“Was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern machen?”

Cantata BWV 210, “O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit,” A Response by Bach to a Changing Musical Aesthetic

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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Abstract

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As the Enlightenment took hold in Europe, all aspects of eighteenth-century society felt its effects. Musical tastes, caught in this ideological shift, began to move from the more codified complexity of counterpoint toward the more simplified aesthetic known as *galant*. Johann Sebastian Bach, now in the most mature phase of a musical career rooted in the contrapuntal style, came under growing public criticism from proponents of *galant* who were increasingly dismissive of counterpoint as an out-dated compositional method. In 1741, during this time of growing censure, Bach created the wedding cantata BWV 210, *O holder Tag erwünschte Zeit*, based on an earlier cantata but with significant changes that are unique within this oeuvre. Rather than the typical celebratory libretto characteristic of his other wedding cantatas, Bach mounted a strong rhetorical argument in defense of music, deftly combining
irony, humour, and pointed barbs to make his point. The rationale for this has not received significant scholarly attention. This dissertation explores the idea that Bach used BWV 210 as a specific personal response to his critics who favoured the changing musical aesthetic of the era, and as a defense of a contrapuntal style cherished by him but no longer valued by many advocates of the galant.

This claim is supported through an aggregation of extant research linking the cantata to the circumstances in which it was created. Particular attention is given to the ideological conflict represented in the aesthetic shift of the eighteenth century, and Bach’s reactions evident in written documents, his compositions and in his unique synthesis of compositional styles intersecting the aesthetics of his era. The circumstances under which the cantata was written provide context for the significant libretto revisions undertaken to adapt the cantata from its closest known counterpart, BWV 210a. Finally, Johann Scheibe’s published criticism against Bach is explored as an important flashpoint for Bach’s use of BWV 210 as a musical rebuttal.

Not only is a better understanding of a lesser-known cantata achieved, but a glimpse into the mindset of Bach is also realized through the unusually personal response included in BWV 210.
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General Abbreviations

The notation system applied in this dissertation is based on the system used by the Acoustical Society of America. Each octave begins on the note C with the octave indicated by the subsequent numeral. For examples, A4 indicates A=440 Hz, C4 = middle C, C5 = the note an octave above middle C.

BWV refers to the “Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis” categorization of Bach’s compositions, as compiled by Wolfgang Schmieder in his 1950 publication, Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs, which has been updated in 1998 by Alfred Dürr and Yoshitake Kobayashi in Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis: Kleine Ausgabe.

Bibliographic Abbreviations

BD I, II, III  Bach-Dokumente, Volume 1, 2, or 3.
NBA  Neue Bach Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke
NBA KB  Neue Bach-Ausgabe: Kritischer Bericht
NBR  The New Bach Reader
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Chapter 1.

“Was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern machen?”

Cantata BWV 210, “O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit”: A Response by Bach to a Changing Musical Aesthetic

Introduction

In 1746 Elias Haußmann (1695–1774) painted a portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) that remains the most widely recognized image of the composer. To most modern eyes, however, the contextual importance of how Bach chose to be portrayed – holding a manuscript titled “Six Part Canon” - is not immediately understood. The piece of music held in Bach’s hand was a canon — a style of composition that represented one of the most erudite forms of contrapuntal art.¹ That Bach elected to be associated with this form of music at this late point in his career was an interesting choice, and clearly showed his self-perception as both composer and contrapuntalist.² By the middle of the eighteenth century, Enlightenment influence had dramatically altered the prevailing musical aesthetic, which in turn had created a contentious environment among musicians. A new wave of musical theorists, led by the prolific pen of Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), championed a simpler musical style referred to as the galant, and conversely challenged the dominance of complex contrapuntal forms that

¹ A highly publicized debate between Mattheson and Bokemeyer used the terminology “galant” versus “canon” to represent two extremes of the eighteenth century musical aesthetic. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of this debate.

² About the Haußmann portrait, Christoph Wolff writes, “Bach displays what he considers his trademark, the short but highly sophisticated canon BWV 1076, an emblem of his erudite contrapuntal art. By not having a keyboard instrument included in the picture, he chose to disclaim his fame as a virtuoso performer. And by not clasping a paper roll, the conductor's attribute ... Bach elected to play down his office as cantor and music director.” Christoph Wolff, Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000), 391.
had traditionally represented the highest order of music.\(^3\) By the 1740s counterpoint was no longer widely respected as the epitome of compositional styles, but rather had been relegated to a peripheral status.\(^4\) Bach was fundamentally a traditionalist whose music remained rooted in polyphony in spite of the dramatic shift towards a homophonic aesthetic that was gaining strength as the century continued. As a result, his music had begun to generate a backlash from the “modern” critics. By portraying himself with a six-voice contrapuntal work, Bach aligned himself with a diminishing group of composers and theorists who persisted in championing learned counterpoint, despite the changing tide of public opinion.\(^5\)

In a similar manner, within Bach’s oeuvre of compositions are pieces that were created as a deliberate reaction to this changing musical milieu. A shift in Bach’s compositional output occurred during the last decade of his life. During this time Bach wrote some of his most substantial polyphonic compositions. Works such as BWV 1080, *The Art of the Fugue*, BWV 1079, *The Musical Offering*, and BWV 232, *Mass in B-minor*, were large scale, self-initiated compositions celebrating the art of counterpoint, despite being composed during a period when contrapuntal methods would have been considered out-dated and old-fashioned. Bach’s music

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\(^4\) See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of eighteenth-century musical aesthetics.

\(^5\) Others such as Lorenz Christoph Mizler (1711–78), Heinrich Bokemeyer (1679-1751), Gottfried Walther (1684-1748), and Johann Kirnberger (1721-83) were also proponents of counterpoint. See Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 421-22.
was generally written for identifiable occasions, but when he created these substantial works later in life there is no evidence indicating that Bach wrote for specific performances, suggesting that Bach’s motivation was purely personal.

It was much more common for Bach and his contemporaries to compose “functional” works conceived and written for specific occasions, or *Gelegenheitsmusik*, such as the fulfilment of commissions from patrons or for the many events associated with civic and liturgical duties. One genre of these commissioned works was the wedding cantata, written for performance at either the wedding ceremony or the festivities following the church service, and accordingly designated as sacred or secular. These pieces, and particularly the secular wedding cantatas, were written in a lighter style befitting the celebratory event. Appropriately, the libretti of Bach’s eight sacred and four secular extant wedding cantatas are of a suitably laudatory nature. An exception was created for a wedding occurring sometime between 1738 and 1741 — the secular wedding cantata, BWV 210, *O holder Tag erwünschte Zeit*. In this work Bach parodied an earlier cantata, traditionally cited as the homage cantata BWV 210a, *O angenehme Melodei*, which in itself was not an unusual process for Bach or for the time. Where this cantata becomes unusual is in Bach’s revisions of the previous libretto. Instead of incorporating the expected modest changes that would easily adapt the libretto’s focus from honouring a single patron to the celebration of a nuptial couple, Bach’s modifications went far beyond a mere change of occasion, and instead transformed the text into a passionate argument

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6 See Chapter 4 for a description of Bach’s sacred and secular wedding cantatas.

7 Scholars have dated BWV 210 based on evidence that Bach's student Johann Friedrich Agricola was the copyist of most of the instrumental parts; he studied with Bach in Leipzig between 1738 and 1741. As discussed later in this chapter, the most recent, compelling research dates the work in 1741.
in defense of music. In the process, Bach completely rewrote recitatives from routine, transitional movements into chromatic, lengthy declamations. He created strange dichotomies between the text and music heard in the central arias, and included pointed statements against those who disparaged music as a “brood from hell” and “Satan’s children” — hardly a typical wedding theme. Because Bach was known to exert considerable control over his cantata texts (a point that will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters), the text adaptations undertaken for O holder Tag would likely have been a very direct representation of the composer’s wishes. What were the specific circumstances surrounding the creation of this cantata that would have compelled Bach to make these changes?

As has been noted, a shift in Bach’s compositional style occurred in his final decade. The aforementioned works, *The Art of the Fugue* (which was probably started around 1740, but published posthumously in 1751), *Musical Offering* (1747), and *Mass in B minor* (1749), were all products of the 1740s. As such, Bach’s creative inspiration continued turning to more erudite polyphonic works even while the popular aesthetic increasingly embraced simpler homophony. It may be that as Bach neared the end of his life he wanted to leave a musical legacy, but another compelling factor may have been a deliberate reaction to the changing musical environment in which he found himself. An episode occurring just prior to the 1740s appears to have irritated Bach and may have provided a catalyst that incited this new phase of compositional output. Between the years 1737 and 1739 Bach became the subject of a series of

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8 The text cited is taken from Recitative 7, bars 4-6, *Soll so ein Himmelskind ersterben, und zwar für eine Höllenbrut?*, and bars 12-14, *was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern machen?* Arias 4 and 6, “Ruhet hie” and “Schweigt, ihr Flöten,” and Recitative 5, “So glaubt man denn, daß die Musik verführe” form the central movements of the libretto.

heated articles debating the value of his compositional style, instigated by the Hamburg music critic Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708-76). Like his mentor Mattheson, Scheibe was a proponent of the new *galant* style of composition that reflected an ideology based in a modern aesthetic of musical simplicity, and Bach’s proclivity to musical complexity did not conform to this trend. In a 1737 article published in his periodical, the *Critischer Musicus*, Scheibe criticized Bach for his “turgid” (*schwülstig*), “artificial” (*künstliche*) music that “conflicts with Nature” (*wider die Natur streitet*). Scheibe’s remarks initiated a fiery response from Bach’s supporters, which in turn instigated several other published comments for or against Bach’s music in a variety of peripheral publications. The debate climaxed with Scheibe’s final and most acerbic critique of Bach published in 1739 when he wrote a bitingly satirical article portraying Bach as a hopelessly archaic and irrelevant bumpkin, named “Cornelius.” Writing in the first person as “Cornelius” (Bach), Scheibe wrote,

> I cannot forbear to warn you that you are in the future not to make bold to find fault with me, or to condemn or make ridiculous the manifold counterpoints, canons, circular songs, and all the other intricate forms of music writing that, as I have found, you have perversely called “turgid.” All these things are particularly close to my heart.

And,

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10 Johann Adolph Scheibe the critic was the son of Johann Adolph Scheibe (1675-1748) the Leipzig organ builder. Subsequent references to Johann Scheibe will indicate the son. The articles referring to Bach published in Scheibe’s periodical the *Critischer Musicus* will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

11 NBR, 338; BD II, No. 400.


13 NBR, 351-2.
I reserve my praise for a piece in which everything is finely intermingled, so that the listener is astonished and cannot conceive in what variegated curlicues everything is interwoven with everything else, since no melody and in fact nothing can be remembered. These are the true masterpieces.¹⁴

As such, owing to Scheibe’s inflammatory comments between 1737 and 1739, Bach was unwittingly thrust into the centre of an impassioned dispute among his contemporaries.

Scholars have noted circumstantial evidence that suggest Scheibe’s comments affected Bach deeply. Christoph Wolff writes that Scheibe’s criticisms came as a “severe blow” to Bach,¹⁵ while Werner Neumann suggests that the temporary leave taken by Bach from his role as director of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum during the summer of 1737 was likely in reaction to Scheibe’s initial article.¹⁶ Speculation aside, we know that Bach was irritated enough by Scheibe’s comments to recruit the skills of Johann Birnbaum (1702-48), Professor of Rhetoric at Leipzig University, to write an immediate, lengthy rebuttal, which was then widely circulated in pamphlet form. That Scheibe’s articles generated a reaction from Bach through Birnbaum’s defense is undisputed; this dissertation proposes that it is equally probable Scheibe’s criticism and the aesthetic environment out of which they were born would have spurred Bach to make a musical statement in his compositions, in much the same way that he later chose to make a visual statement in the Haußmann portrait.

¹⁴ NBR, 352.
Two of Bach’s works provide important compositional parallels to support this claim. First, in 1740, Bach’s contemporary Lorenz Christoph Mizler (1711-78) wrote that the recently published Clavier-Übung III was a deliberate musical reaction by Bach to the criticism levelled by Scheibe, stating that the music was a “powerful refutation of those who have made bold to criticize the composition of the Honorable Court Composer.”

In Gregory Butler’s 1990 study of this work he underscores Mizler’s words, asserting “the Clavier-Übung III ... was intended as Bach’s musical rebuttal to Scheibe’s barb,” adding that Scheibe “stung Bach to action.”

During the last year of Bach’s life a different conflict arose that also elicited a musical response from Bach. The cantata BWV 201, Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan, a secular cantata originally written by Bach in 1729, was remounted and revised by Bach for a performance in 1749, and, in the words of Christoph Wolff, was used as a “musical demonstration, apparently in direct response to the Biedermann affair … and the audition of Count Brühl’s protégé Harrer.” Just prior to this performance Bach had been in a dispute with the neighbouring Rector of Freiberg, Johann Gottlieb Biedermann (1705-1772), who had written a public pamphlet claiming musicians were “depraved and wicked,” a statement that had infuriated Bach and had caused him to instigate the creation of a subsequent published pamphlet in response.

A concurrent episode contributing to Bach’s annoyance was an audition arranged by town council to hire Bach’s successor, which took place shortly after Bach had become

17 NBR, 333.
19 Wolff, The Learned Musician, 445.
20 Ibid., 423-4.
seriously ill during the spring of 1749. Following both the Biedermann episode and the audition for his replacement, Bach revised BWV 201 for an August 1749 performance, altering several lines of the final recitative text to reference these personal adversaries, and thereby targeting both situations. Of this performance, Wolff writes, “... the composer, at his feisty best, took the opportunity to provide a scarcely hidden autobiographical undertone.” In this manner, both the Clavier-Übung III and Phoebus und Pan have been described as a musical response to personal circumstances during the final decade of Bach’s life. Although BWV 210, O holder Tag was revised during this same period, a correlation between Bach’s contentious environment and this particular cantata has not yet been sufficiently substantiated.

If one may draw the conclusion that Bach occasionally used his music as a response to contentions, is it also possible that he used a commissioned wedding cantata to achieve a similar goal? During a decade when Bach created large contrapuntal works, and immediately after becoming the subject of public criticism for his outdated compositional style, is it not reasonable to assume that Bach also substantially reworked an existing cantata to create a piece that also functioned as a personal platform in defense of an art form he held dear? This dissertation explores the idea that Bach revised cantata BWV 210 as a personal response to his musical environment, and as a defense of a musical complexity that was cherished by him but no longer valued by many advocates of the galant movement.

21 Ibid., 444.
22 Ibid., 445.
Review of the Literature

To date, this hypothesis has not been adequately addressed in the academic literature. Some research has been directed at *O holder Tag*, but, as one of Bach’s more peripheral works (a secular cantata for solo voice and small ensemble), it has not attracted considerable attention. The most comprehensive critical commentaries of cantata BWV 210 have been written by Werner Neumann and Alfred Dürr. Neumann’s 1970 *Kritischer Bericht* article in the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* collection provides an extensive description of the manuscript documents, possible dates of composition and comparison to the parody work *O angenehme Melodie*. His discussion of the unusual nature of the libretto is treated primarily as an indicator of the likelihood of Picander’s authorship, rather than as any reflection of Bach’s personal circumstances. Neumann summarizes the text quite simply as encompassing the relationship between music and love in a marriage celebration (*die Beziehungen von Musik und Liebe im Eheleben ausbreitet*). He acknowledges that the text is different than Bach’s other wedding cantatas (*[eine] verschiedensten Geschmacksrichtungen*) yet does not link its distinct quality to Bach’s circumstances. Alfred Dürr comments on the text simply as anonymous prose that correlates the topics of music and love in honour of a musical connoisseur’s

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25 Neumann suggests that Picander, Bach's oft-used librettist, would be the most likely author since Picander seemed to relish the opportunity to display a contrasting range of poetic styles. Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 58.

26 Ibid., 58, 59.
wedding. He makes no mention of the uniqueness of the libretto but rather places emphasis on the musical characteristics of the work.

As such, the two most important commentaries on the work do not fully address the unusual nature of this text. A more recent study of BWV 210 by Michael Maul in 2001 has been the most important research to contextualize the cantata, but Maul’s focus was on substantiating evidence connecting the piece with a Berlin wedding. Hence, his study of the text has been primarily to underline his hypothesis. Szymon Paczkowski’s research in 2007 has also paid some attention to BWV 210, yet Paczkowski has more specifically concentrated on the correlations between the polonaise aria in the eighth movement of BWV 210 with its parody links in BWV 210a and BWV 30a, and as such has focused on aspects more specifically pertaining to this movement rather than on analysis of the libretto. In contrast to previous research, then, the focus of this dissertation is the interplay between the cantata libretto and the historical context in which Bach shaped its composition. Information gleaned from the following studies has directly shaped this investigation.

Prior to the 1957 paper by Georg von Dadelsen positively identifying Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720-74) as the copyist of the instrumental parts of BWV 210, early Bach biographers proposed a wide range of compositional dates that have since been refuted. In the late nineteenth century Philipp Spitta suggested that the unique character of the cantata libretto

27 Dürr, Cantatas, 901.
implied an autobiographical response by Bach to his environment; however, he erroneously suggested that it was a musical reaction to Bach’s heated conflict with Rector Biedermann in 1749. Thirty years after Spitta, Arnold Schering theorized that the cantata was written between 1734 and 1735, based upon the correlating parody movements of the BWV 210 eighth-movement polonaise aria and the eleventh-movement polonaise aria from the cantata *Angenehmes Wiederau*, BWV 30a, the latter of which was performed in September 1737.

With the positive identification of Agricola as the copyist, both Spitta’s and Schering’s dates have been proven incorrect. Determination that the handwriting found in the instrumental parts belonged to Bach’s student Agricola resulted in a narrowing of the possible dates of composition to the period between 1738 and 1741, the years when Agricola was in Leipzig studying with Bach.

Having limited the dates accordingly, Werner Neumann was the first to compile a list of possible recipients, in his 1970 critical commentary. Neumann suggested the familiar tone used toward the couple indicated that the work was likely intended for a Bach family friend and not someone from the noble classes, citing specific terms such as “Macaenas,” “patron,” “great protector” (*Mäzenat, Patron, grosser Gönner*), as well as references to the groom as a person blessed with “wisdom’s treasures” (*Weisheitsschätze*), as indicators of some degree of

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familiarity. By cross-referencing names connected to the Bach family with the existing Leipzig church records, Neumann put forward a strong case for the April 3, 1742 wedding of Friedrich Heinrich Graf and Anna Maria Bose, a couple who were also part of the Bach family circle of friends. The relationship between the Bose and Bach families is underscored by Johann Sebastian and Anna Magdalena naming the betrothed couple as godparents of the youngest Bach child, Regina Susanna (b. February 22, 1742) just six weeks before the couple’s wedding. The Graf-Bose wedding proposed by Neumann becomes problematic when considering that the duration of marriage engagements was usually only a few weeks and yet we know that Agricola departed from Leipzig approximately six months before the Graf-Bose wedding date. Therefore, if the cantata had been written for this wedding, it would have been prepared by Agricola sometime in the summer or early fall of 1741 in advance of the April 1742 wedding occasion, a much greater time span than was usual.

A second theory suggested by Michael Maul provides strong evidence that BWV 210 was written for a wedding that took place in Berlin between Georg Stahl and Johanna Schrader on September 19, 1741. Maul’s research has uncovered four points that underscore his

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34 Neumann NBA KB I/40, 47-64.
35 Graf was a well-connected doctor who later became the legal advisor (Rechtsbeistand) for Anna Magdalena upon Bach’s death, and Anna Maria Bose was one of the daughters of Georg Heinrich Bose, close neighbours and family friends of the Bachs. The Bose and Bach families not only lived next to each other, but they had many children of similar ages and J.S. Bach named five of his children after four of the Bose daughters. Ibid., 56-57. For a more recent article that questions the intimacy of the Bach-Bose relationship, see Hans-Joachim Schulze, “Anna Magdalena Bach’s ‘Herzens Freündin:’ Neues über die Beziehungen zwischen den Familien Bach und Bose,” Bach-Jahrbuch 83 (1997): 151-3.
36 Because Anna Magdalena was an accomplished singer, had close ties with the Bose family, and the secular cantata would not have been performed in a church, Neumann proposes the possibility of her singing the premier. Ibid., 57.
hypothesis. First, Bach stayed with Stahl while visiting Berlin in August 1741, corroborated by extant letters written by Johann Elias Bach addressed to J. S. Bach at Stahl’s Berlin home. Second, included among the aforementioned references to the patron found in the ninth-movement recitative is the phrase, “Thy fame will like a diamond-stone, yes, like the hardest steel (Stahl) steadfast endure, until it resounds throughout the whole world.” Because a conspicuous mention of the groom’s last name would have been a very typical characteristic of a wedding libretto, the possibility of the connection to Stahl’s wedding is very strong. Third, after the death of Stahl in 1772 the catalogue of his estate included a single reference to a “Cantata” by Johann Sebastian Bach, a term that Bach used specifically to title his secular works, not sacred. The designation, along with the particularly beautiful condition of the autograph score point to the likelihood that the manuscript was performed and retained as a wedding gift that then remained in Stahl’s music collection until his death. Fourth, although the instrumental parts of BWV 210 were contained in the estate manuscript collection of his second eldest son, C. P. E. Bach (1714–88), the above-mentioned autograph score was not, and yet by the early nineteenth century the collection of scores had been unified. A complicated, yet plausible path for the unification of these manuscripts has been outlined by Maul, as described in Chapter 4. On the basis of this evidence, Maul’s research presents the strongest case for the original performance to date.

Maul’s research has provided important new information about the context of BWV 210; however, the information gathered has focused more on details of the original recipients

38 Bach’s cousin, Johann Elias Bach sent two letters to Berlin, August 5 and 9, 1741. BD II, no. 489 and 490.
39 Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein, ja, wie ein fester Stahl beständig sein, bis dass er in der ganzen Welt erlinge.
and performance than on the musical or libretto choices made by Bach for its composition. For example, Maul’s discussion of the text is limited to the aforementioned phrases found in the ninth-movement recitative pertaining to the putative patron Georg Stahl. Therefore, given the body of research available, there has not been adequate examination of the cantata in the context of Bach’s intersection with the pervading musical aesthetic of the mid-eighteenth century.  

The Parody Source of BWV 210

The history of the homage cantata on which O holder Tag is based is complicated and has generated debate over whether its closest known counterpart BWV 210a, O angenehme Melodei, is actually the true parody source. Regardless of this, the two cantatas merit comparison since the architecture of each cantata is so similar — the same recitative-aria sequence is used for the ten movements and much of the same text is used for both. Compositional differences occur primarily in the rewritten central secco recitative movements. Unfortunately, because only the solo soprano part has survived from BWV 210a, a more comprehensive comparison between the two cantatas is hampered by a lack of corresponding instrumental parts. In spite of this limitation, the orchestral parts of O holder

40 Mention must be made of Mary Lois Summers’ dissertation, “The Use of the Soprano Voice by J. S. Bach as Exemplified by the Nine Solo Soprano Cantatas,” which was completed in 1982. It is one of the few dissertations that focuses on BWV 210, however, it seems that the researcher did not have access to important findings. For example, O holder Tag, BWV 210 is described as being written in 1749 as a response to Rector Biedermann in 1749, even though by 1982 it had been determined that, with Agricola as the copyist, the work would have been written between 1738 and 1741. With several unfortunate lapses in scholarship, it does not provide a significant contribution to the current literature. Mary Lois Summers, “The Use of the Soprano Voice by J.S. Bach as exemplified by the Nine Solo Soprano Cantatas” (DMA dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982).

41 See Chapter 5 for a discussion of BWV 210a as a parody source for BWV 210.

42 Other minor revisions are seen in Agricola’s parts, most likely from Bach’s hand, such as additional trills, accidentals and dynamic markings added throughout the instrumental parts. For a detailed description of these slight revisions see Neumann, NBA KB, 49-50.
Tag align so well with the soprano score of *O angenehme Melodei* that a reconstruction of BWV 210a has occurred using BWV 210 as its musical source.  

The cause of debate over whether BWV 210a is the actual parody source for BWV 210 has been two discrepancies found in Agricola’s copies of the instrumental parts (the details of which are explained in more detail in Chapter 5). Two alternate theories have been proposed as the parody source: Neumann suggests that an intermediary lost cantata was written after 210a and that Agricola used this work as his source material; whereas Paczkowski proposes that there may have been two lost intermediary cantatas written after the composition of 210a, and that this second lost cantata was the likely source. In both cases, the possible intermediary sources suggested by Neumann and Paczkowski correlate more closely to the movement structure of BWV 210a than to the musical revisions reflected in BWV 210, and as such BWV 210a remains a useful source for comparison study in this research.

**Conclusion**

It is not an entirely new concept that Bach included an “autobiographical” element when he revised *O holder Tag*, and yet within academia this idea has not been substantiated. As previously described, at the end of the nineteenth century Bach biographer Spitta interpreted the text as a response by Bach to his dispute with Biedermann, which, although

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placed in the wrong context, remains an indication that Spitta interpreted the libretto as a personal reaction from Bach. As a commissioned cantata, it is unusual that Bach would have used *O holder Tag* as a personal response to the changing musical aesthetic, and yet others of Bach’s works have been linked to just such a response. The *Clavier-Übung III*, as well as Bach’s 1749 revisions of *Phoebus und Pan*, are two such works that emerge out of Bach’s oeuvre displaying a facet of Bach’s personality in direct reaction to his detractors. To date, however, *O holder Tag* has not been adequately examined as another of Bach’s musical rebuttals.

Further exploration of this hypothesis will occur in the following manner. Chapter Two discusses the substantial shift in the musical aesthetic of the eighteenth century as influenced by Enlightenment theories and vis-à-vis the strong German tradition of contrapuntal music. Significant public debates on musical aesthetics that were generated as a result of the shifting musical landscape are discussed as a precursor to the Scheibe-Bach controversy. Chapter Three considers more specifically Bach’s temperament and examines his reactions to various personal and career adversities encountered throughout his life. Bach’s responses are discussed using written documents and compositions as source material, and thereby provide important context for his use of *O holder Tag* as a personal platform. Chapter Four discusses the culture of the eighteenth-century wedding, highlights characteristics typical of Bach’s other wedding cantatas, and presents theories about the possible recipients of BWV 210. Chapter Five focuses on the text and music of BWV 210, including possible librettists, important musical features, and characteristics of the revised text. Finally Chapter Six specifies details of the Bach-Scheibe controversy and, building on the information provided in previous chapters, discusses how *O*
holder Tag presents a musical reaction by Bach to the aesthetic represented by Scheibe’s critique.
Chapter 2.

Influence of the Enlightenment on the Musical Aesthetics of the Eighteenth Century

Bach’s Intersection with the Changing Aesthetic

Excerpt taken from the first biography of Bach, “On Johann Sebastian Bach’s Life, Genius, and Works,” written by Johann Nikolaus Forkel in 1802:

So long as the language of music has only melodious expressions, or only successive connection of musical tones, it is still to be called poor. By the adding of bass notes, by which its relation to the modes and the chords in them becomes rather less obscure, it gains not so much in richness as in precision. A melody accompanied in such a manner, even if not merely bass notes were struck, but, by means of middle parts, even the full chords, was still called by our forefathers, and with justice, homophony. Very different is the case when two melodies are so interwoven with each other that they, as it were, converse together, like two persons of the same rank and equally well informed. There the accompaniment was subordinate, and had only to serve the first or principal part. Here there is no difference, and this kind of union of two melodies gives occasion to new combinations of tones and consequently to an increase of the store of musical expressions. In proportion as more parts are added and interwoven with each other in the same free and independent manner, the store of musical expression increases, and finally becomes inexhaustible when different time and the endless variety of rhythms are added. Harmony, therefore, is not to be considered as a mere accompaniment of a simple melody, but a real means of increasing the stock of the expressions of the art, or the riches of musical language. But to be this, it must consist not in mere accompaniment, but in the interweaving of several real melodies, each of which may be, and is, heard sometimes in the upper part, sometimes in the middle, and sometimes below.

In such an interweaving of various melodies which are all so singing that each may, and really does, appear in its turn as the upper part, John Sebastian Bach’s harmony consists, in all the works which he composed from about the year 1720, or the 35th year of his age, till his death. In this he excels all the composers of the world.1

Introduction

A significant shift away from learned counterpoint and towards the more popular galant took place during Bach’s lifetime, yet the composer’s musical roots remained firmly planted in a traditional contrapuntal aesthetic. Throughout his career Bach continued to write in a

1 NBR, 442-43. This translation is taken from the first English version of Forkel’s biography, created by Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollman in 1820, included in its entirety in the NBR, 419-82.
synthesis of musical styles, which also included galant idioms, and yet in his assimilation of current musical trends Bach’s persistent integration of polyphony never fully reflected the simpler homophonic aesthetic espoused by the “progressive” movement.\(^2\) As such, Bach’s failure to fully embrace a homophonic style incited reactions from contemporary critics.\(^3\) Proponents of the new musical aesthetic were not only championing a changing fashion in sound, but were also challenging the philosophical foundation of the contrapuntal tradition. As a particularly strong centre for learned counterpoint, German musicians had been taught techniques that had developed over hundreds of years and that were associated with a God-ordained, and thus unalterable, set of principles. Enlightenment rationalists, on the other hand, began to question the rules governing counterpoint, proposing instead that, as a human construct, complex polyphony was a style of composition subject to the changing ideologies of the era. Whereas for centuries complex polyphony had represented the highest form of musical art, the simplicity of melodic-driven homophony became the quintessential sound of the eighteenth century.

“Enlightened” critics, such as Johann Mattheson and Johann Scheibe, helped to transform the aesthetic through publications that incited widespread debate. Thus the public criticism leveled by Johann Scheibe against the traditional elements in Bach’s music was only one of many debates occurring during the first half of the century incited by the conflict


\(^3\) Regarding Bach's incorporation of modern musical idioms, Marshall writes that it is “always within the context of his basically unshakable late-Baroque idiom,” and that the galant characteristics permeating Cantata 201 \textit{Phoebus und Pan} are written within a context of Bach's “unwavering commitment to solid musical craftsmanship and his emphatic repudiation of the easy, light, and merely pleasing in music.” Ibid., 331-332.
between new and old musical ideals. Prior debates between Bach’s contemporaries, pitting the
new ideas of Johann Mattheson against the traditional values of such music theorists as Johann
Buttstett⁴ and Heinrich Bokemeyer, explored contentious issues and contributed to new
understandings of various terms that became equated with traditional versus progressive
musical aesthetics. These debates and conflicting ideologies are highlighted as a backdrop to
the Scheibe-Bach episode that influenced the creation of BWV 210. The second half of this
chapter will focus on Bach’s awareness of the aforementioned aesthetic disputes in light of
documents written in his own hand, his association with leading musical treatises of the day,
and most importantly, through his compositional output.

**The Enlightenment and Galant**

In simple terms, the “enlightened man” had the capability to navigate the world around
him through reasoned logic, not based upon archaic metaphorical images, but by means of
progressive, rational analysis. Within Peter Gay’s two-volume comprehensive discussion of the
Enlightenment, he writes,

> The men of the Enlightenment united on a vastly ambitious program, a program of secularism,
humanity, cosmopolitanism, and freedom, above all, freedom in its many forms – freedom from
arbitrary power, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom to realize one’s talents, freedom
of aesthetic response, freedom, in a word, of moral man to make his own way in the world.⁵

As enlightened philosophies emancipated the “modern man,” ideologies also gradually adopted
a more secular outlook based increasingly on scientific discovery rather than allegorical
mysticism.

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⁴ Other spellings include Buttstädt or Buttstedt.

Gay highlights three generations of philosophers who led the profoundly rapid changes occurring in eighteenth-century society and whose ideas Gay describes in terms of a “growing radicalism.”

Prior to 1750, the French philosophers Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Voltaire (1694-1778) effected significant influence on the dissemination of progressive Enlightenment concepts, and more specifically in Germany the writings of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and Christian Wolff (1679-1754) exerted the greatest influence on the next generation of philosophers. Despite pushing theological boundaries, this earlier generation of philosophers remained rooted in the more traditional foundation of a God-ordained natural law – a concept that all human conduct functioned according to the principles of an unchanging natural order.

As the century progressed, prevailing ideologies moved away from a traditional theocentric outlook, and instead looked to burgeoning scientific findings to inform models of social philosophy. Prominent men of this next generation included America’s Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), Scotland’s David Hume (1711-76), Switzerland’s Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), as well as France’s Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-88) and Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715-71), among others. As the century progressed a third generation of philosophers advocated for more economic and legal reforms based increasingly on a “scientific mythology” in relation to “practical politics,” as espoused by such men as America’s Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), Italy’s Cesare Beccaria (1738-94), Germany’s

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6 Ibid., 17.
7 François-Marie Arouet became known as “Voltaire,” and similarly Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, was known simply as “Montesquieu.” Christoph Wolff, Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Composer (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000), 309-10.
9 Other “second generation” philosophers listed by Gay are: Denis Diderot (1713-84), Étienne Bonnet de Condillac (1715-80), Jean le Rond D’Alembert (1717-83); Ibid. 17.
Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Baron d’Holbach (1723-89). Each generation contributed to the substantial development of such social constructs as politics, education, and religion.

Ironically, in conjunction with the intellectual freedom pursued by these philosophers were the central years of the “age of absolutism” – an era of absolute rule among the European monarchs. Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712-86) provides an excellent example of these curiously parallel eras. Just as there was great political transition in Europe, so too did Frederick’s career reflect the contradictory and dynamic ideology of the century. Frederick was a great admirer of the Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire who initially reciprocated praise for the monarch. About Frederick’s accession to the throne, Voltaire wrote,

Solomon of the North: a philosopher is to become King, oh, our century certainly wished for such an event but dared not hope that it would come true. My Prince is worthy of reigning over his subjects: he knows how to enlighten them.

Frederick also proclaimed to be a new type of ruler who affiliated himself with the growing influence of Enlightenment philosophy. Shortly after acceding the throne, Frederick wrote and published what was intended to be an anonymous critique of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, titled *Anti-Machiavel*, espousing such enlightened ideals as, “the sovereign, far from being the absolute master of the people under his dominion, is nothing else but their first servant and

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10 Ibid. 17.
13 Voltaire and Frederick the Great initially had a warm friendship, but after Voltaire had lived in Prussia at the beginning of the 1740s the relationship noticeably soured. Theodor Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, ed. and trans. by Sabina Berkeley and H. M. Scott (New York: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 90-91; 149-50.
must be the instrument of their felicity as they are of his glory. “\(^{14}\) Although Frederick claimed to be a product of the Enlightenment, his commentary on Machiavelli’s theories versus his personal actions reveal many contradictions within his own psyche. His writing denounced any cruelty, deceit and superstition in favour of peace, humanity, and reason; yet, in reality he aggressively pursued an expansionist military campaign and was not above significant deception and duplicity to achieve success both on the battlefield and within his social circles.\(^{15}\) Thus, even though he espoused the same intellectual and moral freedom proclaimed by philosophers of his century, his absolutist actions arose from principles held by previous generations.\(^{16}\)

Ideals associated with the Enlightenment also influenced a new eighteenth-century archetype of the modern citizen — the *galant homme*. During an era when French manners and culture permeated European aristocracy (a time that also begat the expression *lingua franca*), the French description *galant homme* gained acceptance as a term describing a man who embodied the progressive ideals of his era and also exuded a certain personal refinement and sophistication.\(^{17}\) For example, Voltaire’s entry on *Galant* in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, includes

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\(^{14}\) Frederick the Great, *The Refutation of Machiavelli's 'Prince' or Anti-Machiavel*, ed. and trans. Paul Sonnino (1740; Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981). Frederick intended to publish this anonymously but it became well known that he was the author. Quotation from Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, 34-5.

