

BACH



NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

The Quest of the Esoteric Jesus: Parable, Mystery, and the Baptism Chorale Preludes of *Clavier-Übung* III

Jonathan B. Hall

... And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Luke 8:8-10

If one defines esotericism in the usual way—as some particular set of occult beliefs drawn from Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, or Catharism; Templars, Rosicrucians, or Freemasons; or the *Zohar*, *Da Vinci Code*, or *Bible Code*—then the above passage from Luke is as esoteric as Jesus ever gets.¹ In no other Gospel passage does Jesus so bluntly distinguish between “parable” and “mystery,” and so baldly assert that discipleship implies an initiation not available to everyone.

Esoteric communities are founded precisely upon this distinction, one not normally made in Jesus’s very public teaching. Such communities focus on mystery, and each group’s proprietary mystery is revealed only to the suitably initiated. In the mainstream Christian tradition—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—the only initiation is baptism, and there are no secret teachings. Exceptions to this are rare and only of historical interest.

Normally, baptism makes one a disciple and presumptively eligible to “know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.”

This paper proposes that this nearly-universal understanding of baptism—and the ethos of the Luke passage quoted above—make available a clear symbolic explication of the two baptism chorale preludes of *Clavier-Übung* III: BWV 684 and 685 are contrasting settings of “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam.” In particular, the second, *manualiter*, *alio modo* setting comes into sharp focus, yielding religious and indeed pictorial content far beyond a simple desire for contrasting style.² The differences between the two settings—especially Bach’s use of musical form and style to contrast “parable” and “mystery”—make musical initiation a metaphor for religious initiation. At the same time, no further esoteric symbolism other than that available to Bach, *qua* Lutheran of the early eighteenth century, need be invoked.

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Each of the six catechism hymns in *Clavier-Übung* III is given a pair of settings. The first is always the larger—with a pedal part—and the second, shorter setting is always for manuals only. There is also always a significant stylistic difference between the two. The shorter settings, however, are anything but easy alternatives for a more limited player. Nor do they seem related to Luther's *Shorter Catechism* and hence appropriate for vespers or the instruction of children.³ In particular, it is hard to understand Schweitzer's appraisal of the shorter settings as possessing a "bewitching simplicity," though indeed the larger settings are usually simply illustrative.⁴ If anything, simplicity resides in the larger settings, and subtlety in the smaller. Finally, the two settings are never in the same key, with one exception, mentioned below.

While it is certainly possible, even likely, that Bach uses these pairings to explore more than one *Affekt* suggested by the chorale, or to otherwise build in another layer of meaning, it is usually difficult to do more than speculate about what those layers or *Affekten* might be. Resisting such speculation, however, is also usually difficult. (As an example of this irresistibility, I mention a speculation of my own. Since both "Ten Commandments" preludes strongly emphasize canon as a symbol of "following the law," and since the shorter and livelier is, uniquely, in the same key as its "parent" and uses the rhythms of the gigue, perhaps the set echoes the old paired dances of pavan and galliard, the younger and livelier dancers following their statelier elders.)

Both settings of "Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam" center on the eponymous Jordan, the *mise-en-scène* of the chorale text. As in the case of the other pairs, the first setting, BWV 684, is conceived on a large scale; its symbolism has long seemed apparent. Numerous commentators have pointed to the running left-hand motive as tone-painting, representing the Jordan. David Humphreys goes a step further, identifying the leaping right-hand figure as "the baroque cross theme" and seeing in its "submersion" below the sixteenth notes an image of Christ stepping into the river.⁵ This too is not hard to accept, though I might disagree with Humphreys that the submersion occurs only at the beginning of the prelude. The sixteenth notes rise above the eighth notes on numerous occasions, nine times in all including the repeat. The later occurrences differ from the first only in that the so-called "cross theme" has been significantly modified from its original form. The later patterns generally involve an ascending octave leap followed by downward motion of a step, still an apt image of descent, still arguably "cross-like" and derived from the "cross" figure.

It is illuminating to reflect on the use of a cross theme to symbolize Jesus at his baptism. To evoke Christ's crucifixion anachronistically, at the triumphant, theophanic inauguration of his public ministry, is to invoke St. Paul's association of baptism with death. The Jordan is a type of grave into which Jesus descends and from which, just as quickly, he rises. This

persistent equation of baptism with death is central not only to the thoughts of St. Paul but also those of Martin Luther. In his *Shorter Catechism* we read:

WHAT DOES...BAPTIZING WITH WATER SIGNIFY?

It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, is to be drowned and destroyed by daily sorry and repentance. . . . WHERE IS IT SO WRITTEN? St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 6, verse 4, says: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."⁶

Not surprisingly, the chorale text, also written by Luther, reflects the same perspective in its opening verse:

Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, Nach seines Vaters willen, Von Sankt Johann's die Taufe nahm, Sein Werk und Amt zu 'rfüllen. Da wollt' er stiften uns ein Bad, Zu waschen uns von Sünden, Ersäufen auch den bitterm Tod Durch sein selbst Blut und Wunden; Es galt ein neues Leben.	Christ our Lord came to the Jordan, According to his Father's will; From St. John received baptism, To fulfill his work and duty. Thus he established for us a bath To wash us from our sins, And also to drown bitter death Through his own blood and wounds, Availing unto new life.
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(Translation by the author)

The final verse is even more explicit, and challenges modern sensibility in its reference to a river of Christ's blood. Both St. Paul and Luther pointedly associate baptism with such words as "drown" and "destroy" and with the imagery of death. To accept baptism is automatically to accept death; this is the key to the representation of Christ as a cross. The musical imagery adumbrates two descents into hostile territory: into an unnatural environment for man (water), and into the grave. The turmoil of the water, represented in the running sixteenth notes, is thus not only an emblem of the turmoil that this particular baptism (and every baptism) will entail but also grist for the mill of the concerto style of this work.

