



the reader assess the results, and in the hope of inspiring a new generation of musicologists to discover many new methods' (Tatlow, *Bach's Numbers*, 368–369).

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## RESPONSE TO RUTH TATLOW

In speculating about my aim in her letter of response, Ruth Tatlow wonders whether my article is 'designed to take the discussion forward, or to discredit the theory of proportional parallelism'. I do not think that these are the only two choices or that they are mutually exclusive.

The author's book on parallel proportions does devote space to eighteenth-century understandings of bars and other elements, but this discussion contributes little when it comes time to assign numbers of bars and to add them up. There are multiple ways to count, sometimes invoked in the same analysis, and the matter is complicated by the composer's own ambiguous counting. The study of eighteenth-century writings does not fix these problems, and I suggested not that the author was unaware of them, but rather that she sidesteps them in the theory's application.

The response maintains that the theory of proportional parallelism is supported by the recent 'discovery' that Chopin used Bach's proportional ordering in his own preludes. But if this sort of relationship is mathematically inevitable in Bach, it is equally inevitable in Chopin. The law of large numbers applied in the nineteenth century as well as in the eighteenth, and points to the near certainty of a particular result in both. There is no evidence that Bach intentionally established proportions, none that Chopin found them in Bach's music, none that he purposely created them himself, and none that the practice was 'handed down verbally and in writing from teacher to pupil', as is claimed.

I was indeed fortunate to see Alan Shepherd's work after my article was completed, but it did not change my view. Shepherd ran randomized tests similar to the ones I performed on the Dresden *Missa* but using the *Well-Tempered Clavier Book 1*. In reporting the results, he mentions in passing that of 100,000 tests, every one had a solution – a 100 per cent probability of there being a proportion. But he then goes on to calculate that the 'probability of finding a 1:1 proportion by chance' is, on average, 0.146 per cent (page 122 of pre-publication version). I am not exactly sure what he means by the probability of 'finding a proportion', but the letter echoes this language in speaking of the improbability of Bach's '*finding* a proportion among all the possible combinations'. Perhaps this means that it would have been difficult for Bach to spot the proportions, but there is no evidence that he did, or even knew they existed. The modern analyst has found them, not Bach, and assigned significance to them.

Or maybe it relates to the likelihood of hitting on a particular proportional combination, but it is difficult to see why we might care about the odds of finding a specific proportion in any event. If I drop a hook and worm into water teeming with hungry fish, chances are really good that I will catch one; that's what it means to say a spot is a good place to fish, not that I have a certain (tiny) probability of landing a particular fish from among the many filling the waters of the seas.

Overall, the response reiterates the claim that proportions exist in this music, but it is trivial that they do, given their mathematical inevitability. The matter is non-trivial only if they can be shown to mean something,



and I still do not see any evidence that Bach himself thought so. (Shepherd explicitly does not offer an opinion on Bach's 'intentionality'.)

Finally, it is difficult to miss the curious tone of rebuke in the response. Suggesting that in my article I not only misunderstand but also mislead and misrepresent, the letter clearly implies an ethical lapse in my failure to withdraw the work. But most puzzling is the letter's fundamental concern, expressed in distinctly religious terms, that what I wrote could 'sow doubt for those who have found [the theory] inspiring'. I have no interest in interfering with anyone's inspiration, just in asking questions about what lies behind any interpretative claim, using well-established tools and the evidence of the musical sources.

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#### FIRST BOUNTY OF THE NEW WAÑHAL CATALOGUE

In 2012 Allan Badley announced in this journal the goal of creating a new catalogue of the works of Johann Baptist Wañhal (*Eighteenth-Century Music* 9/1, 157–158). I took over responsibility for the project in 2015, and it is my great pleasure to announce that the first section of this project, a catalogue of the composer's masses, has now been published. The project is a cooperative one between the University of Auckland and the Norges teknisk-naturvitenskaplige universitet in Trondheim, the latter of which is currently hosting it through the research cluster 'The Classical Ages' ([www.ntnu.edu/classical-ages](http://www.ntnu.edu/classical-ages)), under the name *Catalogus novus Wanhalii*.

This project is eventually going to lead to the first complete catalogue of Wañhal's works. Previously, a private agreement from the post-war decades led to Paul Bryan cataloguing the symphonies (*Johann Wañhal, Viennese Symphonist: His Life and His Musical Environment* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1997)) and Alexander Weinmann the remaining works (*Themen-Verzeichnis der Kompositionen von Johann Baptiste Wanhal* (Vienna: Ludwig Krenn, 1986)). However, despite working on it for at least three decades, Weinmann did not manage to finish his catalogue before his death, and it is therefore unsatisfactory for most repertoires. The opening of the former Eastern Bloc and an increased interest in Wañhal's music mean that an update is long overdue.

Wañhal's oeuvre is huge, and it presents a plethora of challenges for cataloguers. We therefore decided that the catalogue should be published digitally. In our current model, we intend first to create an overview of the known extant sources, and thereafter to include more information as we are able to survey them. In this way, we hope to be able to make new entries and add to existing ones as information becomes available.

As noted above, Wañhal's masses are the first works to have been catalogued. He produced more works of this type than any of his Viennese contemporaries: we currently recognize fifty-four masses as being most plausibly attributed to the composer, with fourteen more being regarded as having dubious or spurious attributions. That we have begun with these is not only in recognition of Wañhal's importance as a composer of sacred music, but also in recognition of their having been inadequately treated in Weinmann's catalogue: most of this material survives in manuscripts in modern-day Czechia, and these Weinmann only knew from library cards sent to him. This resulted in many errors, omissions and double entries, and meant