\(^{15}\) Frederick’s well-publicized friendship with Voltaire was fraught with duplicity and suspicion. An example of Frederick's military aggression is the First Silesian War, which he launched immediately after succeeding to power, from 1740-2, against the recently crowned, ill prepared, twenty-three year old, Maria Theresa of Austria. James R. Gaines, p. 244. Schieder, *Frederick the Great*, 91.

\(^{16}\) Frederick’s years of absolute rule in Prussia occurred during a period after the English Revolution, during the American Revolution, and just prior to the French Revolution - all events that served to weaken the power of the monarchy.

\(^{17}\) As was common among aristocracy, Frederick the Great's Prussian education was conducted entirely in French, one result of which was his greater comfort speaking French than German. Building styles of the era were also heavily influenced by the French aesthetic. Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 241.
the phrase, “Etre galant, en général, c’est chercher à plaie par les soins agréables, par les empressements flatteurs,” or, “To be galant, in general, is to seek to please through charming attention and eager flattery.” Robert Gjerdingen summarizes the concept as the following:

Galant was a word much used in the eighteenth century. It referred broadly to a collection of traits, attitudes, and manners associated with the cultured nobility. If we imagine an ideal galant man, he would be witty, attentive to the ladies, comfortable at a princely court, religious in a modest way, wealthy from ancestral land holdings, charming, brave in battle, and trained as an amateur in music and other arts.

In this sense, the term galant became associated with a range of characteristics that personified the ideals of the age.

Desirable activities for a galant man (and woman) included training in the musical arts and regular attendance at operas, which resulted in increased influence of the middle class as patrons of the arts. A growing base of consumers of music sought publications intended to both instruct and entertain, and in response composers wrote galanteries (often keyboard works) specifically intended for these budding amateur musicians with their increased financial power. Gjerdingen writes,

Galant music, then, was music commissioned by galant men and women to entertain themselves as listeners, to educate and amuse themselves as amateur performers, and to bring glory to themselves as patrons of the wittiest, most charming, most sophisticated and fashionable music that money could buy.

Consequently, for the first time in history a cycle of musical growth was aimed specifically at the middle class.

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20 Ibid.
The galant musical aesthetic aimed for a homophonic lyricism rather than complex polyphonic textures; pleasing melodies that unfolded over simpler harmonies were preferred to the frequent interplay of dissonances and consonances produced by independent voices.\(^{21}\) Carl Dahlhaus highlights three main traits that characterized the galant: slowed harmonic rhythm; a replacement of “pathos” with a style that was perceived as more natural and unconstrained; and a deliberate reduction of elaborate Baroque ornamentation to a simpler style of ornamentation (which Dahlhaus describes as galanteries) interspersed in a variety of ways and at measured intervals.\(^{22}\) The resulting simplification of the musical aesthetic was a deliberate aim of the galant style, the effect of which was in stark contrast to learned counterpoint. Daniel Heartz and Bruce Alan Brown refer to a comment written by Bach’s former student Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718-95) as indicative of the philosophy behind this aesthetic change.\(^{23}\) In his introductory notes to the posthumous publication of Bach’s Art of the Fugue, Marpurg contrasts the “freedom” of form inherent in galant with the restrictions inherent in the strict fugal method used in Bach’s composition.\(^{24}\) In this manner Marpurg, who was sympathetic to Bach, underscored a pervading attitude of mid-century musicians, namely that the galant aesthetic represented emancipation from the perceived constraints of contrapuntal writing.

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This emancipation represented an important facet of the changing musical aesthetic. Preference for a galant aesthetic was more than a simple modification of taste; it also signified a conscious movement towards rationalism and away from the mysticism of previous generations. In brief, works such as canon, double counterpoint, and fugue, were not only learned counterpoint, they had become understood as representative of allegorical and theological concepts borne out of previous centuries. As scientific rationality replaced mystical theologies, spiritual connotations associated with contrapuntal methods began to erode. Instead of God-ordained rules governing compositional practices, contrapuntal constructs were perceived as mere human invention and as such, were subject to change. The spiritual associations that had become embedded in contrapuntal methods were an integral part of Bach’s compositional development. Thus, it is important to discuss the north German contrapuntal tradition as a backdrop to the broader ideological issues under debate during Bach’s lifetime.

**The Tradition of Counterpoint in Eighteenth-Century Germany**

The art of counterpoint was the core of German musical training at the beginning of the eighteenth century, a training that had been developed over hundreds of years. The importance of music as a pedagogical subject is evidenced by the inclusion of music theory as one of the quadrivium subjects of the Lutheran Latin school system, which consisted of astronomy, geometry, mathematics, and music. As students proceeded through the music curriculum they would begin with the rudiments of notation, progress through intervals, scales, and melodies,

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until finally they were introduced to canons and other contrapuntal forms, using exercises that served both as theoretical and practical examples for musical training. Bach would have progressed through similar studies in Latin school and, as was typical of the time, he also studied scores by living composers. Included in the information relayed to Bach’s biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818), C. P. E. Bach stressed the importance of his father’s early score studies by composers such as Nicolaus Adam Strungk (1640-1700), Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707), and Johann Adam Reincken (1623-1722), all of whom were accomplished contrapuntists. The importance accorded his father’s training in counterpoint indicates that C. P. E. regarded the practice as foundational to his father’s compositional method.

A comprehensive education in counterpoint reflected the strong tradition of polyphonic composition and theory in Germany, particularly in the northern centre of Hamburg. Dynamic

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26 An example of this progression is found in Hans Mikkelsen Ravn's (1610-1663) pedagogical treatise *Heptachordum Danicum*, the text likely used by the young Dieterich Buxtehude during his early musical training in Helsingør, Denmark, but representative of a system that would have been similarly executed throughout Lutheran schools in Germany. Kerala J. Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck*, rev. ed. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 14-15.


29 Reincken's influence on Bach can be traced back to the period in 1700 to 1702 when he often travelled to Hamburg to hear Reincken's music while a student in Lüneburg. See, Peter Wollny and Michael Maul, “The Weimar Organ Tablature: Bach's Earliest Autographs,” *Understanding Bach* 3 (2008): 67-74. Also pertinent is Reincken’s 1720 remark to Bach, “I thought that this art was dead, but I see that it lives in you.” NBR, 302.

30 Other composers included by C. P. E. are Frescobaldi and “some old and good French men.” BD, 288; NBR, 398.
engagement between compositional theory and practices was evidenced in the accomplished
contrapuntal works of earlier composers such as Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), as well as those
of the next generation that included the aforementioned Buxtehude and Reincken, along with
Christoph Bernhard (1628-92), Matthias Weckmann (1616-74) and Johann Theile (1646-
1725).\(^\text{31}\) Johann Theile was deemed particularly instrumental in passing along a strong
grounding in counterpoint to his students J. P. Förtsch (1652-1732), Georg Österreich (1664-
1735), and Österreich’s pupil, Heinrich Bokemeyer (1679-1751) all of whom produced
treatises and participated in lively critical debate.\(^\text{32}\)

Even though \textit{galant} music gained popularity as the century progressed, many musicians
maintained a strong interest in the tradition of counterpoint, particularly among those who
continued to view the practice as belonging to the musically elite. In 1723 Theile’s student
Heinrich Bokemeyer was one of the first to actively defend the merits of canonic form against
the Hamburg critic Johann Mattheson (the details of which are included later in this chapter).
Mattheson’s provocative prose effectively countered Bokemeyer’s arguments until the latter
publicly ceded defeat; however, within Bokemeyer’s private correspondence he continued to
write and remain actively interested in counterpoint for the remainder of his career.\(^\text{33}\) One of
J. S. Bach’s former students, Lorenz Christoph Mizler (1711-78) was another who preserved an
active interest in learned counterpoint. In 1738 Mizler formed the “Society of Musical

\(^{32}\) According to David Yearsley, of the “Hamburg” composers, it was Schütz’s student Theile who became the
most important figure to carry on the tradition. Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint in the Northern
German Baroque” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1995), 4.
\(^{33}\) Bokemeyer’s interest in counterpoint became more “subdued” following the public debate, yet his continued
interest in counterpoint is most evident in the pages of his private correspondence with J. G. Walther. See
“Science,” a select group of musicians (including Bokemeyer and J. S. Bach) who circulated compositions and theoretical essays, where contributions tended to the musically erudite. For example, Bach’s musical submissions for circulation highlighted complex contrapuntal technique: BWV 1076, *Triple Canon for Six Voices*, BWV 1079, *Musical Offering*, and BWV 769, *Canonic Variations on “Vom Himmel hoch.”* Groups such as Mizler’s emphasized the exclusive nature of the practice of learned counterpoint. It was the domain of the highly skilled and represented the highest form of compositional technique.

Equally important to the intellectual aspects of learned counterpoint were the mystical, numerological, and theological associations reflective of the pre-Enlightenment society in which it had been cultivated. Counterpoint represented a mysterious “celestial harmony” that was understood through symbolic mathematical ratios and was equated with such theories as the Pythagorean “harmony of the spheres.” Accordingly, musical harmonies replicated the perfection of God’s universe and also humanity’s inability to achieve this perfection. No demarcation between music, astronomy or theology was made in discussions about the rules of counterpoint. Sixteenth-century musical treatises such as those by Italian theorist Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-90) describe counterpoint in terms of an astronomical *harmonia*, whereas astronomy treatises such as the seventeenth-century *Harmonices mundi* by the German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) likened the laws of planetary motion to a God-
ordained heavenly harmony. Later musical treatises, such as those by Andreas Werckmeister (1645-1706), who published between 1687 and 1705, wrote of invertible counterpoint as a “mirror of heaven” reflecting the infinite nature of God. The rules and study of musical counterpoint were inherently linked with a human quest to emulate the perfection of God’s universe. Consequently, as a composer who was trained at the turn of the eighteenth century, Bach’s education in musical counterpoint would have been conveyed and understood as both the epitome of intellectual music, as well as a musical process reflective of a perfect universe created by God.

The Eighteenth-Century Shift in Musical Aesthetics

It was against this background that the first generation of “enlightened” music critics, such as Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) and Johann David Heinichen (1683-1729), challenged the prevailing concept of the supremacy of counterpoint. David Yearsley writes,

> It is interesting to note that such a common idea in the 17th century German music theory as the harmony of the spheres had no place in Mattheson’s musical aesthetic. He recognized its existence, but stated flatly, that “since nothing at all can be heard of universal music [i.e. the harmony of the spheres] we will not deal with [it] in this book, but will consider solely and only so-called real or actual music.”

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In this sense, Mattheson contributed to a new paradigm of distinctly un-mystical terminology. If theology and allegory no longer played a defining role in the creation of contrapuntal music, it could be challenged as just another human invention, one that had lost its popular appeal and was in need of reform. The Dresden composer Heinichen echoed similar ideals. Like Mattheson, Heinichen strove to codify counterpoint using the rational terminology of the age instead of the mystical language with which it had long been associated. For both men the highest aim of music was to stir the “affections,” a goal that was much better achieved through the freedom of galant than the rule-bound forms of counterpoint. Within Heinichen’s popular 1728 treatise, Der General-Bass in der Composition, he wrote that counterpoint had only two good uses: to instruct “beginners in composition” and for “church music, if it is mixed, according to the style of good church composers, with other techniques of good taste.” This tepid description of the form contrasted sharply with the elevated position it had held for centuries.

While in the past counterpoint had reflected the highest achievement of compositional skill, progressive critics placed more emphasis on pleasing an audience than on erudite complexity. Instead of a vertical construct designed to please a Higher Being, the musical aim of modern critics such as Heinichen and Mattheson emphasized a lateral construct with

40 Bach and Heinichen knew each other and maintained contact from at least 1717 to Heinichen's early death in 1729. Among the many connections between the two men, we know that a copy of Heinichen's treatise was part of Bach's personal library and that Bach was in fact the Leipzig distributor of the publication when it was released. Wolff, The Learned Musician, 228-229; 342.


42 Harriss, Johann Mattheson's ‘Die vollkommene Capellmeister,’ 279-80.

intentions to reach the listener. “Good taste,” or “Goût,” was the goal, expressed through lyrical melody and affecting accompaniments.\textsuperscript{44}

Among his generation, the prolific output of Johann Mattheson exerted the most influence on the aesthetic discourse of the time. Mattheson was a student of the well-known Hamburg contrapuntist Johann Theile, and yet Mattheson emerged from his studies with a decidedly more modern and humanist viewpoint than his teacher. In many aspects Mattheson could well be described as the exemplary “enlightened” man: he was fluent in English, French and Italian; he studied fencing, dancing and athletics; and he was greatly influenced by the progressive thought of such writers as John Locke.\textsuperscript{45} His early career was dominated by composing for the opera, but it was his persuasive prose that left the most enduring mark on history.\textsuperscript{46} As one of the first critics of musical aesthetics at the beginning of the eighteenth century, his numerous publications served to disseminate a new ideology based upon enlightened, rationalist views. Examples of three of his most prominent publications are the treatise \textit{Das forschende Orchestre}\textsuperscript{47} (1721), his periodical the \textit{Critica Musica}\textsuperscript{48} (1722-25), which was one of the first of the new, vibrant periodicals that was circulated, and his most extensive theoretical treatise, \textit{Der vollkommene Capellmeister} (1739).\textsuperscript{49} In each of his

\textsuperscript{44} Buelow, \textit{Heinichen}, 285.
\textsuperscript{45} Harriss, \textit{Johann Mattheson’s “Der vollkommene Capellmeister,”} 2; Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 258.
\textsuperscript{46} Although Mattheson started primarily as a composer of opera, he turned to religious music during his last decades. Harriss, \textit{Johann Mattheson’s “Der vollkommene Capellmeister,”} 3, 6.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Das forschende Orchestre} included arguments against the mathematical theory of music that had pervaded earlier philosophy.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Critica Musica} introduced a variety of writing styles into popular periodicals, such as letters, articles and news items.
publications, Mattheson argued from the basis of a rational logic stemming from a humanist worldview.

A byproduct of Mattheson’s publications was a shift in the meaning of specific terms used in the aesthetic debate; certain words were deflated of prestige, and instead became relics of an out-dated mode of composition. For example, whereas the term *Kunst* would have traditionally been understood as a superlative used to describe the sophisticated craft of learned counterpoint, Mattheson and other progressives adopted the use of *künstlich*, or “artificial” to indicate unfashionable complex polyphony. The terms *Harmonie* and *Melodie* also became polarizing flashpoints of debate. For hundreds of years *Harmonie* had been equated with counterpoint, as indicated in the aforementioned discussion, yet as the eighteenth-century aesthetic shifted away from polyphony, negative associations with “artificiality” arose, whereas its counterpart *Melodie* became the dominant feature of music favoring the simpler, homophonic, *cantabile* style of *galant*. 50 Within the aesthetic discourse of the time, therefore, these words became representations of fundamentally opposing attitudes. These same terms were later employed by Scheibe in his 1737 criticism of Bach and would have been clearly understood as the opposing terminology associated with an “old” versus “new” musical aesthetic.

49 *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* included sections arguing for the dominance of such *galant* characteristics as the importance of melody as the only true basis for musical composition. NBR, 324; Gregory G. Butler, “Der Vollkommene Capellmeister as a Stimulus to J. S. Bach's Late Fugal Writing” in *New Mattheson Studies*, ed. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 293-295; Harriss, Johann Mattheson's “*Der vollkommene Capellmeister*,” 12-13.

Robust arguments arose between traditionalists and modernists, particularly regarding the status of learned counterpoint. David Yearsley writes, “the vigour with which individual writers argued about [learned counterpoint] illustrates its central importance in the musical debates of the day: learned counterpoint was a symbol of the old, and the weakening of its dominance was a key goal of the new.”51 Two published debates involving Johann Mattheson will be highlighted to provide context not only for the issues in dispute but also to convey the inflammatory tone that characterized the prose. In this manner, greater perspective is gained when later examining the criticism leveled against Bach in the 1730s by Mattheson’s protégé Scheibe.

**Johann Mattheson’s Influential Debates**

The first prominent public debate to be discussed was instigated by Mattheson’s first treatise, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* (1713). The Erfurt organist, Johann Buttstett (1666-1727) took exception to Mattheson’s debunking of traditional musical ideology. In this early treatise, Mattheson stated that canonic counterpoint meant nothing since it was an esoteric art form created to appeal to the intellect rather than the emotions, and as such, was of little worth. At the time, a popular pastime was the circulation of contrapuntal musical puzzles as intellectual exercises, often referred to as “eye” music. Thus, when Mattheson declared the “ear” the best arbiter of taste, he inferred greater importance on emotional response rather than intellectual stimulus. Appealing to the “ear” was equated with an appeal to the heart, whereas “eye” music represented the inferior goal of appealing to the mind. Within the pages of his 1716 treatise, *Ut, mi, sol, re, fa, la, tota Musica et Harmonica Aeterna*, Buttstett responded by specifically

51 Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 257.
addressing and defending the mathematical basis of the “harmony of the spheres” as an incontestable foundation of composition. Buttstett represented the traditional viewpoint when he stated that knowledge of well-wrought polyphony superceded music judged solely by the “ear.” He asserted that galant music was simply a superficial style and that Mattheson was unfairly maligning the established rules of composition when he described them as the source of music’s demise. In his second treatise Das beschützte Orchestre (1717) and in response to Buttstett, Mattheson included a biting satirical dismissal of what he considered Buttstett’s seventeenth-century views. George J. Buelow writes that this interchange was one of the first pivotal debates to affect a transformation in the German musical aesthetic. He writes:

… what occurs in the volumes by Mattheson and Buttstett is the last struggle of German conservative, traditional music theory, with its noble and decisive 17th-century heritage inevitably defeated on the battleground of the 18th century, where new music from Italy as well as France had compelled such writers as Mattheson to formulate an entirely new theoretical approach to the understanding of their art. Although Buelow refers to this exchange as a “last struggle,” it occurred during the early stages of what continued to be a widespread debate between opposing viewpoints, and as such, is better understood as one of the first of several public battles.

A second influential dispute appeared as a series of four separate publications printed within the pages of Mattheson’s musical periodical Critica Musica, which circulated between


53 Buelow, “Buttstett” Grove Music Online.
January and April of 1723. In this debate Mattheson engaged the Wolfenbüttel organist Heinrich Bokemeyer in a written battle over the value of canon (a prominent form of learned counterpoint), versus the value of the galant style, an argument that encompassed the tensions between “old” versus “new,” “artificial” versus “natural,” Harmonie versus Melodie, “tradition” versus “modernity.” As much as Mattheson represented the progressive, enlightened man, in many ways Heinrich Bokemeyer (1679-1751), who was only two years Mattheson’s senior, hearkened back to a seventeenth-century outlook. Mattheson and Bokemeyer were both educated in Hamburg under the tutelage of Johann Theile, but whereas Mattheson embraced the progressive musical aesthetic of the galant, Bokemeyer remained rooted in the traditions of learned counterpoint. Bokemeyer’s pursuits tended towards those of a previous generation, with his interests in theology, poetry, and the philosophies of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Christian Wolff. Consequently, Bokemeyer’s starting position was that Harmonie was not simply an alternate form of composition equal to all other forms, but rather the musical metaphor for the eternal harmony of God’s universe, underscored by a set of God-ordained compositional rules. Although Bokemeyer attempted to defend the emotional value of canonic counterpoint, he was repeatedly unsuccessful in countering Mattheson’s convincing arguments. When Bokemeyer asserted that canonic form was indeed

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55 Although Bokemeyer ceded to Mattheson at the end of the debate, he would have been an equal match for Mattheson. David Yearsley notes that by the time this debate took place Bokemeyer had amassed an impressive collection of German and Italian treatises on learned counterpoint, indicating that he was “certainly well equipped to engage Mattheson in a polemic on this highly contentious issue.” Yearsley, “Alchemy and Counterpoint,” 206.


57 Mattheson, Critica Musica, 342-3.
pleasing to the ear for it was “the true source of artistic melody that touches the heart” (die rechte Quelle der künstlichen und herz-rührenden Melodie). Mattheson countered that the terms künstlich and herz-rührenden were oxymoronic, and again asserted that the essence of canon was built upon an artificial set of constraints that needed to be broken.⁵⁸

As a result of this debate, many of the aforementioned polarizing terms of aesthetics became even more clearly defined in their association with either “traditional” or “modern” musical style.⁵⁹ When Bokemeyer defended the conventional position that, “The perfection of nature is not recognized when it is not brought to light by the investigations of art,”⁶⁰ Mattheson retorted that Kunst (art) was nothing more than a mannered and distracting artificiality imposed on music. The simple essence of Natur was the higher goal, which was manifested in the simple texture of a melodic-driven sound. Mattheson described composers who “slavishly” followed the rules of traditional contrapuntal writing rather than composing from a source of true “freedom” as Künstler, mere “Craftsmen.”⁶¹ He wrote, “one finds that most contrapuntalists are artists in harmony and hobblers in melody, in a word, artful, tiresome, bunglers.”⁶² Although Bokemeyer valiantly attempted to defend the traditional values

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⁵⁸ Mattheson, Critica Musica, 327, 332, 336; Bokemeyer quotation translation from Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 278.
⁵⁹ As an example of Mattheson’s dominance in musical criticism during the 1720s, Johann Gottlieb Walther referenced Mattheson no fewer than two hundred times in his monumental Musicalisches Lexicon, published in 1732. Mattheson was his largest single source for the more than three thousand entries. Walther, Musikalisches Lexicon, ed. Friederike Ramm (Kassel, New York: Bärenreiter Verlag, 2001).
⁶⁰ Denn die Vollkommenheit der Natur würde nicht erkannt wo sie durch das Nachspüren der Kunst nicht zum Vorschein gebracht würde. Mattheson, Critica Musica, 331; translation from Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 277.
⁶² Es geschiehet solches gemeiniglich bey den meisten Contrapunctisten die finden den Künstler in der Harmonie und Hümpler in der Melodie, mit einem Worte, künstliche mühseelige Stümper. Mattheson, Critica Musica, 283.
associated with the terms Kunst, künstlich music, and the Künstler, Mattheson’s skilfull arguments effectively undermined him on every point. In the end, Bokemeyer completely capitulated to Mattheson including the admission that he had become absolutely convinced by his opponent’s logic; Bokemeyer declared to the public that Mattheson had completely persuaded him of the supremacy of Melodie over Harmonie.63

Responses to Mattheson’s triumph indicate that prevailing opinion supported the victor. As was common practice for Mattheson, he solicited letters from colleagues, in this case Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739), Heinichen, and Telemann, who all sided with Mattheson in letters subsequently printed in Die Canonische Anatomie.64 The careful wording of Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel’s (1690-1749) 1725 treatise on canon, “Practical Instruction on how one can compose Perpetual Canon according to the true foundation of such Musical Arts, based in part on melody, and in part also only on harmony,” written only two years after the debate, also suggests a reluctance to appear too closely aligned with traditional ideologies.65 Although Stölzel did not refrain from writing a treatise about “traditional” perpetual canon shortly after such a pivotal debate, his choice of several key phrases in the title reflects an acute awareness of the controversy that had arisen around the form. David Yearsley points out that Stölzel first stressed the “practical” application of the instruction, rather than allowing for any assumption of a purely intellectual exercise. Also, by using the now pejorative term Künsteleyen to

63 Ernest Harriss writes that following the debate, Bokemeyer and Mattheson became “good friends,” even to the point of Bokemeyer working with Mattheson on his 1737 treatise Kern melodischer Wissenschaft. Harriss, Johann Mattheson’s “Der vollkommene Capellmeister,” 9.

64 Telemann's response was the most tepid: he agreed that galant was the most expressive of the styles of music, but that knowledge of canonical form remained a strong requirement for any music professional. Heinichen had much more unequivocal support for Mattheson's victory. Critica Musica, 356-58.

65 Practischer Beweis wie aus einem nach dem wahren Fundamente solcher Noten-Künsteleyen gesetzten Canone Perpetuo ... Theils an Melodie, Theils auch nur an Harmonie ... zu machen seyn.
describe canon, he likely insulated himself from further criticism by acknowledging his awareness of the issues. Finally, he allowed both Melodie and Harmonie as key words indicating a broadening of canonic form to include the rising status of melody within a contrapuntal technique.\textsuperscript{66} Finally, the 1728 popular treatise by Heinichen, Der General-Bass in der Composition, was the most boldly dismissive of counterpoint, which he described as, “something laborious (like farmers’ work when they load manure into wheelbarrows) but not artistic once one has learned the routines.”\textsuperscript{67} As such, these examples serve to underline the increasingly disparaging tone used in reference to learned counterpoint indicative of the contentious atmosphere in which it was being debated. Bach’s Leipzig career spanned these years of aesthetic transformation, yet although he remained open to the influences around him, he continued to create music that adhered to an individual compositional style.

Bach’s Intersection with the Musical Discourse of his Time

“...the allegorical significance and centrality of learned counterpoint seems to have been vanquished, at least for Bokemeyer and the tradition he represented. Only a composer able to rehabilitate artifice and complexity and reinvigorate the allegorical power of learned counterpoint could hope to transcend taste, and in so doing appeal to the eternal, heavenly discourse.” - David Yearsley\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{66} Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 292-3.
\textsuperscript{67} Buelow, Thorough-Bass Accompaniment according to Johann David Heinichen, 281.
\textsuperscript{68} Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 294.
“A genuine eighteenth-century composer, that is an artist clearly and unequivocally committed to musical progress, Bach did not aim to achieve his musical and aesthetic goals at the expense of breaking with and discarding traditional values.” - Christoph Wolff

There are virtually no references in Bach’s own hand to his personal position vis-à-vis the aesthetic debate; rather we must rely largely on circumstantial evidence displayed by his actions or heard in his music to delve into Bach’s thoughts. One rare document where he specifically comments on the changing musical aesthetic of the time can be found in his memorandum to the Leipzig town council in August, 1730, the “Short But Most Necessary Draft for a Well-Appointed Church Music, with Certain Modest Reflections on the Decline of the Same.” Bach writes,

Now, however, that the state of music is quite different from what it was, since our artistry has increased very much, and the taste [gusto] has changed astonishingly, and accordingly the former style of music no longer seems to please our ears, considerable help is therefore all the more needed to choose and appoint such musicians as will satisfy the present musical taste, master the new kinds of music, and thus be in a position to do justice to the composer and his work.

It would seem from this statement that Bach was aligning himself with proponents of the new aesthetic of the galant, a style that had begun to influence not only secular styles but music for

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70 Tanya Kevorkian writes, “Bach famously wrote little about his ideas concerning music. Without the legal background of Mattheson, Telemann, Kuhnau and other musical colleagues, he may have been less inclined to enter the polemical fray. Perhaps he thought his music would speak for itself.” Kevorkian, Baroque Piety (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 141.

71 NBR, 149.
the church as well, thereby directly effecting the music Bach produced on a weekly basis. The context in which this statement was made, however, strongly suggests an ulterior motive. Bach was writing this document to press the Leipzig town council for improvements on the musical resources available to him, which he may have been trying to accomplish by appealing to their sense of municipal pride. If the Leipzig town council was able to increase the salaries of the musicians, the performers would then be able to “satisfy the present musical taste, master the new kinds of music, and thus be in a position to do justice to the composer and his work,” which would reflect well on the town as a leading, “modern” centre of music, a centre that Bach points out, could rival the leading musical hub of the time, Dresden. Christoph Wolff suspects that Bach’s statement in the “Short but Necessary Draft” was simply a necessary tactic of persuasion; he writes, “any expression of interest in the old ‘musical taste’ would surely have been counterproductive,” since the town council would surely have been more interested in promoting the latest sounds rather than what was considered out-dated. It should also be noted that Wolff emphasizes one must not conclude that Bach was inclined only towards “the former style of music” for there is equally no evidence to that effect. Therefore, in one of the few primary sources where Bach expresses an opinion on the subject, we remain without conclusive evidence that the statement written by Bach actually reflects his opinion, since it seems more likely written for practical rather than dogmatic reasons.

72 Bach made direct comparison between the excellence of Dresden and the musicians’ higher salaries, with the “decline” and poor financial states of the Leipzig musicians. NBR, 149. See Kevorkian, Baroque Piety, 123. Petzoldt, “The Economic Conditions of the 18th-Century Musician” in The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century, ed. by Walter Salmen, annotated and trans. by Herbert Kaufman and Barbara Reisner (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 168.


74 Ibid.
A second comment attributed to Bach in the Forkel biography, but not written by the composer himself, provides a different glimpse into Bach’s opinion of *galant*. Since Leipzig had no opera house of its own, Bach would often take his eldest son Wilhelm Friedemann to the Dresden opera house where they would hear the latest “Dresden ditties” of *galant* opera offerings.\(^{75}\) That Bach would attend these performances with his oldest son indicates a certain level of enjoyment on his part, and yet the alleged dismissive reference to the music belies a lack of deeper appreciation for the style. Forkel inserted his own opinion in the biography, suggesting that Bach would not have described the Dresden music in such terms to anybody except his son who, at that time, “already knew what is great in art and what is only beautiful and agreeable,” insinuating that what was heard in the opera house did not fall under the former category.\(^{76}\) While providing some insight, neither incident affords conclusive evidence of Bach’s opinion of *galant*. Consequently, the wider body of available evidence found in Bach’s actions and his music offers greater insight than these two examples.

**Bach and Theoretical Publications**

To begin, one must question whether Bach was actually engaged in the discourse surrounding the “astonishingly” changed musical style, for he has been more associated with practical music-making than with theoretical musings. In a letter from C. P. E. Bach to Forkel, C. P. E. describes his father as “no lover of dry, mathematical stuff,” which has underlined the historical perception that Bach was a man who had little time for the theoretical debates

\(^{75}\) Forkel writes that Bach “used to say in jest some days before his departure: ‘Friedemann, shan't we go again to hear the lovely Dresden ditties?’” NBR, 461. See also Tanya Kevorkian, *Baroque Piety*, 101.

\(^{76}\) NBR, 461.
occupying much of the musical publications of the time. This perception, however, does not represent a complete picture of the composer. Although Bach did not actively participate in the written debates of the time, he was also not oblivious to them. Within his personal library were many books and treatises on music theory. As well as owning his own copies, Bach was also the distributor of such progressive treatises as Heinichen’s *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (1728) and Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739). Living in the university town of Leipzig where book fairs occurred several times a year, Bach would also have been surrounded by the most current musical ideas. An anecdote from theorist Martin Fuhrmann (1669-1745) recounts the 1729 Leipzig book fair where he observed “a musician” glancing through the latest publications of Mattheson and Heinichen (respectively *Der musicalische Patriot* and *Der General-Bass in der Composition*, both published in 1728), followed immediately by an account of the great fortune he had of hearing Bach play the organ. It is quite possible then that Fuhrmann was referring to Bach when he quoted the same musician describing the two treatises by Mattheson and Heinichen as, “somewhat heavy reading ... but quite accurate nevertheless,” and that “whoever fails to learn from Mattheson’s and Heinichen’s writings is a blockhead.”

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77 *... kein Liebhaber, von trocknem mathematischen Zeuge.* This quotation is taken from a January 13, 1775 letter from C. P. E. Bach to Forkel. NBR, 398; BD III, 288.

There is also evidence that Bach’s knowledge of the circulating musical treatises was integrated into his teaching. Bach was highly regarded as a pedagogue with a renowned knowledge of counterpoint, and although very few original sources of his methodology exist, what little has survived reveals an approach that emphasized a practical application of theoretical principles. Bach’s strength as a teacher is evidenced by his impressive list of students, including his sons, Johann Friedrich Agricola, Carl Friedrich Abel, Johann Christoph Altnickol, Johann Kirnberger, Johann Ludwig Krebs, Lorenz Christoph Mizler, and Johann Caspar Vogler, among others. Because he did not write his own texts or treatises, Bach’s methodology is not well documented. As such, knowledge of Bach’s teaching has been gleaned from anecdotes provided by C. P. E. and Kirnberger, as well as a document written by an unknown student in 1738 — it is this document that links Bach’s pedagogical methods to his awareness of circulating treatises.79 A handwritten original manuscript appears to be material dictated by Bach to his students and recorded by one of them, titled, “The Precepts and Principles for Playing the Thorough-Bass or Accompanying in Four Parts by the Royal Court Composer and Capellmeister as well as Director of Music and Cantor of the Thomas Schule, Mr Johann Sebastian Bach, at Leipzig for his Students in Music, 1738.”80 The manuscript is divided into four sections, the second of which is a close paraphrase of Friederich Niedt’s


(1674-1708) treatise, *Musicalische Handleitung* Volume I, from chapters one to nine. Both the student manuscript and Niedt’s treatise reflect the same methodology that C. P. E. described as his father’s — students begin with four-part writing and progress to two-voice fugues. Because it is probable that both Bach and Niedt used the same source as the origin of their pedagogical method (Niedt studied with Bach’s second cousin Johann Nicolaus Bach (1669-1753) after 1695), it is likely that thereafter Niedt incorporated the Bach family pedagogical method into his own treatise. Niedt’s treatise would have resonated with Johann Sebastian as a parallel methodology to his own, and for that reason would have served well as a teaching resource for his own students. The student transcription of Niedt’s methodology, thereby underlines Bach’s awareness of the treatises circulating at the time.

**Bach’s Reaction to the Changing Aesthetic as Expressed Through His Music**

Bach’s perpetual integration of musical trends within his own compositions provides the strongest testament to his understanding of the theoretical discourse of the time. The compositions of Bach covered a broad spectrum of styles, looking both to the past and the future. An early example of Bach’s incorporation of the Italian style may be found in his studies of Vivaldi’s music. While still in Weimar, Bach became so enthralled with the recently published Vivaldi violin concerti that, between 1713 and 1714, he arranged them for keyboard.

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81 The three volumes of Friederich Niedt's popular treatises, published under the general title *Die Musicalische Handleitung*, or “The Musical Guide,” include sections that documented and codified the principles of thorough-bass realization and performance. His first treatise was published in 1700, and posthumously re-issued in 1710, 1717, and 1721, the latter two by Mattheson. Ibid., xi, xxii.

82 Ibid. xiii.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid. For a discussion on the similarities and differences between Niedt's Part I and Bach's “Precepts and Principles...” see the explanatory notes to Part I of Poulin, *Niedt's The Musical Guide*, 27-55. Bach's changes generally relate to a more practical application of the material and may also reflect adaptations developed between Niedt's original publication in 1700 and the student dictation in 1738.
According to Forkel, “[Bach] studied the chain of ideas, their relation to each other, the variation of the modulations, and many other particulars.”\(^{85}\) This intense study of the Italianate school provided an important contrast to Bach’s contrapuntal training, and according to Christoph Wolff, represented a “fruitful dialectic” of synergy between musical simplicity and complexity, “which Bach nearly always tipped in the direction of complexity.”\(^{86}\) Even at this early stage in his career, Bach’s inclination toward density was evident in his transcriptions of the Vivaldi works. For example, in BWV 978, *Concerto in F major after Vivaldi*, Bach’s additions and alterations to the inner voices consistently create more complex dimensions than is heard in the original work. Wolff summarizes Bach’s assimilation of the Italian style as, “…the strongest, most lasting, and most distinctive development toward shaping his personal style: the coupling of Italianisms with complex yet elegant counterpoint, marked by animated interweavings of the inner voices as well as harmonic depth and finesse.”\(^{87}\)

This amalgamation of styles remained a characteristic of Bach’s music throughout his life. Whereas many of Bach’s peers made a more complete shift towards a *galant* idiom after the 1730s, Bach’s writing never fully embraced the new aesthetic. Instead, he incorporated *galant* idioms within a more polyphonic paradigm.\(^{88}\) An example of this can be found in the “Christe eleison” duet movement of the *Mass in B minor*, written toward the end of his life. *Galant* characteristics such as consonant parallel thirds, dance-inspired syncopations, and

\(^{86}\) Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 173.
\(^{87}\) Ibid., 174.
mixed duple and triplet rhythms in the vocal lines, combined with unison violins, and a slowed harmonic rhythm, are juxtaposed with such contrapuntal features as the intertwining sixteenth-note melody of the unison violins, and imitative motifs between the soprano, alto, violins, and continuo. The effect becomes a texture much more complex than is normally associated with the *galant* and yet one that still conveys elements of the style.\(^9^9\) Robert Marshall writes,

> Of course, the “Christe eleison” is not a *galant* piece. The harmony and counterpoint are both too rich. Indeed the fascination of the number derives in part from the delicate balance and almost systematic alternation of *galant* homophony and late Baroque imitative counterpoint practically from one phrase to the next.\(^9^0\)

Bach was also not averse to creating compositions that incorporated a *galant* aesthetic for more practical, financial reasons. As the burgeoning middle class became a larger segment of the music-buying public, the popularity of dance-inspired solo keyboard collections of *Galanteries* also gained increasing popularity. Bach’s 1731 publication of his *Clavier-Übung I*, is a good example of such *Galanteries* that would have appealed to this new demographic.\(^9^1\)

The title, *Preludes, Allemandes, Courantes, Gigues, Minuets, and Other Gallantries*, is ordered in such a manner that one would expect the “Gallantries” to be found only after the core dances, not interpolated as they actually appear in the collection. Richard Taruskin notes that the title reflects a presumably calculated ordering of the works — core dances are listed first followed by the “and Other Gallantries” as a very casual, almost afterthought. Taruskin suggests that this is “very telling” of Bach’s opinion, signifying a deliberate hierarchy in the


\(^{90}\) Ibid, 340.