BWV 684 is cast as a concerto movement complete with ritornellos, *Fortspinnung*, and the restless harmonic metamorphosis of its motivic elements. The bass is in the left hand, on a separate manual; the cantus firmus, in the tenor voice, is played by the pedal. The registration suggested is thus of the "consort" variety. The piece speaks of action, energy, event, drama; it is extroverted and virtuosic—*splashy*. Its impact is visceral. It is written in a popular contemporary style (yet interestingly also boasts a cantus firmus *en taille!*). There seems to exist widespread agreement as to Bach's probable pictorial intentions. He proposes to tell us a thrilling story, on an exciting and literal level: man against nature, man against the supernatural. The

entire hymn tune unfolds phrase by phrase beneath a stunning flux of passagework, until the entire tale is told, and over. It is, in short, quite like a parable: a tale told for a wide audience with a readily understandable story line and message.

The contrast with the *alio modo* setting is overwhelming. In the first place, the second setting does not employ the entire tune, only the first phrase, which is treated as a motive. From the outset, then, we are dealing not with narration but with allusion. This is already a step away from parable toward mystery; but what Bach does with his themes takes us much further down that road.

Looking deeper, if BWV 684 is a concerted piece in the popular Italian style, then BWV 685 is a . . . well, what? It is often described simply as a fughetta, almost by default; but Bach's careful titling denies it this designation. Bach specifically titled three of the catechism chorale preludes "fughetta" or "fuga": *Fughetta super Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot*, BWV 679, *Fughetta super Wir glauben all an einem Gott*, BWV 681, and *Fuga super Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*, BWV 689. BWV 685 does not carry such a designation and neither does *Vater unser im Himmelreich*, BWV 683 (not surprisingly), or *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir*, BWV 687 (surprisingly, until one sees the fugal technique for what it is: a fore-imitative context for the cantus firmus in the soprano voice.) Williams acknowledges that Bach is sparing in his use of the designation "fughetta," but then uses it freely himself.⁷

True, BWV 685 does flirt with fugal elements. There are, seemingly, a subject and countersubject, always faithfully paired and both deriving from the chorale melody. They are never answered, however, and actually behave more like a theme-pair or motivic fund than subject and countersubject. Also, for a "small fugue," does the piece not launch too quickly into inversion—that is, before the themes have been properly announced *recto*? Is the immediate leap to a prominent announcement of the *inversus* not so abrupt and unusual, and does it not call so much attention to itself that our suspicions should be aroused? Does the hasty *inversus* not make a pedantic display of contrapuntal device in violation of good form, even taste? Why would Bach do such a thing?

Williams diplomatically says that BWV 685 is "not a simple fughetta."⁸ True enough: and it is not a complex one either. If in light of these observations and the absence of "fughetta" in the title we decide that the term cannot apply to BWV 685, the question remains: *what is it?*

I propose that BWV 685 is a work unto itself, a true *alio modo*: not a fughetta, but "another kind" of piece, a work of contrapuntal tone-painting in which certain techniques, such as imitation and inversion, are used for a specific artistic—and religious—purpose. Consider the first two appearances of the theme-pair in mm. 1-8, as given in Example 1.

EXAMPLE 1 BWV 685, reduction of mm. 1-8

In a piece explicitly about a river, does this technique not suggest the image of a shoreline reflected in water? It is well known that still waters reflect like a mirror; there are countless stories, myths, paintings, and photographs that exploit this simple physical fact. The *alio modo* setting of "Christ, unser Herr zum Jordan kam" is, I suggest, a picture of a still river and a shoreline. This reading at least gives some clear purpose to the strange behavior of the opening bars.

Most of the balance of the piece is episodic or developmental in nature, with bits of the theme pair appearing in various groupings—hinted at, *dissolved*. It is a seamless and subtle piece of counterpoint, a series of images and mirror images. In mm. 9-12 (see Example 2), the canon—spun from the "countersubject"—is also written in invertible counterpoint at the tenth, which practically requires contrary motion and thus further reinforces the idea of mirror imaging.

EXAMPLE 2 BWV 685, mm. 9-12

The theme-pair is presented three times *recto* and three times *inverso*, offering both structure and more of the pervasive symbolic triplicity of the collection. But more than that, I think

Bach's purpose is simply to *mirror* the reflective nature of water. If the larger setting takes as its metaphorical conceit the rushing waters of the Jordan, and implicitly foreshadows other stories of Jesus walking into/above turbulent water as well as stories of the flow of blood that comes with his death, then the second setting shows us the same waters calmed.

