



fighting to make ‘we the people’ included we the women, we the enslaved and we the disenfranchised, as well as those fighting to respect the sovereignty of Indigenous people whose unceded territory the United States still occupies, were drowned out by partisan propaganda in the early republic.

GLEND A GOODMAN
ggoo@sas.upenn.edu



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 doi:10.1017/S1478570620000561

MARK A. PETERS AND REGINALD L. SANDERS, EDS
COMPOSITIONAL CHOICES AND MEANING IN THE VOCAL MUSIC OF J. S. BACH
 Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018
 pp. xxv + 328, ISBN 978 1 498 55495 4

Essay collections form an integral part of the ever-expanding body of Bach scholarship. The present anthology, *Compositional Choices and Meaning in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach*, joins the ranks of recent publications such as *Exploring Bach’s B-Minor Mass* (ed. Yo Tomita, Robin A. Leaver and Jan Smaczny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)), *The Routledge Research Companion to Johann Sebastian Bach* (ed. Robin A. Leaver (New York: Routledge, 2017)) and the biannually published volumes in the series *Bach Perspectives*. Seventeen eminent authors have contributed to this book, approaching the composer’s vocal music from four different contextual angles, each of which forms its own section: theological background, analytical methodologies, parody (or self-borrowing) technique and reception history. Their brief – already outlined in the title of the book – is communicated at length by the Preface’s (at times repetitive) emphasis on two questions with many possible but no definite answers: the meaning of a Bach work and the composer’s artistic intentions.

Beginning part 1, Markus Rathey’s thoroughly researched essay investigates not so much its nominal subject, Bach’s 1708 cantata *Gott ist mein König* (BWV71), as peripheral topics related to it. First, he examines how contemporary sermons may have influenced the theological content of the work. Following that, the reader gets an overview of the compositions of J. G. Ahle, Bach’s predecessor in Mühlhausen. (Rathey is also the author of a monograph on Ahle: *Johann Rudolph Ahle, 1625-1673: Lebensweg und Schaffen* (Eisenach: Wagner, 1999).) Finally, the question is raised whether several cantatas with unclear geneses may have been composed during the Mühlhausen years.

Erik Chafe convincingly articulates the shifting emphasis from Jesus to the incarnation (and its meaning) in Bach’s 1723 Christmas cantatas, particularly BWV40 and BWV64. His theological elaboration on why and how these cantatas draw on John’s Gospel and his first epistle is compelling, though the wealth of detail may make this essay challenging for non-expert readers. The two music examples that are included are certainly helpful; more would have facilitated the understanding of the context even further.

Chapter 3 moves seamlessly to cantatas celebrating Eastertide, following on from Chafe’s Johannine theology and with a strong emphasis on Martin Luther’s ‘theology of the cross’. In fact, about a third of Mark A. Peters’s essay is taken up by an enticing examination of Luther and his sermons for Jubilate as well as biblical commentary by Abraham Calov and Johann Olearius, without much reference to Bach in these pages.

Intriguingly, Bach used red ink a number of times when writing out the text in the fair copy of the St Matthew Passion; this appears to be the only time that he used two different colours in a manuscript. In chapter 4 Mary Greer proposes several (not necessarily straightforward) possible links between the use of red ink and Bach’s metaphorical invocation of Jesus’ blood. Her argument is supported by an extensive theological exegesis, bringing in commentary by Luther, Calov and Olearius. While evidencing the results of impressive research, this chapter is another in which the balance between the study of Bach’s music and its theological context may be questioned, as it seems to lean too much towards the latter.



The commitment of the volume's editors to offering 'aspects of newer musicological methodologies' is commendable, but not consistently implemented, as two of the articles were conceived in the early years of our century and another two in the last century. Martin Petzoldt's contribution begins with the subheading 'Bach Research Today' (as of 2007), as it announces the conclusion of the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* before presenting a cursory introduction to Alfred Dürr's new chronology of the cantatas. In the rapidly evolving world of Bach scholarship, some of Petzoldt's observations hardly represent recent developments. However, his suggested eight possible approaches to the sacred choral works of Bach contain valuable thoughts.

Bach's Magnificat is the focal point of the first of the analytical chapters, by Reginald L. Sanders. In his discussion of the opening chorus's design, Sanders demonstrates how the orchestration and formal structure of the movement reflect the pregnant Virgin's jubilation, taken from Luke's Gospel. However, his explanation of the work's complex genesis would have benefited from a timeline. Equally, the later version of the Magnificat, created between 1732 and 1735, in a different key (D major) and with significant revisions, deserves more than a footnote (which includes erroneous years of composition). The connection between the section on rhetorical theory and the topic of the article seems to be remote.

In her chapter, Kayoung Lee expands on previous research by John Butt and Laurence Dreyfus on Bach's tonally open ritornellos. Her analysis of two selected cantata movements reveals how closely the tonally open ritornellos relate to the formal structure of the movement, and how the challenges posed by them are always resolved by a tonally satisfying ritornello before the end of the piece.

The last chapter in the analytical section offers an article by Wye J. Allanbrook originally published in 1993. It explores how a Christian believer might hear the aria 'Mache dich, mein Herze, rein' from the St Matthew Passion metaphorically as a cradle song, and what harmonic and rhythmic strategies from the composer would support this claim. As the author died in 2010, it is puzzling that her footnote 7, which begins 'I interpret this differently than Markus Rathey, who describes this rhythmic pattern not as a rocking of the cradle', is cast in the first person, given that the cited reference, Rathey's book on Bach's major vocal works, was not published until 2016 (*Bach's Major Vocal Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press)). Notwithstanding the editors' disclosure regarding posthumously added references, the personal tone of the footnote is unwarranted.