\(^{91}\) Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 380. The *Clavier-Übung I* was first published in 1731. Ibid., 540.
composer’s mind. Taruskin continues that the hierarchy reflected in the title mirrors the value given to the two different sources that fed Bach’s “creative stream,” namely, his foundation in the more esoteric style of learned counterpoint, and the merging of the more modern, simple *galant*. This hierarchy also demonstrates that the lighter *galant* aesthetic is not fully absorbed into Bach’s compositions.

A third example suggesting Bach’s musical response is a four-part canon written for the Hamburg poet and amateur musician, Ludwig Friedrich Hudemann (1703-1770), which was circulated by Bach in 1727. The “Hudemann Canon,” as it has become known, is an example of the “eye” music derided by Mattheson in his 1713 treatise, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*. As seen in the following example, the canon is a musical “puzzle” requiring the recipient to unlock the pattern indicated by the curious arrangement of clefs on either side of the notes.

Figure 1. Bach’s Canon for four voices, BWV 1074, dedicated to Hudemann, written before August 18, 1727.

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93 Ibid.

94 Walther’s description of Hudemann was a “legal scholar who has not only taken great strides in the theory of music, but is also not inexperienced in execution, and occasionally uses his pen for composition, his fingers for playing, his throat for singing; also, in addition to his thorough knowledge of many languages, writes neat Latin as well as German poetry, and particularly a *galant* letter in Italian and French.” NBR, 312.

95 Image taken from NBR, 135.
Even though “eye music” had been a specific target of the Mattheson debates, it seems that Bach offered this canon unapologetically. In fact it is likely that it became the most famous of Bach’s compositions during his lifetime, and as such, the work with which he was most associated.\footnote{Yearsley, \textit{Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint}, 42.} It is also especially notable that Bach sent this canon to Hudemann since the recipient not only lived in Hamburg, but was a former composition student of Mattheson’s (in 1724) who had continued to maintain contact with his teacher.\footnote{Werner Braun suggests that evidence of Hudemann’s continued contact with Mattheson is the Latin poem written by Hudemann included in a 1725 edition of Mattheson’s \textit{Critica Musica}. Braun, “Bachs Stellung im Kanonstreit,” 110, fn 25.}

Interest in this canon was long-lived and widespread.\footnote{Other mentions of the work include two different solutions put forward by Walther in his correspondence with Bokemeyer, the first originating from a Doctor Syrbio in Jena in 1735, and the second describing his own solution in 1738. Yearsley, \textit{Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint}, 42.} Shortly after it was sent to Hudemann, Telemann printed the canon in a 1728 edition of his popular periodical \textit{Der getreue Music-Meister}, and more than a decade later it still generated enough public curiosity for Mattheson to include it in a discussion of canonic form in his 1739 \textit{Der vollkommene Capellmeister}.\footnote{Mattheson, \textit{Der vollkommene Capellmeister: Part III}, in Harriss, \textit{Johann Mattheson’s “Der vollkommene Capellmeister,”} 761-3.} It is not surprising that Mattheson’s inclusion of the Hudemann canon was not particularly flattering to Bach. After introducing the complicated nature of Bach’s puzzle, Mattheson exclaimed, “Oh! What artifices!” and after describing various attempts at solving the canon, he concluded dismissively,

I have never devoted more time and labour to it than needed merely for the above transcription [a written-out sequential entry of the four voices], and also would have been glad to forgo the
former if I did not believe that citing of the little piece could serve perhaps for instruction or for contemplation for many.  

In his 1969 article, Werner Braun suggests that in light of the 1723 debate between Mattheson and Bokemeyer, Bach deliberately sent this work to demonstrate his support for Bokemeyer’s initial views. Bach composed this contrapuntal puzzle for Hudemann with full knowledge of the prevailing attitude of Mattheson and other progressive musicians, yet it was sent nonetheless.

A much later canon dating from the last year of Bach’s life again suggests that he was not cowed by opinions of his contemporaries, and may have deliberately used a composition in strict contrapuntal form as a musical rebuttal to detractors. In 1749 Bach dedicated a canon to the Leipzig medical student B. G. Faber, *Fa, Mi, et Mi Fa est tota Musica*, BWV 1078. Of particular note, however, is Bach’s title. As part of Mattheson’s efforts to “modernize” eighteenth-century musical theory he had argued against the use of solmization, which was a system that had been steeped in medieval allegory that as described earlier, was rejected by Butnstett in his 1717 treatise *Ut, mi, sol, re, fa, la tota musica et harmonia aeterna*. The Swedish Kapellmeister Christian Ritter also reacted in a letter to Mattheson arguing, among other things, that the semitone represented by the syllables “mi fa” formed the cornerstone of all music. Mattheson’s response to both men was contemtuous, engaging in debate with Butnstett and describing Ritter’s semitone designation of “mi fa” as both confusing and inane.

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100 Ibid., 762-3.
102 BWV 1078 would have been lost if Kirnberger had not made a later copy that survived. The canon was probably not newly composed, but rather selected by the composer from an earlier collection of contrapuntal pieces.
When Bach chose the title for his 1749 canon David Yearsley suggests the highlighted terms “fa, mi” and “tota musica,” seems to be in direct connection with the arguments that had been suggested by both Buttstett and Ritter, thereby implying Bach’s continued awareness of the issues that had informed the aesthetic debate as well as a continued affiliation with those who defended traditional musical values.  

In contrast, the music of Bach’s 1739 publication, the *Clavier-Übung III*, has been interpreted as a distinctly different reaction to the contentious musical environment. In addition to his unabashed circulation of strict contrapuntal forms demonstrated by the “Hudemann” and “Fa, Mi” canons, Bach also created this collection of keyboard works to convey a decidedly more modern aesthetic. Gregory G. Butler first describes the chorale settings contained in the work as a probable response to two major Lutheran anniversaries, but more importantly, also writes,

…toward the middle of 1737 an event occurred which, I believe, had an even more decisive impact on the composition of the pedalier catechism settings and on the disposition of *Clavier-Übung III* as a whole. On 14 May Bach’s former student Johann Adolph Scheibe fired the first salvo in a controversy that dragged on for well over two years… It may well have been Scheibe’s attack that stung Bach to action, precipitating his decision to publish a collection of compositions for organ that might prove his attacker’s assertions unfounded.

In the wake of the Scheibe controversy, Bach’s ally Lorenz Christoph Mizler seized an opportunity to emphasize the “progressive” aesthetic pervading this keyboard collection in his

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104 In 1739 the Lutheran Church was celebrating the bicentennial of Luther’s sermon in St. Thomas on May 25, 1539, and the Augsburg Confession of August 12, 1539.

1740 review of the publication, commending the work as “a powerful refutation of those who have made bold to criticize the composition of the Honorable Court Composer.” The publication of this collection thereby provides an important counterpart to the previously cited canons, and foreshadows the portion of Bach’s compositions of the 1740s that tended toward a more modern aesthetic, such as the Peasant Cantata, BWV 212 from 1742.

Finally, Bach’s most direct musical reaction to the galant has widely been considered his secular cantata BWV 201, Geschwinde, geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde, or Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan, a work most likely written for his Leipzig Collegium Musicum in 1729. Picander’s text centres on a singing contest between the two main characters, “Phoebus” and “Pan,” sung by Bass I and Bass II soloists respectively, with a cast of other characters judging the aria competition that ensues. As outlined earlier in this chapter, an important aspect of the galant influence was a rejection of “artificiality” (or the künstlich), in favour of a “natural” (natürlich) style of composition, and in Bach’s setting of Pan’s aria a particularly satirical musical depiction of this “natural” aesthetic is taken to a humorous extreme. Where Pan displays his singing skills in the seventh-movement aria, Bach makes use of excessive word-painting to more “naturally” convey the text. For example, Pan sings the word wakkelt, or “shakes,” which is set by Bach reiterating the conspicuously awkward syllable “ack” seven times before finally continuing with the melody, as follows:

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106 NBR, 333.
108 The text of Pan’s seventh-movement aria: Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge, So wackelt das Herz. Wenn der Ton zu mühsam klingt und der Mund gebunden singt, So erweckt es keinen Scherz (For dancing, for leaping, Thus shakes the heart. If the note sounds too labored And the mouth sings with restraint, It arouses no mirth). Translation Dürr, Cantatas, 911.
In a subsequent phrase, Pan restates the same awkward syllable, but this time with the added “shake” of sixteenth notes at the beginning and an accentuated arpeggiated line at the end of the phrase, as follows:

In contrast to the superficial treatment of Pan’s text, Phoebus sings a stately, fifth-movement aria set in a Largo tempo with lovely entwining lines of transverse flute, oboe d’amore, violin I, violin II, viola, and continuo.109

Following the arias of the competing protagonists, various other characters comment on the singing styles of each. In response to Pan’s satirical aria, “Midas” praises the singing as “[sounding] so well to me that I have learned it at once,” whereas the music of Phoebus is considered “far too florid” — two comments that anticipate the later criticism against Bach

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109 Phoebus’ Aria, Movement 5, text: Mit Verlangen drück ich deine zarten Wangen holder, schöner Hyazinth; und dein’ Augen küss’ ich gerne, weil sie meine Morgensterne und der Seele Sonne sind (With longing I press your tender cheeks, Charming fair Hyacinth; and I love kissing your eyes, for they are my morning stars and the sun of my soul). Ibid., 909.
from Johann Scheibe. In the end, the more sophisticated singing of Phoebus is declared the winner, for “there is nothing lovelier than [his] songs,” whereas the followers of Pan who “have yet more brothers like you,” belong to the camp of “folly and unreason.” In the wake of the published controversies that had already dominated critical discourse in the 1720s, this collaboration between Bach and Picander seems to take specific aim at those who promoted simplicity in music to the detriment of compositional complexity, as revealed in the arias of Pan and Phoebus. It must be assumed, however, that Bach and Picander did not take aim at all galant music given that the cantata is infused with galant idioms, but rather at those who dismissed more sophisticated writing as “far too florid,” or too complicated to “remember at once.”

\[\text{110 Ach, Pan … dein Lied hat mir so wohl geklungen, dass ich es mir auf einmal gleich gemerkt…. Der Phoebus macht es gar zu bunt, Allein dein allerliebster Mund sang leicht und ungezwungen. sung by the character “Midas”, an advocate of Pan, movement 10 recitative. Ibid., 912.}\]

\[\text{111 Es ist nichts lieblicher als deine Lieder, and, du hast noch mehr dergleichen Brüder. Der Unverstand und Unvernunft will jetzt der Weisheit Nachbar sein … sung by the character Momus, an advocate of Phoebus, movement 14 recitative. Ibid.}\]
Conclusion

“Arnold Schönberg summed it up well when he observed: ‘The early [adherents of Art Galant] thought Bach’s music outmoded … Today much of their music is outmoded while Bach’s survives eternal.’”\textsuperscript{112}

The music of Bach never fully reflected the \textit{galant} traits championed by “progressive” musicians, but instead his works exhibited an amalgamation of musical influences. John Butt writes, “Where there are dualist elements (something doubtless endemic to the emerging and fashionable \textit{galant} music of the 1720s), these are again integrated in a way that never involves a pre-packaged synthesis or some kind of facile resolution.”\textsuperscript{113} Bach’s unique synthesis of styles was an approach to composition that did not remain confined to a wholly “traditional” or “progressive” aesthetic. His continued adherence to traditional forms of composition garnered criticism, most notably in the 1730s when the young Hamburg music critic Johann Scheibe publicly admonished Bach for his outdated compositional style. In turn, some of Bach’s compositions suggest that he occasionally used his music as a commentary on the simplistic “forward” musical fashions of his age. In this manner, although he did not contribute to the critical discourse published by his contemporaries, Bach’s compositional output indicates an awareness of the issues that dominated the shifting musical aesthetic.


Chapter 3.
Bach and Personal Conflict:

Societal Constructs of his Era, Bach’s Temperament, and His Reactions

Introduction

In his 1974 article in defense of Johann Scheibe, George J. Buelow states that one of Scheibe’s points of criticism was actually directed at Bach’s personality and not his music, as it has been more commonly ascribed. When Scheibe wrote, “this great man would be the admiration of whole nations, if he were more agreeable,” he was specifically referring to Bach’s cantankerous personality.¹ Buelow writes, “[Scheibe] was stating a fairly well-known fact: that Bach had an exceedingly argumentative, irascible, and frequently disagreeable temperament.”² Conversely, in her 2007 chapter focused on Bach’s status as Cantor in Leipzig, Tanya Kevorkian describes Bach in decidedly different terms. She writes, “when [Bach’s] complaints are studied against a fuller background of contemporary conventions and conflicts, Bach emerges as an occasionally frustrated genius who was adept at working with the political convention of his day. In this, he very much resembled other musicians.”³ Whether Bach was a particularly difficult man or just a typical musician navigating his way through career challenges, a study of his reactions to adversities yields insight into his personality and his opinions. An understanding of his various types of responses, such as tenacious petitioning of

¹ Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel translate this phrase as, “This great man would be the admiration of whole nations if he had more amenity (Annehmlichkeit).” NBR, 338.
³ Kevorkian, Baroque Piety, 128.
authorities, recruitment of colleagues for rebuttals, and his own compositions, provides context for Bach’s reaction to the changing musical milieu and more specifically, Scheibe’s barbs.

That Bach would respond strongly to the reaction against learned counterpoint and that his music would reflect his personal circumstances is consistent with other known responses by the composer. Records from the composer’s years in Leipzig provide the richest source of documents, but earlier episodes also help to construct a context for his character and his reactions. A reaction by Bach to Scheibe’s criticism and the changing musical milieu is consistent with other responses to conflict, as outlined in this chapter. The construct of eighteenth-century social hierarchies and the channels of authority through which Bach navigated are provided as an introduction and backdrop to the subsequent discussion of Bach’s personal environment and his responses to adversity.

**Societal Constructs in Eighteenth-Century Leipzig**

The society in which Bach lived was structured around a strong social hierarchy. In the broadest sense, the population was divided into the aristocracy and the commoners, with many complex gradations of status within each group. Among the latter, factors such as profession, education, wealth and land ownership wove an intricate and complex web of human relationships. Richard Petzoldt uses the following model to describe this system:

The Age of Absolutism, oriented towards strict etiquette, categorized subjects rigidly according to rank. This is borne out by the allocation of tiers in theaters, for example. Next to the rulers who governed by divine right, the aristocracy and nobility held the highest positions. They in turn were divided into higher and lower ranks, as were the members of the not very highly

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respected merchant nobility. Even the various levels of city dwellers were differentiated according to their rights and obligations. They, of course, were brought up to look with disdain upon the peasants.\(^5\)

Bach spent most of his career under the dual authorities of the Saxon Electorate in Dresden and the town council in Leipzig. The structure of authority was such that the Leipzig town council functioned under the incontestable power of the Electorate, but with more self-regulation than many other German towns. The considerable autonomy exercised by Leipzig was somewhat unusual for the time and was largely a result of the strong financial situation of the thriving merchant centre vis-à-vis the relatively cash-strapped Dresden.\(^6\) Although a mutually beneficial relationship existed, the Leipzig town council was unquestionably subordinate to the Elector who maintained the ultimate decision on municipal issues. The Absolutism of the age was perceived in religious terms: the aristocratic power held by the Elector Friedrich August I (“August the Strong”) who ruled from 1694 to 1733, and his son Friedrich August II, who ruled from 1733 to 1763, was understood as the “arm of God,” assuming ultimate control over all matters, municipal or ecclesiastical.\(^7\)

Within the municipal politics of Leipzig, two spheres of jurisdiction existed. As in other university towns, control of the population fell under the separate and distinct authorities of the university and the town council. University affiliates - those employed by the university - were


\(^7\) Kevorkian, Baroque Piety, 99-102.
exempt from the duties of the citizenship, such as paying taxes, but also did not have the privilege of property ownership. By Bach’s time in Leipzig, some crossover between these separate governing groups had begun to take place. Because membership on town council was predicated on citizenship, university affiliates were not normally part of council, but after 1721 (and during the time that Bach served as Cantor) a law was passed that permitted affiliates to swear an oath of citizenship for the duration of their service. Members of council would have included citizens in respected professions, such as medical doctors, professors, lawyers, notaries, and wealthy merchants. Extant documents describing Bach’s conflicts with the town council may leave the impression that the council was a rigid, conservative governing body; however, the opposite was true. Unlike the typical situation in German towns of the eighteenth century, Leipzig did not foster a membership drawn from a closed circle of the established upper class families. Rather, it accepted newcomers into the inner circles of municipal power, which resulted in a town with a vibrant governing body, an attribute that greatly contributed to the success and independence of Leipzig.

The Position of Cantor in Eighteenth-Century Leipzig

At the time Bach was hired as Cantor of the St. Thomas school in 1723, Leipzig was one of the most progressive political, cultural and economic centres in Germany. Although there has been some dispute about the level of respect accorded Bach’s Cantorship in Leipzig, its strong connection with the Saxon Elector in Dresden, its important tri-annual trade fairs, and

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8 For a more detailed description of the university and civic circles of authority, see Ibid., 16.
9 For more on the social hierarchy of university affiliates compared to citizens see Beachy, The Soul of Commerce, 15-17.
10 Ibid., 24.
its status as a “university town” all contributed to the prestige of the post.\footnote{For a less than positive description of Bach’s role in Leipzig see Reinhard Szeskus, \textit{Bach in Leipzig: Beiträge zu Leben und Werk von Johann Sebastian Bach} (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel GmbH, 2003), 13-63. Wolff describes the position in a much more positive light. Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 237-9. A good comparison of status between Bach’s Cöthen and Leipzig employment is included in Norman Rich’s chapter, “The Historical Setting: Politics and Patronage” in \textit{The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach} (New York: Amadeus Press, 2009), 86-97.} Bach’s role as Cantor of the most important churches in the city meant that he was the highest-ranking musician and at the forefront of its musical activities.\footnote{Bach was not only responsible for the music at St. Thomas church, but also for the St. Nicholas and St. Paul churches of Leipzig. Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 252. The cantor ranked third among the senior St. Thomas faculty of four. Ibid., 247.} The St. Thomas school was also a highly regarded academic institution that attracted students from all over Germany.\footnote{Ibid., 238, 246-7.} News of his appointment and subsequent arrival in Leipzig was of enough significance to the wider population that it garnered mention in the Leipzig, Dresden, and Hamburg newspapers.\footnote{Kevorkian, \textit{Baroque Piety}, 127.}

While the position of Cantor held prestige, it also held a somewhat ambiguous station in the social hierarchy.\footnote{Armfried Edler, “The Role of the Organist,” in \textit{The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century}, ed. by Walter Salmen, trans. by Herbert Kaufman and Barbara Reisner (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 81-84.} The position itself did not automatically secure social status. Contemporary references suggest that Bach gained some fame in Germany throughout the course of his career, with evidence also showing that he circulated among the town’s intellectuals and leading council members, but there is also indication that his social standing was somewhat tenuous.\footnote{Bach’s close associations with powerful characters such as the town governor Flemming, and professors Gottsched and Birnbaum, indicate that he had social connections to elite circles. Kevorkian, \textit{Baroque Piety}, 128.} He was the first Cantor hired for the position who did not hold a
university degree.\textsuperscript{17} Also, his annual salary of just over 100 \textit{thaler} was lower than at least eleven other council-appointed officials, including town accountants and secretaries, and as such did not reflect the assumed stature of this position.\textsuperscript{18} Although many of the Bach children had prominent godparents who came from elite circles, godparents were often chosen specifically to solidify a connection with those of an upper status and would not necessarily indicate a social equality between the families.\textsuperscript{19} Even the Bach family’s relationship with the neighbouring wealthy merchant Bose family has come under scrutiny as possibly more distant than earlier assumed.\textsuperscript{20}

Bach was an ambitious man who cultivated connections with Leipzig’s elite. As a member of the middle class he would have been keenly aware of the various levels of class structure, as well as the importance of navigating through this hierarchy. In the eighteenth century there was also more opportunity for advancement through such avenues as education, business acumen, marriage, and important connections than was possible in prior eras. One beneficial connection fostered by Bach was his relationship with General Joachim Friedrich

\textsuperscript{17} Ulrich Siegle, “Bach’s Situation in the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Leipzig,” in \textit{Bach's Changing World: Voices in the Community}, ed. Carol Baron (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 127-159. For a comparison between Bach’s education and that of his predecessor Kuhnau, see Kevorkian, \textit{Baroque Piety}, 125.

\textsuperscript{18} Bach’s ability to earn extra money through commissions increased his annual earnings to approximately 700 \textit{thaler} a year, but this remained lower than the salary of 1000 to 1200 \textit{thaler} indicated when he initially took the Leipzig position. Kevorkian, \textit{Baroque Piety}, 127; Szeskus, \textit{Bach in Leipzig}, 42-44, 56-58; Petzold, \textit{Economic Conditions}, 184; Arnfried Edler, “The Role of the Organist,” in \textit{The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century}, ed. by Walter Salmen, trans. by Herbert Kaufman and Barbara Reisner (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 81-87.

\textsuperscript{19} See Wolff’s list of Bach children and their godparents. Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 396-8; Kevorkian, \textit{Baroque Piety}, 128.

von Flemming (1668-1740), the representative of the Saxon electoral court.\textsuperscript{21} Flemming was a strong supporter of Bach who actively commissioned cantatas, such as the three composed to commemorate Flemming’s birthdays (the last of which is BWV 210a, \textit{O angenehme Melodei}, the closest parody source for BWV 210, \textit{O holder Tag}).\textsuperscript{22} Bach’s associations with Leipzig university professors, such as Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-66) and Johann Abraham Birnbaum (1702-48), indicate that he was connected with the university circles, but because of his lack of educational credentials, he would not have been fully accepted as a peer. Christoph Wolff summarizes Bach’s position as follows:

Bach was by no means integrated into the close-knit academic community. He knew well that without university study, let alone a degree, he lacked the formal qualifications required in academe. Moreover, his other connections mattered to him: the son of a town piper, he felt comfortable in craft circles that included organ builders, other instrument makers, and musicians in general. His court music experience and, in particular, his incontestable standing as a keyboard virtuoso made him a welcome and respected insider in all domains of professional music making. Indeed, like many of his musician colleagues, he may well have disdained the exclusive and often arrogant world of the professoriate.\textsuperscript{23}

Although Bach’s connections with men in powerful positions benefited his career and the careers of his sons, in the end he remained essentially a moderately famous civic employee steering his course through a complex web of eighteenth-century social constructs.

\textsuperscript{21} A history between Bach and the Flemming family has also been traced back to the aborted Marchand-Bach harpsichord contest of 1717 that was hosted by Joachim Flemming’s brother in Dresden (Paczkowski has clarified that many, such as Christoph Wolff, have erroneously connected this event with Joachim instead of his brother, Marshal Jakob Heinrich Flemming). Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story of an ’Aria Tempo di Polonaise’ for Joachim Friedrich Flemming,” 65n8; Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 319.

\textsuperscript{22} Only the libretti of BWV 249b (1726) and BWV Anh. 10 (1731) are extant, whereas the soprano part remains for BWV 210a \textit{O angenehme Melodei}.

\textsuperscript{23} Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 319.
Bach’s Responses to Conflict

Early Life

Aspects of Bach’s personality, and specifically how he dealt with challenges, can be examined by looking at a range of conflicts occurring during his life. It is a complex task to interpret the personality of a historical figure based only on rare extant documents and the research of others, but in spite of these limitations, when analyzing Bach’s reactions to adverse conditions in his environment, certain consistent traits are evident. Bach exhibited a strong will — determination, tenacity, independence, resourcefulness, confidence, and pride — that informed his interactions with the world around him. Several early episodes highlight the nature of Bach’s character.

The most dramatic event of the young Bach’s life would have been the death of his parents. Although early or unanticipated death was commonplace at the time, the loss of one’s parents at an early age would have made a lasting impression on the life of a child regardless of how common an occurrence it was. Until Bach was nine years old he grew up as the youngest child in the household of his parents Johann Ambrosius and Maria Elisabeth Bach (née Lämmerhirt), where he learned the musical trade from his father, and attended school. Bach’s obituary states that, “Johann Sebastian was not yet ten years old when he found himself bereft of his parents by death. He betook himself to Ohrdruf, where his eldest brother, Johann Christoph, was Organist, and under this brother’s guidance he laid the foundations for his playing of the clavier.” In short, mere weeks after Bach’s ninth birthday on March 21, his mother died and was buried on May 3, 1694; his father remarried in November of the same

24 NBR, 299.
year, but died shortly thereafter, on February 20, 1695, just one month before Johann Sebastian’s tenth birthday. Certainly the early loss of both parents would have caused significant upheaval in the young boy’s life.

Subsequent events display Bach’s independence and resolve in the face of challenges. While Bach was organist in Arnstadt, his first important job as a church musician, he requested a leave of four weeks to study with the great organist Dieterich Buxtehude in Lübeck. Instead of visiting for the proposed length of time, he overstayed by three months. Upon his return, Bach not only appeared to be unapologetic, but stirred up tensions further by accompanying the congregational chorales with complex harmonic variations, techniques likely acquired while in Lübeck, which incited further complaints by the Arnstadt consistory. It appears that not only did Bach refuse to obey the Arnstadt authorities, but in his fierce determination to develop musical skills, he put into practice his newly expanded improvisational skills despite apparent consternation of the congregants and his superiors. Another aspect of Bach’s spirited nature is evident in his response to the consistory’s second accusation. Instead of tempering his playing to a middle ground as requested, he went to the other extreme and made his chorale improvisation far too short. The Arnstadt consistory minutes record certain désordres between the students and Bach, which Christoph Wolff suggests is descriptive of resulting laughter.

25 Ibid., 46.
26 The Arnstadt consistory complained that, “having hitherto made many curious variationes in the chorale, and mingled many strange tones in it,” Bach caused the congregation to be “confused.” Bach defended his absence by stating that he had “hoped the organ playing had been so taken care of by the one he had engaged for the purpose that no complaint could be entered on that account,” NBR, 46; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 85.
27 The February 21, 1706 minutes from the consistory proceedings include the statements: “after [Bach’s] attention had been called to it by the Superintendent, he had at once fallen into the other extreme and made it too short,” and “Rambach [the prefect, or choir leader] appears, and he is similarly reproved for the désordres that have hitherto taken place in the New Church between the students and the organist.” NBR, 47; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 86.
The apparent motivation for Bach’s insubordination reveals a facet of Bach’s personality that is evident throughout his life — the pursuit of musical excellence superseded ostensible limitations. Later in his career this same self-imposed pursuit of musical excellence can be seen in his tremendous compositional output of church cantatas during the first years as Cantor in Leipzig, his great summative works of the 1740s, and his unique synthesis of musical styles that did not conform to the musical trends of the era. Even many of his disputes with the Leipzig town council can be attributed to this same pursuit of musical excellence, as described later in the chapter.

**Bach’s Years in Leipzig**

The surviving documents from Bach’s career in Leipzig famously depict the composer in frequent conflict with the town authorities and his colleagues. Whether these episodes indicate a man who, in the words of George J. Buelow, was particularly “argumentative, irascible, and frequently disagreeable,” or, as Tanya Kevorkian surmises, just “an occasionally frustrated genius who was adept at working with the political convention of his day…” and who “…very much resembled other musicians,” they do shed light on the circumstances of Bach’s life and how he chose to respond to them. The genesis of several of Bach’s conflicts in Leipzig can be attributed to a number of factors. First, Bach was navigating through an ambiguous position in the social hierarchy of Leipzig where his jurisdiction over certain responsibilities was threatened from time to time. By ceding these responsibilities, an erosion of his power would have taken place, and as such, his vociferous defense of certain duties takes on a larger threat of maintaining a position on the social ladder, not only for himself but also

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for the general role of the cantorate. Second, as a Cantor without a university degree his position was relatively tenuous. Even before Bach arrived in Leipzig, town council was rife with tension between factions who wanted a Cantor whose strength was pedagogical versus the successful faction who preferred a Cantor who functioned more as a performance-oriented Kapellmeister. Bach’s lack of university credentials underscored his shortcomings as an academic Cantor, which served to fuel conflict with certain members on council throughout Bach’s career. Third, Bach’s continued striving towards the highest standards of music-making also put him into conflict with his colleagues and students from time to time. Certain musical tenets that Bach espoused, founded on what can usually be described as a more traditional perspective, made him intolerant of those in opposition. These local conflicts can be understood best from the petitions and rebuttals written in Bach’s own hand, as well as other documents written by such sources as town council minutes and petitions from Bach’s adversaries. In the local arena, Bach responded confidently in written form, and evidence suggests that he responded in his compositions as well. The following incidents demonstrate the nature of Bach’s tensions in Leipzig as well as his reactions.

Immediately after being hired in Leipzig in 1723, Bach was caught in the crossfire of politics between the town council and the University Church. As had been the arrangement with his predecessor, Johann Kuhnau, Bach would have expected that the St. Thomas Cantor would also play for the services held at the University Church. Instead, the University wanted

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29 Ulrich Siegele gives a detailed description of the town politics around this event. He suggests that the town council was vying to centralize the musical activities of Leipzig around one single music director, the St. Thomas Cantor; however, the University seized the opportunity offered by disrupted events to exert their independence from the council and hire their own music director. A second factor discriminating against Bach was his lack of university education – Görner, as an opera composer, was an academically trained musician, whereas Bach the organist, was not. Siegele, “Bach’s Situation,” 152-53.
to give its newly hired music director, Johann Gottlieb Görner (1697-1778), full responsibility for services, which would result in a cut in Bach’s pay by half. Bach’s initial petition to rectify the situation was met with refusal by the town, and yet Bach, undeterred, proceeded to write three more petitions directly to the Dresden Elector. The Elector intervened and Bach’s petition was finally granted. Bach’s instatement as director for the traditional services resulted in full fee payments by the University Church until his death in 1750. His determination not to relinquish this part of his job not only allowed him more pay but also allowed him to maintain the beneficial connection to the university that was no doubt a significant motivation in his initial application for the Leipzig position.

Battles over appropriation of responsibilities were fought with equal determination, but not always as successfully. In 1728 one of the sub-deacons at St. Thomas, Gottlieb Gaudlitz (1694-1745), asserted that he should take over the responsibility of choosing hymns for the afternoon Vespers service. Bach resisted on the grounds that it had always been the Cantor’s jurisdiction and that Gaudlitz tended to select new hymns from outside the Dresden Gesangbuch which tended to be, in the words of Bach, “very long,” thereby “[holding up] the divine service.” A humorous scenario can be imagined as the provocation for a September 8, 1728 memorandum from the consistory of Dresden. In this document the consistory asks that Bach be informed, “when the ministers who are preaching cause it to be announced that particular hymns are to be sung before or after the sermon, he shall be governed accordingly and have the same sung,” implying that Bach had refused to play the announced hymn on

30 Bach’s letters to the king were dated September 14, November 3, and December 31, 1725; NBR, 118-24.
32 Wolff, The Learned Musician, 258; NBR, 137-9.
previous occasions, and rather had played his own preferred choice of repertoire. \(^{33}\) Bach was scolded for his actions, indicating that Gaudlitz “won” on this issue; however, it seems that Bach must also have achieved some measure of success. A similar conflict occurring two years later, in February 1730, indicates that the introduction of new hymns was once again under contention, but this time the city council memorandum reads, “in the churches of this town … new hymns hitherto not customary, shall not be used in public divine services.” \(^{34}\) Christoph Wolff suggests that Bach’s petition against Gaudlitz’s choice of hymns from outside the *Gesangbuch* must have been met with some agreement during the earlier episode, even if not all of his original demands were met. \(^{35}\)

Six months later a less amicable episode between Bach and town council occurred. In August 1730, heightened tensions climaxed with accusations that Bach was “incorrigible” about neglecting his teaching duties, leaving town without official sanction, sending “a choir student to the country,” and showing “little inclination for work.” \(^{36}\) Bach scholar Ulrich Siegele suggests that the impetus for this conflict did not arise out of the specific accusations of Bach’s neglect of duties, but rather as a result of the conflicting town council factions tracing back to when Bach was hired. As previously mentioned, when Bach was hired the more traditional “Cantor” faction wanted a pedagogically-focused academic, whereas the “Kapellmeister” faction preferred someone whose performances would bring acclaim to the city. \(^{37}\) When the *Kapellmeister* faction won out, Bach was given the position with a decreased teaching load, but

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\(^{33}\) NBR, 137.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 143-4.

\(^{35}\) Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 258.

\(^{36}\) NBR, 144-5.

this compromise set the stage for years of tensions between Bach and the council, as well as within the council itself.38

Two events occurring in 1729 would have fuelled the Cantor-Kapellmeister tensions that had been simmering since Bach’s arrival. First, Bach took over leadership of the secular, instrumental Collegium Musicum, a group that performed music around town and at some services of the New Church.39 Siegele asserts that the Cantor faction would have been unhappy with the corresponding additional performances this would have added to Bach’s already full schedule, and that the council’s accusations were probably generated in part as an effort to rein him in.40 Second, in October the long-serving St. Thomas school headmaster Johann Heinrich Ernesti (1652-1729) died, resulting in a disturbance within the organization of the school that lasted until his replacement Johann Matthias Gesner (1691-1761) was hired in the summer of 1730.41 This unsettled period overlapped with grievances against Bach that he had missed teaching singing classes, had left Leipzig without leave, and that he had apparently refused to do the monthly dormitory inspection rounds.42 Regarding this last accusation, it appears that the death of Rector Ernesti precipitated the need for dormitory inspection duties to fall on the

38 Bach was allowed to hire a substitute for some of his teaching duties, a concession that had never been allowed prior. For Siegele’s description of the ongoing friction that continued on council after Bach was hired, see Ibid., 127-49; for his description of the 1730 episode, see Ibid., 157-9.