With purpose and thoroughness, Bach uses inversion as a visual metaphor. Let us playfully take the *rectus* and *inversus* together and locate the imaginary boundary between water and land. If we stack the two forms, as in Example 3, we find that the middle point between each of the corresponding notes falls between middle C and the B below. We can thus imagine the invisible space between these two notes as the shoreline.

EXAMPLE 3 BWV 865: Determining the “shoreline” between the subject (above) and its inversion (below)

For the most part, the two outer voices respect this boundary. There is one B in the soprano voice, and C twice in the bass: close enough. The boundary between actual water and land is also approximate. The imagery is thorough but not pedantic. Although the outer voices mind their places, the middle voice—*der Mittler!*—runs freely between them. Similarly, not only does the Mediator go between land and water in his baptism, but on another level of interpretation, between heaven and earth as well.

The typological implications are rich. Just as Christ's baptism is connected intimately with passion and death, so is his entering of the Jordan intimately connected with the stilling of the waves at Gennesareth. While the first prelude gives us a strong, confident, action-oriented narration of Christ descending into the turbulence of the river, the second asks us to “reflect.” This is a quiet, post-baptismal, post-climactic picture of the Jordan. The waters, having encountered Jesus, are stilled.

A persistent numerical differentiation between the two pieces—four versus three—is also apparent. BWV 684 is in common time, or *tempus imperfectum*, is in four voices, and, counting the repeat, has eighty-one (or three to the fourth power) measures. BWV 685 is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, or *tempus perfectum*, is in three voices,

and has twenty-seven (or three to the third power) measures. The shorter piece even employs counterpoint at the tenth: an octave plus a third. From this shift in emphasis from “four” to “three” one may reasonably infer a corresponding progression in the two works from imperfection to perfection.

From the summary of the differences between the two settings presented in Table 1, we see how dramatic a contrast Bach has painted. One could even spin out other binaries: presence/absence; body/soul; nature/grace; humanity/divinity; and so forth. One could also fruitfully discuss the medieval levels of allegory, assigning the literal level to the first prelude and some understanding of the other three to the second. At any rate, the musical symbolism in these two preludes provides a clear program and message for the listener. This message not only locates baptism in the context of suffering and death, it also opens the believer to the mysteries of the Kingdom. By painting the Jordan River with such contrasting techniques, Bach uses musical initiation as a metaphor for spiritual initiation. Further, both pieces are now seen to be bound together, as the individual is with Christ by means of the powerful, polyvalent symbol of water. The final verse of the chorale seems to validate the argument sketched above:

Das Aug' allein das Wasser sieht,
Wie Menschen Wasser gießen,
Der Glaub im Geist die Kraft versteht

Des Blutes Jesu Christi,
Und ist für ihm ein rothe Fluth
Von Christi Blut gefärbet,
Die allen Schaden heilen tut
Von Adam her geerbet,
Auch von uns selbst begangen.

The eye sees only water,
when water is poured for us,
Faith in the Spirit understands the
power
of the blood of Jesus Christ,
and it is for him a red flood
colored by the blood of Christ
that heals all the wounds
inherited from Adam,
and that which we have brought
upon ourselves.
(Translation by the author)

“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables.” The baptized can plumb the depths, but the uninitiated see only the surface. Likewise, the musical initiate explores the *alio modo* prelude, but for the masses Bach spins a thrilling yarn full of roiling water and heroic endurance. With a chosen few, Bach broods on the mystery of water and the word of God by making use of a remote, technically and formally esoteric musical structure. This, I believe, is as esoteric as Bach is willing to be: no more or less than Jesus himself is willing to be.

Is there also a small hint in favor of my argument on the title page of the collection. *Clavier-Übung* III is dedicated “denen Liebhabern, und besonders denen Kennern”—to music lovers, and especially to connoisseurs, “knowers.” Can we infer a distinction between *Liebhaber* and *Kenner* parallel to the distinction between those who will understand only the parable and those who will comprehend the mystery? Could this

TABLE 1 Comparison of BWV 684 and BWV 685

Features	BWV 684	BWV 685
Style	concerto –spinning out –rhythmic drive –familiar	<i>alio modo</i> –tone-painting –thematic unfolding –strange
Time Signature	C (<i>imperfectum</i>)	3/4 (<i>perfectum</i>)
Number of Voices	4	3
Number of Measures	81 = 3 ⁴	27 = 3 ³
Melodic/Thematic Basis	cantus firmus	motivic
Further Characterizations	flowing water extroverted active virtuosic visceral oriented toward the spectator parable	still water introverted contemplative non-virtuosic cerebral oriented toward the disciple mystery

distinction, in fact, be key to understanding the paired preludes in general? Does Bach invest the “simple” settings with the deeper ideas?

To conclude, perhaps there is a hint of pietism amidst all the orthodoxy. Besides teaching his listeners, perhaps Bach is also inviting them to a personal exercise in religious imagination. Perhaps we are invited to witness Christ’s baptism, to place ourselves at the Jordan and imagine its waters flowing now fast, now slow, now calling attention to their own exuberance, and now gently inviting—and demonstrating—reflection. By providing his audience with such imagery, perhaps Bach is trying to create a musical moment in which it is difficult to abstain from reflection.