Unclear chronology creates confusion in chapter 9 as well. The original German version of Hans-Joachim Schulze's article 'Parody and Text Quality in the Vocal Works of J. S. Bach' was published in 2004, though the references suggest that some of the essay was created before the 2000 publication of Christoph Wolff's pivotal Bach monograph *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: Norton). This perhaps explains why Schulze argues for the first performance of both the St Matthew Passion and the Funeral Ode (BWV198) having taken place in 1729, while Wolff (and also the data from *Bach Digital*, www.bach-digital.de) clearly indicates that both compositions were premiered in 1727.

Bach's parody technique is the subject of the next five essays, beginning with Robin A. Leaver's nuanced explanation of the historical circumstances and reasons for the composer's inclusion of a number of parodied movements in his Lutheran Missae (BWV232–236), the Christmas Oratorio (BWV248), the Schübler Chorales (BWV645–650) and elsewhere. The section about the meaning of 'andächtige Musique' makes for fascinating reading, as it elaborates on Bach's dedicated study of his Calov Bible, even if its direct relationship to the parody technique is somewhat oblique. It is well worth reading, though, not least for its analysis of one of Bach's most memorable lines, written in the margin of his Calov Bible: 'Bey einer andächtigt Musique ist allerzeit Gott mit seiner Gnaden Gegenwart' (Where there is devout music, God with his grace is always present.)

Gregory Butler's essay concerns Bach's first serenatas – a term defined in more than one way in the literature – and offers an explanation for some problematic chronological and analytical details. (It would have been helpful if the author had clarified whether he considers a serenata simply to be a congratulatory secular cantata or something else.) Steven Saunders analyses a parody aria from the Christmas Oratorio. After a thorough survey of previous research, he juxtaposes 'Bereite dich, Zion' with its original and discusses their



differences, and even proposes an intriguing ‘uneasiness surrounding the transformation’ of the original to the parody amongst his colleagues (221).

In chapter 13 Yo Tomita, one of the world’s leading experts on the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, puts forth a bold hypothesis: Bach’s vocal music may have served as a possible source of inspiration for some preludes and fugues in Book 2. Six vocal motives and their possible reappearances in Book 2 are analysed, with similarities being suggested based on shared keys and thematic material, as well as other resemblances. Some, but not all, of these relationships are demonstrated by means of music examples. In the course of associating these pairs, Tomita poses three incisive questions to the reader regarding his approach (for example: can two musical motives be related if they contain different sets of intervals? (231–232)). However, no answers are provided in this essay, which appears to represent work in progress.

Part 4 ostensibly offers recent scholarly thought on the reception of Bach’s vocal music. This is certainly delivered in chapter 14, Tanya Kevorkian’s expert presentation on the structure of the church service in Leipzig in Bach’s time, and how the audience may have reacted to performances, particularly to the chorales, of the St Matthew Passion. The following chapter, however, is only peripherally about Bach or about reception history. Jason B. Grant’s scrupulous survey investigates Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach’s borrowings from members of his family in the edition of his complete works (www.cpebach.org), while also taking stock of the content of his estate in the 1790 catalogue (*Nachlaß-Verzeichnis*). The extent to which the second surviving Bach son formed *pasticcios* by reusing, often with minimal alteration, works by other composers – members of his own family, as well as others – is presented in meticulous detail here. Grant’s conclusion is that for C. P. E. Bach, the traditional method of composition was by no means the only way to boost the number of ‘his’ compositions.

Chapter 17 makes for fascinating reading, as its author allows himself a much higher level of personal admiration for a Bach composition than it is customary in academic writing. Robert L. Marshall characterizes the Mass in B minor as supra-denominational on the first page and supra-personal on the second-to-last. He may not offer much by way of new research, and his writing is the briefest in the book by some margin; yet he presents his homily with evident awe for what he calls – citing Hans Nägeli – the ‘Greatest Musical Work of Art of All Times and Nations’ (299).

This leaves one, rather problematic essay to be discussed. William H. Scheide’s hitherto unpublished essay from around 1946 is a strongly worded vignette from the distant past. The editors’ note argues for its inclusion in the book, as it is a ‘vital source for understanding the beginnings of the early music movement in the US’ (295); however, there is very little about that subject to be found. Instead, the author offers a strikingly subjective survey of music history, claiming *inter alia* that Mozart ‘has no understanding of human beings as such’ (283) and that in Debussy’s music, ‘rhythm and melody become almost extinct’ (285). Matters do not improve once he turns his attention to Johann Sebastian Bach. Scheide suggests that it is ‘useful to divide [Bach’s] music into four stylistic groups: fugue, chorale, recitative, and concerto’ (291). One might wonder where, for example, the suites, partitas and sonatas for keyboard, violin and cello or the Goldberg Variations fit into his tidily compartmentalized system. This collection of his bold and confident conclusions unquestionably amounts to an intriguing historical artefact. None the less, it is hard to see a justification for considering his antagonistic views to be a significant contribution to new scholarship, which should surely be a criterion for being published in the same anthology as some of the most prominent living Bach scholars.

ZOLTÁN SZABÓ

zoltan.szabo@sydney.edu.au