42 NBR, 144-5; Kevorkian, Baroque Piety, 134; Wolff and Emery, “Bach,” 23.
conrector, the *tertius*, and the cantor.\(^43\) Records show that the conrector and *tertius* received payment in September 1730 for their services, but Bach did not; Christoph Wolff assumes therefore that Bach had refused to carry out his duties while in the midst of this struggle with the Leipzig town council.\(^44\)

Tensions came to a head in August of 1730 as evidenced by three documents describing Bach’s reactions to the situation. The first two portrayed the aforementioned “incorrigible” Bach from the council perspective; from the August 2, 1730 council meeting, the report read, “Not only did the Cantor do nothing, but he was not even willing to give an explanation of that fact; he did not hold the singing class, and there were other complaints in addition;” and from August 25, 1730 the Mayor Dr. Born reported, “He has spoken with the Cantor, Bach, but he shows little inclination to work, and the question is whether the class ought not to be given to Magister Krügel instead of Petzold, without additional salary.”\(^45\)

Two days before this meeting with Dr. Born, Bach had penned the third document from this period, his lengthy missive “Short But Most Necessary Draft for a Well-Appointed Church Music, with Certain Modest Reflections on the Decline of the Same.”\(^46\) As described in Chapter 2, instead of addressing the complaints put forward by the town, Bach countered with a detailed description of the dearth of musical resources available to him. His appeal included

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\(^{43}\) Inspector duties would have occurred one week per month (alternated with the rector and two teachers), and would have required Bach to supervise meals and prayers, serve as night guard, and enforce curfew. For a description of the conditions of the sleeping quarters, and particularly the unhygienic state of the building, see Szeskus, *Bach in Leipzig*, 1-63.

\(^{44}\) Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 346.

\(^{45}\) NBR, 144-5. Siegele writes that the mayor, Dr. Born brought up complaints about Bach at the August 2 meeting even though it was not on the agenda. Siegele believes that Born did this deliberately to catch the “Kapellmeister faction” off guard, and thereby mount a campaign to oust Bach from his position. Siegele, “Bach’s Situation,”157.

\(^{46}\) NBR, 145-51.
lobbying for an increase in wages for himself and other town musicians, as well as a higher standard when accepting incoming students. These improvements would increase the quality of music in Leipzig to be comparable to the high standards of Dresden (and also comparable to the standards Bach had enjoyed in Cöthen). It is likely that Bach understood his audience very well and masterminded the situation accordingly. Instead of a defense of his actions, he used this memorandum as an entreaty to the group on council who would have been persuaded by their sense of musical civic pride, the group who, in Siegele’s terms, would have represented the Kapellmeister faction. From this episode, therefore, Bach appears to have cleverly countered the council grievances by agitating for concessions rather than acquiescing to their demands. Christoph Wolff writes, “from Bach’s behaviour during these disputes [with town council] it can be seen that, under pressure, he would defy bureaucratic regulations in order to preserve his independence and to clear himself an artistic breathing-space.” It also suggests a character trait not usually associated with Bach, as a shrewd manipulator of arguments to appeal to his audience in order to achieve his musical goals. It can be seen, therefore, that Bach consistently strove to achieve high standards of music making using whatever means possible — an important facet of Bach’s personality.

There is no record of further tensions with the council following Bach’s memorandum, implying that conflicts diffused, but one further repercussion — this time of a musical nature — may have occurred. On September 17, 1730 Bach inserted a highly unusual cantata for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity of the liturgical cycle, a cantata that is without precedent among Bach’s church cantatas. His BWV 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen, is written for solo

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soprano and obbligato trumpet, a combination that was more common in the Italian theatre works of such composers as Alessandro Scarlatti than in the conservative Leipzig Lutheran church. Robert Marshall writes,

Now *Jauchzet Gott* is not only difficult; it is an outright showpiece, a *nec plus ultra* of coloratura fireworks – virtuosity, really, for its own sake. And it has an immediacy of appeal, owing not only to its difficulty, but also to such factors as the fanfare melodies in the first movement, the snappy syncopations in the alleluia theme, which, I submit, represents in this context, a new fresh element in Bach’s music – a stylistic trait, then, and a manner of vocal writing one would surely have associated at the time with nothing so much as the Italian opera – of the kind cultivated in Dresden.\(^{48}\)

If part of Bach’s motivation in comparing Leipzig’s potential with the glories of Dresden’s music was an appeal to the *Kapellmeister* faction of town council, then this operatic style of cantata composed around the same time may have been intended for a similar purpose. Both the memorandum and the cantata were created within weeks of each other. Given the proximity of these two events, it is possible that the composition of *Jauchzet* was a musical expression underlining his written memorandum.

Three unconventional features of the work help to underscore this contention. First, the soprano line is particularly demanding; it encompasses a range that includes C5,\(^ {49}\) coupled with extensive coloratura lines more typical of theatre music written for female or castrati opera singers than sacred cantatas written for boy trebles.\(^ {50}\) Second, the libretto does not make the usual specific allusions to the corresponding scripture readings, but instead expresses a general...

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49 See “General Abbreviations” for an explanation of this notational system.
50 That Bach undertook this piece in the context of a Leipzig Sunday morning service where a woman would not have been allowed to sing has remained one of the unanswered questions about the September 17 performance. For possible scenarios see Marshall, “Bach the Progressive,” 326; Alfred Dürr, *Cantatas*, 540.
sentiment of praise and faithfulness. References to the Lutheran readings for the day found in
the libretto are at best tangential.\textsuperscript{51} Third, under the cantata title Bach added the designation for
performance et ogni tempo (at any time), and only sometime later did he add a second line
stating Dominica 15 post Trinitas (Fifteenth Sunday of Trinity), which Alfred Dürr suggests
explains the lack of correlation between the readings and the music.\textsuperscript{52} It is plausible then that
Bach inserted this composition into the church cycle to help underline his recent written
message to the council. By inclusion of this virtuosic, operatic style of church cantata, Bach
was displaying his range of stylistic abilities and affirming the support of his advocates on
council. In this manner, in conjunction with his appeal to the town council for more fashionable
music comparable to Dresden’s theatre, Bach provided a composition to underline his
argument.

A final insight into Bach’s character gained from his conflicts of 1730 is the rare
personal letter that Bach wrote to his old friend Georg Erdmann in October 1730. Just two
months after the tensions with town council had come to a head, Bach complained to his friend
of being misled by the Leipzig town council, particularly over the remuneration associated with
the position, and of authorities who “were odd and little interested in music, so that I must live
amid almost continued vexation, envy, and persecution….\textsuperscript{53} The complaints of “continued
vexation” coupled with Bach’s general lack of compositional activity in the latter half of the

\textsuperscript{51} The Lutheran readings for The Fifteenth Sunday of Trinity were Galatians 5:25-6:10 and Matthew 6:23-34. For
a description of possible tenuous links between the libretto and readings, see Dürr, \textit{Cantatas}, 540.

\textsuperscript{52} For various theories on the original performance of BWV 51, see Dürr, \textit{Cantatas}, 540; Marshall, “Bach the
Progressive,” 320; Klaus Hofmann, “Johann Sebastian Bach's Kantate ‘Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen’ BWV 51:
Überlegungen zu Entstehung und ursprünglicher Bestimmung,” \textit{Bach-Jahrbuch} 75 (1989): 43-54; Uwe Wolf,
“Johann Sebastian Bach und der Weißenfelser Hof - Überlegungen anhand eines Quellenfundes,” \textit{Bach-

\textsuperscript{53} NBR, 152.
year are indicators that the confrontation with the council had a significant impact on him personally.

Bach was again reacting to job tensions in August 1736, this time owing to a conflict with the recently appointed, and much younger, Rector Johann August Ernesti (1707-81).\(^{54}\) According to Christoph Wolff the relationship between J. A. Ernesti and Bach caused the most violent controversies of Bach’s Cantorate, the most notable of which was the battle over the right to choose “prefects” — Bach’s student musical assistants for services.\(^{55}\) The initial incident occurred when Ernesti appointed a prefect, a student named Gottfried Theodor Krause, without Bach’s consent, that grew into an eighteen-month battle between the two men with several St. Thomas students caught in the crossfire. Bach complained that the Rector had overstepped his boundaries and was now undermining Bach’s authority with the students. Ernesti complained that Bach was behaving inappropriately by vigorously dismissing his appointed students and refusing to submit to his authority.\(^{56}\) Ernesti’s account describes dramatic disruptions made by Bach when he “chased away” the prefect Krause while he was “already singing” — which implies that it occurred during the service — in order to insert his preferred prefect, Küttler. According to Ernesti’s account, Bach did this twice on the same day; in the morning Bach caused a “great commotion” when he sent Krause away, and when Krause came back at Ernesti’s command, Bach ejected the student “with much shouting and noise” in the choir loft. The doomed student Küttler was then thrust into the centre of conflict between these two formidable men. Ernesti commanded that Küttler defer to him rather than Bach,

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\(^{54}\) Johann August Ernesti was no relation to the former Rector Johann Heinrich Ernesti.

\(^{55}\) Wolff and Emery, “Bach,” *Grove Music Online*, 24; NBR, 172-96

\(^{56}\) NBR, 172-82.
which Küttler heeded. In response, and unfortunately for him, Küttler faced Bach’s fury—Ernesti writes that Bach “sent [Küttler] away from the table, in the evening, for having obeyed me.”

At the core of this episode was a battle of wills, with additional incidents only serving to increase the intensity. In the midst of the dispute, Ernesti had been given special release from his dormitory inspection duties as a result of favour curried from the presiding mayor Stieglitz. A later summary of the episode describes Bach’s response as: “Thus when it was Bach’s turn to undertake the inspection, he cited the precedent of Ernesti and came neither to table nor to prayers.” In Ernesti’s first lengthy rebuttal to Bach’s complaints, he took pains to alert the town council to the Cantor’s other alleged abuses of job duties. Ernesti wrote,

This is not the place to complain to Your Magnificences and You, Most Noble Sirs, about him [Bach], which, however, I reserve for another occasion; but I cannot avoid instancing this one fact: that not alone his unpleasantness but also the misfortune suffered by poor Gottfr. Theodor Krause, who later ran away, is to be attributed solely to the negligence of the Cantor. For if he had gone to the wedding service as he should have, since there was nothing wrong with him, instead of thinking it was beneath his dignity to conduct at a wedding service where only chorales were to be sung (for which reason he has absented himself from several such wedding services, including the recent one for the Krögels, in connection with which, as I could not help hearing, the musicians in service to Your Magnificences and You, Noble Sirs, complained to other people) – then said Krause would have had no opportunity to indulge in those excesses…”

Long after the student in question — Krause — had left Leipzig, Bach and Ernesti continued to battle. After the initial incident involving the prefects, Bach wrote appeals to the

57 Ibid., 180-81.
58 Quote taken from Johann Heinrich Köhler’s Historia Scholarum Lipsiensium of 1776. NBR, 172.
59 Ernesti’s letter to council is dated September 13, 1736. Ibid., 181-2.
town council, and when he did not win their support, he wrote several petitions to the higher governing level in Dresden. The final outcome of this conflict was a decree from Dresden on December 17, 1737, almost a year and a half after the initial incident. After pages and pages of petitions from both parties, the Elector provided a tepid response that was vaguely in support of Bach. 60 Augustus II sent a verdict that acknowledged the episode as wrongful to the “court composer,” but ended with the instruction to town council to “take such measures, in response to this complaint, as you shall see fit. This is Our Will.” 61

The Bach-Ernesti conflict underscores several characteristics of Bach’s personality. That Bach would not yield to Ernesti’s demands over such a length of time and in the end emerge the victor again displays the strength of his will and his tenacity. Besides the overt argument over job duties, shades of other issues were also likely contributing factors. First, Ernesti was a “progressive” educator who placed greater importance on academics than on musical traditions, which would have annoyed Bach, who demanded of his students the highest excellence in music. 62 An account written in 1776 includes the following description of the tensions between the two men:

60 This verdict occurred just over a year after Bach had finally been appointed by August II as a composer of the Royal-Polish and Electoral-Saxon Court on November 19, 1736. Bach had spent three years lobbying for this appointment, first with the July 1733 dedication of his Missa (Kyrie and Gloria), BWV 232 to the newly acceded August II, followed by several years of petitions in request of the title. This anecdote also underlines Bach’s ambitions and drive.

61 NBR, 195-6. In his biography of Bach, Spitta assumed that during the Elector’s subsequent Easter visit to Leipzig in April, 1738, he personally intervened in favour of Bach; during that same visit Bach performed special music in honour of the king (Elector), which would not necessarily include the two known cantatas performed during the visit. Ibid., 196-9.

The situation between [Bach] and Ernesti developed to the point of charge and countercharge, and the two men from that time on were enemies. Bach began to hate those students who devoted themselves completely to the *humaniora* and treated music as a secondary matter, and Ernesti became a foe of music. When he came upon a student practicing on an instrument, he would exclaim “What? You want to be a beer-fiddler too?”

If Ernesti had won the right to appoint prefects, Bach would not only have been yielding power, but he would have been acquiescing to a colleague with a very different philosophy toward music.

Second, Bach states several times in his petitions that his authority was being undermined by Ernesti’s contrary position. When specifically addressing the commotion caused when dismissing Krause, or “the *disordres* that were caused eight days ago during the public divine service by the actions of the Rector of the St. Thomas School here, Mr. Ernesti,” Bach writes,

> Since the same thing took place today, both in the morning and in the afternoon, and, to avoid a great commotion in the Church and a *turbatio sacrorum*, I had to make up my mind to conduct the motet myself and to have the intonation taken care of by a University student, and the situation is becoming worse and worse, so that without the most vigorous intervention on the part of You, My High Patrons, I should hardly be able to maintain my position with the students entrusted to me, and accordingly should be blameless if further and perhaps irreparable disorders should result from it … such as further public annoyance in the Church, disorder in the School, and reduction of the authority with the students that is necessary to my office …”

Besides the obvious threat to Bach’s authority over his students, he may also have felt that his position in the social hierarchy of Leipzig was compromised. By ceding jurisdiction over

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63 Taken from Johann Friedrich Köhler’s later summary account *Historia Scholarum Lipsiensem*, published in Leipzig in 1776. NBR, 172.

64 Petition dated August 19, 1736; Ibid., 182-3.
important elements of his station, he would also be acknowledging the superiority of the position of Rector over Cantor. Other points that infer a hierarchical aspect are Ernesti’s specific reference that Bach refused to play certain weddings that were “beneath him,” and Bach’s refusal to do dormitory inspection duties when Ernesti had been excused from the same. Bach underlined the larger issues at stake when he wrote that if accepted, this change in responsibilities would jeopardize “the rights of my successors,” indicating an awareness of the greater implications that the concession would enact. In the face of adversity, therefore, Bach consistently showed a spirited, strong-willed reaction, displaying traits of tenacity, pride, and indomitability, whether as a newly orphaned child, a young man in his first job, or as an established professional in mid-career.

**Bach’s Response to Conflicts Beyond Leipzig**

When Bach was faced with disagreements at a municipal level, he did not hesitate to write numerous rebuttals in his own defense, yet the confidence displayed in these local interactions is not as obvious in the less parochial, and more public conflicts beyond Leipzig. Johann Scheibe’s (1708-76) articles were not the first to challenge Bach’s musical aesthetic using a widely read circulated publication — in the 1720s and 1730s Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) also targeted Bach’s music for its outdated, old-fashioned style. A later event also reached beyond the borders of Leipzig when in 1749 Bach aggressively disputed criticism against the value of music for education launched by a neighbouring rector Johann Gottlieb Biedermann (1705-72). In all these situations, Bach did not respond in his own written defense, but rather chose to remain silent or to recruit educated colleagues to write on his behalf. Before

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65 Petition dated August 12, 1736; Ibid., 173.
exploring the possible reasons, a summary of Mattheson’s complaints against Bach will be discussed. These criticisms provide opportunity to study the Leipzig Cantor’s reaction to adversity presented in the public sphere, instigated by a respected musical peer.

Even though the two men never met, within the numerous publications of Johann Mattheson sporadic allusions to Bach and his music are included, most in praise of Bach the organist, but occasionally in judgment of his compositional style. There are two known occasions when Mattheson wrote specific criticisms of Bach’s music, even though he would have had limited opportunity to hear performances or even see scores. \(^{66}\) In his 1725 edition of the *Critica Musica*, Mattheson lampooned Bach’s setting of BWV 21, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*. \(^{67}\) This was a cantata Bach had used as an audition piece for the position of organist at the St. Jacobi’s Church in Hamburg in 1720, and one that was obviously still circulating in Hamburg five years later. Since Hamburg had been the centre of the North German contrapuntal tradition it is understandable that Bach would have presented this more traditional cantata even though in 1720 the trend in church music was already shifting towards an opera-influenced, recitative and aria style of cantata. \(^{68}\) Bach’s offering was rooted in the older style of psalm-texted choruses, set with dense polyphony and irregularly set phrase lengths. Mattheson’s comments ridiculing Bach’s approach are indicative of the aesthetic shift

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\(^{66}\) George Stauffer writes that in the over twenty-four references to Bach found within Mattheson’s twenty-four publications, he only makes mention of seven of Bach’s compositions, and that several of those works are referenced more than once. Stauffer, “Johann Mattheson and J. S. Bach,” 357-59.


\(^{68}\) In 1704 Erdmann Neumeister published his *Geistliche Cantaten statt einer Kirchenmusik*; Neumeister’s texts were much more personal and dramatic than traditional texts. By the 1720s this new style of sacred libretti had become the most up-to-date for church cantatas. George B. Stauffer, “Bach and the Lure of the Big City” in *The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2009), 248.
that had already taken hold in Hamburg and of Mattheson’s disdain for the “old” form. He wrote:

In order that good old Zachow\textsuperscript{69} may have company, and not be quite so alone, let us set beside him an otherwise excellent practicing musician of today, who for a long time does nothing but repeat:

“I, I, I, I had much grief, I had much grief, in my heart, in my heart. I had much grief, etc. in my heart, etc. etc., I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., etc., etc., etc. I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., etc.”

Then again:

“Sighs, tears, sorrows, anguish (rest) sighs, tears, anxious longing, fear and death (rest) gnaw at my oppressed heart, etc."

Also:

“Come, my Jesus, and refresh (rest) and rejoice with Thy glance (rest), come, my Jesus (rest), come, my Jesus, and refresh, and rejoice … with Thy glance this soul, etc.”\textsuperscript{70}

Several years after Mattheson’s mockery of Cantata 21 he again derided Bach’s compositional style, in his 1731 treatise \textit{Große General-Baß-Schule}, where he described Bach’s music as “unsingable.”\textsuperscript{71} In both cases, there is no evidence of a formal response from Bach of any kind, even though it is highly probable that he would have either read the criticisms himself or that he would have been alerted to them by well-read colleagues such as Walther or Bokemeyer.

\textsuperscript{69} Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow was Handel’s teacher and organist at Our Lady’s (Market) Church in Halle. Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 527.

\textsuperscript{70} Mattheson, \textit{Critica Musica} II, 368; Stauffer, “Bach and the Lure of the Big City,” 248-9.

\textsuperscript{71} Cited in Stauffer, “Bach and the Lure of the Big City,” 364.
Two more episodes illuminate Bach’s intersection with Mattheson. Shortly after Mattheson’s disciple Scheibe had launched a public criticism that similarly attacked Bach’s old-fashioned style, Mattheson mentioned Bach in the context of the latter’s contrapuntal expertise. In the 1739 treatise *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Mattheson wrote:

… [I] might wish to see something of the like [referring to Mattheson’s treatise on fugues, *Die wolklingende Fingersprache*] published by the famous Bach in Leipzig, who is a great master of fugues. Meanwhile, on the one hand this lack shows sufficiently the negligence and the lack of thorough contrapuntists as well as on the other hand also scant demand of present-day ignorant organists and composers for such instructive things.\(^{72}\)

In this case, George Stauffer interprets Mattheson’s comment as deliberately provoking Bach to write a treatise outlining the method of his formidable, if out-dated, contrapuntal skills.\(^{73}\)

Again, there is no known written response by Bach. Finally, in 1740 Mattheson published his volume *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, which was a comprehensive listing of Germany’s most renowned musicians. Mattheson had made at least two requests of Bach to submit autobiographical information for inclusion in this volume, but did not include Bach in the published volume, inferring that Mattheson did not receive the requested information from the Cantor.\(^{74}\)

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\(^{73}\) Stauffer, “Bach and the Lure of the Big City,” 364-5.

\(^{74}\) Mattheson had requested Bach to clarify a point of genealogy in his 1717 *Das beschützte Orchestre*, and asked Bach for a résumé in both the *Exemplarische Organisten-Probe* (1719) and the *Grosse General-Bass-Schule* (1731). Ibid., 262.
Why did Bach fail to refute or respond to any of Mattheson’s provocations, when in the local arena, he exhibited no hesitation to write in his own defense? In this situation, the gap between Mattheson and Bach’s educational backgrounds may have been a strong influence. Bach’s status as the first Cantor of Leipzig to be hired who did not hold a university degree seemed to be both a source of pride and a source of embarrassment; on the one hand, the tone of his obituary championed that Bach was a “self-made” musician who had learned his trade by observation and development of his own extraordinary musical resources, yet on the other hand he was attracted to the Leipzig job in large part because it was a university town that offered appealing benefits such as a solid education for his sons. These contrasting facets appear to have paralleled Bach’s reactions when he was faced with challenges from outside the local sphere. When confronted with conflict from the town council or other local characters, Bach showed absolute self-confidence in his numerous petitions to local and aristocratic powers; yet, in the aforementioned cases when Bach encountered public musical criticism levelled at him by Mattheson (and later Scheibe), he did not respond in the same direct manner.

George Stauffer emphasizes Bach’s lack of academic standing as a significant source of the reluctance exhibited in Bach’s reactions within the public arena. Compared to Bach, Stauffer suggests that Johann Mattheson’s impressive credentials, as a highly educated, sophisticated music critic with numerous popular publications to his name, would have cut an

75 Raymond Erickson writes, “When Bach ended his formal education in Lüneberg by completing the Prima, he had acquired a better education than any of his siblings and almost all of his other relatives. To go to the university, for which he certainly qualified, was out of the question for financial reasons. But the strong religious and theological background he had acquired would enable him to pass the theological examination for the cantorate of St. Thomas’s school over twenty years later. Moreover, the extensive library he acquired over the years is testimony to his deep interest in and knowledge of religion and the scriptures.” Erickson, “The Legacies of J. S. Bach,” 24. For the importance Bach placed on a university education for his sons, see Erickson, 10; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 238.
intimidating figure.\textsuperscript{76} Also, in contrast to Telemann, Handel, and Heinichen who were university-trained composers in major urban centres, Bach’s Lyceum education was meagre. Stauffer writes, “Mattheson had the urbanity of a big-city sophisticate; Bach had the limitations of a provincial Thuringian church organist. When Mattheson needed intellectual sustenance, he read Voltaire and Lessing; when Bach turned to literature, he opened his Calov Bible.”\textsuperscript{77} (Although there is substance to Stauffer’s assertions, it should also be noted that other evidence indicates the liveliness of Bach’s mind; Bach’s library collection has been noted for its range of books and its remarkable size, and his interest in treatises and recent theoretical discourse is implied by his role as Leipzig book distributor for such prominent and progressive music theorists as Heinichen. Lastly, that Bach was attracted to less sophisticated poetry than Voltaire could be attributed to a generational divide as much as a difference in intellectual interest.) In light of Bach’s assertive, strong-willed, and spirited personality it is likely that he would have been irritated by public criticism from such an esteemed figure as Mattheson, and yet it is also just as likely that Mattheson’s fame and sophistication generated a hesitancy in Bach to react in kind.

Whereas Bach was reluctant to provide direct, written responses in published discourse, he does not appear to have had the same tentativeness when composing. The previous chapter explored evidence to support that Bach used his music to comment on the widespread shift in musical aesthetic; there is equally strong evidence to suggest that some compositions were also created in response to specific events, such as criticism levelled at him by his contemporaries.

\textsuperscript{76} Mattheson was able to correspond in German, English and French; he was secretary to the British Ambassador in Hamburg, and authored eighteen books. Stauffer, “Bach and the Lure of the Big City,” 263.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
Bach did not pen a response to Mattheson’s 1725 criticism of his “old-fashioned” Cantata, BWV 21, and yet it is perhaps not coincidence that Bach sent his contrapuntal musical puzzle, the “Hudemann Canon,” to Mattheson’s former student who also lived in Hamburg, just two years after the publication. The “Hudemann Canon” was circulated not only in the wake of Mattheson’s lampoon of BWV 21, but also just four years after the monumental and very public Bokemeyer-Mattheson debate of 1723, as described in Chapter 2. It was a bold move for Bach to deliver a musical puzzle in canonic form just a few years after Mattheson had specifically debunked this type of “eye music,” and such a short time after Mattheson had ridiculed Bach for his out-dated mode of cantata writing. Implied by this action is an utmost confidence in his musical abilities, regardless of the opinion of more educated colleagues.

Even though Bach did not respond in writing when faced with Mattheson’s criticisms, we know that in other cases Bach enlisted the help of his learned friends to write on his behalf. Two well-known instances are Bach’s recruitment of Professor Johann Birnbaum to write a circulated response to Scheibe’s first article, and the 1749 recruitment of Christoph Gottlieb Schröter (1699-1782) to fashion a response to Rector Johann Gottlieb Biedermann’s objectionable opinions. In spite of Bach’s reluctance to pen the aforementioned written responses, there is strong evidence to suggest that he was far from detached in the process. In the case of Birnbaum’s response to the Scheibe articles, it is generally acknowledged that Bach had a strong hand in the creation of the defense (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6), with a similar involvement apparent between Bach and his later defender Schröter.

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78 Robin Leaver, “Religion and Religious Currents” in *The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2009), 130; George Stauffer describes Birnbaum as Bach’s “mouthpiece” who wrote, “at the
Bach’s vigorous editing of Schröter’s 1749 rebuttal developed into an episode that generated great tension between the two men, serving as a concrete example of Bach’s proprietary attitude towards the written responses of his defenders. When Rector Biedermann, from the neighbouring town of Freiberg, circulated his pamphlet expressing dismissive views of musical education, Bach enlisted the help of Schröter, his fellow member of Lorenz Christoph Mizler’s “Society of Musical Science,” to write a response. Schröter was also someone with whom Bach had corresponded for over thirty years. After Schröter sent his original article to Bach for approval, Bach replied that it was, “well-written, and to [his] taste.” Bach’s actions, however, make it clear that he actually felt some reservation not conveyed to the author, for he took it upon himself to change Schröter’s title to include the words “Christian Reflections upon…,” and rewrite sections of the prose injecting more vehemence into the arguments. Without further consultation, Bach proceeded to print and circulate “Schröter’s” article. When Schröter read the edited prose he was deeply offended, complaining of the “violent changes” Bach had made, “not to mention the unhappy title urging of Bach himself” and who was “undoubtedly provided [with] musical advice.” Stauffer, “Johann Mattheson and J. S. Bach,” in New Mattheson Studies, ed. George J. Buelow and Hans-Joachim Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 361.

79 Bach had attested to Schröter’s ability as an organ builder in a testimonial dated July 13, 1716. For more on Schröter see NBR, 243.

80 Ibid., 241.

81 As reported by Georg Friedrich Einike, an example of Schröter’s mild prose in his criticism against Biedermann, is his complaint over the rector’s “unfriendly attitude toward the innocent art of music.” When Schröter accused Bach of the changes, Bach responded that it was the publisher, not him, who had made the alterations. A letter dated June 5, 1750 from Schröter to Bach states that did not believe the Cantor’s claims and urged Bach to “openly acknowledge that he is the author.” Bach died before a response could be made. NBR, 242; Wolff, The Learned Musician 423.
‘Christian Reflections upon, etc.’ for although his hastily written article contained nothing un-Christian, yet such a title was in no way suited to the matter at hand.” 82 Schröter considered the revisions under his name so unsophisticated that he was sure “no reader who was familiar with his way of writing or thinking, from other sources, could consider him the author of such a mixture ….” 83 A mutual colleague, Georg Friedrich Einike (1710-70), wrote a report in April 1750 that included a comment attributed to Bach that may provide insight into the tone of the “violent changes” made to Schröter’s prose. According to Einike, Bach wrote that Schröter’s pamphlet would show Rector Biedermann his “dirty ear [would] be cleansed and made more fit to listen to music,” using the pun “dirty ear,” or Dreck-ohr, as a rhyme for Rector. This type of reference was considered so coarse and sensational by Johann Mattheson, who encountered Bach’s comment when he reprinted Einike’s summary in 1751, that Mattheson felt obliged to explain in French that the pun was “a base and disgusting expression, unworthy of a Capellmeister.” 84 In this incident, therefore, Bach’s attempt to counter personal conflict with an insertion of his own prose was highly ineffective; he angered his ally Schröter, and elicited the disdain of an educated contemporary, Mattheson. Stauffer writes, “Here we see Bach the culpable, behind-the-scenes manipulator, willing to voice his opinion through the writings of others but unwilling to keep his hands off the copy.” 85 In this manner, Bach is revealed as actively involved in the argument fashioned by his defender, yet unsuccessful in his attempt to enhance the prose.

82 NBR, 242.
83 Ibid.
84 Mattheson reprinted Einike’s report in his 1751 publication “Seven Dialogues of Philosophy and Music.” Ibid., 243.
On the other hand, immediately following the Schröter publication Bach created a decidedly more successful musical response to the same conflict within the libretto revisions of his cantata BWV 201, “Phoebus and Pan,” which according to Christoph Wolff, occurred in “direct response to the Biedermann affair.”86 When Bach remounted this cantata in the summer of 1749 (a cantata first composed twenty years prior to a text by Picander, as described in Chapter 2), he altered the final recitative lines to reflect his current adversaries, as follows:

Picander’s original text:

“Now, Phoebus, take up your lyre again; there is nothing lovelier than your songs.”87

altered to:

“Now, Phoebus, redouble music and songs, despite Hortens and Orbil raging against it.”88

Christoph Wolff asserts that the allusions to “Hortens” and “Orbil,” two figures known in classical Latin literature as misguided and brutal academics respectively, would have been understood by Bach’s Leipzig audience as referring to Bach’s foe Biedermann.89 Wolff also suggests that a succeeding word variant from the original was Bach’s comment against the actions of a second adversary, the Saxon Prime Minister, Heinrich, Count von Brühl.90 During the spring of 1749, while Bach had been very ill, Brühl had proposed a new music director,
Gottlob Harrer (1703-55), to the Leipzig town council. Bach heard the news that a new candidate was being auditioned as his replacement, and became greatly irritated. As such, the second iteration of the above text was altered once more to read,

“Despite Birolius and Hortens raging against it.”91

Christoph Wolff writes,

Just as he played linguistically with the word “rector” in the Biedermann affair, he now manipulated the name Orbil(ius) into an anagram, Birolius – sounding awfully-close to a dog-Latin version of the Saxon prime minister’s name Brühl. There must have been enough people in the audience to get the wittily disguised innuendo so that Bach once again had the last laugh, this time in a double sense.92

That Bach would have been bold enough to mock the second most powerful man in Saxony in his adapted libretto may also be an example of the unfailing confidence Bach exhibited in the strength of his music.

This late episode, therefore, again shows a situation wherein Bach was reluctant to attach his name to a circulating written publication but confident when using his own composition as a means of defense. Between the two spheres of Bach’s conflicts, within and beyond Leipzig, a markedly different approach to his adversaries is observed. Most notably, in his reactions to criticism from a more public platform, Bach demonstrated hesitancy to respond in writing, but showed no similar reluctance to respond with his own compositions. This same pattern appears when observing Bach’s reaction to the published criticisms leveled against him by Johann Scheibe. Before focusing on BWV 210 and the Scheibe episode, however, the genre

91 Tobt gleich Birolius und ein Hortens darwider.
92 Wolff, The Learned Musician, 446.
of wedding cantatas in general, and specifically Bach’s secular wedding cantatas, will be
explored to provide further context.
Chapter 4.
The Culture of Eighteenth-Century Weddings

Bach’s Secular Wedding Cantatas

Manuscript of BWV 210 and the Original Recipients

Introduction

As a secular wedding cantata, BWV 210, *O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit*, belongs to a peripheral genre of Bach’s works that was intended as entertainment for wedding guests. The musical forces required were usually minimal; generally, solo voices with intimate chamber ensembles. They were commissioned pieces composed during an era of *Gelegenheitsmusik*, when music was expected to meet the requirements of the event and recipients rather than convey any personal statement from a composer. As such, the odd textual diversion into a passionate argument in defense of music is curiously incongruent. Why would Bach choose a composition that was expected to be light entertainment in honour of a nuptial couple as the vehicle for an impassioned rhetorical argument?

To address this question, this chapter will first discuss the environment in which the cantata was performed — the eighteenth-century German wedding. Historian Richard van Dülmen asserts that “hardly any event played so important a role in the life of a ‘premodern’ citizen as a couple’s wedding,” alluding not only to the lifelong union of a couple, but also to
the important social benefits of a wedding event.¹ Eighteenth-century Lutheran wedding celebrations were large gatherings of the community that also afforded couples the opportunity to invite guests of a higher social rank. This would in turn reflect well on the wedding pair and their families. Given the profile of these events, a rhetorical argument integrated by Bach into a wedding cantata libretto would have had a larger platform than one may initially expect.

The exceptionality of a rhetorical argument inserted into a commissioned text must also be understood within the more general context of the eighteenth-century wedding cantata genre. Following a discussion of the social environment of weddings, this chapter explores how and where music was included in these celebrations, and particularly on the different settings in which the sacred and secular works were performed. Characteristics consistent between sacred and secular works are contrasted with the differences between these two genres. To provide comparison between BWV 210 and Bach’s other wedding cantatas, a survey of Bach’s wedding music follows with particular consideration accorded the secular works. Included in this discussion is a look at Bach’s working relationship with his libretto collaborator Johann Christoph Gottsched as a backdrop to a study of the modifications made to the libretto of BWV 210. The final section of the chapter will focus on a detailed look at the specific circumstances in which BWV 210 was created, including information about the history of its manuscripts, possible recipients, and how the location and patrons of the original performance may have informed the revisions made to the music and text (as further discussed in Chapter 5).

The Culture of Eighteenth-Century Weddings

As the quote by van Dülmen emphasizes, weddings were an important juncture in the life of an eighteenth-century German citizen. During a time when social hierarchy dictated the course of a person’s life, the ability to improve one’s stature through marriage was a significant opportunity. The concept of the economically beneficial marriage was not new to the eighteenth century, but whereas in previous times strategic marriages were largely confined to the elite classes, by the eighteenth century the practice had infiltrated the growing middle class as well. As such, social mobility through marriage was a common occurrence. One typical example was a marriage between the offspring of an established, patrician burgher with one from a more recently wealthy and educated family. Another common path was the union of a master’s daughter with his apprentice. An example of the latter was the search by Dieterich Buxtehude for his successor when the requirement for the job was marriage to Buxtehude’s daughter, a stipulation that was only fulfilled after several young musicians had declined the enviable post.

Not only was the marriage union a pivotal decision for a couple, but the wedding day itself was also of great importance, as van Dülmen describes:

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5 There is some speculation that Bach was offered to “take over the family business” upon his visit to the elderly Buxtehude in the winter of 1705-6. Johann Mattheson stated that both he and Handel had been offered a marriage condition to marry Buxtehude’s eldest daughter, a woman who would have been ten years older than Handel, Mattheson, and Bach. Peter Williams, *The Life of Bach*, 38.
A wedding was never simply a party between two families, but instead was a public, representative celebration. Always welcome were guests of higher social standing; in the city either a councillor or patrician, in the country the Landlord.6

A calculated distribution of invitations to prominent members of society was a vital part of wedding preparations because, given the very public nature of the wedding celebrations, status reflected on the couple by the presence of these influential guests, or their representatives, would be noted by many.7

Although the importance of a favourable marriage influenced the middle class regardless of religious affiliation, denominational differences tended to determine the scope of the wedding occasion.8 Catholic ceremonies were generally smaller affairs, often performed at the church door rather than inside the sanctuary, with the presiding priest serving to pronounce a simple blessing. Lutheran ceremonies, in contrast, developed into more elaborate events, a difference that can be traced back to the beliefs established by Martin Luther two centuries earlier. Whereas the Catholic Church demanded that priests remain celibate, Luther encouraged ministers to marry and have children in a union blessed by the Church.9 One result of this was a

6 Eine Hochzeit war neimals das Fest zweier Familien allein, sondern eine öffentliche, representative Festlichkeit. Immer gern gesehene Gäste waren daher höhere Standespersonen, in der Stadt etwa ein Ratsherr oder Patrizier, auf dem Lande der Grundherr.” van Dülmen, Kultur und Alltag, 150.

