potsdam organ builder Karl Schuke (1906–1987) – “Old Schuke” as Peter called him – as ashes from Schuke's cigarettes fell into the precious Baroque pipes. In another letter he recounted his glee in driving a shockingly bright blue automobile into communist Dresden, amongst a population accustomed only to blandly pastel-colored Trabants. For leisure he recommended visiting the city's “big round Kino” and reading Kurt Vonnegut's *Schlachthaus 5*. He especially liked the Poles, he said, because they were lively and wild.

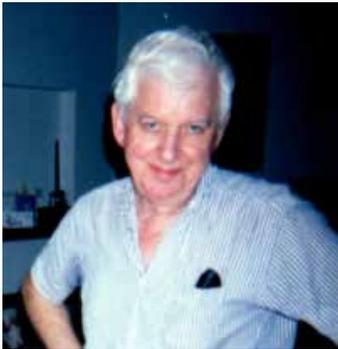
Peter was born Methodist but as a youth joined the Church of England and sang as a choirboy. Devoutly religious, he kept everyone around him abreast of saints' days. Once, during Lent, he remarked with a smile that he always gave up sugar in his coffee, and relished how glorious it would be on Easter morning when he could finally add the sugar back.

Peter's lifelong enthusiasm for learning and discovery was contagious. At Duke University he became the center of a veritable community of scholars in which everyone, regardless of actual status, was at once colleague and student. While he was writing *The Chromatic Fourth During Four Centuries of Music* (1998), colleagues and students alike were buzzing in the halls, discussing new examples of music with chromatic fourths they'd found (that is, the interval of a fourth, filled in chromatically, as in the bass line to Purcell's “Dido's Lament”), which they hoped might later turn up in the book.

Peter's scholarship posed more questions than it provided answers, much to the consternation of peers, but it was precisely the many questions that inspired his students' (and encouraged colleagues') curiosity and originality. He chuckled with obvious delight when his publisher returned the manuscript of *The Life of Bach* (2004) to him, saying it contained far too many question marks. (This brings to mind Niemetschek's anecdote about Emperor Leopold II, who tells Mozart he has written “too many notes” and, of course Mozart replies “only as many as necessary, your Majesty”). Some at Duke fondly mused that, if Bach were miraculously resurrected and wandered into his office, Peter would be terribly disappointed finally to know the answers.

In graduate seminars on Bach's cantatas or pithy discussions during coveted office hours, it was common for Peter to dash with excitement to the harpsichord and play an unexpected passage from *Das Rheingold*, or perhaps a Mahler symphony. The connections he drew between seemingly unrelated ideas were always surprising and often stunning. Peter was a role model, too, in another, perhaps more significant way: he welcomed and respected keen observations, even from students, that challenged his own views.

Peter generously and openly discussed his research. Before presenting at a conference, he would send a formal invitation to students and faculty to hear him give the paper on campus. Few failed to attend. He taught practical seminars on realizing continuo in which everyone had to play, and his patience—particularly with



those for whom keyboard was not a first instrument—was remarkable. He attended graduate student recitals, and he played concerts for us. He gave praise when praise was due, commented thoughtfully on our writings, and shared personal, real-world advice from the perspective of a seasoned performer and

about surviving in academia. On occasion, he would invite a few lucky advisees to his home, where they were greeted by polite, well-behaved children, shown a curious collection of large, taxidermied owls from Europe, and treated to a dinner that was followed by Peter's delicious homemade crepes with rum sauce. Never mind that he didn't know where the tablecloths at home were kept, it was just easier to eat in the kitchen.

Peter Fredric Williams, born 14 May 1937, in Wolverhampton, UK, died 20 March 2016. He liked to say that he was a coronation baby (12 May 1937 was the crowning of George VI and Queen Elizabeth). When he died at five minutes to midnight it was already 21 March in Leipzig. Whether Herr Bach was prepared — on his birthday, no less — to answer a lifetime of questions, or whether his student truly desired the answers, we shall never know.