In the end, regardless of one’s perspective, it is not particularly complicated: for the Lutheran, the spiritual life of the believer is bound up in the historical life of Jesus, and a river runs through it.

1. Note the ninefold repetition in that sentence. Note also that it contains forty-five words, and note further that $4 + 5 = 9$. Coincidence? Yes.
2. Peter Williams, *The Organ Music of J. S. Bach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 421.
3. David Humphreys, *The Esoteric Structure of Bach’s Clavierübung III* (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1983), 3.
4. Albert Schweitzer, *J. S. Bach*, trans. Ernest Newman (New York: Dover Publications, 1966, after the original 1911 Breitkopf and Härtel edition), 1: 289.
5. Humphreys, 57.
6. Martin Luther, *Small Catechism* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1962), part IV, question IV, 20.
7. Cf. Williams, 399 and 401.
8. Williams, 420.

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BOOK REVIEW

Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow. An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity, by Karol Berger. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2007. xi, 420pp. \$39.95 (hardcover), \$24.95 (softcover).

The principal thesis of Karol Berger's ambitious project, as stated in the introduction, is that linear, finite time replaced circular, infinite time as a concern of central importance in European art music only in the later eighteenth century. As suggested in the title, Berger sees time in the late Baroque as circular, cyclical like the seasons or the church year, and his first three chapters treat music by J. S. Bach in that light.

Berger begins Chapter 1, "The Arrested Procession," by outlining Bach's deployment of choral forces in the opening chorus of the *St. Matthew Passion*, "Kommt, ihr Töchter," including a convincing explanation of why the text of the Daughter Zion is given to a four-part choir rather than a soloist. He then describes the two types of da capo form employed by Bach—the normal form in which the A section is repeated in its entirety, and what he refers to as "modified" da capo ABA form. Although his explanation of how the two differ harmonically is correct, that of how their ritornello structures vary is not. His explanation would have been clearer, and his valid claim as to the greater concentration of the "modified" form buttressed, if he had stated specifically that, in the modified form, the second vocal phrase and closing ritornello of the normal A section are excised from their original position and later replace the literal repetition of the A section following the B section. A diagram graphically illustrating the excision process at work might have been helpful here. He concludes his analytical treatment by making the point that both forms describe a large circle, with the A sections of the normal form representing two smaller closed circles.

This all serves as preparation for his analysis of the opening chorus presented convincingly as a "modified" da capo form somewhat adapted to include the statement of the chorale cantus firmus. His analysis is clear and compelling, and his interpretation of the concluding nineteen measures brilliant: a "most extraordinary ending, which conflates in a single phrase what normally is presented in successive ones—the end of the B section and beginning of the A' section, as well as recapitulations of the first vocal phrase and the ritornello—and for good measure also blends the texts of the two protagonists into one."

For Bach, ritornello transformations, whether in concerto ritornello form or in da capo aria form, do not mark the passage of time by articulating its linear flow. Rather, they articulate the "timelessness of the contemplative reinforcement of the central idea." Berger sees Bach's predilection for the circular shape of time in play not only at the level of the movement but also on the larger scale in his arrangement of pieces into cyclic collections. He finishes the chapter by interpreting the multiple telescoping at the end of the movement as a suspending of the flow of time—an abolishing of past, present, and future "in favor of the eternal Now."

Chapter 2, "A Crystal Flying Like a Bullet," presents an equally brilliant analysis of the Fugue in C Major from *WTC I*. He divides the fugue into four sections—exposition (mm. 1-6), two sets of demonstrations (mm. 7-13 and 14-23), and coda (mm. 24-end). His adoption of the term "demonstration" for various ways of presenting the subject in stretto works particularly well and really penetrates to the heart of what fugue is all about. He goes on in his analysis to show how Bach arranges seven demonstrations to construct the fugue. His reading of the composition of the fugue as requiring three distinct operations—invention of the subject and deciding which contrapuntal operations it can be subjected to, arriving at an overall tonal plan, and, finally, fitting the demonstrations into this tonal plan before closing—is compelling. In addition, counterpoints have to be added, gaps between demonstrations filled, and cadences constructed before the whole can be performed. Since this interpretation has much in common with rhetorico-musical applications, Berger might usefully have introduced this angle into his analysis.

Berger observes that there is no way of knowing when the fugue will end until the onset of the coda, at which point it suddenly becomes obvious that Bach is wrapping up the fugue and then quickly does so. Beyond the temporal layer present in all music, there is here an atemporal layer that dominates, rendering time unimportant. For Berger, the lack of interest on Bach's part in the linear flow of time is reflected in his relative disinterest in the temporal disposition of his demonstrations. Having argued in these two chapters that for Bach time either follows a circular route or is abolished altogether, he asks the question: "But why does Bach prefer this shape of time rather than the other, why the circle rather than the straight line?"

In Chapter 3, "There Is No Time Like God's Time," Berger answers this question. He compares the *Passion*

with late Baroque *opera seria* in which action in narrative recitatives alternates with contemplation in reflective arias. As such, the flow of events in time (recitatives) is checked by “timeless moments of contemplation” (arias). He argues that it is precisely the da capo form of arias and the strophic form of chorales that capture these timeless moments of contemplation as musical structures.