7 Gottlieb, The Family in the Western World, 79.

8 Wunder, He is the Sun, She is the Moon, 53.

9 Specifically in regards to marriage, the reformers’ reactions against the Catholic Church were due in part to perceived abuses, an example of which was the constraint placed against marriage between children of godparents or between distant relatives (a situation not uncommon, especially in small communities), requiring payment of a dispensation fee to the church.
Lutheran marriage ceremony that was considered an important public gathering for the congregation, not just an event for friends and family.  

The church ceremony remained the focal point of the wedding, but the surrounding festivities were the highlight for many attendees. The wedding day typically included a procession through the streets, a well-attended church ceremony, and subsequent celebrations with food and entertainment. Depending on the status and financial resources of the couple, wedding festivities could extend for days or even weeks with entertainments and excessive amounts of food and drink provided for guests. In some cases public displays of wealth and lavish festivities became so problematic and widespread that laws were enacted in an attempt to rein in these extravagances; financial ruin was the occasional result for the very families who had hoped to use the opportunity to elevate their situation.

**General Characteristics of Eighteenth-Century Wedding Cantatas**

During the first half of the eighteenth century concerted vocal music, or the “cantata,” was used in a wide range of liturgical, civic, and private functions, and so naturally the ubiquity

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11 van Dülmen writes, *Die wichtigste Ereignis für alle Teilnehmer war die nach der Trauung folgende Hochzeitsfeier* (The most important event for the participants was the party following the wedding), *Kultur und Alltag*, 153.


13 To protect families from overextending their financial resources during wedding festivities laws were introduced to limit the number of guests and amount of food one could prepare, yet seldom were these heeded. van Dülmen, *Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit: Kulturelles Handeln und Sozialer Prozess*, (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1993), 228, and 194-235. The eighteenth-century church labeled these wedding events as *mehr denen Heydnischen, als Christlichen gleichen* (more Hedonistic than Christian). Ibid., 155. See also Wunder, *He is the Sun, She is the Moon*, 47.
of the form included wedding celebrations. Performances of wedding cantatas occurred either during the ceremony or as subsequent entertainment, and are thus designated as “sacred” or “secular” respectively. Three general characteristics that pertain to both the sacred and secular works provide a background for the context in which BWV 210 was written. First, textual allusions to the bridal pair were often incorporated into the libretto, including references to the profession, personal interests, or the last names of the couple. (Because of this custom it is often possible to surmise the identity of the couple even when information about the recipients and wedding date has been lost.) In the secular genre these references were usually more overt, yet even in the sacred, flattery and mention of the honourees were often included. Second, regardless of the sacred or secular setting, a libretto was expected to convey a celebratory mood befitting the festive occasion. Texts for sacred works were drawn from scriptures or the wedding liturgy, whereas secular texts encompassed a wider range of plots, often incorporating such elements as mythological characters, clever references about the couple, and other witticisms. Regardless of the source material, wedding libretti were intended as musical celebrations of the event and thus typically maintained a light, cheerful tone. Third, libretto booklets were published and distributed to the audience with the names of the nuptial couple prominently displayed on the title page, but often the composer’s name as well. These booklets commemorated the event, served to provide a visual reinforcement of the musical text, and also clearly indicated the composer of the music.14

14 Dissemination of Sunday morning cantata texts was customary, and, therefore, it is not surprising that the wedding service cantatas would also have received the same treatment. It is notable that the secular cantata texts were also published and distributed.
Although both sacred and secular works may be described as “wedding cantatas,” they would have been perceived as quite different genres that fulfilled distinct functions. The designation “cantata” would not have been applied to both genres in such a broad sense; it is only after the eighteenth century that the term has been applied to describe all multi-movement concerted vocal compositions, whether sacred or secular. Composers such as Bach would not have recognized the same term for both. The “cantata” is rooted in the seventeenth-century Italian secular model that was a vocal work generally written for one or two solo voices, accompanied by sparse musical forces (normally basso continuo), and comprising several contrasting musical sections that became more stylistically defined towards the end of the century as recitative and aria.\textsuperscript{15} Texts of these “cantatas” typically consisted of amatory subjects or odes in honour of patrons, and only very rarely included sacred subjects. Notably, Bach differentiated between his sacred and secular genres by titling the sacred cantatas Trauungsmusik, or “wedding music,” and his secular, Hochzeitskantaten, or “wedding cantatas,” underlining the distinction between the two types. That Bach specifically distinguished his sacred works from his secular suggests that a similar separation of genre was present within the composer’s creative impetus.

The musical forces employed for each also suggests a distinction in Bach’s mind that differentiated sacred wedding cantatas from their secular counterparts. Bach’s instrumental and vocal forces used in the sacred works tended to be of a size more closely aligned with those heard at Sunday morning performances, whereas his secular cantatas were more intimate chamber works that correspond more closely to the aforementioned Italianate cantata. An

\textsuperscript{15} Palisca, Baroque Music, 114-15.
example of one of Bach’s larger sacred wedding cantatas is the late, BWV 195, *Dem Gerechten muß das Licht*, written for a double choir of concert and ripieno singers with a full festival orchestra consisting of timpani, three trumpets, two flutes, two oboes and strings. Bach’s other sacred wedding works also used choir and soloists with instrumental ensembles. In contrast, the four secular wedding cantatas were written for solo voices accompanied by smaller instrumental ensembles. As such, the differences in musical forces also serve to underscore the aesthetic divide between the two cantata genres.

The context in which each genre was performed also demonstrates distinctions between the sacred and secular. When included, a commissioned cantata provided the greater part of the music heard in the wedding ceremony (a facet underscored by the previously cited episode when J. A. Ernesti chastised Bach for delegating his prefects to play the weddings that “were beneath his dignity” as they only required hymns). During the wedding liturgy, performance of the cantata was divided into two sections titled “Before the Wedding” and “After the Wedding.” Typically the first half of the cantata was presented at the beginning of the ceremony followed by the spoken liturgy of the wedding and, after the vows were spoken and

16 Andrew Parrott defines “concertist” singers as those who sang solo as well as ensemble parts, and “ripienists” as the ensemble singers who reinforced and augmented the concertists. Andrew Parrott, *The Essential Bach Choir* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 30.

17 Although the royal wedding cantata BWV Anh. 13 was also a secular cantata, it must be considered in an entirely unique context. It too employed soloists rather than a choir, but also may have made use of the larger instrumental forces that were part of a preceding grand procession through the streets of Leipzig.

18 NBR, 181. Commissioned cantatas also represented an important element of the working musicians’ income. Andrew Parrot writes, “These extra-liturgical duties [such as weddings] afforded opportunities … to earn a little money…” Andrew Parrot, *The Essential Bach Choir* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 9.

19 These two parts were titled in German or Latin as: *Vor der Trauung/ Vor der Copulation* and *Nach der Trauung/ Nach der Copulation/ Post Copulationen.*
the wedding couple and minister moved to the altar steps, the second half was performed. A congregational chorale closed the service.  

In contrast, secular wedding cantatas were performed without pause and took place in a greater variety of settings. Particularly for the burgher and noble classes, status and wealth of the bridal pair were the most significant determinants of the nature of the post-wedding festivities. Among accounts of middle class weddings, Frederick Hudson describes cantata performances at wedding breakfasts, while van Dülmen writes more generally of performances at public celebrations occurring after the wedding. Among the wealthier and noble classes, affairs often extended for several days and included elaborate entertainments. Barbara Reul describes the 1745 wedding celebrations at Anhalt-Zerbst for Catherine the Great, which included evenings of extravagant concerts, or *Abendmusik*, accompanied by fireworks. Marked differences in the durations of secular cantatas also underscore the variety of performance environments. For example, two different secular wedding cantatas, or “Serenatas,” by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690-1749) written for the same 1736 wedding festivities, vary in length from the thirty-five minute *Seid willkommen, schöne Stunden* to the

20 According to Hudson, wedding services would have lasted approximately half an hour. Frederick Hudson, “Bach’s Wedding Music” *Current Musicology* 7 (1968), 117, 119. The liturgy of the Lutheran wedding service has been included in Hudson, NBA KB I/33, 7-11; and Sanford Terry, *Bach Cantata Texts*, (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1926), 531-33.


seventy minute *Alles, was sonst lieblich heißt.* Hence, the less “ritualized” nature of secular wedding celebrations allowed for fewer constraints in their creation.

**Bach’s Wedding Cantatas**

Among Bach’s hundreds of known cantatas only thirteen works have been identified as wedding pieces: seven sacred cantatas, which listed chronologically are BWVs Anh. 14, 34a, Anh. 211, Anh. 212, 120a, 197, and 195; a set of three chorales used in place of a single sacred wedding cantata, BWVs 250, 251, and 252; and five secular cantatas, BWVs 202, Anh. 196, 216, Anh. 13, and 210. Secondary sources indicate that these twelve surviving cantatas and single chorale collection are only a fraction of what Bach produced. Suggestion of the ratio of extant to lost wedding cantatas is apparent, owing to the verger of the wedding registry at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig who meticulously recorded a total of thirty-one sacred cantatas (*gantze Brautmeßen*) provided by Bach and performed between July 15, 1723 and February 18, 1749. No similarly detailed record was kept at the St. Nicholas Church, but one may assume that a similar number of church cantatas were performed for the weddings conducted there.

Therefore, of the estimated sixty sacred cantatas composed by Bach during this time,

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23 These two “Serenatas” were written for the wedding celebrations of Prince Günther I von Schwarzburg-Sondershausen. Amanda Babington, review of *Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel: Two Serenatas*, recorded by Dorothee Mields, Elisabeth Graf, Knut Schoch, Ekkehard Abele, Telemannisches Collegium Michaelstein, conducted by Ludger Rémy, *Eighteenth-Century Music* 8, iss. 2 (September 2011): 345.

24 The sacred cantata BWV 196, *Der Herr denket an uns*, has been listed as another of Bach’s wedding cantatas but this has been disputed in recent years. See Konrad Küster, “‘Der Herr denket an uns,’ BWV 196: Eine frühe Bach-Kantate und ihr Kontext,” *Musik und Kirche* 66 (1996): 84-96. Alfred Dürr does not categorize it among the wedding cantatas, but rather in “various occasions.” Dürr, *Cantatas*, 779. In 1997 Peter Wollny discovered a 1736 libretto of BWV 195, which brought to light the existence of an unknown third version of this cantata. Peter Wollny, “Neue Bach-Funde,” *Bach-Jahrbuch* 83 (1997): 7-50.

25 Neumann and Hudson have both reproduced the verger records of wedding cantata services at St. Nicholas church, listed with the names of the wedding couples, the bride’s father, and the officiating minister; NBA KB I/33, 12-17; Hudson, “Sources and Performance of Bach’s Wedding Music,” 4; Hudson, “Bach’s Wedding Music,” 112.
manuscripts and libretti of only nine survive, leaving the number of lost cantatas immense. No
similar record was kept for the secular wedding cantatas, making it difficult to ascertain Bach’s
output and corresponding losses, but given the proportion of extant to lost works of the sacred
genre, one may assume that a similarly large number of works have vanished.26

The time span represented by these thirteen surviving wedding cantatas encompasses
Bach’s entire career. The first of the known wedding cantatas is the secular cantata BWV 202
_Weichet nur_, which has been dated as early as 1708 and as late as 1717, during the composer’s
years in Weimar, while a final version of his last known wedding piece, BWV 195 _Dem
Gerechten muß das Licht_, was created between 1747 and 1748.27 Even so, the majority of the
existing works originated from a narrow, four-year period during his early years in Leipzig;
seven of the surviving cantatas were created between 1725 and 1729 (the same time period that
Bach composed his 1729 homage cantata, BWV 210a _O angenehme Melodei_).

Of these wedding cantatas, even fewer exist with their manuscripts intact. Most of the
music that has survived in some form can be traced back to scores bequeathed to Bach’s two

26 Wedding cantatas of most composers of the era have not survived well. For example, within the prolific
compositional output of Georg Phillipp Telemann, only thirty-two wedding cantatas and serenatas are known,
with the likelihood that many more are lost. George J. Buelow, _A History of Baroque Music_ (Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 2004), 562; Steven Zohn, “Georg Phillipp Telemann” _Grove Music Online_ (Oxford

27 An earlier disputes wedding cantata, BWV 196 has also been linked to Bach’s early years in either Mühlhausen
or Weimar, but compelling scholarship by Konrad Küster argues that it is better categorized as a sacred cantata
written for an unknown celebration. Küster, “‘Der Herr denket an uns,’ BWV 196,” 84-96; Dürr, _Cantatas_, 779-
80. Joshua Rifkin makes compelling arguments for Bach’s composition of the secular wedding cantata BWV 202,
_Weichet nur_, from as early as 1705-6, while Bach was in Weimar, and Alfred Dürr dates a revision of the sacred
wedding cantata BWV 195, _Dem Gerechten muß das Licht_, at 1747-8. Joshua Rifkin, liner notes to Johann
Sebastian Bach: Cantata BWV 202 “Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten” Cantata BWV 209 “Non sa che sia dolore,”
753-7.
eldest sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philip Emanuel: cantatas BWV 34a, and BWV 120a were given to Friedemann, whereas BWV 195 and BWV 197 were left with C. P. E. It seems that the two sons managed their father’s manuscripts very differently. The works given to Wilhelm Friedemann sustained the greatest losses with only fragments of 34a and the second half of BWV 120a surviving, whereas the two cantatas, BWV 195 and 197, passed along to C. P. E. remain in their entirety. The performing parts of BWV 210 were also listed among C. P. E. Bach’s collection of scores after his death and also exist in full (as described in more detail in the final section of this chapter). The only other wedding score that has survived as a whole is the early, secular cantata BWV 202, Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, which has been preserved solely through the serendipitous existence of a secondary copy made in 1730 by Johannes Ringk for a collection of Bach scores amassed by Ringk’s teacher J. P. Kellner. Lastly, fragment parts for the soprano and alto soloists of the secular cantata BWV 216, Vergnügte Pleißenstadt, are all that remain, but the cantata can be reconstructed in part owing to parody movements of the third and seventh movements and a secondary source of Picander’s libretto.

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28 Most of the associated performing parts of these works remained with Anna Magdalena. To help alleviate her financial strains, Anna Magdalena sold orchestral parts to the Leipzig town council in 1752, the positive results of which were the preservation of several scores. Hudson, “Sources,” 4.

29 Ibid.

30 Ringk copied works by a variety of other composers as well, such as Böhm, Buttstett, Buxtehude, Werckmeister, Pachelbel, Bruhns, and Handel, and his copies are considered to be “usually reliable.” Peter Williams, The Organ Music of J. S. Bach. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 155.

31 Parody movements are linked to BWV 204 and 205 respectively.

32 The libretto appears in the pages of Picander’s 1729 publication, Ernst-Schertzhafte und Satyrischen Gedichte. NBA KB, I/33, 38.
Of the other five cantata libretti, two have remained in circulation since their inception, whereas the other three have only been discovered within the last century. The first two were written by Johann Christoph Gottsched: BWV Anh. I 196, *Auf! Süß entzückende Gewalt*, for the 1725 wedding celebrations of a Leipzig burgher couple,\(^{33}\) and the second, BWV Anh. 13 *Willkommen! Ihr herrschenden Götter der Erde!*, for the 1738 Leipzig Easter Fair festivities honouring the upcoming nuptials of the Saxon Princess Maria Amalia to King Karl IV of Sicily during the royal visit to Leipzig.\(^{34}\) Both poems were passed down through Gottsched’s own eighteenth-century publications as well as by secondary accounts of the royal wedding celebrations. The remaining three libretti have been discovered more circuitously. Early in the twentieth century an undesirable event effected a fortuitous outcome by uncovering BWV Anh. I 14 *Sein Segen fließt daher wie ein Strom*. In 1902 a wall of the St. Thomas School was demolished to make way for a new road, and in the process revealed a hitherto unknown wall cupboard containing various manuscripts from Bach’s time. Among the papers was the anonymous libretto dating from 1725.\(^{35}\) In the 1990s Bach Archives researcher Hildegard von Tiggemann discovered the final two libretti, BWV Anh. I 211, *Der Herr ist freundlich dem, der auf ihn harret*, and BWV Anh. I 212, *Vergnügende Flammen, verdoppelt die Macht*, while searching through material in the library collection of the Bückeburg castle.\(^{36}\) Both texts are by

\(^{33}\) This cantata text was included in several of Gottsched’s subsequent publications, the first of which was, Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst* (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1751; repr. facsimile, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962); Dürr, *Cantatas*, 895.

\(^{34}\) Sources for this second collaboration include the surviving published libretto, an account of the event written up in the Leipzig newspaper by chronicler Johann Salomon Riemer, and a description of the work in a later article by Johann Mizler. NBR, 197, 350.

\(^{35}\) Frederick Hudson, NBA KB I/33 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958), 30.

Picander, and comprise two of the three libretti discovered by von Tiggemenan in the Bückeberg library that date from the year 1729 (the third libretto is the 1729 performance of BWV 210a for Duke Christian of Weißenfels, as described in Chapter 5).

**Bach’s Secular Cantatas**

Since the sacred and secular cantatas were performed in very different settings, composed for dissimilar musical forces, and designated in distinctive categories, the two genres were not as closely linked as one might expect. As such, given that *O holder Tag* was a secular work, concentration on the text and music of Bach’s secular cantatas is particularly helpful as a background to the discussion of BWV 210 closing this chapter. As a precursor to this final discussion, a brief description of the secular cantatas will highlight important musical and textual characteristics as they relate to the later discussion of BWV 210, as well as any other pertinent information that characterizes each work.

A musical trait appearing in all three secular wedding cantatas with extant music, BWV 202, BWV 216 and BWV 210, was Bach’s incorporation of “progressive” musical trends. The earliest, BWV 202, *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, was likely written before 1715 while Bach was still in Weimar (although it has also been linked to Bach’s later Cöthen years), determined by idiosyncrasies in the notation and musical style. As a product of this span of time, it is one

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37 Joshua Rifkin has posed compelling arguments that point to Bach’s earlier years spent in Weimar, between 1708 and 1717. The 1730 manuscript copy retains a peculiarity of notation — cancelled out sharps instead of natural signs — a practice Bach stopped using around 1715. Musically, Rifkin writes, “the recitatives resemble others composed [in Weimar] both in their brevity and in their arioso closes; the sinuous oboe line and slow-fast-slow layout of the opening movement have frequent parallels in the arias from the years 1713-14 but few thereafter; and the fourth aria exploits a manner of combining voice and obligato instrument whose only real counterparts in Bach’s output date from 1715 or earlier.” Joshua Rifkin, CD, 1987. Alfred Dürr reiterates Rifkin’s arguments for Weimar, while restating that the traditional dating has been for Cöthen. Dürr, *Cantatas*, 893-4.
of the first examples of the contrasting da capo aria to appear in Bach’s music (after the turn of the eighteenth century, a contrasting “B” section became increasingly popular in aria writing, whereas prior to this the “Unity of Affect,” or a conveyance of a single emotional state, was more usual).\footnote{Marita P. McClymonds, “Aria: 18th century,” Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315 (accessed June 5, 2012).} The introductory movement of BWV 202 provides a particularly beautiful example of this emerging form. The music begins in Adagio with languid, rising, diminished harmonies permeating the string writing, underscoring arching, intertwining oboe and soprano melody lines; the contrasting “B” section begins with a sudden modulation into the dominant key employing simpler, triadic harmonies in a sprightly, accented, Andante.

In a similar manner to BWV 202, the 1728 cantata BWV 216, Vergnügte Pleißenstadt, also displays Bach’s awareness of the most current musical trends. During the late 1720s, when this cantata was written, the galant style had gained tremendous popularity, a style that pervades the remaining manuscript parts for the solo soprano and alto. Both vocal lines make use of frequent syncopations and dance rhythms, and when harmonized in the final duet, Bach sets the voices in frequent parallel thirds. Bach scholar Robert Marshall has suggested that the secular cantata, BWV 201, Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan, a cantata most likely written the following year, was Bach’s first substantial foray into the galant style, and yet the vocal parts of this wedding cantata represent an even earlier example.\footnote{Robert Marshall, The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach: The Sources, the Style, the Significance (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 35.} During this same period most of the music for BWV 210, O holder Tag was also composed, most likely in 1729 as the
homage cantata BWV 210a *O angenehme Melodei*. As such, even though *O holder Tag* is considered a late example of Bach’s secular wedding cantatas, its musical genesis occurred within the same two years that produced BWV 216, *Vergnügte Pleißenstadt*, and BWV 201, *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*, all works that are infused with *galant* idioms.

Finally, although the music has not survived, according to contemporary accounts it appears that Bach’s 1738 royal wedding cantata, BWV Anh. 13, *Willkommen! Ihr herrschenden Götter der Erde!* was also written in an especially modern, *galant* style worthy of the Dresden court. Leipzig city chronicler Johann Salomon described the performance as particularly successful, writing that the royals “did not depart from the window for as long as the music continued, but graciously heard it out, and it well pleased His Majesty.”

It is also notable that Bach’s defender Johann Christoph Mizler specifically cited this piece when mounting his arguments against Bach’s detractors the following year. Mizler stated, “Anyone who heard the music that was performed by the students at the Easter Fair in Leipzig last year, in the Most High Presence of his Royal Majesty in Poland, which was composed by Capellmeister Bach, must admit that it was written entirely in accordance with the latest taste, and was approved by everyone.”

Therefore, although the aforementioned cantatas represent only a fraction of the full number of secular wedding cantatas that must have been created by Bach, all musical indications are that the composer used a predominantly modern style of writing.

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41 NBR, 350.
The texts of the four secular cantatas (other than BWV 210) range in plots and vary in the frequency of references to the wedding couple, but particularly of the three cantatas intended for burgher weddings, all focus on light, playful topics (the cantata written to honour the royal nuptials is unique, as will be discussed subsequently). The lively tone of the BWV 202 libretto provides a wonderful counterpoint to Bach’s pious liturgical cantatas. In the words of Alfred Dürr, the more informal “trifling, jesting tone” of the libretto, along with the small musical cast of solo soprano, oboe, strings, and continuo, infer that Bach wrote the piece for a burgher couple, although the recipients and date remain unknown. Most scholars suggest that the Weimar poet Salomo Franck was the librettist, whether it was written in Weimar or later in Cöthen, since the style of poetry is typical of Franck, and Bach continued to set Franck’s texts even well after the composer left Weimar. Mythological entities populate a plot devoid of sacred imagery and filled, rather, with sexual innuendo. Apollo, Cupid and Flora indulge in their lusty pursuits as the cold of winter cedes to the new life of spring. Inspired by the emerging warmth, Apollo (or Phoebus) gallops through the world on his swift horses in search of a new mate, for “since [the world] delights him so much he himself wants to become a lover.” Cupid also pursues the pleasures of love, for he “seeks his delight” when Flora’s “splendour becomes glorious” and when “hearts are victorious in their ardour.” The final four movements turn the focus back to the wedding couple, but continue to adopt the playful tone

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42 Dürr, Cantatas, 894.
43 Alfred Dürr, Joshua Rifkin, and Neumann all suggest that Franck was the librettist. Bach used Salomo Franck most often for his Weimar cantatas but continued to use Franck’s texts even after he moved to Cöthen.
44 Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden durch die neugeborne Welt. Ja, weil sie ihm wohlgefällt, will er selbst ein Buhler werden.
45 Drum sucht auch Amor sein Vergnügen, wenn Purpur in den Wiesen lacht, wenn Florens Pracht sich herrlich macht, und wenn in seinem Reich, den schönen Blumen gleich, auch Herzen feurig siegen.
set by the amorous mythological creatures that inspire the newlyweds to enjoy the springtime pleasures of love:

To become adept in love,

to jest and caress is better than Flora’s passing pleasure.

Here the waves flow,

here laugh and watch

the palms of victory on lips and breast.46

The final simple gavotte wishes a blessing on the nuptial couple for a “thousand bright and prosperous days,” drolly adding wishes for their love to also bear “flowers.”47

The 1725 “Serenata” secular cantata, BWV Anh. 196, Auf! Süß entzückende Gewalt, contains many plot similarities with the earlier BWV 202, Weichet nur, yet the tone of the poetry is decidedly more elevated. As such the two cantatas provide interesting comparison. This first collaboration between Johann Christoph Gottsched and Bach was written shortly after Gottsched was hired as Professor of Literature at Leipzig University.48 Both BWV 202 and BWV Anh. 196 reference secular mythology, but whereas 202 is rife with earthy, sexual innuendo, Gottsched’s Anh. 196 is set on a more lofty plane of philosophical debate. Gottsched

46 Sich üben im Lieben, in Scherzen sich herzen ist besser als Florens vergängliche Lust. Hier quellen die Wellen, hier lachen und wachen die siegenden Palmen auf Lippen und Brust.

47 Sehet in Zufriedenheit tausend helle Wohlfahrtstage, dass bald bei der Folgezeit eure Liebe Blumen trage!

48 This initial cantata collaboration was for the November 27, 1725 wedding of Christian Sibylla Mencke and Peter Hohmann. The bride’s father, Professor Johann Burchard Mencke (1674-1732), was a renowned scholar who had brought Gottsched to Leipzig shortly before the wedding. Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 22-25. Mencke “saved” Gottsched from recruitment into the Prussian grenadiers (a group of “giant” soldiers forcibly collected by King William of Prussia based on size – Gottsched was over six feet tall), for which Gottsched was deeply grateful. This libretto would have given Gottsched the opportunity to express his gratitude and to show his skills as a poet to honour his mentor. For an excellent article outlining the career achievements of J. B. Mencke see, Adalbert Brauer, “Professor Johann Burchard Mencke, F.R.S. (1674-1732),” Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London 17, no. 2 (Dec. 1962): 192-197.
writes for four voices, Nature, Modesty, Virtue, and Destiny, who engage in a sophisticated dialogue about the pleasures of wedded love. While mythological creatures of BWV 202 actively pursue sexual pleasures, Gottsched’s characters are engrossed in a more formal conversation, rationally weighing the merits of passion.\textsuperscript{49} Also, whereas BWV 202 is devoid of sacred imagery, BWV Anh. 196 makes frequent reference to the spiritual in spite of its secular context, contributing to the elevated tone of the prose. Gottsched’s opening text states, “Up, sweet enchanting force and power, from which God’s own hand arises.”\textsuperscript{50} Gottsched’s formal tone of rhetoric is demonstrated in the sixth movement recitative sung by “Virtue” where the topic of sexual passion is expressed as follows:

I hate in fact the vicious wiles of Lewdness with which that fallen woman often snares the wanton foot of youth, until she has delivered distress both soul and flesh a thousand-fold.

Ah no, proper love has his own arm who guides all things, and me as well, now granted to mortal men.

It does not shrink from my presence, and my own fire beats often with its passion in loveliest union.\textsuperscript{51}

The cantata concludes with a Chorus of Nymphs singing that “virtue” will provide the newly-weds with contentment, fortune, health and blessings.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{49} The primary characters are, \textit{Die Natur, Die Schamhaftigkeit, Die Tugend, Das Verhängnis}, and the cantata closes with a chorus of \textit{Chor der Nymphen an der Pleiße} (Nymphs on the River Pleisse).

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Auf! süß-entzückende Gewalt, die du aus Gottes Hand entspringest ...}

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ich hasse zwar der Geilheit Laster-Stricke, durch welche dieß verdammte Weib die wilden Jugend Fuß umschlinget; biß daß sie endlich Seel und Leib in tausendfaches Unglück bringet. allein die Liebe rechter Art hat dessen Arm, der alles lencket, so wohl als mich, den Sterblichen geschencket. Sie scheut nicht meine Gegenwart, und meine Glut schlägt oft mit ihren Flammen gantz lieblich zusammen.}
Bach’s more frequent cantata collaborator “Picander” was the author of the subsequent secular cantata, BWV 216, *Vergnügte Pleißenstadt*. This work is the first known wedding cantata written by Picander, and provides an excellent example of text and music built entirely around personal allusions to the wedding couple, in this case the February 5, 1728 wedding festivities celebrating the union of Susanna Regina Hempel with the merchant Johann Heinrich Wolff. Picander shapes the libretto of BWV 216 as a dialogue between the rivers running through the hometowns of the bride and groom, the Neiße and Pleiße respectively, set by Bach using the soprano and alto soloist to represent each waterway. Integrated into the river references were frequent mentions of the bride and groom’s last names, as demonstrated in the fourth movement recitative where the river Pleiße exhorts the Neiße to, “Forgo your chagrin, beloved Neiße stream, and send your ‘Hempelin’ to me with your fondest wishes!,” and in the third movement aria as follows:

O most charming Hempel miss,

This your soul is free from blemish,

This your face is like the angels’,

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52 *Glück und Wohlfahrt, Heyl und Seegen, müße deiner Tugen wegen, sich um deine Wohnung legen.*

53 The Wolff-Hempel wedding took place in a favourite Leipzig Weinschänke, the Schellhafferischen Hause, a location that also hosted performances by the Collegium Musicum. Bach’s relationship to the couple is unknown. NBA KB I/40, 37-38. Neumann suggests that Picander may have had some influence in the couples’ relationship because the libretto “Liebes-Congreß zwischen dem Cupido, Wolff und Hampelmänn,” was printed in his 1729 publication *Ernst-Scherzhaft und Satyrischen Gedichte*. Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 38.

54 Johann Wolff was from Leipzig and Susanna Hempel was from Zittau. Bach set the alto as the river Pleiße, which runs through Leipzig, and the soprano as the river Neiße, which runs through Zittau.

55 *Erspare den Verdruss, beliebter Neißenfluß, und sende deine Hempelin zu mir mit gutem Willen hin!*
Angel-like, your every wish,
O most charming Hempel miss.
O my dearest Hempel miss,
You, you were my ornament,
But as soon as you left me,
I my very crown did miss,
O my dearest Hempel miss.56

The fourth and final example of Bach’s secular wedding cantatas was the Abendmusik performance celebrating the impending nuptials of Princess Maria Amalia and King Karl IV of Sicily while they were visiting Leipzig during the 1738 Easter Fair. In many respects BWV Anh. 13, Willkommen! Ihr herrschenden Götter der Erde! is unique among the secular wedding cantatas: the honoured couple was aristocracy, unlike the burgher recipients of the other four cantatas; the performance did not occur during the wedding occasion itself, which took place in Dresden, but rather as part of the celebrations of the royal family’s visit to Leipzig; and finally since more than half of the text is centred on adulation of the sovereign, King Augustus II (who was also in attendance), it may be better classified as an homage rather than wedding cantata.57

Among the extant secular cantatas, this work was the most prestigious and lucrative


57 Alfred Dürr does not include this work with the other wedding cantatas, but instead classifies it as “Festive Music for the Electoral House of Saxony.” Dürr, Cantatas, 820.
commission, \(^{58}\) and it would have had additional cachet as a later collaboration with the increasingly famous Professor Gottsched. \(^{59}\) In summary, even though the honorees of Bach’s four aforementioned secular wedding cantatas ranged from burgher to royal status, all texts were of a consistently celebratory nature and remained focused on the joyful event they were intended to commemorate.

**Bach’s Adaptations of Gottsched’s Poetry**

Before shifting the focus to BWV 210, a brief discussion of the nature of Bach’s relationship with Gottsched warrants attention since it serves both to highlight their very different philosophical viewpoints (that were later mirrored in the different aesthetic viewpoints expressed by Bach’s defenders and Johann Scheibe), and to demonstrate the working relationship between composer and librettist. Gottsched was fifteen years Bach’s junior and was part of a growing group of the younger generation who had become avid proponents of the modern German enlightenment philosophers Christian Wolff and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. At the time of his employment with the Leipzig University, Gottsched was already a leading intellect in literary theory and was a charismatic influence on his students,

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\(^{58}\) Over seven hundred cantata texts were printed and Bach was paid a fee of fifty *thalers*, which was the equivalent of a month’s wages. Geck, *Bach*, 196.

\(^{59}\) Unlike Bach’s other four secular wedding cantatas, performance of this work was surrounded by the extravagant fanfare befitting nobility. City chronicler Riemer reported that at 9 PM on April 28, 1738 a procession of six hundred university students carried torches through the streets of Leipzig, later augmented by a large group of musicians performing special music composed by Bach for choir, trumpets and drums. The instrumental ensemble also must have been large because Riemer describes no fewer than four “marshals” who led the musicians as they processed through the streets. The group finally settled in the *Marktplatz* in front of the windows where the royal family were lodging. The surviving libretto booklet of the cantata performance indicates interpolated arias and recitatives, suggesting that soloists rather than choir performed the music, but since Bach had an orchestra of brass and drums at his disposal and given the exalted audience, one may surmise that the composer augmented the musical offering by incorporating these instrumental forces into the cantata orchestration. NBR, 350; Geck, *Bach*, 196.
including Johann Scheibe.\textsuperscript{60} In relation to the terms later used by Scheibe to criticize Bach’s music, John Butt writes:

Scheibe’s use of the term \textit{Schwulst} (turgidity) comes directly out of Gottsched’s critical theories, where it was applied to the outmoded ‘second Silesian School’; the specific Silesian poet with whom Scheibe compares Bach, von Lohenstein, is also central to Gottsched’s stylistic categories.\textsuperscript{61}

In fact many of the musical reforms promoted by Scheibe, and the corresponding criticisms directed at Bach, have been linked to concepts espoused by Gottsched and his literary reforms.

Bach collaborated with Gottsched on only three known occasions spanning from 1725, shortly after both men arrived in Leipzig, to 1738, a time when both had become very established in their respective fields. The first and last fruits of their partnership were the aforementioned secular wedding cantatas, BWV Anh. 196, \textit{Auf! Süß entzückende Gewalt}, and BWV Anh. 13, \textit{Willkommen! Ihr herrschenden Götter der Erde!}; unfortunately, as already noted, Bach’s settings of these poems have been lost. The second collaboration between Bach and Gottsched is the only work that has survived with both the music and the libretto intact, and as such offers important insight into the creative process of these two very different men not otherwise afforded by a study of text alone. This association, from October 1727, was the cantata BWV 198, \textit{Tombeau de S. M.la Reine de Pologne} (or Laß, Fürstin, laß einen Strahl), written for the Leipzig funeral of the Electress of Saxony, Queen Christiane Eberhardine.\textsuperscript{62} For

\textsuperscript{60} Laurence Dreyfus, \textit{Bach and the Patterns of Invention} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 232.