Mary Oleskiewicz

Weblinks to other memorials:

John Butt, "Peter Williams Obituary: Perpetually Inquiring Scholar of the Organ and of J. S. Bach" in *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/apr/08/peter-williams-obituary>

David Yearsley, "Skepticism, Irony, and Doubt: Williams on Bach" in *Counterpunch*: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/05/06/skepticism-irony-and-doubt-williams-on-bach/>

Review — "Geheimnisse der Harmonie": Bachfest Leipzig 2016

The annual Bachfest Leipzig, organized by the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, ran from 10 to 19 June 2016. The motto chosen for this year was "Geheimnisse der Harmonie" (Secrets of Harmony), a reference taken from the obituary of 1754 which praised Bach's extraordinary compositional skills. The program, consisting of 115 events, had distinct topics including the juxtaposition of multiple versions of some of the best-known choral works and the performance of several cantatas from the 1723/24 annual cycle. We also heard pieces by anniversary composers Max Reger (100th of his death) and Ferruccio Busoni (150th of his birth), both of whom played major roles in promoting Bach's works through their own compositions. These and other topics were illuminated in a series of lectures by Bach-Archiv scholars Michael Maul, Andreas Glöckner, Wolfram Enßlin, Christiane Hausmann, and Klaus Rettinghaus.

Reflecting on the Motto

Exploration of the meaning and the implications of Bachfest's motto began with a performance of the Passacaglia BWV 582 at the opening concert in the Thomaskirche at 5:00 p.m. Ullrich Böhme's delicate and imaginative execution on the "Bach organ" brought to my mind an answer to the question of motto's meaning: the secret might be the persuasive power of logic. After the speeches, the new Thomas-cantor Gotthold Schwarz led the Thomanerchor, ThomasSchulChor, and the Leipziger Universitätschor with Gewandhausorchester in three works based on the idea of apocalyptic visions: *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort*, BWV 20, Reger's Requiem WoO V/9, and the final chorale of BWV 60 before a fully-packed house.

On the following day I attended a panel discussion moderated by Thomas Bille at the Altes Rathaus at 11:00 a.m. in which Peter Wollny and Sir Roger Norrington discussed the annual motto and wider issues including Norrington's "pure tone" approach to performance, which he demonstrated admirably in his concert on 15 June at the Nikolaikirche at 8:00 p.m. in a performance of the 1724 version of Sanctus BWV 232^{III}, Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, HWV 76 and Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, Hob. XXII:14.

The event at which the quest for meaning was most methodically explored was the chamber concert by Anne Freitag (traverso and recorder), Susanne Scholz (violin) and Jean-Christophe Dijoux (organ and harpsichord) in the Grassi Museum for Musical Instruments on 16 June at 5:00 p.m. Entitled "Canones Diversi," their program traced the ways in which canonic composition evolved from the Renaissance through the early Baroque to the time of Bach. Using the instruments of each time period and with a brief introduction on the pieces, it was effectively a lecture on music history that vividly portrayed the complexity of Bach's harmony and contrapuntal art, the artistic breadth and depth, and the technical challenges that performers face, particularly in the trio sonata of the *Musical Offering*.



William Christie with Les Arts Florissants (Photo: Gert Mothes)

Comparing versions of Bach's major choral works

This year's highlight was a pair of concerts of the *St. Matthew Passion* BWV 244, one directed by Trevor Pinnock on the first day at the Gewandhaus at 8:00 p.m., and the other by John Eliot Gardiner in the Thomaskirche six days later. Pinnock with the MDR Rundfunkchor and Gewandhausorchester, on the one hand, went for the version as edited and presented in 1841 by Mendelssohn – although he did not adopt all of the alterations Mendelssohn made (such as the pitch alterations in Evangelist's part). He appears to have sought the image of Bach through the eyes of Mendelssohn rather than reproducing the Mendelssohn's interventions in Bach's craft. The result was a remarkably natural rendition of the drama that captured the effects Mendelssohn must have intended with the added dynamics and articulation marks. Gardiner with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists, on the other hand, attempted to recreate the dramatic effect that allegedly caused the reaction of an old, noble widow that was reported in Christian Gerber's *Historie der Kirchen-Ceremonien in Sachsen* (1732, repr. *The New Bach Reader*, pp. 326f). The widow is said to have exclaimed "God save us, my children! It's just as if one were at an Opera Comedy!" The Evangelist's story-telling (performed by James Gilchrist) was painfully vivid, especially when it concerned sin. Elsewhere in the work the voice of the Monteverdi Choir penetrated deep into the heart of audience: their exquisite handling of phrasing and the coloring of intricate harmonic shifts in the chorales demonstrated the secret of Bach's harmony and its expressive power.

The cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV 21 was another of

the works presented twice, firstly in Bach's 1723 version. We heard BWV 21 on 11 June at 8:00 p.m. in the Nikolaikirche performed by Solomon's Knot Baroque Collective. We then experienced it in the arrangement of Robert Franz (published by Leuckart in 1867) on 17 June at 8:00 p.m. in the Thomaskirche as performed by the Thomanerchor Leipzig with the Staatskapelle Weimar (directed by Gotthold Schwarz). Franz's version is heavily enriched in terms of texture: it is re-scored with the addition of clarinets, bassoons, and double-bass. The result was worth hearing and it sounded quite like one of the symphonies of the mid-Romantic period. Solomon's Knot Baroque Collective (whose program also included Johann Schelle's cantata *Machet die Tore weit*, and Bach's Magnificat in E-flat Major, BWV 243a) made a strong impression with their intimate and engaging style of communication led by Jonathan Sells or other members of the ensemble when he was not performing. Each of the musicians contributed to the ensemble's organic whole, which made the audience feel as if they also belonged to it.

New approaches to the *St. Mark Passion*

Two concerts were dedicated to the *St. Mark Passion* BWV 247: one was a version for the hearing-impaired entitled "Bach & Mime" on 14 June at 8:00 p.m. in Gewandhaus (which I did not go to, as the concert clashed with Christian Tetzlaff's Violin Solos in Thomaskirche); the other was a new composition by Steffen Schleiermacher (b. 1960) called *Nach Markus: Passion* on 13 June at 8:00 p.m. in Nikolai-kirche. The latter, commissioned for this year's Bachfest, preserves the seven movements thought to be the surviving fragments of Bach's *St.*

Mark Passion and fills the remaining spaces, which are normally done with the borrowed or recreated movements from the known compositions, with new compositions using a new libretto provided by Christian Lehnert (b. 1969). Schleirmacher made extensive use of Bach's four-part chorales, which are freely dissected, to glue together all of these newly composed movements. Michael Schönheit with Collegium Vocale Leipzig and Merseburger Hofmusik premiered the hybrid artwork to profound spiritual effect.

* * *

The last day of Bachfest began with the morning service at the Thomaskirche, which followed the order of worship in Bach's time. Hearing BWV 24 in the context of the service was powerful.

One of the recurring themes at Bachfest is the Zimmermann's coffeehouse experience. I attended one such event from 3:00 p.m. at Michaeliskirche. In its lavishly decorated interior and rich acoustic space, Berliner Barock Solisten with Dorothee Oberlinger (recorder) and Jacques Zoon (traverso) as concertists entertained the sold-out house with a program comprising BWV 1067, Locatelli, Vivaldi and Telemann. It was a selection that Bach himself could have done in one of his *collegium musicum* concerts. The moment of excitement came early with the third piece, Vivaldi's Concerto in C Major, RV 443 with Oberlinger who electrified the audience with her virtuosic soprano recorder playing.

Bachfest always closes with the *B-minor Mass* in the Thomaskirche, and it was William Christie's turn with his Les Arts Florissants, which did not disappoint. Christie took quick tempi, which allowed the Mass to unfold cleanly and naturally. Instead of responding to Bach's bold harmonic contrivances such as those in the "Et incarnatus est" or the Adagio portion of the "Et expecto", Christie reserved the moments of his intervention for the greater musical discourse. The drama finally arrived with the "Agnus Dei," which was transformed to the sublime as if by magic in the "Dona nobis pacem."

Next year's Bachfest will run from 9 to 18 June 2017 with the motto "Ein schön new Lied': Musik und Reformation."

Yo Tomita

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST: 21–22 APRIL 2017

SYMPOSIUM: J. S. BACH IN THE AGE OF MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM, AND GLOBALIZATION

Although the music of J. S. Bach has inspired a voluminous amount of scholarship, the impact and appropriation of his music in the 20th and 21st centuries remains relatively unexplored. This conference seeks to bring together scholars from diverse disciplines and perspectives that share an interest in the multiple ways the music of J. S. Bach has impacted culture or inspired the work of composers, pedagogues, performers, critics, and listeners during the 20th century and beyond. Topics include Bach's influence on major composers, recent discoveries in archival research, the reception and appropriation of "Bach" by diverse political regimes, the use of Bach's compositions as pedagogical models in higher education, the quotation from or appropriation of Bach's compositions and style, and the metamorphosis of "Bach" and his music from local to national, European, Western, and, now, Global.

21 APRIL 2017: SCHOLARLY PANEL ON BACH'S MASS IN B MINOR

22 April 2017: Scholarly Symposium, with Keynote Address by Michael Marissen and contributions by Brent Aberbach, Louis Epstein, Ellen Exner, Joel Lester, Robert Marshall, Traute Marshall, Daniel R. Melamed, Andrea Moore, Matthew Mugmon, Szymon Paczkowski, Markus Rathey, and Janice Stockigt.