Berger invokes a painting by Titian to illustrate another way in which time is attenuated in the Passion; for the contemplators (e.g., the faithful) and the personages in the story (e.g., Jesus) time is different and the temporal distance between them is made even greater in the opening chorus. He then enters into a hermeneutic discussion of the Passion in order to support his contention that as a whole “it is marked by a wish to neutralize time and render insignificant its relentless flow from past to future.” He sums up his view of the coexistence of temporal and non-temporal layers elegantly, utilizing the concept of “linear temporality embedded within the envelope of eternity.” He concludes his discussion of hermeneutics by invoking the title of Bach’s *Actus tragicus* (BWV 106), i.e., “Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit,” the source for the title of the chapter, to put forward his claim that God’s time is not only ontologically more important but superior—that is, the best time of all. But what is the basis for this preference for eternity? It comes, he reasons, from the wish to stop time since only by doing so can death be held at bay.

The last segment of the chapter is given over to later composers’ reception of Bach’s music, in particular of the *WTC*. Berger traces their preference for this music to its timelessness. His linkage of this concept with his discussion of the non-temporal aspect of fugue is debatable but it leads to an absorbing discussion of Bach as “the master of harmony” as an important aspect of the reception of the composer’s music after his death.

The musicologist reader may argue with Berger’s at times repetitive presentation of what seem to be patently obvious analytical details, but given the audience to which such relatively complex analysis is directed, this emerges as a strength, not a weakness of his presentation. In fact, Berger’s musical analyses in this book are as good as any I know—clear, comprehensible, and penetrating. At the same time, his elucidation of difficult and involved concepts is always absorbing, and often breathtaking in scope. His argumentation is at once subtle, sensitive, and persuasive.

This book represents a major contribution to cultural theory and the history of ideas. It should be read by anyone interested in the music of Bach, particularly those interested in his Passion music.

Gregory Butler

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“BACH AND HIS SONS” BACHFEST LEIPZIG 2008



Sir Roger Norrington conducting the Mass in B Minor in the Thomaskirche at Bachfest Leipzig 2008. Photo Gert Mothes

With a program designed to shed light on the roles played by Bach’s sons during the transition from the Baroque to the Classical period, this year’s Bachfest Leipzig consisted of more than 100 events packed into the ten-day period from June 13 to 22. The lavish program consisted not only of concerts, held in historic venues where Bach himself had performed, but also of organ tours to neighboring towns, lectures by prominent Bach scholars, educational workshops, and morning worship services featuring Bach’s cantatas.

Among the festival’s most polished performances was the rendering of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach’s 1769 *St. Matthew Passion* by Ivor Bolton leading the Balthasar-Neumann-Chor and Ensemble. The performance was held in the beautiful and acoustically rich but also acoustically complex Nikolaikirche. This *Passion*, a pastiche in which movements in Philipp Emanuel’s wonderfully expressive idiom are joined with movements from his father’s *St. Matthew Passion*, was introduced in a lecture by Ulrich Leisinger, who recently edited this work for *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works*.

The theme of the festival was further advanced by the performance of works for viola da gamba by Johann Christian Bach and by Christian’s friend and professional associate Carl Friedrich Abel. According to the program, some of the works performed had not been heard in concert since the time of their composition. Although the pieces themselves are rather unimaginative and predictable, the colorful and dynamic performances of Thomas Fritsch (bass gamba) and Ad-El Shalev (harpsichord and fortepiano) inspired a certain originality of spirit in the ensemble, successfully recreating the mood and atmosphere of the Bach-Abel concerts of late eighteenth-century London.

Sir Roger Norrington’s contribution to the festival theme centered on the role Bach and his sons played in the development of the symphony. In performances of J. S. Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No.1, C. P. E. Bach’s Symphony in B minor, Wq 182/5, J. C. Bach’s Symphony in G minor, Op. 6, No. 6, and Mozart’s Symphony in E-flat major, K. 543, Norrington and the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen explored the ways in which balance, nuance, and the shaping of phrases contribute to the eloquence of a piece. Given the nature of the genre, however, Norrington’s decision to perform these works from the balcony of the Thomaskirche not only sounded “wrong” conceptually but also resulted in a particularly disappointing performance of the Brandenburg Concerto. To the audience below, the ensemble playing in the concerto seemed poor, though the impression to Norrington above may have been different.

Several of the concerts that had at best only a loose connection to the festival theme were nevertheless among the most memorable. The Freiburger Barock Consort led by Petra Müllejans offered a program of chamber music by “Bach and Friends” that included pieces by Buxtehude, Telemann, Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin, and Johann Ludwig Krebs. Their imaginative positioning of the continuo instruments to suit each piece, coupled with their exciting technical displays, highlighted the variety of colors, textures, and styles found in these pieces.

Another concert only loosely connected to the festival theme focused on the Berlin Sing-Akademie and featured works by Akademie founders Fasch and Zelter as well as *Herr, deine Augen sehen nach dem Glauben*, BWV 102, and the Mass in A major, BWV 234. The two Bach pieces were performed as they would have been known in the early nineteenth century, in the versions heavily altered by C. P. E. Bach. The audience’s appreciation of this unusual concert was greatly enhanced by the program notes written by Uwe Wolf that drew attention to the many relevant issues. The only disappointment was the contribution of this year’s Bach Medal winner, the Rheinische Kantorei and the Kleine Konzert conducted by Hermann Max, who failed to present a polished performance in the Nikolaikirche.