\textsuperscript{62} See Dreyfus, \textit{Bach and the Patterns of Invention} for a more detailed description of the event and musical connections, especially pages 232-34.
this occasion Gottsched created a lofty Trauer-Ode ("Ode of Mourning") written in nine symmetrical strophes that maintained an A-B-B-A rhyme scheme. In spite of Gottsched’s status and the obvious symmetry inherent in the writing, Bach completely disregarded the form of the poetry, and instead, in the words of Laurence Dreyus, “wreaked havoc” with the content. ⁶³ Rather than setting the poem in the expected strophic form as penned, Bach arbitrarily split stanzas to create a recitative and aria Italianate structure, constructing a cantata in ten musical units instead of reflecting the original nine poetic stanzas. There is no record of Gottsched’s response to this alteration, but contemporary accounts suggest that Bach’s setting created a stir. The Leipzig paper specifically, and perhaps even critically, noted that Gottsched’s ode had been set by Bach “in the Italian style.” ⁶⁴ Even Bach’s supporter Lorenz Mizler later made the point (that may have been indirectly aimed at Bach) that “setting odes in the style of cantatas … is most unnatural.” ⁶⁵ It is likely that this same event later prompted Scheibe to denounce “a certain Director of Music at a famous university who composed Latin psalms for the awarding of doctorates and Latin odes in cantata style at eulogies.” ⁶⁶

The implication of Bach’s substantial manipulation of Gottsched’s poetry is that the composer’s musical instincts superseded textual demands. Dreyfus describes the music as “augmenting and supplanting the text in ways that ultimately eclipse [the poetry].” ⁶⁷ In light of

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⁶³ Ibid., 237.
⁶⁴ The reference was included in a pamphlet entitled, “Tearful Leipzig,” in which Gottsched’s poem was reprinted and the author made particular mention of Bach’s setting, “in the Italian style.” Ibid. 233.
⁶⁵ NBR, 136-7; Lorenz Mizler, Musikalischer Bibliothek Part 5 (Leipzig: 1738), as cited in Neumann, NBA KB I/38, 125, and Dreyfus, Bach and the Patterns of Invention, 233.
⁶⁶ Johann Scheibe, Critischer Musikus (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf, 1745; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), 176.
⁶⁷ Dreyfus, Bach and the Patterns of Invention, 238-9.
this, and even though it is not possible to ascertain the exact revisions undertaken by Bach for
the 1725 wedding “Serenata,” or the 1738 *dramma per musica*, one may safely presume that
Bach would have freely adapted Gottsched’s word settings as he felt necessary, as occurred for
the 1727 Funeral Ode, given Bach’s predilection for text alteration to suit his musical needs.
The working relationship between Gottsched and Bach has been interpreted variously, but in
spite of their differences, it appears the two men maintained a relationship amicable enough to
collaborate on these three different occasions.68

**Manuscript of BWV 210 and the Original Recipients**

To close this discussion of Bach’s wedding cantatas, the circumstances in which *O
holder Tag* was composed will be explored. A published libretto of BWV 210 has not survived
nor, unfortunately, has any concrete evidence indicating the intended couple or date. The most
important information to indicate a performance date has been the identification of Bach’s
student Agricola as one of the manuscript copyists, narrowing the possible dates of
composition to between 1738 and 1741, the years Agricola studied with Bach in Leipzig.69
Werner Neumann in his 1970 *Neue Bach Ausgabe* critical commentary, suggests that the
familiar tone used in references to the patron as having “wisdom’s treasures”
(Weisheitsschätze), as well the mentions of “Macaenas,” “patron,” and “great protector”
(Mäzenat, Patron, grosser Gönner), establish that the recipients were not of the noble class, but


69 Hermann von Hase, “Breitkopfsche Textdrucke zu Leipziger Musikauflführungen zu Bachs Zeiten,” *Bach-
Jahrbuch* (1913): 69-120; von Dadelsen, *Bemerkungen zur Handschrift Johann Sebastian Bachs, seiner Familie
und seines Kreises*, 20.
rather either family friends or at least familiar. To date, Neumann and the Bach Archives researcher Michael Maul have presented the two most probable arguments for the proposed recipients, as described briefly in the introductory chapter.

Having narrowed the dates to Agricola’s student years with Bach, Neumann suggests that the Leipzig wedding most fitting the libretto’s characteristics and the time frame were the nuptials of Friedrich Heinrich Graf and Anna Regina Bose on April 3, 1742. Friedrich Graf was a lawyer in the employment of the Dresden court, while Anna Regina Bose was the daughter of Georg Heinrich Bose, a well-known Leipzig businessman and close neighbour of the Bach family. Connection between the J. S. Bach family and the young couple is apparent through the designation of Friedrich Graf and Anna Bose as godparents to Bach’s last child, Regina Susanna, who was born just weeks before their wedding. As stated in Chapter 1, Neumann’s hypothesis becomes problematic when looking at the time lag between when Agricola left for Berlin and the wedding of the proposed couple. Because eighteenth-century marriage engagements normally did not last for more than a few weeks, it is highly unusual that Bach would have prepared this cantata during the summer or early fall of 1741 while Agricola was still in Leipzig, for a wedding that took place in April of 1742.

70 Neumann cites von Hase in support of his hypothesis; von Hase, “Breitkopfsche Textdrucke:” 115-116; Neumann, NBA KB, 56.
71 Ibid. 56.
72 The relationship between the Bach and Bose families has traditionally been viewed as close; however studies by Hans-Joachim Schulze have indicated that the families may not have been as close as once thought. Hans-Joachim Schulze, “Anna Magdalena Bach’s ‘Herzens Freündin:’ Neues über die Beziehungen zwischen den Familien Bach und Bose” Bach-Jahrbuch 83 (1997): 151-3. Johann Sebastian and Anna Magdalena Bach named five of their daughters after four of Bose daughters. NBA KB, 56.
73 Regina Susanna Bach was born February 22, 1742.
Michael Maul's 2001 *Bach-Jahrbuch* article outlines compelling evidence pointing to the September 21, 1741 wedding of the Berlin physician Georg Stahl (1713-72), a link corroborated by known circumstances, indications within the libretto, and analysis of various documents.\(^7^4\) Two letters dated August 5 and 9, 1741, confirm that J. S. Bach stayed with Georg Stahl while visiting his son Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach in Berlin that summer.\(^7^5\) Bach’s cousin Johann Elias Bach wrote two letters to Johann Sebastian addressed at Stahl’s home on *Unter den Linden Straße*, urging his cousin to return home quickly because Anna Magdalena was in poor health.\(^7^6\) On September 21 of the following month Stahl married Johanna Schrader, daughter of a prominent Berlin pharmacist. The proximity of Bach’s visit, the Stahl-Schrader wedding, and that both events happened within the known time frame in which *O holder Tag* was composed corroborate Maul’s premise.

Within the work itself Maul notes that the libretto also supports the Stahl hypothesis. The custom of adding poetic allusions to the nuptial couple seems to occur in the ninth-movement recitative. During this final recitative the focus has returned to praise of the wedding patron after the preceding central argument in defense of music. Here the text includes reference to “Stahl” in the line, Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein, Ja wie ein fester Stahl beständig sein (Your fame will endure like a diamond-stone, yes, like the hardest steel, it will


\(^7^5\) C. P. E. Bach had moved to Berlin when he was hired in 1738 for the private chapel of the crown prince Friedrich (also called Frederick the Great).

\(^7^6\) BD II, Nos. 489 and 490. Seven months later Anna Magdalena gave birth to the couple's last daughter, suggesting that concerns for her health may have been heightened owing to her pregnancy. No documents exist to indicate the precise date when Bach returned to Leipzig from Berlin, but we know that Bach was back in Leipzig by August 25 for the annual performance of the Leipzig city council election cantata.
be steadfast), underlining the strong possibility that a very deliberate allusion to the patron’s name was inserted.\textsuperscript{77}

Two further links connecting \textit{O holder Tag} to the Stahl-Schrader wedding were uncovered by Maul in his examination of Stahl’s posthumous estate auction catalogue from 1773. Included within the three-page inventory of Stahl’s musical collection was a manuscript entry: 5. \textit{Eine Cantate und verschiedene Inventiones von Joh. Seb. Bach} (5. A Cantata and Various Inventions by Joh. Seb. Bach). As already described, “cantata” was a term used by Bach to designate his secular works rather than sacred, thereby fitting the description of a \textit{Hochzeitskantate}.\textsuperscript{78} Also, the catalogue listing number “5” is written on the top left corner of the Soprano/Continuo autograph score title page, as shown.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{77} Maul, “Dein Ruhm,” 16.

\textsuperscript{78} Maul writes: “…so ist bei dem Begriff “Cantate” in Johann Sebastian Bachs Schaffen eher an ein weltiches als an ein geistliches Vokalstück zu denken.”, Ibid, 14.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 12-15. Maul specifies that the hypothesis linking the number 5 on the manuscript with Stahl’s estate papers needs further investigation. Manuscript title page image taken from Maul, 22. The handwriting of the title and instrumentation has been identified as Bach’s. It appears that Bach wrote \textit{e Continuo} after writing the upper instrumentation. The bottom lines, “\textit{di J. S. Bach}” are in an unknown hand, as described by Neumann, NBA KB, 47.
Werner Neumann’s history of the original manuscript parts provides Maul with yet another link between Berlin and BWV 210, if in a somewhat more convoluted manner. The Hamburg estate papers of C. P. E. Bach dating from 1788 include the instrumental parts of BWV 210 as part of the manuscript holdings, and yet curiously, the autographed vocal part, not the instrumental parts, emerges as part of the 1824 estate papers of C. P. E. Bach’s Hamburg successor Christian Friedrich Gottlieb Schwencke (1767-1822). If C. P. E. Bach owned the instrumental parts when he died, and bequeathed these manuscripts to his successor
Schwencke, why then does the autograph score appear in Schwencke’s estate rather than the instrumental parts? It is not known specifically how or when the collection came together, but it is assumed that the Berlin *Singakademie* director Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832) (the man responsible for amassing many works by J. S. Bach for the *Singakademie* library) brought both sets of manuscripts to Berlin at some time during the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Within this manuscript collection housed today in the Berlin *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek* are two different title pages, one page in C. P. E. Bach’s hand, and one in J. S. Bach’s hand.  

Based on the history of the manuscripts as described by Neumann, a connection to Georg Stahl would help explain the two title pages, as well as the gap between C. P. E. Bach’s possession of the instrumental parts and the autographed score that later appears in Schwencke’s estate. Maul posits that if C. P. E. Bach played harpsichord at the Stahl-Schrader wedding, he would have had access to the instrumental parts. The beautifully crafted autographed Soprano/Continuo part, on the other hand, would have been given as a wedding gift to Stahl and Schrader, hence the separation of instrumental and vocal parts. It is possible that Schwencke subsequently acquired the autograph vocal score while studying in Berlin with Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721-83) and Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718-95) from 1783 to 1787, either directly from the Stahl estate or from an unknown intermediary source. After Schwencke’s death Zelter likely purchased the autographed score from the 1824 Schwencke

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82 The autographed Soprano/Continuo score was particularly carefully and beautifully written, almost without comparison in Bach’s known autographed manuscripts. Neumann writes that the quality of this particular manuscript indicates that it was meant to be showcased. He writes, “Bachs kalligraphisch ausgefertigte Stimmen offensichtlich eine Konzeptvorlage voraussetzen.” NBA KB I/40, 56.
estate, but it is unknown whether Zelter had already acquired the instrumental parts prior to his purchase of the autograph score, or if Zelter united the manuscript collection by some other means. It is also possible that historians have misinterpreted the Schwencke estate catalogue as indicating only the autographed score, and instead the entire collection may have already been in his possession, which would have subsequently been passed along to Zelter. In either case, the first reference to the united manuscripts with their two different cover pages occurs in the Singakademie collection of Bach scores.

Neumann’s indication that a familiar tone was used with the patron recipient of O holder Tag also reinforces Maul’s Stahl hypothesis. When C. P. E. Bach moved to Berlin he and Georg Stahl became friendly; Stahl was godfather to C. P. E. Bach’s daughter Anna Carolina Philippina, and Stahl also collected many of C. P. E.’s scores (also indicated in the Stahl estate catalogue of 1773). Maul notes that the two men may have felt an immediate camaraderie because they had both grown up with famous fathers and were both following in their fathers’ career footsteps. That J. S. Bach would stay with Stahl while visiting Berlin in 1741 also suggests familiarity. Further, it appears that Bach was comfortable in his host’s

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84 Georg Stahl’s father, Georg Ernst Stahl (1659-1734) was a famous chemist and physician who had developed the phlogiston theory, a scientific theory that, in simple terms, suggested that all objects had a vital force or soul; this theory was immediately criticized by more “modern” philosophers such as Gottfried Leibniz. It is tempting to speculate whether the younger Georg Stahl felt some empathy for J. S. Bach in response to Scheibe’s public criticism, after witnessing his own father’s public critique at the hands of Leibniz.

85 While Bach worked in Weimar Georg Stahl’s uncle, Georg Conrad Stahl, held the position of Weimar court physician, making it likely that the two men would have met. This, however, cannot be verified with any documentation. Maul, “Dein Ruhm,” 12.
home. In his first letter of August 5, Johann Elias asked Bach to return “soon” to attend to Anna Magdalena’s poor health, apologizing for disturbing Bach in his “present peace and contentment.” Bach’s cousin also expressed concern about whether J. S. would extend his stay in Berlin and miss the upcoming Leipzig Council Elections and St. Bartholomew’s Day (both of which were musical events) that were to occur at the end of August. Four days later Johann Elias sent a second letter again pressing Bach to come home earlier than anticipated because Anna Magdalena had taken a turn for the worse. The implication that Bach was otherwise planning to miss the Council Elections at the end of August may also signify that he was intending to stay for the Stahl-Schrader wedding in September.

If O holder Tag was intended for Georg Stahl’s wedding, a performance of Bach’s music in the prominent German city of Berlin would also have afforded the composer several benefits. First, Bach was an ambitious man adept at creating opportunities to further his career. Even though he was well established by 1741, most of his accolades had resulted from his skills on the keyboard, not his compositions. Also, because his reputation was centred in Saxony, it would have been strategic for Bach to have a musical platform in the Prussian capital of Berlin, which was emerging as one of the most important musical centres in Germany under the patronage of Frederick the Great. A presentation of his music in Berlin would have provided the composer with the opportunity to perform his music for an audience

86 NBR, 212-13.
87 Ibid., 213.
88 In 1741 Carl Heinrich Graun (1704-1759) was undertaking the development of Frederick’s new opera house, which opened in 1742. Arts had ceased to be funded and promoted under Frederick’s father Wilhelm I, and therefore Frederick’s accession to the throne also represented a renaissance of music in Berlin. In September 1741 Graun would have just completed a tour to hire Italian opera singers for Frederick’s new opera company, but Frederick himself would have been in battle until November 1741. Daniel Heartz, Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720-1780 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003), 362.
that may otherwise have been unfamiliar with it. Second, because his son C. P. E. was in the early stages of his career in Berlin, the prospect of bolstering his son’s career in this city would have been very much in character. Third, the recent controversy generated by Johann Scheibe’s published criticisms would in all likelihood have reached the growing population of prominent musicians employed by Frederick the Great. It is also possible, therefore, that references to music’s detractors as a “brood from hell” and “Satan’s children” would have been understood by some as allusions to those who had publicly criticized the composer. Fourth, because Georg Stahl was closely connected to the Prussian court, it is conceivable that Bach intended to lay the groundwork for a future audience with Frederick the Great. It was on the Prussian king’s later repeated insistence that Bach finally met Frederick in 1747, the result of which was *The Musical Offering*, a work based on musical thematic material provided by the king himself.

It is only possible to speculate about Bach’s various motivations for creating BWV 210, but regardless of performance location or recipients, it has been established that the message conveyed in the text and music of *O holder Tag* was unlike his other secular wedding cantatas. The strength of this message speaks most directly through Bach’s treatment of the music and text, both of which are explored in more detail in the next chapter.
Chapter 5.
A Comparison Study of BWV 210a as a Source for BWV 210

Possible Librettists

Musical and Textual Characteristics of BWV 210

Introduction

Bach’s unusual text adaptations undertaken to create BWV 210 provide the foundation of this research. Whereas his previous and subsequent wedding cantatas remained within a more consistently celebratory tone, BWV 210 deviated into an unusually intense argument in defense of music – a topic clearly tangential to the wedding occasion at hand. Previous chapters have described the substantial musical aesthetic shift from “traditional” counterpoint to “modern” galant occurring during the first half of the eighteenth century, a transition that took place during Bach’s career, and how on previous occasions he had used his music as a response to these changes. It has also been established that Bach readily used modern, galant idioms in his music, although it has also been determined that, regardless of his stylistic inspiration, Bach continued to employ the traditional contrapuntal elements that did not reflect the preferred homophonic simplicity of this modern style. Finally, Bach’s adaptations of libretti demonstrate that he readily modified text to better express his musical ideas, occasionally reworking text himself and at times revising sections to intentionally express personal

1 Works cited include BWV 201 Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan, and the Clavier-Übung III.
viewpoints. It is against this background that a study of the musical and textual choices made by Bach in his creation of BWV 210 takes place.

**Cantata BWV 210a, O angenehme Melodei, as Source Material for BWV 210**

The history of the parody source for BWV 210 *O holder Tag* has generated debate regarding whether its closest known counterpart, BWV 210a, *O angenehme Melodei*, was actually used as the musical template. The two cantatas are certainly very closely related; both cantatas use the same recitative and aria structure, and of the ten movements, only three recitatives in 210 are newly composed. Among the seven parody movements, most of the musical adaptations made by Bach are small additions, such as ornaments, articulation indicators and dynamic marks. The two largest discrepancies between the cantatas — and the source of some controversy — are found in the instrumental performing parts of movements seven and nine, the final two recitatives of BWV 210. These have caused scholars to question whether BWV 210a was the musical source used by Bach’s copyist Johann Friedrich Agricola, or if instead Bach’s student used a lost intermediary version of the cantata.

The first discrepancy occurs in the seventh-movement recitative where Agricola writes parts for the Violin I, Violin II, and Viola to play from bar six to the end of an eleven-bar movement. This has been subsequently struck out in what is believed to be Bach’s hand with *tacet* written over the mark. The final version of the musical replacement is the existing twenty-four bar secco recitative. Agricola’s cancelled string parts were as follows:

2 See Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 51-54; Dürr, *Cantatas*, 879; Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story of an 'Aria Tempo di Polonaise,’” 82-96.

3 Neumann has included a detailed description of the manuscripts. Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 47-54.

4 Ibid., 52.
These cancelled string parts correspond well to the seventh-movement soprano part of BWV 210a. Both are eleven bars long with harmonies that work perfectly as underpinnings for the surviving vocal line. Their resemblance is further demonstrated by Alexander Grychtolik’s integration of Agricola’s string parts into his reconstructed version of BWV 210a. Indications, therefore, would point to BWV 210a as the parody source for Agricola except for a curious variance in key signatures between the two cantatas. Even though the harmonies of the string parts of 210 support the soprano part of 210a, Agricola’s cancelled string parts are written using four sharps whereas the soprano part of 210a uses only two sharps, thereby suggesting a discrepancy in Agricola’s copy source. The reconstruction of Agricola’s cancelled string parts with the extant vocal line as reconstructed by Grychtolik shows the movement written with the original two sharps from the soprano part from 210a, but also demonstrates the competing tonalities of E major after the opening bars, and A major to close the movement, as seen in Figure 6.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Image from Grychtolik, *O Angenehme Melodei*, 26. The following movement in both 210a and 210, the eighth-movement polonaise aria, is set in C-sharp minor, which offers one link between the recitative key signature and its subsequent aria. Used with permission.
Figure 6. BWV 210a, Grychtolik’s reconstruction of Seventh Movement.
7. Recitativo

Doch lasse dich, dein Glanz ist noch nicht ganz verschwunden

und im Bann getan! Ja, wenn es möglich war, daß dich die ganze Welt verließ und deine

Leiblichkeit verließ, so komm zu uns-ner Gönner in ih-rer Gunst und Hei-gung her. Sie wis-sen al-

lein, wie Wis- senschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müs-se sein.

* Continuo-Stimme und Generalbaß-Bezifferung von Herausgeber als Rekonstruktion ergänzt.
The continuo part and the thorough-bass figuring are editorial additions.
In comparison, Bach’s replacement secco recitative in BWV 210 is composed with a key signature of three sharps, and closes with a cadence in E major, as follows:

Figure 7. BWV 210, Seventh Movement.
Because of the shifting tonality within the movement, any of the three versions of key signatures—two, three, or four sharps—could be applied to the music. Owing to the discrepancy in key signatures between 210a and the cancelled parts of 210, however, it remains unclear which source material Agricola would have used when he applied the E major key signature to the cancelled string parts.

A second discrepancy occurs in the ninth movement recitative. Both 210a and 210 begin with the same melody but after the tenth bar the two cantatas diverge; 210a is thirteen bars long, whereas 210 is eighteen bars with a completely different melody and harmony for the final eight measures. In this case, Agricola’s copies of the orchestral parts are written cleanly, with no similar corrections or additions made by Bach. Agricola’s pristine copies imply, then, that his musical template was a replica of the corresponding source movement. If Agricola duplicated a given score when creating his instrumental parts—a cantata with a seventh movement thirteen-bar *accompagnato* recitative written using four sharps, and a ninth movement eighteen-bar *accompagnato* recitative—he used a version that no longer exists.

Scholars have proposed various theories to explain the nature of these two major inconsistencies. Michael Maul has suggested that Bach may have struck out the seventh movement *accompagnato* string parts during a rehearsal period in Berlin sometime before the wedding, and subsequently rewrote the movement. Although that is possible, we know that Bach had returned to Leipzig by the latter half of August 1741, and if Bach had been involved in the musical rehearsals in preparation for the September 19th Stahl-Schrader wedding, he

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would have been rehearsing unusually far in advance.\textsuperscript{7} Also, the seventh-movement recitative is part of a cohesive libretto making it difficult to believe that it was a hasty reworking of an altered text. Werner Neumann was the first to suggest that Agricola’s instrumental parts may have been copied from an intermediary cantata, “Source C.”\textsuperscript{8} Given that so many of Bach’s cantatas have been lost, and that at least four very similar reworkings of this cantata are known to exist (namely, the three versions of 210a that will be discussed in more detail subsequently, and the single version of 210), Neumann’s theory is plausible. In a 2007 article, Szymon Paczkowski expanded on Neumann’s lost cantata source theory, suggesting that two intermediary cantatas may have occurred prior to the writing of BWV 210, and that this second rendering of the work would have been Agricola’s parody source.\textsuperscript{9} Both theories are possible but, until further discovery is made, remain hypothetical. Until then, the musical correlations between BWV 210a and 210 remain so close that comparison between the two continues to be a useful tool when discussing the music and texts. The substantial text changes made to create BWV 210 are vital to the argument of this dissertation, and therefore a brief investigation of text revisions undertaken for the three known versions of BWV 210a will help provide context for discussion of the later changes made to create BWV 210.

\textsuperscript{7} In a second letter dated August 9, Bach had been urgently asked to return home due to Anna Magdalena’s illness and we know that he was back in Leipzig for the town council election cantata at the end of August. NBR, 212-13.

\textsuperscript{8} Neumann’s remarks date from his 1970 critical commentary. NBA KB I/40, 52.

\textsuperscript{9} For more on his theory, see Paczkowski, “Aria Tempo di Polonaise,” 64-98. Of particular note, Paczkowski disagrees that BWV 210a is an obvious parody source for BWV 210. He writes, “the differences between the surviving soprano part of \textit{O angenehme Melodei} (BWV 210a) and the remaining parts copied by Agricola are so extensive as to render any simple match-making between the two versions practically impossible.” It is curious that Paczkowski describes the arias of the sixth, eighth, and tenth movements as “considerably changed variants of their counterparts in BWV 210a” when actually the musical and textual template in all three is almost identical. In fact, the cantatas are so closely aligned that a reconstruction of this soprano manuscript fragment has been proven by the publication of \textit{O angenehme Melodei}, edited by Alexander Grychtolik. Paczkowski, “Aria Tempo di Polonaise,” 84; Grychtolik, \textit{O Angenehme Melodei} (2007).
One of the main sources of evidence for three different performances of 210a is found in the multiple lines and erasures of the text underlay occurring in the soprano performing part.\textsuperscript{10} Two lines of text are included in the score, with the upper line showing text erasures and different handwritings indicating a third text version was written over an earlier text. An example of an erasure occurring on the upper line is shown in Figure 8. Here, the first seven letters of the name “Flemming” are written in a different hand than the final letter “g.”\textsuperscript{11} Scholars have determined that the “g” was retained from the original word “Herzog” (Duke) to create the replacement word “Flemming,” thereby establishing the chronology of these two performances.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} The autograph soprano part of \textit{O angenehme Melodei} is currently part of the collection of the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków, Poland (\textit{Mus. Ms. autogr. Bach St 72}). According to analysis by Yoshitake Kobayashi some parts of the autograph manuscript show evidence of Anna Magdalena’s writing, and in fact Anna Magdalena may have been the soprano who first sang this piece. Yoshitake Kobayashi, “Zur Chronologie der Spätwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs: Kompositions und Aufführungsstätigkeit von 1736 bis 1750,” \textit{Bach-Jahrbuch} 74 (1988): 42-43.

\textsuperscript{11} A manuscript excerpt taken from Szymon Paczkowski’s 2007 article highlights this erasure detail, confirming the connection with the Duke Christian libretto. Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story,” 78.

\textsuperscript{12} Neumann, NBA KB I/39, 99-102; Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 51-59; Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story,” 74-79.
The erasures made in the upper line of text match the printed libretto from the Leipzig birthday celebrations for Duke Christian of Weißenfels on January 12, 1729, thereby confirming this occasion as the earliest performance of the cantata. These erasures also support a theory of a

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13 This performance marked the second of two birthday cantatas Bach had written for the Duke, but most importantly, the 1729 performance occurred just prior to the Duke granting Bach the honorary title of Capellmeister to the ducal court of Saxe-Weißenfels a few weeks later. The first birthday cantata for Duke Christian was the 1713 performance of Frohlockender Göter-Streit, the “Hunt Cantata,” BWV 208, composed for the Duke’s 31st birthday on February 23. Wolff, The Learned Musician, 134-35, 341-42.
third performance of the work occurring for Count Joachim Friedrich Flemming of Leipzig, the context of which will be described in more detail subsequently.

The second line of text would have been inserted for a performance occurring between that for Duke Christian and Count Flemming, since the modification of words for this middle performance are written below that for Duke Christian, but presumably before the erasures made to replace the upper line intended for Count Flemming. Very little is known about this second performance, except that the cantata text is directed at a group of anonymous “patrons” (Gönner). Owing to the unspecific nature of this group of recipients, scholars have been unable to verify the identity or date of this performance.

The third and final recipient of this cantata was the aforementioned Count Flemming, the Leipzig-based military governor and court representative of Dresden who served from May 7, 1724 until his death on October 12, 1740. Flemming was a frequent commissioner of cantatas for the many festivities he arranged, primarily for the royal visits in Leipzig (of which only one Bach cantata libretto survives), but also for his own personal celebrations. Of the latter, three known cantatas remain, the last of which was O angenehme Melodei. Although the date of this final performance has not been verified, the chronological parameters must be

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15 Neumann, NBA KB 1/39, 102.
16 Flemming was an official representative of the Polish-Saxon court with responsibility for fiscal issues and the troops. Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story,” 64-5.
17 Flemming commissioned Bach to write a cantata for the birthday celebrations of King August II on May 12, 1727, titled Entfernet euch, ihr heitern Sterne, BWV Anh. 9; Christian Haupt’s libretto is all that survives.
18 Other Bach cantatas commissioned by Flemming for his own celebrations are Entflihet, verschwindet, entweichet, ihr Sorgen, BWV 249b performed in 1726, and So kämpfet nur, ihr muntern Töne, Anh. 10 performed in 1731.
confined to the years between the 1729 performance for Duke Christian and Flemming’s death in 1740. Considering the intervening version for the unknown patrons, it is most likely that Bach wrote it sometime in the mid-1730s.\textsuperscript{19}

Two arias from BWVs 210a and 210 have been linked to other compositions. The best-known connection is the eighth-movement aria excerpted by Bach for the September 28, 1737 performance of BWV 30a, \textit{Angenehmes Wiederau}. In this rendition Bach set the polonaise tune to a different text, changed the key to B minor (instead of C-sharp minor), wrote for tenor rather than soprano soloist, and when compared to the instrumentation of BWV 210, changed the accompanying forces.\textsuperscript{20} Paczkowski suggests that Bach’s re-use of this dance style underlines the popularity of the polonaise as particularly fashionable in Saxony during the 1730s, an aspect that presumably would have appealed to Bach’s noble recipients.\textsuperscript{21} A second, less documented connection is the strong musical similarity between the fourth-movement aria, “Ruhet hie, matte Sinne” of BWV 210a (which was later revised as “Ruhet hie, matte Töne” for BWV 210), and the fifth-movement aria “Wie starb die Heldin so vergnügt” from the previously discussed Gottsched and Bach 1727 funeral ode for the Electress of Saxony, BWV 198, \textit{Tombeau de S. M. la Reine de Pologne}\textsuperscript{22} (which was later re-used in 1731 as “Mein

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Neumann, NBA KB I/39, 102.
\item The tenor sings this aria as the character, “Elster River.” This cantata was commissioned to celebrate the purchase of the Wiederau estate by the first chamberlain at the Dresden court, Johann Christian von Hennicke (1681-1752), and was set to a text by Picander. In BWV 30a the aria is set for transverse flute, oboe d’amore, violin I, violin II, viola, and continuo, whereas in BWV 210 it is set for oboe d’amore, violin I, violin II, violone, and continuo.
\item Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story,” 80-82.
\item Also titled, \textit{Laß, Fürstin, laß einen Strahl}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Heiland, dich vergeß ich nicht” for Bach’s St. Mark’s Passion, BWV 247). Both “Wie starb die Heldin” and “Ruhet hie” share a lilting, 12/8 metre, frequent interplay of melodic suspensions among the trio, arpeggiated musical lines outlining the dominant seventh as a strong melodic motive, and an immediate move to the subdominant harmony in the first full bar, all of which combine to create a remarkably comparable aural effect, particularly in the opening phrases. Differences between the two renditions include a change of instrumentation from a trio for alto, and two viola da gambas, to one for soprano, oboe d’amore, and violin, and a tonality set one note higher, from D major to E major.

The most important observations of the three versions of BWV 210a are Bach’s lack of musical alteration and the minimal textual changes he incorporated for each different performance. For all three recipients the aria and recitative texts from movements one to six are replicated, and only when the focus turns to the various dedicatees from the seventh movement to the end do minimal alterations appear. These small changes simply reflect the change of name and title of the honouree, as shown in the following text examples from the seventh-movement recitative:

Text for Duke Christian:

23 This connection was brought to the author’s attention by Dr. Alexander J. Fisher, Associate Professor of Music, University of British Columbia, on October 29, 2012. For a discussion on the circumstances under which the cantata was created, see Wolff, The Learned Musician, 314-15.

24 An even closer parody connection to “Lass, Fürstin, lass” is the aria “Mein Heiland, dich vergeß ich nicht” from the 1731, St. Mark Passion, BWV 247. Even though “Lass, Fürstin” and “Mein Heiland” bear the nearest resemblance, their noticeable similarity to “Ruhet hie” bears mention.

25 The text written for the funeral ode aria describes the “cheerful” death of the Electress when her “courageous spirit” was subdued by death’s arm, which draws some parallels to the parody aria text of BWV 210a where the soprano tells the strings to “rest.”

26 The full text of BWV 210a, including the text variants of the three performances (with their English translations) is included in Appendix A.
So komm zu deinem teuren Herzog in seinem Schirm und Schatten her. Er weiß allein, wie Wissenschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müsse sein.

(Then come to your dear Duke, into his shelter and shade. He alone knows how knowledge and the arts must be valued.)

Text for the unknown patrons:

So komm zu unsre werten Gönner in ihre Gunst und Neigung her. Sie wissen allein, wie Wissenschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müsse sein.

(Then come to our honoured patrons, into their favour and affection. They alone know how knowledge and the arts must be valued.)

Text for Count Flemming:

So komm zu deinem teuren Flemming in seinem Schirm und Schatten her. Er weiß allein, wie Wissenschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müsse sein.

(Then come to your dear Flemming, into his shelter and shade. He alone knows how knowledge and the arts must be valued.)

The widest divergence between the three versions occurs in the final phrase of the cantata, as follows:

Text for Duke Christian:

Dein fürstliches Haus vermehre den Schimmer und breite sich aus, bis selber das Glänzen der Sonne verfliegt.

(May your princely house increase its luster and extend itself until even the brilliance of the sun vanishes before it.)
Text for the unknown patrons, showing a new phrase:

Ein ewige Lust bestelle die Wohnung in euerer Brust, bis diese das Singen der Engel entzückt.

(May an eternal delight make its dwelling in your breast until it is enraptured by the singing of angels).

Text for Count Flemming, showing a slightly revised version of the original:

Dein gräfliches Haus vermehre den Schimmer und breite sich aus, bis selber das Glänzen der Sonne verfliegt.

(May your comital house increase its luster and extend itself until even the brilliance of the sun vanishes before it.)

Given the modest revision made for these three performances, it is most likely that Bach undertook the amendments himself.

The minimal text alterations incorporated by Bach within the various versions of BWV 210a underline that the general plot outline was suitable to reflect the variety of occasions and recipients for which it was prepared. It is also significant to note that the performances of BWV 210a took place over a protracted span of years, from the 1729 cantata for Duke Christian to the final rendition for Count Flemming that most likely took place in the mid-1730s, and yet all would have occurred prior to Bach’s public dispute with Johann Scheibe. The chronology of these events, therefore, also supports the premise that Bach’s interaction with Scheibe between 1737 and 1739 became a strong catalyst for the subsequent extensive revisions made when Bach reworked this cantata for the later wedding event.
Possible Librettists

The librettist for BWV 210 and BWV 210a remains unknown, although several possible authors have been proposed. The most frequent name suggested is Bach’s oft-used librettist “Picander,”27 who penned numerous texts for Bach’s sacred and secular cantatas. In his 1950 article, Ian F. Finlay suggested that because Picander has been identified as the author of the Wiederau cantata BWV 30a, he might also have been the author of its parody source, BWV 210a; however, no specific evidence has corroborated his proposal.28 A more compelling argument in favour of Picander’s authorship is the range of poetic output and libretto styles he provided for Bach. Of the working relationship between the two men Finlay notes, “Picander gave Bach what he wanted, whatever it may have been… There is, unfortunately, no surviving correspondence between Bach and Picander, but we do know that Bach gave him specific instructions…”29 The unusual nature of the text of BWV 210 would have been compatible with the variety of Picander’s other libretti, and in fact it is likely that he would have embraced the unconventional nature of O holder Tag as an intriguing undertaking. In his critical commentary, Werner Neumann suggests that the unusual subject matter in the libretto of BWV 210 would have presented a challenge that Picander would have enjoyed.30 It is possible, then, that Picander was the author of both 210a and 210, but alternately, even if Picander wrote the initial text of 210a, a second author may have penned the extensive modifications for 210.

27 Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700–64).
29 Ibid., 190.
30 Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 58.
A readily available author for these revisions would have been Bach’s cousin Johann Elias Bach (1705-55), who lived with the Bach family as the children’s tutor and Bach’s secretary from October 1737 to October 1742. In his correspondence, Elias makes references to various libretti he wrote for weddings and other festive occasions, but there is no corresponding evidence that J. S. used his cousin’s texts for his own compositions. If Johann Elias did write the revised text of BWV 210, it would certainly have been an addition to the earlier 210a libretto since he only arrived in Leipzig in 1737, eight years after the original 1729 performance.

A third possibility is that Bach adapted the text of BWV 210 himself. Bach’s working relationship with his librettists was such that he frequently adapted and modified texts to suit his musical needs, and occasionally he even wrote cantata texts himself. For example, Frederick Hudson has suggested various works within the wedding cantata genre where it is likely that Bach created the texts, such as the sacred cantatas BWV120a, *Herr Gott, Beherrscher alle Dinge*,32 and BWV 197, *Gott ist unsre Zuversicht*,33 and the secular cantata BWV 34a, *O ewiges Feuer*.34 In the case of BWV 210a, it is reasonable to assume that Bach undertook the slight adaptations made to reflect the three recipients, and given his predilection for rewriting other cantatas, it remains a strong possibility that Bach was also responsible for the more fundamental libretto changes occurring in BWV 210.