For more information contact Erinn E. Knyt (eknyt@music.umass.edu)

BACH NETWORK UK. EIGHTH J. S. BACH DIALOGUE MEETING, 10–15 JULY 2017

I am happy to announce details of the 2017 BNUK Dialogue Meeting. After a hugely successful meeting in Cambridge, England in July 2015, we decided to hold our meeting again in the historic sixteenth-century mansion of Madingley Hall, <http://www.madingleyhall.co.uk/> The hall is set in magnificent grounds that include a walled garden, wild meadows and formal gardens, part of which were landscaped in the eighteenth century by Capability Brown. Madingley is just three miles from the ancient university city of Cambridge.



We have set aside two and a half days for dialogue and presentations: Tuesday, 11 July 2017 after afternoon tea; Wednesday the 12th; and all day Thursday the 13th. Experience shows that many delegates will wish to stay both before and after the meeting. We have therefore reserved rooms for Monday, 10 July and also for Friday the 14th (departure Saturday morning) so that delegates can settle in, read and prepare, hold meetings, continue discussions, hammer out joint research projects, or simply enjoy Cambridge with friends. As always we will schedule a Young Scholars Forum, in which scholars in the early stages of their careers condense five years of research into as many minutes. Please let us know if you would like to be part of this.

(continued, over)

The program committee, comprising Yo Tomita, Richard D. P. Jones, Stephen Rose, Szymon Paczkowski, Bettina Varwig, and Ruth Tatlow is in the process of matching speakers and topics to generate rich discussion. Details of the program will be publicized through our mailing list (sign up on www.bachnetwork.co.uk) and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BachNetworkUK>

Registration for the meeting will open in early 2017, although expressions of interest beforehand are very welcome and helpful for planning: please email our Dialogue Administrator, Charlotte Bentley on bentley.bnuk@gmail.com.

Ruth Tatlow
Chair of the BNUK Council

MEMBER NEWS

This fall the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project begins its seventh season of performances modeled on Bach's own, in free concerts that feature two performances of a cantata with a lecture in between. The project is directed by Wendy Gillespie and advised by **Daniel R. Melamed**; details are on the ensemble's Facebook page.

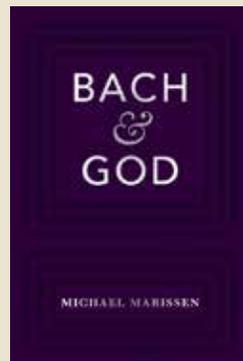
Mary Frandsen has published a critical edition with historical introduction of the earliest known concertos with aria by Dresden court Kapellmeisters Vincenzo Albrici (1631–1690) and Giuseppe Peranda (1626–1675): "Das geistliche Konzerte am Dresdner Hof ca. 1660–1666: Die frühesten 'Concerti con Aria,'" *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Dresden*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Ries & Erler, 2015), and a biographical article on Giuseppe

Peranda (1626–1675), in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 81 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2015).

Michael Kassler's edition of Christopher Papendiek's *Trio for flute, cello and harpsichord or piano forte* will be published by Trübcher (www.trubcher.com) in September 2016. Papendiek (1755–1826) was a pupil of Johann Christian Bach in London and succeeded him as a member of Queen Charlotte's chamber band.

RECENT BOOKS

Bach & God (Oxford University Press, 2016) explores the religious character of Bach's vocal and instrumental music in seven interrelated essays. Noted



musicologist **Michael Marissen** offers wide-ranging interpretive insights from careful biblical and theological scrutiny of the librettos. Yet he also shows

how Bach's pitches, rhythms, and tone colors can make contributions to a work's plausible meanings that go beyond setting texts in an aesthetically satisfying manner. In some of Bach's vocal repertory, the music puts a "spin" on the words in a way that turns out to be explainable as orthodox Lutheran in its orientation.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Founded in 1972 as a chapter of the Neue Bachgesellschaft, the American Bach Society supports the study, performance, and appreciation of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Annual dues are \$50 (\$25 for students). Membership information and application materials are available online at the website listed below. Interested persons may also contact Reginald L. Sanders, Kenyon College Music Department, Storer Hall, Gambier, OH 43022, USA, or sandersr@kenyon.edu.

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www.americanbachsociety.org
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