The performance of the second (1725) version of the *St. John Passion* by the Collegium Vocale Gent conducted by Daniel Reuss exhibited excellence in diction and articulation. The chorales “Petrus, der nicht denkt zurück” (no.14, which concludes Part I) and “Durch dein Gefängnis, Gottes Sohn” (no. 22) were exceptionally beautiful: every word was expressed with the utmost clarity and placed within a carefully crafted phrase. The handling of the *turbae* was also exemplary. The chorus “Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen” (no. 27b) was sung without the “shouting” one so frequently encounters in today’s performances of Bach’s vocal music, and the proper vocal execution allowed the powerful emotion of the music to reach directly into the hearts of the listeners. The penultimate chorus, “Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine” (no. 39), was very effective as a panoramic

vocal scene. The sound began softly, as if appearing from a distant landscape, and the forte passages were never forced, even at the height of emotion. The soloists, unfortunately, were generally disappointing—an all too common occurrence at today's concerts, it would seem. The most reliable was Christoph Prégardien (tenor, evangelist). But even in his arias "Zerschmettert mich" (no. 13) and "Ach, windet euch nicht so, geplagte Seelen" (no. 19), which are unique to the second version, there were numerous pitch problems, and his singing in the upper register was forced. Both arias are technically too demanding and compositionally too complex even for an accomplished singer such as Prégardien, which perhaps explains why Bach removed them from later versions.

Also unforgettable was the performance of the Mass in B minor—the festival's annual closing piece—conducted this year by Sir Roger Norrington leading the RIAS Kammerchor with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen. As in his performance of the orchestral works, Norrington's positioning of the musicians again raised concerns. In the balcony of the Thomaskirche the soloists were placed behind rather than in front of the orchestra and the horns and trumpets were placed on the left and right wings respectively. Despite these drawbacks (and the disappointing performances in the solo numbers, particularly in the "Christe" and the "Laudamus te"), Norrington truly shone in the performance of the choral movements, many of which were exceptional. The sonority of the opening four bars of the "Kyrie," for instance, was magnificent, and the ensuing fugal section was so clearly articulated and so beautifully shaped by the orchestra that the audience had every reason to hope for magic later on. Unfortunately, the "Et incarnatus est" was too slow to sustain the inherent tension and the "Crucifixus" was too angry to convey the complexity of meanings in this pivotal text. The "Confiteor," however, was superb, and it was convincingly connected to the powerful "Expecto" by its beautifully controlled counterpoint and realization of the expressive harmonies of the slow section that appears toward the end of the movement. Ultimately, solemn beauty prevailed in the absolutely stunning final movement, "Dona nobis pacem." One left with the impression of having experienced a deeply moving performance in which great dramatic moments were occasionally mixed with moments of disappointment.

Regular attendees of the Bachfest Leipzig undoubtedly noticed the greater emphasis placed this year on accommodating attendees who have a better grasp of English than German. Simultaneous interpreting was provided for all musicological lectures and translations of many concert programs were also available. The courtesy and friendliness of the staff of the Bach-Archiv is never failing.

Bachfest Leipzig 2009 runs from June 11 to 21 on the theme "Bach—Mendelssohn—Reger."

Yo Tomita

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Barbara Wiermann (Leipzig), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach und Adam Friedrich Oeser – eine Ergänzung

Daniel R. Melamed (Bloomington, IN), Bachs Schwester

Besprechungen

Matthias Geuting, *Konzert und Sonate bei Johann Sebastian Bach. Formale Disposition und Dialog der Gattungen*, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2006. (Bochumer Arbeiten zur Musikwissenschaft. 5.), 336 S. (Karl Heller, Rostock)

Hans-Joachim Schulze, *Die Bach-Kantaten. Einführungen zu sämtlichen Kantaten Johann Sebastian Bachs*, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag 2006 (Edition Bach-Archiv Leipzig), 760 S. (Ingeborg Allihn, Berlin)

Anke Fröhlich, *Zwischen Empfindsamkeit und Klassizismus. Der Zeichner und Landschaftsmaler Johann Sebastian Bach der Jüngere (1748–1778). *Œuvre-Katalog. Mit einem biographischen Essay von Maria Hübner**, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007 (Edition Bach-Archiv Leipzig), 277 S., 210 Abb. (Helmut Börsch-Supan, Berlin)

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanks to the able stewardship of my predecessors, the American Bach Society flourishes. Both of the Society's publications, *Bach Perspectives* and *Bach Notes*, have a superior track record. The next volume of *Bach Perspectives*, entitled *Bach and the Oratorio Tradition*, will be edited by Daniel R. Melamed (Indiana University). Reginald L. Sanders has done an outstanding job of editing *Bach Notes* for the past five years, and is stepping down after this issue. I am happy to report that Andrew Talle, chair of the musicology department at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, has agreed to be his successor. Talle, a 2006 winner of the Society's William H. Scheide Prize, holds a BM in cello performance and a BA and MA in linguistics from Northwestern University and a PhD in musicology from Harvard University. He is active as a cellist and is currently working on a book about the reception of Bach's keyboard music before 1800.