31 Johann Elias Bach letters from March 3, 1739; August 8, 1740, July 7, 1741; February 8, March 21, and August 8, 1742 all include references to his libretti.
33 NBA KB I/33, 88.
34 Ibid., 44.
Manuscript of BWV 210

The collection of O holder Tag manuscripts is housed in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin and consists of separate parts for solo Soprano and Continuo, Oboe d’amore, Flute, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violone.\(^{35}\) Two parts, the solo Soprano with Continuo, as well as the Violone, are the only manuscripts written out in Bach’s hand, underscoring that they were new additions for this later wedding version of the parody source.\(^{36}\) Otherwise all parts are copied in the hand of Bach’s student Agricola.\(^{37}\) It has been noted by Neumann that the autograph score of the Soprano with Continuo part is particularly beautiful, written on the finest paper and in a careful hand, which suggests to Neumann that Bach intended it as a wedding gift for the nuptial couple.\(^{38}\)

General Musical Characteristics of BWV 210

Before discussing the textual modifications incorporated into O holder Tag, a discussion of pertinent musical features provides the framework against which the libretto is best examined. The mixture of compositional styles conveyed in the five aria movements of the cantata is discussed with consideration given to the time span between the initial composition


\(^{36}\) We do not know the instrumentation Bach used for BWV 210a; however, since Bach wrote the Soprano/Continuo and Violone scores in his own hand it is likely that these were parts without precedent and therefore represent additions to a previous version. The violone plays only in the first, second, eighth, ninth and tenth movements. Grychtolik’s reconstruction of BWV 210a includes the violone part in the score, although given this premise it is unlikely that it would have been part of the original ensemble.

\(^{37}\) NBA KB I/40, 47-48.

\(^{38}\) Neumann writes, “Die Notensysteme sind mit peinlicher Genauigkeit gezogen, die Notenschrift ist groß und klar und ästhetisch eindrucksvoll. Bach muß viel Zeit auf diese Niederschrift verwandt haben, die offenbar als Geschenk für das Hochzeitspaar gedacht war.” NBA KB I/40, 49.
of BWV 210a and the subsequent creation of BWV 210. Also Bach’s treatment of the interpolated recitatives, and specifically the newly composed central recitatives, is highlighted as a backdrop to the heightened intensity of the revised text. Finally, other dominant musical features that characterize this cantata will lead into the discussion focusing on the libretto.

**Galant Traits Incorporated into Bach’s Synthesis of Styles**

The most important musical feature of BWV 210, particularly as it pertains to the premise of this dissertation, is the *galant* style of writing permeating the music. The piece is such an excellent example of Bach’s *galant* style, especially typical in his secular and late cantatas, that it has been highlighted in Claude V. Palisca’s text, *Baroque Music*. Palisca writes,

> A tendency toward periodic phraseology and slower harmonic rhythm is also present in some of [Bach’s] late works. Some good examples are the aria “Schweigt ihr Flöten” in the wedding cantata BWV 210, *O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit* … which also illustrates a mixing of triplet rhythms with duple time; in the aria “Seid beglückt” in the same cantata; and in “Heute noch” in the *Coffee Cantata*.39

Palisca’s remark describing BWV 210 as one of Bach’s late works is somewhat deceptive since other than the three newly composed recitatives and some modifications made to the arias, most of the music was actually composed mid-career in 1729. During this time Bach’s other compositions indicate a general receptiveness to the musical trend. For example, the only cantata produced by Bach in the previous year (a period when Bach’s compositional output had declined considerably) was the *galant*-influenced secular wedding cantata BWV 216,

Vergnügte Pleissenstadt, written in February 1728. In March of 1729, when Bach took over leadership of the Collegium Musicum, he also produced the galant cantata BWV 201, Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan (The Contest Between Phoebus and Pan), a work that playfully mocked aspects of the fashionable style even as it incorporated its elements. Finally, it was during the following August that Bach drafted his 1730 “Short but Necessary Draft for a Well-Appointed Church Music” that included his statement, “Now, however, that the state of music is quite different from what it was, since our artistry has increased very much, and the taste [gusto] has changed astonishingly, and accordingly the former style of music no longer seems to please our ears.” His compositions and the written statement, therefore, all display Bach’s openness to the new musical trend.

Bach’s integration of galant traits, however, was always characteristically coupled with a remarkable ability to fuse imitative voicing into the musical texture. In a subsequent paragraph Palisca notes,

Bach must have instinctively realized that for one who had so fully mastered the resources of the strict contrapuntal method and could draw from it every last measure of beauty and expression it would have been sacrilege to lay it aside for an ill-formed, undisciplined technique that had its origins mainly in comic opera.

Accordingly, a synthesis of styles is apparent in all of the arias written for BWV 210a and 210, for as much as they exude the modern galant, the many moments of imitative writing and independent instrumental lines never fully comply with a simpler homophonic aesthetic.

40 See Appendix B for full text and translation.
41 NBR, 149.
42 Palisca, Baroque Music, 333-34.
Although Palisca cites only two of the cantata arias as examples of *galant*, each of the five arias in the cantata contain both *galant* traits and Bach’s seamless integration of polyphony, as follows. The second-movement aria, “Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder,” is written in a graceful, triple metre, incorporating a pleasing, sixteenth-note melody introduced by unison oboe d’amore and first violins and dance-like syncopations as demonstrated in bars 10 and 12. Frequent trills, appoggiaturas and graceful, duple slurs throughout the vocal and instrumental lines also reflect a *galant* style, as seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9. BWV 210, Second Movement, Bars 1 to 16.
Where the aria most noticeably diverges into more complexity, however, is in the “B” section where imitative melodic motives first introduced by the soprano and then subsequently heard in the continuo, violins and oboe d’amore, and viola, feature enticing, imitative part writing.

Figure 10. BWV 210, Second Movement, Bars 101 to 110.

In the second aria, the fourth-movement “Ruhet hie, matte Töne,” Bach again combines both *galant* simplicity with moments of more complexity. The aria is set as a trio for the soprano, oboe d’amore, and violin, with lovely overlapping melodic lines intertwining in frequent moments of tension and release over tied, interwoven phrases. Its lilting tune, set in 12/8 time, begins with the oboe d’amore and violin harmonized in typical *galant* parallel intervals of thirds and sixths; however, where the *galant* aesthetic is thrown askew is in the employment of both parallel and imitative voicing in the trio, as demonstrated in Figure 11 taken from the “B” section of the piece.
Figure 11. BWV 210, Fourth Movement “B” section, Bars 17 to 24.
Of particular note in this aria is the peculiar combination of negative text with charming music, which creates a strangely ironic tone, as discussed later in the chapter.

Palisca’s reference to the sixth movement, the third aria, “Schweigt, ihr Flöten,” as an excellent example of galant, is demonstrated particularly well in the flute line with its abundance of triplets. Comparison between the soprano parts of BWV 210a and 210 underscores how Bach’s incorporation of these galant triplets also reflects the heightened emotional content of his textual revisions. Where the new word “eilt” (hurry) is sung by the soprano (as shown in Figure 13), Bach revises the vocal line from the previous duple rhythm (shown in Figure 12) into a new triplet sequence, which, owing to the shortened duration of the notes and increased rhythmic activity, effectively serves to convey the urgency of the new lyrics.

Figure 12. BWV 210a, Sixth Movement, Bar 28.

![Figure 12](image)

*a-ber bist al-lein vom Him-mel*

Figure 13. BWV 210, Sixth Movement, Bar 28, displaying the increased intensity of the vocal line in this corresponding bar.

![Figure 13](image)

*eilt*

Again, alongside galant traits, Bach creates episodes of imitative phrases between the flute and soprano lines.
The homophonic texture introducing the fourth aria, the eighth-movement “Großer Gönner,” as seen in Figure 14, highlights the fashionable polonaise tune on which the aria is based. Once again, however, the music alternates between homophonic phrases and imitative writing throughout, as demonstrated in the violin parts of Figure 15.

Figure 14. BWV 210, Eighth Movement, Bars 1 to 5, demonstrating a homophonic texture typical of galant.

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43 Paczkowski underscores the popularity of polonaise tunes during the first half of the eighteenth century with Speronte’s well-known collection of dances, Singende Muse an der Pleiße of 1736, where approximately one third of the dances are polonaises. Paczkowski, “Bach and the Story,” 80. Alternatively, Little and Jenne suggest that this aria should be classified as a sarabande, a similar dance that was performed at a slightly slower tempo than the polonaise. Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach: Expanded Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 20, 303.
Figure 15. Eighth Movement, Bars 12 to 14, demonstrating imitative writing in the violins.

The fifth aria of the cantata, “Seid beglückt,” is a lively finale featuring an exuberant, syncopated melodic line, underpinned by slower harmonic movement, both typical of galant, although once again Bach incorporates episodes of independent interplay among the tutti instrumental ensemble, as demonstrated in Figure 16.
Figure 16. BWV 210, Tenth Movement, Bars 24 to 29.
Musical Adaptations made for BWV 210

In addition to the pervasive *galant* style of the writing throughout BWV 210, a second important study is the range of musical alterations undertaken by Bach when he adapted the previous cantata source to create BWV 210. In contrast to the extensive text revisions, the majority of musical changes did not fundamentally alter replicated movements. The parodied arias and recitatives were adapted with very few musical adjustments, primarily involving minor embellishments such as ornamental passing notes, small rhythmic variations, and slight alterations of the melodic line to reflect new text (as previously demonstrated in Figures 12 and 13). For examples, a comparison between the same vocal passage of the final aria in 210a and 210 reveals a sudden syncopated octave leap incorporated by Bach, resulting in a delightful intensification of the celebratory mood of the text, as shown in Figures 17 and 18.

Figure 17. BWV 210a, Tenth Movement, Bars 32 to 35.

Figure 18. BWV 210, Tenth Movement, Bars 32 to 34, showing Bach’s elaborated vocal line.

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Examples found in the first aria, “Spielet, ihr beeseeltes Lieder,” are bars 110, 112, and 156, as well as additional passing notes in bars 115 and 149, and added appoggiaturas in bars 23-24 and 47-48.
Whereas moments such as the octave leap in the final movement soprano part successfully portrayed a new text, other modified phrases were less successful. One example of this occurs where a vestige of previous word painting was unsuccessfully retained in spite of a new text underlay. In the final bar of the opening recitative where the soprano originally sings “so mußt du auch recht himmlisch sein,” Bach initially composed eighth notes spanning D5 to B5 to suggest the word “himmlisch” (heavenly) as shown in Figure 19. For his BWV 210 revision Bach retained this original melodic contour, but did not have the impetus of text to drive the dramatic vocal leap. Instead, the highest note of the recitative lands on the unimportant word “zu” of “zu erfreuen” (see Figure 20).

Figure 19. BWV 210a, First Movement, Bar 10, with the original word setting.

![Figure 19](image)

Figure 20. BWV 210, First Movement, Bar 10, with the awkward word setting.

![Figure 20](image)

Overall, however, the minor musical changes crafted by Bach that both enhanced and occasionally detracted from the original melodic line, did not fundamentally alter the musical effect of the earlier rendition.

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45 For an explanation of the this notational system see “General Abbreviations.”
On the other hand, extensive musical changes were carried out in the central recitative movements, which were completely recomposed. The central secco recitatives — the third, fifth and seventh movements — form the core of Bach’s textual and musical revisions of 210, and were all extended to become much longer than their earlier counterparts. Of particular note is the dramatic exclamation of text reflected in the speech rhythms of Bach’s vocal line coupled with especially complex harmonic writing of the continuo underlay. All three new recitatives are composed using three sharps in the key signature, yet very rarely do any stay centred within an A major or F-sharp minor tonality. In particular, the seventh-movement recitative proceeds through convoluted chromatic shifts. For example, Bach opens with a descending augmented fourth in the basso continuo, from E-sharp 3 to B2, which underpin two short vocal outbursts spanning a diminished tenth within four notes and that also incorporate a descending tri-tone from B4 to E-sharp 4. The four opening soprano notes further accentuate this dissonance by arriving on a displaced augmented fourth on the downbeat of the second bar, E-sharp 4 over the B2 of the bass. The first arrival on a “tonic,” the F-sharp 2 in bar 4, is approached from a descending semitone G2 natural in the previous bar, and followed by another tri-tone leap to the B-sharp 2 in bar 5, as shown in the following:

Figure 21, Seventh Movement, Bars 1 to 6

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46 The third movement is thirteen bars long in 210a and sixteen in 210; the fifth movement is ten bars long in 210a and thirty bars in 210; the seventh movement is eleven bars long in 210a and twenty-four bars in 210.
It is not until bar 18 when the text turns to praise of the patron that the harmonic writing settles into a more predictable pattern. Musically, these inserted recitatives provide an interesting chromatic counterpoint to the more *galant*-inspired writing of the parodied arias, and also heighten the effect of the newly revised prose.

**Other Musical Traits**

Alfred Dürr has suggested that “the work was written for a connoisseur,” an opinion that is underscored by the aforementioned harmonic complexities of the recitatives as well as the technically demanding writing within the arias. The musical requirements made of the musicians are significant, and thereby indicate a high level of expertise among the original performers. The soprano range spans two octaves, from C-sharp 4 to C-sharp 6, with recitative melodies reaching B5 in two different movements and demanding passagework heard in the

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47 See Figure 7 for the entire Seventh Movement Recitative.

48 Dürr, *Cantatas*, 901.
second, sixth and final arias. A good example of the latter is found in the second movement aria from bars 154 to 160 as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 22. BWV 210, Second Movement, bars 154 to 160.

Additionally, whereas other Bach cantatas often end with a simple dance, such as the gavotte movement that closes the secular wedding cantata BWV 202 *Weichet nur*, the last movement of 210 is a rollicking, *vivace* aria in an *alla breve* time signature. The vocal part again includes particularly athletic phrases. In the midst of a busy “B” section, Bach inserts such challenging passagework for the soprano as seen in Figure 22.

Figure 23. BWV 210, Tenth Movement, Bars 52 to 55.

Bach’s instrumental writing is equally demanding, and in particular, the solo for transverse flute in the sixth movement, *Schweigt, ihr Flöten*. If the cantata was in fact created for the 1741 Stahl-Schrader wedding in Berlin, the year and location coincide with other interesting possible associations. While visiting Berlin in August 1741 Bach dedicated his Flute Sonata BWV 1035 to Michael Gabriel von Fredersdorf (1708-58), secretary for Frederick the Great and also an accomplished flautist. Also, the great flute virtuoso Johann Joachim Quantz
(1697-1773) had recently moved from Dresden to Berlin in 1741 to become the king’s flute teacher and head of the chamber music for Frederick’s Royal Prussian Kapelle. Given that the king was also an accomplished flautist, the prominence of the instrument in Frederick’s court may have contributed to Bach’s choice to revise this particular cantata containing such a virtuosic flute part. It is also tempting to speculate that if BWV 210 was first heard in Berlin, Fredersdorf might have been among the ensemble that premiered the work.

The music for *O angenehme Melodei* and *O holder Tag* is infused with *galant* idioms, and in light of this, one overarching question becomes apparent. If Bach were defending the traditional art of counterpoint against its detractors, why would he choose to rework a cantata based on such fashionable *galant* idioms to do so? The answer to this question lies both in a more nuanced deliberation of Bach’s reaction to *galant*, as well as a consideration of the time between when the original and revised versions were composed. That Bach would have composed a cantata in 1729, using a fashionable style of music when it was intended for the secular celebrations of a noble patron, was characteristic of the composer. That being said, throughout his career Bach continued to incorporate “traditional” counterpoint regardless of stylistic trends. As is true in most of Bach’s music, the integration of *galant* into the music of the original homage cantata is coupled with his proclivity towards complexity, and as such, maintains a density that is not representative of the popular musical style. I suggest that when Bach first composed BWV 210a he incorporated a *galant* aesthetic without any sense of irony; however, when Bach revisited the cantata for the wedding celebrations occurring more than a decade later, a more finessed message was intended through both the music and text. The

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49 Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 357, 425; Ellen Exner, “The Forging of a Golden Age: King Frederick the Great and Music for Berlin, 1732 to 1756” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010), 310, 312.
wedding cantata was composed in the immediate aftermath of the public dispute with Johann Scheibe and during his final decade, a time when Bach created some of his most monumental works in contrapuntal style. At this time, the revisions undertaken to the text served to convey a very different message than that of the original.

Textual Characteristics of BWV 210

Comparisons between the Libretti of BWV 210a and BWV 210

As presented in Chapter 4, the libretto of *O holder Tag* BV 210 is unique among Bach’s wedding compositions; whereas Bach’s other known wedding cantatas remain consistently celebratory and focused on the wedding event, BWV 210 deviates into a multi-movement, carefully crafted argument in favour of music and against its detractors, an argument that does not appear in its closest known counterpart, BWV 210a. The range of adaptations executed by Bach or his librettist, from the merely slightly revised aria texts applied to identical music, to the completely rewritten central recitatives, transform standard homage poetry into an idiosyncratic wedding libretto.

Before a more detailed analysis of the poetic variances, a very brief summary of the two cantata texts is necessary. *O angenehme Melodei* begins in praise of music, introduces music’s “distress” caused by those who consider it “worthless,” and then closes with the attention turned towards the honoured patron as saviour of his beloved art. The plot develops with a seamless continuity and a logical progression from one movement to the next. *O holder Tag*, on the other hand, follows a less linear path, with concepts juxtaposed from one movement to the next in what appears to be a much more disjointed amalgamation of ideas. In the end it too
leads to final movements in praise of the patron, but the process seems to be, at least superficially, a much less cohesive progression.\(^{50}\) Both cantatas begin in a similar fashion; while \textit{O angenehme Melodei} opens in praise of “Music,” \textit{O holder Tag} begins with praise of the nuptial day. From this point on, however, the two libretti diverge. Where \textit{O angenehme Melodei} continues to develop its ode to “Music” through subsequent movements, \textit{O holder Tag} proceeds through an argument that at turns disparages music, lauds its attributes, and decries its detractors before finally returning the focus to the wedding couple for the final three movements. In so doing, while \textit{O angenehme Melodei} maintains a more unified poetic arch in praise of music and patron, \textit{O holder Tag} diverts the attention of the listener away from the wedding event into what should be a subservient plot line.

To provide a context for the textual changes undertaken, a discussion of the libretto amendments will first highlight the pragmatic modifications made to reflect a change of event and patron, followed by the more unusual changes Bach incorporated to convey his central defense of music. Certain key words that were critical to the aesthetic arguments of the early eighteenth century (as discussed in Chapter 2) are stressed in the context of how they were prominently integrated into the original 1729 libretto, followed by their very different treatment in Bach’s reworking of the text more than a decade later. Finally, a range of responses to the libretto by Bach scholars is discussed, revealing a lack of satisfactory context for this cantata in the extant literature.

Although the libretto of \textit{O holder Tag} is unusual, considerable parts of the text do remain focused on the wedding event for which it was commissioned. In particular, the outer

\(^{50}\) For both cantata texts and translations see Appendix A.
movements — one, two, eight, nine and ten — incorporate modifications that serve simply to transform the homage cantata into a wedding cantata, and in contrast to the other five central movements, the revisions made in these outer sections remain most closely aligned with the corresponding texts found in *O angenehme Melodei*.

The five central movements comprising of three recitatives and two arias — movements three, four, five, six, and seven — create an entirely different context compared to BWV 210a. Whereas the original setting of the third-movement secco recitative opens with the command, “You cares, flee, flee, you troubled woes!” in a continuation of the opening sentiment emphasizing the power of music to “make bitter griefs sweet,”* Bach completely alters this moment, beginning instead with the provocative statement, “But cease, you lively strings; for with enamoured couples there should be calm! You do not harmonize with Love.”* The poet urges the “devout couple” to avoid following music’s “innate impulses” that lead to “vanity,”* and rather to “go to the altar of thanksgiving … [to] offer up an inspired prayer to the Father.”* Therefore, instead of exhorting cares to “flee” as is heard in 210a, the soprano insists the strings be silent; and likewise, rather than praising the power of music for its ability to “dispel torment,” the corresponding movement advises that music leads the pious couple astray.

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51 *Ihr Sorgen, flieht, flieht, ihr betrübten Kümmernüsse, und, macht herbes Grämen süße.*

52 *Doch, haltet ein, ihr muntern Saiten; den bei verliebten Eheleuten soll’s stille sein! Ihr harmoniert nicht mit der Liebe.*

53 *Denn eure angebornen Triebe verleiten uns zur Eitelkeit*

54 *Ein frommes Ehepaar will lieber zu dem Dankaltar mit dem Gemüte treten und ein beseeltes Abba beten*
The revision of this third-movement recitative establishes the strange juxtaposition of music and text in the subsequent fourth-movement aria, “Ruhet hie.” The original text of 210a sets the lulling melody as an invitation to the “senses” to rest, for “a tender harmony is for hidden woe the proven panacea;” however, the text of 210 inverts the original sentiment and instead asserts that “Your tender harmony is no true panacea for a happy marriage.” The attractively interwoven melodic lines set against this revised text exhorting music to cease create a curious incongruity. Within the aria a moment of word painting is crafted to enhance the word Harmonie (the term associated with counterpoint) through extended bars of intertwined soprano, oboe d’amore and violin lines; however, this same moment takes on a darker quality in Bach’s revision, for Harmonie is described as misleading the listener down the pathway of musical “vanity” (as described in the previous recitative).

Following this aria, the cantata once again takes a completely new poetic turn. In response to the lulling fourth movement aria, the rewritten fifth-movement recitative begins, “So is it believed that Music leads one astray and does not harmonize with Love at all?” which is answered with a resounding, “Oh no!” The subsequent text then presents a compelling and beautifully wrought portrayal of music’s worth. The poet writes of Music: “Who would not admit its merits, which here such noble patrons honour?”; “It is, like Love, a mighty child of heaven”; “It steals into all hearts and can be with the high and the humble”; “It calls the mind up to heaven and can tell of the highest glory to loving spirits”; and, “Indeed, Love is called

55 Eine zarte Harmonie ist vor das verbogne Weh die bewährte Panazee
56 Eure zarte Harmonie ist vor die beglückte Eh’ nicht die wahre Panazee
57 So glaubt man denn, daß die Musik verführe und gar nicht mit der Liebe harmoniere? O nein!
much stronger than death. Who denies it? Music strengthens us in death’s need.”

58 The corresponding fifth movement of 210a also represents a central turning point in the narrative, but does not match its later counterpart in length nor passion. In 210a this recitative introduces a moment of tension where “Musica” is distressed, setting the stage for a subsequent “rescue” by the honoured patron in the seventh-movement. In this earlier version the distress of the fifth movement recitative prepares the agitation of the sixth movement aria, Schweigt, ihr Flöten, and as such, maintains a linear poetic flow. The rewritten version, however, begins with the opening question, proceeds to an expansive central ode to music, and then closes with another sudden question, “Yet what lament is heard there that eschews the nimble sound of beloved strings?” In this manner both recitatives segue into the subsequent aria, yet the transition created in the latter version is only achieved after much wider-ranging prose.

The agitated sixth-movement aria is a technical tour-de-force for the flute. Both aria versions start with the soprano urging the flute to “Be silent” (Schweigt, ihr Flöten), to which the flute replies with flamboyant, melismatic triplet phrases that contrast the predominantly duple rhythm of the soprano line. This interplay between the soprano and obbligato instrument creates a dichotomous setting of text and music in both 210a and 210. The two renditions diverge, however, in the intensity of the subsequent text. While both begin with the statement,

58 Wer wollte den nicht ihren Wert betrachten, auf den so hohe Gönner achten?; Sie ist der Liebe gleich, ein großes Himmelskind; Sie schleicht in alle Herzen ein und kann bei Hoh’ und Niedern sein; Sie lockt den Sinn zum Himmel hin und kann verliebten Seelen des Höchsten Ruhm erzählen; and, Ja, heißt die Liebe sonst weit starker als der Tod, wer leugnet? Die Musik stärkt uns in Todes Not.

59 The original plotline presents “beloved Musica” (beliebte Musica) as a distressed art, “for there are many to whom [she is] worthless” (den es sind ihr’ viel, denen du verächtlich bist), establishing the context for the succeeding aria, “Be silent, you flutes” as representational of music’s melancholy.

60 Doch, was erklingt dort vor ein Klagelied, das den geschwinden Ton beliebter Saiten flieht?
“Be silent, you flutes; be silent, you notes,”\textsuperscript{61} the soprano in 210a tells the flutes that they “do not sound fair even to me [Musica],”\textsuperscript{62} while the vocal line in 210 states that their music does not “sound good to Envy.”\textsuperscript{63} Following this, the revised text of the “B” section further heightens this urgency. Instead of Musica complaining of feeling forsaken,\textsuperscript{64} the later rendition insists the flutes “hasten through the darkened air till you are called to the grave!”\textsuperscript{65} The message conveyed is that “Envy” is hastening the flutes to their grave, and thereby driving music to its demise.

Following the urgency of the sixth-movement aria, in both 210a and 210 the seventh-movement recitative again returns the focus to the honoured patron; however, as has been the pattern, Bach’s revised version only does so after an extended passionate divergence. In 210a, attention is immediately drawn to the virtues of the patron as the defender and champion of Musica,\textsuperscript{66} and after this simple transition, the cantata closes with the final three movements in praise of the honouree. Bach’s revised recitative, on the other hand, leads the listener through a much more extensive series of ideas. Using the aforementioned proliferation of tri-tones, an arresting series of four questions in direct response to the previous aria begin this movement.

\textsuperscript{61} Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt ihr Töne
\textsuperscript{62} klingt ihr mir doch selbst nicht schöne
\textsuperscript{63} ihr klingt dem Neid nicht schöne
\textsuperscript{64} Geht, ihr armen Lieder, hin, weil ich so verlassen bin! (Go, you poor songs, for I am thus forsaken.)
\textsuperscript{65} eilt durch die geschwörtzte Luft, bis man euch zum Grabe ruft!
\textsuperscript{66} Ja, wenn es möglich wär, daß dich die ganze Welt verließ und deine Lieblichkeit verstieße, so komm zu deinem teuren Herzog/Flemming in seinem Schirm und Schatten her, or So komm zu unsre werten Gönner in ihre Gunst und Neigung her. (Indeed, if it were possible that the whole world forsook you and rejected your loveliness, then come to your dear Duke/Flemming into his shelter and shade), or alternatively (… then come to our honoured patrons into their favour and inclination). As previously described, it is likely that this movement was scored for \textit{accompagnato} strings, as suggested by Agricola’s performing parts.
The soprano asks, “What air? What grave? Shall Music perish, that gave us such great benefits? Shall such a heavenly child die, and indeed for an infernal crew?”67 For the second time in the cantata, the response is an unequivocal “Oh no!,” but this time with the additional phrase, “That cannot be.”68 In an allusion to the third and fifth-movement recitatives, the poetry asserts “Love can endure cheerful strings quite well before its throne,”69 which is followed by an additional barb against music’s detractors, “What would Satan’s children make of this song? It is enough that you have heaven’s protection, whenever an enemy fumes against you.”70 It is only after these statements that the focus finally returns to the groom, the “Maecenas” for whom the cantata was created.71

**Specific Terminology in the Libretti of BWV 210a and BWV 210**

A final point underscoring the premise that Bach adapted this cantata as a specific rebuttal to his detractors is revealed in the choice of terms used in 210a but noticeably absent in 210. Within the increasingly widespread published critical discourse of the time, such as the treatises and periodicals of writers like Johann David Heinichen and Johann Mattheson, certain words had become stylistically representative of contrasting ideologies of musical aesthetics. Three important terms that play an important role in the libretti of 210a and 210 are: *Melodie,* associated with the melody-dominant aesthetic espoused by progressive critics; *Harmonie,*

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67 *Was Luft? Was Grab? Soll die Musik verderben, die uns so großen Nutzen gab? Soll so ein Himmelskind ersterben, und zwar für eine Höllenbrut?*

68 *O nein! Das kann nicht sein*

69 *Die Liebe kann vergnügte Saiten gar wohl vor ihrem Throne leiden*

70 *was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern machen? Genug, daß dich der himmel schützt, wenn sich ein Feind auf dich erhitzt*

71 *Be of good cheer, patrons still live who gladly dwell amidst your charm. And one such patron you shall now in fact revere at his wedding feast. (Getrost, es leben noch Patronen, die gern bei deiner Anmut wohnen. Und einen solchen Mäzenat sollst du auch itzo in der Tat an seinem Hochzeitfest verehren.)*
linked to “traditional” contrapuntal writing; and *angenehme*, or “pleasing,” a term often used to encapsulate the *galant* aesthetic. About “*angenehme*” David Sheldon writes,

> The use of the word “*angenehme*” (pleasant, agreeable) deserves special mention. Even though Mattheson spoke of an effect “so schmeichelnd / so angenehm und so galant, in der heutigen *Music*” as early as his *Neu-eröffnete Orchestre*, it was Scheibe and later Quantz and his Berlin colleagues who gave to this word its high aesthetic value in music.  

In a description of Telemann’s twenty-four odes of 1741, Johann Scheibe used the term *angenehme* as one of the characteristics of the “middle style” or “*mittelmässigen und galanten Schreibart*.” A paraphrase of Scheibe’s description of the sound, as described by Sheldon, is:

> The middle style must be particularly witty (*sinnreich*), pleasant (*angenehm*), and flowing (*fließend*). Beauty and naturalness are its main attributes; it must avoid the odd, dissolute, and wild, as well as the crude, silly, and commonplace. The harmony must be subservient to the melody and function to make it more clear and perceptible.  

As outlined in Chapter 2, although Bach did not participate in the published discourse of the time, there is strong evidence to suggest that he was well informed of the critical discussions, and therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Bach was well aware of the terminology that had become associated with these aforementioned aesthetic topics.

> That Bach would have composed a 1729 birthday tribute to the Duke with music infused with *galant* idioms and highlighting two terms very clearly associated with the most modern musical trends in its opening phrase, “*O angenehme Melodei!*” suggests a correlation between this cantata and the most current musical fashions. The libretto highlights the term a second time in the eighth-movement polonaise aria where it describes the object of the patron’s

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73 Ibid.
musical desire as, “Aber unter denen allen liebt dein gnädiges Gefallen ein angenehme Melodei” (But among them all [the arts] your gracious favour loves an agreeable melody).

Clearly in this version of the libretto, the word “angenehme” maintains positive connotations.

References to Harmonie are also included twice in the original text. One mention occurs in the phrase immediately following the aforementioned eighth-movement polonaise, stating, “Durchlauchtigst Haupt, so bleibe fernerweit der edlen Harmonie mit deinem Schutz geneigt!” (Illustrious Head, then remain henceforth inclined to noble harmony with your favour!). It is as if the librettist is deliberately urging the patron to continue protecting Harmonie even though he “loves” an “angenehme Melodei.” A second reference occurs in the fourth-movement aria: “Eine zarte Harmonie ist vor das verborgne Weh die bewährte Panazee” (A tender harmony is for hidden woe the proven panacea), where the poet is emphasizing the “proven” nature of soothing harmony.

It may not be coincidental, then, that when the revisions were undertaken to create Oholder Tag much later in Bach’s life, important terms associated with the aesthetic debate are treated very differently within the libretto. In the revised version of the eighth-movement polonaise aria, no longer does the patron love “an agreeable melody” (ein angenehme Melodei), but instead the singer extols the patron’s ability to “inspire such pleasure as sweet music’s charming art” (kann dich nichts so sehr ergötzen, als der süssen Töne Kunst). This new poetic phrase not only eliminates use of the terms angenehme and Melodei, but it also introduces the word Kunst, a term that had also become (derogatorily) equated with complex
counterpoint. In the strangely ironic context of the third- and fourth-movements the singer admonishes strings to stop playing because their lively sounds do not “harmonize with love” \( (ihr\ harmoniert\ nicht\ mit\ der\ Liebe) \), but instead “mislead [the wedding couple] into vanity” \( (verleiten\ uns\ zur\ Eitelkeit) \). The pair is told instead to write a “pleasing song” \( (ein\ angenehmes\ Lied) \) on their breasts. The ironic tone of this recitative sets up the fourth-movement aria where the librettist specifies that “delicate harmony” \( (zarte\ Harmonie) \) is “not the true panacea” \( (nicht\ die\ wahre\ Panazee) \) for this wedding day. Included in the subsequent fifth-movement rebuttal of the previous two movements, the term \( Harmonie \) appears once again, this time within the opening phrase, “So then does one believe that music misleads and does not harmonize at all with love?” \( (So\ glaubt\ man\ den,\ dass\ die\ Musik\ verführe\ und\ gar\ nicht\ mit\ der\ Liebe\ harmoniere?) \), which is answered with a resounding, \( O\ nein! \). The central extended statement that follows creates the core message of the cantata, extolling the power of music. A final reiteration of the term \( Harmonie \) occurs in the opening phrase of the final recitative, “Esteemed good Sir, strongly continue, as now, to maintain favour with noble Harmony” \( (Hochteurer\ Mann,\ so\ fahre\ ferner\ fort,\ der\ ecken\ Harmonie\ wie\ itzt\ geneigt\ zu\ bleiben) \). In contrast to the greater prominence of the term \( Harmonie \) is a complete absence of the term \( Melodei \), a word that had played such a dominant role in the previous rendering. The increased proliferation of the term “harmony” along with the elimination of the term “melody,” therefore, serve to underline the premise that a very different agenda was intended by Bach in this later version of the work. To date this aspect of the libretto has not received attention among the commentaries of BWV 210.

\[\text{74 In particular see the debates of Johann Mattheson in Chapter 2 and the criticisms of Johann Scheibe in Chapter 6.}\]
Interpretations of the Libretto of BWV 210

If one reads the text simply as a forced unification of two distinct concepts, marriage and music, the libretto content seems strange and confusing, giving rise to several questions. What would compel Bach to create such a strangely incongruous message as is heard in the fourth-movement aria “Ruhet hie,” where the soothing quadruple compound metre is actually meant to convey the notion that music is not a true panacea? Why does the libretto introduce the notion of “envy” as the enemy of music, in the sixth-movement aria? If this is meant simply to celebrate a patron’s love of music on his wedding day, why intensify the negative aspect of music’s demise as it “hastens through the darkened air” towards the “grave,” or introduce such strong verbal images as music’s detractors described as “Satan’s children,” or an “infernal crew”?

These incompatibilities in the libretto have generated a range of interpretations. The early Bach biographer Philipp Spitta was one of the few who interpreted the text as Bach’s response to his detractors, making specific mention of textual allusions towards the “despisers and disparagers of music.”75 Spitta erroneously linked these references, however, to Bach’s dispute with Rector Biedermann of Freiberg, with whom Bach was feuding in 1749, a date we now know is much later than the possible time of composition. Later critics such as Werner Neumann and Alfred Dürr have conveyed a more general, if somewhat neutral, opinion of the poetry. Neumann states that the work is a “not unseemly [discussion] about the relationship

75 Spitta, Johann Sebastian Bach, 635.
between music and love within a marriage,” whereas Dürr summarizes it simply as a meditation “over the interrelations between music and love.” Others, such as Szymon Paczkowski, have been much more dismissive. Paczkowski describes the text as,

visibly stilted and artificial, occasionally lacking in consistency and logic. Evidently it is a reworking of an earlier text, which has been forcibly twisted into the shape of a wedding cantata. The love “plot” has been awkwardly coupled with the notion of love for music, present in BWV 210a. Obviously, the connection would make sense only if the bridegroom were a serious music lover – such as Georg E. Stahl.