In the six months since taking office, my fellow officers, Lynn Edwards Butler, vice president, and Mark Peters, secretary-treasurer, have brought energy and an infusion of new ideas to the organization. Planning is already well under way for the next biennial meeting of the Society, which will take place May 7–9, 2010, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on the theme “Bach and his German Contemporaries.”

In addition to these ongoing activities, we also intend to explore fresh avenues through which the American Bach Society can carry out its mission of supporting “the study, performance, and appreciation of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach in the United States and Canada.” The redesign of the ABS web site has already begun and members will be notified by e-mail when the new site is launched. The Society is greatly indebted to Daniel R. Melamed for maintaining the existing site for the past eight years.

In the Spring 2008 issue of *Bach Notes*, President Gregory Butler announced the receipt of an anonymous gift in the amount of \$100,000 to support public outreach and fund Bach-related educational projects. The Advisory Board agreed at its most recent meeting that making German-language publications available in English to students, performers, and Bach aficionados in a timely manner is a high priority for the Society. Starting this fall, specific articles and books will be identified and their translation expedited through this fund. Our deepest appreciation to

the donor—a member of the Society—for helping to make this important new initiative possible.

Over the past four decades many developments—some global and others specific to the field of Bach scholarship—have had a significant impact on the study and performance of Bach's music. These developments include the opening of the former Eastern bloc, permitting greater ease of communication with and travel to these countries as well as the rediscovery of sources once thought lost; the maturation of the historically-informed performance practice movement; the establishment of the Internet and quantum leaps in technology; and the completion of the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* (New Bach Edition), a milestone reached in 2007.

Since the Society's founding in 1972, its membership has also changed markedly. Originally a small group of scholars, our ranks have expanded to include educators, performers, and Bach aficionados. So that the Society can best serve this membership, we will soon ask you to participate in a survey. We would like to learn more about your areas of interest and expertise and what you think the Society could and should be. We look to you to help chart the course of the Society during the coming decade and beyond.

The 2008 ABS Membership Gift will be *About Bach* (ed. Butler, Stauffer, and Greer, University of Illinois Press, 2008). Look for it in February 2009!

Mary Greer

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Richard Benedum (University of Dayton, emeritus) has been named the outstanding alumnus of the University of Oregon for 2009. Benedum is very active professionally and recently read a paper on the relationship between the organ works of Buxtehude and Bach at the College Music Society National Conference (Atlanta, September 2008) and a paper on grant writing for music faculty for the National Association of Schools of Music (Seattle, November 2008).

CONCORA (Connecticut Choral Artists) mourns the loss of Catherine Stockman, who died unexpectedly on October 29, 2008. Ms. Stockman served as executive director of CONCORA from 1991 to 2001, and during her tenure was instrumental in establishing performances of J. S. Bach's works as the centerpiece of every performance season. Under her direction, the Friends of Bach was established as an auxiliary organization of donors and volunteers, supporting and enhancing the choral performances through educational events, recitals, and master classes. CONCORA'S Bach

performance series has now grown into a full collaboration with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra under the baton of CONCORRA Founder and Artistic Director **Richard Coffey**. Ms. Stockman's lifelong devotion to music and education is reflected in the many organizations she served, including the Hartford Chorale and the New Britain Symphony Orchestra, of which she was executive director at the time of her death.

The Louisville Bach Society is currently celebrating its 45th season under the musical direction of co-founders **Melvin and Margaret Dickinson**. December concerts included performances of Bach's *Magnificat*, with guest soloists Birger Radde (tenor of Berlin, Germany) and Jay Carter (countertenor), as well as the Society's annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. For more information on the complete season and on the Gerhard Herz Young Artist Competition, visit www.louisvil-bachsociety.org.

Cory Hall has developed a web site, www.BachScholar.com, devoted exclusively to issues concerning tempo in Bach's music. Included are a detailed, fifty-page summary of Hall's theory of tempo, an exhaustive tempo analysis of the Mass in B minor, links to videos that demonstrate these tempos (with Hall at the piano), and a resource center where several unpublished studies can be downloaded.

Now in its 21st season, Carolina Baroque, led by **Dale Higbee**, offers two concerts as part of its Salisbury Bach & Handel Festival. The October concert, entitled "Bach Cantatas from Mühlhausen, Weimar & Leipzig," included performances of *Aus der Tiefen rufe ich Herr, zu dir*, BWV 131, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 61, and *Jesu nahm zu sich die Zwölfe*, BWV 22. The Salisbury Post praised the music making on this occasion, writing, "Once again . . . music lovers were treated to an outstanding concert. . . . The 10 seasoned performers gave us a stunning evening of music." The May concert, "A Baroque Sampler," will include instrumental works by Handel, Frescobaldi, Purcell, Rameau, and Couperin. For more information, visit www.carolinabaroque.org.

Michael Kassler recently published *A. F. C. Kollmann's "Quarterly Musical Register" (1812): An Annotated Edition with an Introduction to his Late Works* (Ashgate, 2008). Kollmann was a pioneer in introducing Bach's music to England and his journal included the first substantial English-language biography of Bach.

Arthur Lawrence is the editor of a new volume of the harpsichord works of Elizabeth Jacquet de La Guerre first printed in 1687 and 1707. This volume, published by the Broude Trust, is based on the newly-discovered 1687 exemplar, the previously known 1687 exemplar in Venice, and the only known 1707 source, at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. In addition, Lawrence will soon edit a critical facsimile of the newly-discovered 1687 source.

Robin A. Leaver is now emeritus, having "retired" from Westminster Choir College at the end of the spring semester. He currently resides in Dover, New Hampshire, where his wife, Sherry Vellucci, is dean of libraries at the University of New Hampshire. Leaver continues as visiting professor at the Juilliard School in New York City and is currently teaching at the Institute of Sacred Music, Yale University. In July he was appointed honorary professor at Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, for the next five years in order to work with Professor Yo Tomita in overseeing PhD students engaged in Bach or Bach-related studies. Early next year he will also be visiting professor at Trinity Theological College and the Methodist School of Music, both in Singapore.

Karen G. Mandelbaum received her PhD in music theory from the CUNY Graduate Center in May 2008 with a dissertation entitled "The late keyboard rondos of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: issues of genre, form and voice leading."

Mary Oleskiewicz has been appointed visiting professor at the Universität der Künste, Berlin, and in the fall semester taught the seminar "Musik und Aufführungspraxis am Hofe Friedrichs des Großen." Oleskiewicz also recently edited the volume *Solo Sonatas for C.P.E. Bach: The Complete Works*.

Curt Sather, who has been organist at the Basilica of San Miniato al Monte in Florence, Italy, since June 2006, recently recorded works by J. S. Bach on the basilica's 1988 Tamburini organ. *J. S. Bach/Curt Sather/San Miniato al Monte* is available at the basilica or from Sather at sathercurt@hotmail.com.

Bach Cantata Vespers at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Kansas City, Missouri, enters its 21st season of cantata performances in the Lutheran vespers. Beginning at 5:00 pm on four Sundays from October to March, conductor **William T. Stewart** leads the Immanuel Vespers Choir and Orchestra in the performance of cantatas such as *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*, BWV 98, and *Wie werden aus Saba alle kommen*, BWV 65.

Teri Noel Towe was recently featured in an article in the *Baltimore Sun* concerning his 1724 manuscript of the organ part to *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam*, BWV 7. Towe's manuscript, which was copied by one of Bach's pupils but contains notations in Bach's hand, is missing pages three and four of what was originally an eight-page part. The missing pages were recently located at a small museum in the town of Melun, France, thanks to the efforts of the Frenchman Philippe d'Anchald who read about the manuscript and the missing pages on Towe's website.

DIRECTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Bach Notes is published twice yearly (fall and spring) and mailed to all members and subscribers. Submissions for the Spring 2009 issue are due by 28 February 2009, and should be in Microsoft Word, employ endnotes, and follow the stylistic guidelines of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th ed.). Email submissions (much preferred) should be sent to bachnotes@americanbachsociety.org and submissions on compact disc (CD), with hard copy, may be mailed to Andrew Talle, Faculty, Peabody Conservatory, 1 East Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore, MD 21202.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Gregory Butler is senior professor of music at the School of Music, University of British Columbia in Vancouver and past president of the American Bach Society. He is the author of *J. S. Bach's Clavier-Übung III: The Making of a Print* and numerous articles on the first editions of Bach's works. He has also written extensively on Bach's concertos, and a book-length study on the concerted works is presently nearing completion. He is collaborating with his wife, Lynn Edwards Butler, on a study of the Leipzig organs and organ works of Bach.

Jonathan B. Hall earned a DM in organ performance and literature at the Jacobs School of Music of Indiana University in 2001. His dissertation on the life of Calvin Hampton (1938-1984) will soon be published by Wayne Leupold Editions. He lives in New Jersey and is active in the New York metropolitan area as a recitalist, speaker, and writer on musical topics. A Fellow of the American Guild of Organists and Dean of the Brooklyn Chapter, he has recorded on historic pipe organs for many organizations, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Yo Tomita received his doctorate from the University of Leeds in 1991 with a dissertation on the sources of Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, part II. In 1995 he was appointed research fellow at the School of Music, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, where he currently serves as professor of musicology. His recent publications include three articles in *The English Bach Awakening: Knowledge of J. S. Bach and his Music in England 1750-1830*, ed. Michael Kassler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and a new revised critical edition of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, part II (G. Henle Verlag, 2007). In "Anna Magdalena as Bach's copyist," which appears in *Understanding Bach* 2 (2007), the web journal of the Bach Network UK (<http://www.bachnetwork.co.uk/>), he clarifies his views on the subject that were misrepresented in print in 2006. He is currently working on a two-volume monograph on *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, part II, for Ashgate Publishing.

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Founded in 1972 as a chapter of the Neue Bachgesellschaft, the American Bach Society is dedicated to promoting 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 www.americanbachsociety.org. Interested persons may also contact Mark Peters, ABS Secretary-Treasurer, Trinity Christian College, 6601 West College Drive, Palos Heights, IL 60463, USA.

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