All four of the aforementioned responses are unsatisfactory. Even though Spitta recognized an autobiographical element conveyed by Bach, his context was misdirected. Neumann’s and Dürr’s acceptance of the libretto as a simple discussion of the interconnectedness of the two concepts of music and marriage does not explain the disjointed treatment of the text nor the imbalance of focus on an argument for the worth of music rather than concentration on the nuptial couple. In this sense, Paczkowski’s opinion of the work as a “forcibly twisted” reworking of the more successful text of 210a that resulted in an “awkward,” “stilted,” and “artificial” wedding cantata libretto is the most compelling of the critics’ views. If, however, one views the libretto through the lens of Bach defending a musical style that formed the foundation of his compositional aesthetic, the intensity of the revised text becomes more explicable. Additionally, if Bach had a sympathetic patron, as seems to have been the case in Georg Stahl, the integration of these themes not only becomes less problematic, but instead, very compelling. The final chapter will describe in detail the specific circumstances in

76 Der Verfasser der Dichtung, die sich nicht ungeschickt über Beziehungen von Musik und Liebe im Eheleben ausbreitet. Neumann, NBA KB I/40, 58.
77 Dürr, Cantatas, 899.
which Bach found himself in the years leading up to his reworking of BWV 210, and how BWV 210 provides a persuasive platform for Bach in the aftermath of the Scheibe controversy.
Chapter 6.
Johann Scheibe versus Johann Sebastian Bach

Conflicting Ideologies Reflected in Cantata BWV 210

“...while we are able to recognize common human elements in earlier music — such as intellectual skill or the imitation of emotions — there is a third element here, a sort of human presence that is unwittingly particular and as much constructed through the music as reflected in it, and thus contingent on duration. This is not so much a unique human figure who exists prior to the music and whom the music somehow reveals or skillfully realizes (which is perhaps more common in later stages of modernity) — a sort of self-discovery — but one who is honed through the process of musical composition, a self-creation out of materials already at hand.” — John Butt

Introduction
Bach’s music continues to generate commentary and remains difficult to define in narrow terms. It looked neither forward nor back, but rather was an idiosyncratic synthesis of both old and new. As such, Bach’s compositions provide a unique commentary on the intersection of tradition and progress at a time when musical ideologies were undergoing a fundamental shift. Within the breadth of academic research into Bach and his music, there has been a dearth of critical discussion about BWV 210, *O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit*, and specifically as a rare musical example of Bach’s response to this intersection of philosophies.

Analysis of the libretto and music reveals a work full of dichotomies — in a piece whose purpose is primarily to entertain, Bach injects a substantive case for the value of music; one aria text decries the strings as a misleading and false panacea for woe, yet is set within an enticingly soothing trio of interwoven oboe d’amore, violin and voice; a cantata that projects a decidedly galant aesthetic in the arias also includes remarkably harmonically complex and dissonant recitatives. Finally, a libretto that disparages those arbiters of “taste” who have rejected the contrapuntally complex music of the past is conveyed through music that integrates the very galant idioms representative of this “good taste.” Through these apparent contradictions Bach creates a complex commentary on the musical ideologies of the time.

The vociferous reactions resulting from Johann Scheibe’s public criticism of Bach’s musical style were indicative of the heated aesthetic debates that arose as a result of these changing ideologies. Both the criticisms by Scheibe and the defense of Bach by his advocates exposed an underlying schism of philosophies that defined the era. Ideas generated out of what is now called the Enlightenment changed the musical taste of the eighteenth century to such a degree that Bach’s music, so rooted in the tradition of the previous centuries, was largely ignored after his death.\(^2\) In this chapter a detailed description of the issues and debate that developed between Scheibe and Bach’s defenders will be outlined, and the specific topics in contention explored against the backdrop of the broader musical discourse. In light of the issues under debate, the intersection between Bach’s music and the aesthetic ideals of the mid-eighteenth century are investigated, particularly as they apply to Bach’s treatment of BWV 210. In this manner, an understanding of the unusually personal statement that underlines the

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message of the wedding cantata *O holder Tag* will provide greater insight into Bach’s reaction to his environment.

**Johann Scheibe versus Johann Sebastian Bach**

A description of the controversial episode between Johann Scheibe and Johann Sebastian Bach has been included in most Bach biographies and has often been described in black and white terms; many historical accounts portray Scheibe as an audacious, young critic who dared to challenge the compositional style of the genius composer Bach and who is therefore unequivocally guilty for his lack of judgment.¹ For example, the early Bach biographies by Johann Nikolaus Forkel and Philipp Spitta both describe Scheibe’s comments as the revenge of a disgruntled former student who took the opportunity to publicly smear Bach’s name, and this has become the prevailing account of subsequent biographers.² More recently, Spitta’s portrayal of the episode has been questioned and discredited by George J. Buelow, and in the process Buelow has delivered a more nuanced understanding of the event.³ Given Buelow’s compelling version of events, it is far less likely that Scheibe’s criticisms were borne out of a personal vendetta than out of his conviction that Bach’s music simply did not reflect the progressive ideology Scheibe espoused. The supposition that Scheibe was acting out of resentment, coupled with the acerbic tone frequently used in his prose has, at times, masked the larger, and more interesting debate that the interaction represents, namely that Scheibe’s

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² Forkel writes, “… but [Scheibe] found [Bach’s] decision so unjust that he afterwards, in his Critical Musician, sought to revenge himself by a violent attack on his former judge.” NBR, 440. See also NBR, 337.

criticisms highlight how Bach’s music was perceived both by his contemporaries and vis-à-vis the musical values of the era.

The importance of Scheibe’s comments and their effect on Bach has also been open to some debate, and needs to be addressed prior to a description of the events themselves. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel suggest in *The New Bach Reader* that the written responses exchanged by Bach’s contemporaries in reaction to the Scheibe controversy were little more than a “tempest in a teapot,” whereas Christoph Wolff writes, “as much as bystanders may have viewed the literary battle between Scheibe and Johann Birnbaum (on Bach’s behalf) as a tempest in a teapot, Bach did not remain unaffected by it.”\(^6\) Wolff even ventures to say that Scheibe’s criticisms came as a “severe blow” to Bach.\(^7\) Circumstantial evidence also suggests that the criticisms affected Bach so adversely that, as Werner Neumann submits, Bach’s temporary leave from his role as director of the Leipzig *Collegium Musicum* during the summer of 1737 was likely in reaction to Scheibe’s first article.\(^8\) That Bach enlisted the help of the Leipzig professor, Johann Birnbaum, to pen a lengthy and fervent response to both of Scheibe’s articles is also indicative of Bach’s personal reaction. Finally, Bach’s responses to other controversies occurring in his life, as outlined in Chapter 3, indicate a fiery temperament that did not retreat from conflict. Therefore, given his reactions to frictions occurring at other times in his life, together with his confirmed actions of recruiting Birnbaum and temporarily

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\(^6\) NBR, 337; Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 431.


\(^8\) Neumann, “Das ‘Bachische Collegium Musicum,’” 7.
leaving the *Collegium*, it is most likely that Bach was intensely irritated by the public dispute incited by Scheibe’s articles.

**Who was Johann Scheibe?**

Today Johann Adolph Scheibe is known primarily for his notorious public denigration of Bach; however, his many other important contributions should also be noted. He was not only one of the leading critics of the eighteenth century but also had a career as a successful composer, *Kapellmeister* of the Danish court of King Christian VI, author of several books, and founder of both a music academy for children in Sønderberg and the Danish Music Society in Copenhagen.\(^9\) He was born in Leipzig in 1708 to a father who was a famous organ builder, and who was also most likely Scheibe’s primary keyboard teacher, and not J. S. Bach, as has more often been assumed.\(^10\) While living in Leipzig Scheibe studied poetics at the Leipzig University under the tutelage of Gottsched, however, he had to interrupt his schooling in 1726 after his father experienced a financial crisis.\(^11\) The following ten years have been described by Scheibe as a period when he became self-educated by reading treatises and studying organ and composition.\(^12\) We also know that during this time he unsuccessfully auditioned for organ posts in Leipzig, Prague, Gotha, Sondershausen and Wolfenbüttel.\(^13\) In 1736 Georg Philipp Telemann encouraged him to move to Hamburg, a town that was both a centre for Enlightenment philosophy, producer of progressive publications, and also the place where

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\(^10\) As David and Mendel describe in their “Introductory Note,” NBR, 337; Buelow, “In Defense of J. A. Scheibe,” 86.
\(^12\) Mattheson, *Grundlage*, 313.
\(^13\) Buelow, “In Defense of J. A. Scheibe,” 86.
Scheibe connected himself with two important reformist minds, Telemann and Johann Mattheson. Once again at the urging of Telemann, Scheibe began publication of his periodical the *Critischer Musicus* in 1737, which after a one-year hiatus in 1738, he continued to publish weekly until 1740. The modern ideology expounded by Scheibe in his articles focused on music theory, style, and aesthetics, using article formats such as letters, essays, and news items to proliferate ideas and generate debate. Scheibe also incorporated a common literary device at the time, writing in the form of a fictitious or anonymous author, a form he used in two of his inflammatory articles about Bach. Although no specific evidence has confirmed the geographical circulation of Scheibe’s periodical, it would have been readily available to Bach in Leipzig, and as indicated by the interest generated among Bach’s colleagues as a result of Scheibe’s articles, it was widely read among German-speaking musicians. The opinions expressed in Scheibe’s publications represented an ideology that, according to George Buelow, were at the “forefront of a wave of new criticism” and that inaugurated “a new outlook in the critical writing about music in Germany.”

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16 This type of inflammatory writing is particularly notable in Scheibe’s final article about Bach from April 1739. NBR, 351-2.

17 Descriptions of the readership are as follows: Bach’s awareness, Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 1; Birnbaum rebuttal (1738), NBR, 338-48; Mizler refutation (1738-9), NBR, 349-50, and comment in his review of Bach’s *Clavier-Übung III* (1740), NBR, 333; Mattheson’s inclusion of Scheibe’s remarks the introduction to his *vollkommene Capellmeister* (1738), Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 302; and Schröter’s summary account (1746), NBR, 352-53.

musical aesthetic he espoused was of a progressive style borne out of the ideals of the Enlightenment, and particularly representative of his generation.

An important yet questionable episode occurring during Scheibe’s years in Leipzig has been commonly cited as the starting point of Scheibe’s subsequent campaign against Bach. According to Bach’s sons, in an account given to Bach’s biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel after their father’s death, Scheibe auditioned for a post as organist in Leipzig in 1729, but was rejected by a jury that included Bach.19 As a result, the account contends, Scheibe began to stir up opinion against Bach as early as 1731, later resulting in his published articles of the late 1730s.20 A document in Bach’s own hand provides the most compelling evidence against this version of events. On April 4, 1731 Bach wrote a letter recommending Scheibe for an organ post in Freiberg. If Scheibe had felt that he had been treated unfairly by Bach two years earlier and was then in the midst of a campaign maligning Bach (of which Bach was supposedly aware), it is implausible to suggest that Scheibe would request such a letter and that Bach would comply.21 Therefore, although Scheibe’s critical articles have been linked to a grudge held by the author, it is far more likely that the most compelling impetus for Scheibe was a critique based on larger aesthetic issues rather than personal enmity.22

19 Forkel biography in NBR, 440; Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, 223.
22 Another angle to this episode, as described by John Butt, suggests that Telemann viewed himself as a musician rather than a theoretician, and that although Mattheson (in the words of Butt) also “sniped” at Bach, he saw himself more as a “mediator among the social classes,” and therefore it fell upon the younger generation of Scheibe to commit “parricide.” Butt, *Bach’s Dialogue with Modernity*, 206.
Overview of the Bach-Scheibe Controversy

Scheibe’s many attributes have now become overshadowed by the episode that has created his infamy, namely, the criticism he published about Bach and the ensuing debate that arose. Before discussing the issues incited by these articles, a brief overview of the dispute will establish both the chronological order of events and the characters involved. On May 14, 1737 Scheibe published an article in his *Critischer Musicus* (the sixth issue of the inaugural year of publishing), in the form of an “anonymous” letter from an “Able Musikant Abroad” (not until 1745 did Scheibe finally admit authorship). As the anonymous writer, Scheibe described ten musicians encountered on the author’s travels, nine ambiguously portrayed, but with the tenth clearly representing Bach.23 Within two concise paragraphs Scheibe made many pointed comments targeting both the personal credentials of Bach and his compositional style, which he described as “vainly employed, since they conflict with Nature.”24 The closing analogy of the article compared Bach to the poet Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein (1635-83), a writer who had become equated with what the moderns viewed as an outdated, bombastic, and distasteful poetic style of the previous generation.25 By equating an overly complex, artificial style, Scheibe asserted that both Bach and von Lohenstein created works that were robbed of their

23 Ibid., 87; NBR, 338.

24 NBR, 338. Scheibe did not only write of Bach in a pejorative sense, nor did he condemn all of Bach’s music. For example, just after printing his surrebuttal to Birnbaum’s pamphlet he included Bach in a May 5, 1739 edition of *Critischer Musicus* where he listed the best of the German composers, as follows, “A herald calls with raised voice: Fux, Hasse, Handel, Telemann, Bach Graun, Schmidt, Heinichen, Graun, Stölzel, Graupner, Bokemeyer with golden letters the high priest writes [these names] in the book” (*Ein Herold rief mit erhabener Stimme: Fux, Hasse, Händel, Telemann, Bach, Graun, Schmidt, Heinichen, Graun, Stölzel, Graupner, Bokemeyer, von dem Oberpriester mit goldenen Buchstaben in das Buch gezeichnet*). BD II no. 444, 364.

25 The Leipzig professor Johann Gottsched, who was also Scheibe’s former teacher, denigrated von Lohenstein for his old-fashioned style of writing. Dreyfus writes, “It must have stung Bach to be compared to a poet so much ridiculed in the intellectual circles of Leipzig, especially since Lohenstein stood for an outmoded and tasteless writer from the distant past.” Dreyfus, *Patterns*, 96-97.
simpler, natural beauty (*die Schwülstigkeit hat beyde von dem natürlichen auf das künstliche*). The article thereby targeted several facets of the composer; by labeling him as a *Musikant*, Bach’s credentials were under fire, and by describing his music as “artificial,” “impossible” to play, and overly polyphonic — along with his stinging reference to von Lohenstein — Scheibe directed his pen against an outdated aesthetic in Bach’s music.

In January 1738, the Leipzig Professor of Rhetoric Johann Birnbaum, also writing “anonymously,” published a lengthy defense of Bach in pamphlet form, “Impartial Comments on a Questionable Passage in the Sixth Number of the *Critischer Musicus*.” Although written by Birnbaum, Christoph Gottlieb Schröter’s 1746 “Summary” account of the Scheibe episode confirms that Bach specifically recruited the Professor to write the piece and it is highly probable that Bach also exerted significant influence on the content and distribution. Immediately after Birnbaum fashioned his rebuttal and circulated it in pamphlet form, other writers also entered the debate. Within the pages of his 1738 treatise, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Johann Mattheson reprinted a letter wherein Scheibe commented that, “Bach’s church pieces are always more artificial and more tiresome, but by no means as full of energetic conviction and intelligent reflection as those of Telemann and Graun.” Mattheson added his own provocative footnote to Scheibe’s letter, stating, “In music one should never

26 BD II, 286-87; NBR, 338.
28 NBR, 353. Other accounts of Bach’s control of the publication of the second pamphlet and the likelihood of Bach’s similar involvement in the first are included in Geck, *Bach*, 211; Leaver, “Religion and Religious Currents,” 130. Also, George Stauffer describes Birnbaum as Bach’s “mouthpiece” who wrote, “at the urging of Bach himself” and who was “undoubtedly provided [with] musical advice.” Stauffer, “Johann Mattheson and J.S. Bach,” 361.
begin with such tiresome artificialities, but rather with natural and easy melodic concerns." In direct response to Birnbaum, Scheibe published his own brief surrebuttal in the February 18, 1738 issue of the Critischer Musicus, but in his response Scheibe focused solely on the contentious reception of the term Musikant, rather than addressing Birnbaum’s wider arguments directed at compositional style. The extent of published material expanded further when Bach’s former student Lorenz Christoph Mizler (1711-1778) reprinted Birnbaum’s entire lengthy rebuttal in the pages of his periodical, the Neu eröffnete Musicalische Bibliothek to which he added his own assertion that Bach could write “in accordance to the latest taste” when he “wishes to.”

In response to Scheibe’s initial article we know that the aforementioned commentary arose from Birnbaum, Mattheson and Mizler in their own publications, but there is also evidence that the debate had caught the interest of the wider musical community. In a 1738 letter from Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748) to Heinrich Bokemeyer (1679-1751), Walther asks his colleague to discretely report back to him sub rosa about the response to the Scheibe-Birnbaum dispute in the Wolfenbüttel area where Bokemeyer lived (unfortunately, Bokemeyer’s response has not survived). Also in 1738, Johann Matthias Gesner (1691-1761),

30 NBR, 348-9.
31 NBR, 349-50. The Neu eröffnete Musikalische Bibliothek (Newly Opened Musical Library) was published by Mizler from 1736 to 1754. George Buelow describes Mizler as “both personally and philosophically an enemy of Scheibe,” and therefore connects much of Mizler defense of Bach as a personal vendetta against Scheibe. Buelow, 88, 98. Jan Chiapusso includes Scheibe’s printed review of Mizler’s “24 Odes” as, “so bad that they brought disgrace upon the printer for exposing such miserable scribblings to print.” Chiapusso, Bach’s World, 254. Mizler also founded the “Society of Musical Science” in 1738, which Bach joined in 1747. Wolff, The Learned Musician, 422; NBR, 296-97.
Professor of Classics at the University of Göttingen (and former rector of the Thomasschule in Leipzig), made a notable reference to Bach in a footnote of his publication on Quintilian, most likely included as an indirect jab at Scheibe. After pointing out Bach’s formidable skills in performance and composition, Gesner summarized his thoughts with, “Favorer as I am of antiquity, the accomplishments of our Bach, and of any others that there may be like him, appear to me to effect what not many Orpheuses, nor twenty Arions, could achieve.”

Following Scheibe’s second article of February 1738, Bach arranged for the printing of two hundred copies of a second pamphlet written by Birnbaum in March 1739 titled, “Defense of his Impartial Comments,” which Bach specifically wanted ready in advance of the Leipzig Easter fair. Unfortunately this second pamphlet has not survived other than Scheibe’s reprinted version included in his 1745 compilation of the *Critischer Musicus*. In his April 2, 1739 issue, Scheibe responded with his most audacious article to date, writing as the anonymous contributor, “Cornelius,” who represented a thinly veiled parody of Bach as an undereducated, pompous, and hopelessly outdated bumbler (although Scheibe claimed that the article was not directed at Bach, it was clearly understood as such). Scheibe set aside all

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33 Gesner’s Latin text is reprinted in BD II, 331-32; also cited in Dreyfus, *Patterns of Invention*, 221.

34 Correspondence dating from March 3, 1739 from Johann Elias Bach to a printer in Jena confirms that Johann Sebastian wanted copies made in time for the Leipzig fair. Apparently the Jena printer was unable to fulfill Bach’s wishes because four days later Johann Elias writes to a different printer, in Ronneburg, asking for two hundred copies to be made on medium-quality paper. BD II, 337; 211.

35 “Vertheidigung seiner unparteyischen Anmerken.” It was reprinted with footnotes in Scheibe’s 1745 compilation of his *Critischer Musicus*. BD II, 340-60; Geck, *Bach*, 210-11.

36 NBR, 350-52. The *New Bach Reader* contains a note that a copy of this edition of *Critischer Musicus* held in the New York Public Library, bears the eighteenth century hand-written notation, “This letter is a satire on Mr. Bach.” Scheibe claimed, however, that the creation of the character “Cornelius” was a compilation of the foibles of various musicians. NBR, 352. Bach's contemporaries, on the other hand, clearly interpreted this article as being directed at Bach, as described in the 1746 article, “A summary account of the controversy, by Christoph Gottlieb Schröter,” NBR, 352-53; BD II, no. 552.
niceties taking aim at Bach’s music and his use of Birnbaum as his defender. “Cornelius” writes:

What good are those bare songs that can be understood at once and remembered and sung from memory? I reserve my praise for a piece in which everything is finely intermingled, so that the listener is astonished and cannot conceive in what variegated curlicues everything is interwoven with everything else, since no melody and in fact nothing can be remembered. These are the true masterpieces.

And,

Though I cannot write against you myself, I will persuade one of my good friends to defend me against you.  

Bach’s supporters clearly saw this article as particularly egregious (as noted in the following paragraph). After this final inflammatory article, which has been excused by George Buelow as “unfortunate youthful sarcasm,” all parties refrained from further published comments, and the controversy gradually subsided.

After a six-year lapse, Scheibe resurrected the issue when he created his 1745 compilation of the Critischer Musicus, and included the second of Birnbaum’s pamphlets with one hundred and sixty-four of his own footnotes refuting Birnbaum’s statements. Once again Johann Mizler rose to Bach’s defense by instigating and publishing the article, “A summary account of the Controversy,” for which he recruited one member of his Society of Musical

37 NBR, 352-53.
39 NBR, 353.
Science, Christoph Gottlieb Schröter (1699-1782) to write.\textsuperscript{40} Mizler’s personal interaction with Scheibe indicates that Mizler’s vigorous defense of Bach was fuelled by hostility between himself and Scheibe as well as his indignation about Scheibe’s critical articles of Bach. Previous to Scheibe’s 1737 article there had already been an ongoing enmity between Scheibe and Mizler borne out of their very different musical ideologies and the particularly negative press each had given the other.\textsuperscript{41} In his later summary accounts Schröter was no more complimentary of Scheibe than Mizler. Included in his description of the Scheibe-Birnbaum episode Schröter made specific comment about the “Cornelius” article of 1739, which he described as “not permissible satire but a shameful libel. Since in the face of the anger thus aroused he has not adopted any modest or well-grounded position, but instead has heaped injury upon injury …”\textsuperscript{42} After Bach’s death, Mizler published a second summary article by Schröter for circulation in 1752.\textsuperscript{43} The controversy, therefore, positioned Bach in the centre of a debate that had lasted well over ten years and had aroused passionate responses among his contemporaries.

\textbf{Scheibe’s Criticisms as a General Commentary on Diverging Musical Aesthetics}

Scheibe’s comments targeting Bach’s music as an example of an outdated compositional style arose from a contemporary viewpoint (primarily embraced by the next generation) that succeeded in transforming a sound aesthetic during the course of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} NBR, 352-53. Schröter was also recruited by Bach to pen a response to Biedermann in 1749, yet, as described in Chapter 3, Bach felt that Schröter’s tone was too mild and in response, edited the prose, much to Schröter’s dismay. Wolff, \textit{The Learned Musician}, 423-24.
\item \textsuperscript{41} According to Buelow, Mizler was both “personally and philosophically an enemy of Scheibe.” Mizler gave unfavourable reviews to each of Scheibe’s \textit{Critischer Musicus} issues, and Buelow asserts that Mizler’s defense of Bach had the ulterior motive of “destroying Scheibe’s reputation.” Buelow, “In Defense,” 88.
\item \textsuperscript{42} NBR, 353.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Schröter’s “Streitschriften Scheibe-Birnbaum,” Leipzig, 1752. BD III, 22-23.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
eighteenth century. His criticisms serve to highlight the important issues that dominated musical discourse during the first half of the century and that thereby transformed the musical landscape. George Buelow writes,

> What Scheibe tried to say about Bach’s music when viewed in the context of his entire theoretical and aesthetic statements makes perfectly good sense and, more important, brings to all who will listen without prejudice a vivid, instructive picture of the remarkable changes taking place in music at that time in Germany.  

It is important to remember that the demarcation of 1750 as the end of the “Baroque” era is misleading, for the style of music produced in the contrasting “Classical” musical era that followed began fluidly and much earlier than the middle of the century. Bach’s music spanned this significant shift and because his music did not fully embrace a modern aesthetic, it was not surprising that his compositional style became a target for Scheibe’s pen.

Even though Bach was vociferously defended by a band of supporters, Scheibe’s comments were representative of the growing prevalence of the modern aesthetic he espoused. Georg Telemann, arguably the most popular composer in Germany at the time, seems to have been fully aware and in approval of Scheibe’s critique before the first publication. Telemann was friendly with Bach (and was also the godfather of Bach’s second son Carl Philipp Emanuel), and is not typically associated with the Scheibe controversy, but in actuality when Scheibe started publication of the *Critischer Musicus* Scheibe he worked under the direct

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mentorship of Telemann. According to Scheibe, Telemann read the first fifteen issues of publication before they circulated, about which Buelow responds:

> It seems incontestable not only that the general character of Scheibe’s work evolved under Telemann’s encouragement and advice, but also that Telemann had seen and approved Scheibe’s comments on Bach. It is unlikely that at this point in his life Scheibe would have published anything to which Telemann took exception.

Therefore it seems that even Telemann tacitly supported the opinion that Bach’s music did not reflect the aesthetic ideals of the age and that it warranted critique.

In addition to the influences of Telemann and Johann Mattheson, another important stimulus in the development of Scheibe’s musical ideology occurred while studying poetics in Leipzig with Johann Christoph Gottsched. During those years Gottsched had already begun his literary reforms and would have exposed his students to his ideals of literary “good taste,” which included the stripping away of artifice. Scheibe’s reference comparing Bach to von Lohenstein was likely inspired by an essay written in 1732 where Gottsched equated the English poet John Milton (1608-74) with “… the predominance of Lohensteinian excess, uncontrolled imagination, pretentious forms of expression, and wrong-headed judgment.” In musical terms, Scheibe applied Gottsched’s use of “Lohensteinian excess” to the musical “artifice” of counterpoint or Harmonie. The utmost goal of music, therefore, was no longer the

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47 Scheibe, Über die musicalische Composition (Leipzig: 1773), ix; Buelow, 97.
48 The essay “Critische Anmerkungen über Lohensteins Lobrede” was included in Gottsched’s periodical, Beyträge zur Kritischen Historie der Deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit (Essays on the Critical History of the German Language, Poetics and Rhetoric) vol. 1 (Leipzig: Bernhard Christoph Bretikopf, 1732): 496-526.; also cited in Geck, Bach, 208.
high “artistry” exhibited in complex polyphony, but rather a flowing Melodie that spoke to the human spirit through a natural simplicity, free of “excess.”\textsuperscript{49} As such, the parallel reforms underway in literature also underscore the influence of Enlightenment ideals that also informed Scheibe’s musical critique.

\textbf{Specific Criticisms Directed at Bach}

Scheibe’s initial article on May 14, 1737 presented his primary complaints about Bach’s music, which in essence was that Bach’s music was simply too complicated. Scheibe outlined his complaints using the following points. Bach’s preponderance of polyphony obscured the purity of a beautiful melody and his overwrought “artistry” did not conform to the modern ideals of “taste.” Scheibe described Bach’s pervading polyphony, or Harmonie, as “turgid” (schwülstig), “confused” (verworrenes), and infused with an excess of “artifice” (in this context, described as Kunst) that darkened its beauty.\textsuperscript{50} In addition, Bach’s tendency to write every embellishment on the score not only disallowed improvisational freedom of the performer, but further obscured the modern aesthetic of a simple, singing melody. Scheibe’s complaints about Bach’s musical aesthetics were compounded by what Scheibe felt were excessive demands on performers to recreate music that may have been idiomatic for the keyboard, but were “impossible” for singers and instrumentalists.\textsuperscript{51} Between the two “camps” that engaged in this debate of aesthetics, therefore, several familiar themes are present; the

\textsuperscript{49} Geck, \textit{Bach}, 205.

\textsuperscript{50} Scheibe wrote, “This great man would be the admiration of whole nations if he had more amenity [Annehmlichkeit], if he did not take away the natural element in his pieces by giving them a turgid [schwülstiges] and confused [verworrenes] style, and if he did not darken their beauty by an excess of art [Kunst].” (Dieser grosse Mann würde die Bewunderung gantzer Nationen seyn, wenn er mehr Annehmlichkeit hätte, und wenn er nicht seinen Stücken durch ein schwülstiges und verworrenes Wesen das Natürliche entzoge, und ihre Schönheit durch allzugrosse Kunst verdunkelte.) NBR, 338; BD, no. 400, 286.

\textsuperscript{51} BD no. 400, 286-88; NBR, 338.
dominance of Harmonie versus Melodie, polyphony versus homophony, “artificial” versus “natural,” a calling to higher artistry versus pleasing the listener, and the prevailing dominance of “taste.”

A consistent theme in Scheibe’s discourse was the dominance of Melodie over Harmonie, an ideology underscored by the philosophical ideals that informed his musical aesthetic. Polyphony was not simply an aesthetic choice, but instead represented an ideal borne out of pre-Enlightenment values. In brief (and as described more fully in Chapter 2), the rules of Harmonie had traditionally been understood as developing out of a God-ordained order of the universe reflected in the intricacies of counterpoint — or a musical construct that replicated the “harmony of the spheres.” In this sense, because the deepest expression of music was for the glory of God, the complexities of Harmonie represented the highest form of musical offering. As Enlightenment ideals influenced societal constructs towards a humanistic outlook, the immutability of contrapuntal rules was challenged. Whereas “God-ordained” rules were beyond reproach, those developed by humans could be adapted as ideologies evolved, and consequently progressive critics challenged long-standing concepts of musical aesthetics. As noted in Chapter 2, Peter Gay describes a broad “freedom of aesthetic response” associated with the Enlightenment, which, when applied to a musical aesthetic, responded to the rule-bound constraints of complex counterpoint with a movement towards the more “natural” aesthetic of simpler homophony.

53 See Joyce L. Irwin, Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque (New York: P. Lang, 1993), 1-7.
54 Gay, The Enlightenment, 3.
Scheibe complained that in Bach’s music, “all of the voices must work with each other and be of equal difficulty, and none of them can be recognized as the principal voice,” which was earlier described as “confusing” and “turgid.” The rebuttal by Birnbaum, on behalf of Bach, displays a collision of completely different ideologies. Birnbaum begins:

> What does the word “confused” (verworrenes) mean in music? … This much I know: that “confused” means that which has no order, and of which the individual parts are so strangely thrown about and mixed up among one another that one cannot see where each really belongs. … Where the rules of composition are most strictly observed, there without fail order must reign…

Birnbaum summarizes his argument with:

> It is certain, by the way, that the voices in the works of this great master of music work wonderfully in and about one another, but without the slightest confusion. They move along together or in opposition, as necessary. They part company, and yet all meet again at the proper time. Each voice distinguishes itself clearly from the others by a particular variation, although they often imitate each other. They now flee, now follow one another without one’s noticing the slightest irregularity in their efforts to outdo one another. Now, when all this is performed as it should be, there is nothing more beautiful than this Harmonie.

Therefore, a fundamental difference is exposed by Birnbaum’s response. From Scheibe’s vantage, the rules that governed Harmonie had become representative of the “artificial” in music, and instead of enhancing a composition, detracted from what should be a “natural” sound, whereas Birnbaum espoused the opposite. What for Scheibe represented an outdated “excess of art” remained for Bach a fundamental enhancement derived from the highest order.

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55 NBR, 338.
56 NBR, 344.
The debates over whether Harmonie superseded Melodie clearly represented the changing perceptions of what was “artificial” or “natural” in music. An overabundance of “Art” versus the pleasing simplicity of “Nature” were terms equated with the core contention; according to Scheibe the polyphony that infused so much of Bach’s compositions was exactly what was meant as “artificial” and in “conflict with Nature.” These words had already gained widespread use a decade earlier when Mattheson and Bokemeyer engaged in their public battle in 1723. Mattheson had asserted that Kunst associated with learned counterpoint was fundamentally an “artificial” aesthetic that was no longer the ideal, whereas Bokemeyer responded that, “The perfection of nature is not recognized when it is not brought to light by the investigations of art.” Birnbaum’s response to Scheibe’s accusation that “turgidity” had led Bach’s music from “the natural to the artificial” almost exactly echoes Bokemeyer’s sentiment. Birnbaum writes that polyphony is not an “excess of art,” but rather that “… art lends Nature a beauty it lacks, and increases the beauty it possesses.”

Birnbaum continues:

The essential aims of true art are to imitate Nature, and, where necessary, to aid it. If art imitates Nature, then indisputably the natural element must everywhere shine through in works of art.

57 NBR, 338.
58 Denn die Vollkommenheit der Natur würde nicht erkannt wo sie durch das Nachspüren der Kunst nicht zum Vorschein gebracht würde. Mattheson, Critica Musica, 331.
59 Also schenckt die kunst der natur die ermangelnde schönheit und vermehrt die gegenwärtige. NBR, 345; BD, 303.
Accordingly it is impossible that art should take away the natural element of those things in which it imitates Nature — including music.\textsuperscript{60}

His syllogism only served to underscore the ideological divide between Scheibe and Bach. Buelow writes, “[Birnbaum’s] may have been Bach’s own viewpoint of the ‘natural’ in art, but it was not Scheibe’s. The difference in viewpoint underlines the overall dramatic changes in musical outlook between the younger Scheibe and the older Bach.”\textsuperscript{61}

The underlying goal of Scheibe’s notions of melody-dominant writing using a simpler, “natural” style was a deliberate intention to “please” the audience through an emotional connection with the listener, best attained through an agreeable melody rather than erudite polyphony. Theodor Adorno writes,

\begin{quote}
In Bach’s time to be modern was to throw off the burden of the \textit{res severa} for the sake of \textit{gaudium}, of the pleasing and playful, in the name of communication, of consideration for the presumptive listener who, with the decline of the old theological order, had also lost the belief that the formal vocabulary associated with that order was binding.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

Rather than propagating an esoteric, rule-bound contrapuntal aesthetic, those who promoted a new aesthetic of music sought to convey emotion through beautifully wrought melody. In Mattheson’s 1723 debate, he claimed that \textit{künstlich} (“artificial”) and \textit{herz-rührenden} (“heart-stirring”) were oxymoronic terms. Mattheson asserted that \textit{Melodie} supplanted \textit{Harmonie} in large part because the more cerebral context of contrapuntal music did not connect with the

\textsuperscript{60} NBR, 345.
\textsuperscript{61} Buelow, “In Defense,” 95.
listener as well as a melodic-dominant style could. Now, instead of a “vertical” construct designed to please God, a “lateral” construct gained favour, with the higher goal of Annehmlichkeit (translated as “charm” or “pleasantness”).

Scheibe specifically addressed the perception that Bach’s music lacked a pleasant appeal when he wrote that Bach, “would be the admiration of whole nations if he had more Annehmlichkeit.” Because very little of Bach’s music was performed or circulated outside Leipzig, it must be noted that when Scheibe wrote this he was likely most familiar with Bach’s liturgical music of the 1720s, and not the range of music that Bach was writing in the 1730s. For example, Robert Marshall’s influential article “Bach the Progressive” makes particular mention of the deliberate assimilation of “progressive” musical trends in Bach’s music after 1729 in both his secular and sacred compositions. A revealing amendment made by Bach in 1736 is just one example of the continuing evolution of Bach’s compositional style occurring in that decade. In the final handwritten version of the St. Matthew Passion of 1736 Bach modified the rhythm for the flute part of the opening chorus, bar 26, from a long-short-long pattern to the short-long-short pattern of the more modern Lombardic style. Along with these nods to current trends, however, Martin Geck points out that Bach intertwined an “old-fashioned” cantus firmus “O Lamm Gottes unschuldig” within the same movement in what could only be described as the greatest artistry. It is significant, therefore, that although Bach

63 Critica Musica, 332, 336, as cited in Yearsley, “Ideologies of Learned Counterpoint,” 278.
64 NBR, 338.
incorporated new trends throughout his life, he continued to maintain artistry grounded in his traditional contrapuntal training.

The arguments generated by Bach’s defenders reveal the synthesis of styles that Bach’s music exhibited. However, in using Bach’s most modern traits as the basis of defense, the effectiveness of the claims was weakened. For example, Mizler’s 1738 response to Scheibe’s criticisms included the following description:

… if Mr. Bach at times writes the inner parts more fully than other composers, he has taken as his model the music of over twenty or twenty-five years ago. He can write otherwise, however, when he wishes to. Anyone who heard the music that was performed … at the Easter Fair in Leipzig last year … must admit that it was written entirely in accordance with the latest taste, and was approved by everyone. So well does the Capellmeister know how to suit himself to his listeners.68

Unfortunately the cantata cited by Mizler has since been lost, but the sentiment is clear; although Bach is known for his traditional style, he also occasionally incorporates newer musical trends that please his listeners. Inadvertently, however, Mizler underlined the essence of Scheibe’s criticism by admitting that Bach’s writing was more often associated with the music of twenty-five years prior. By protesting that Bach could write in the “latest taste” when he “wished to,” Mizler’s remark could be interpreted as effectively reiterating Scheibe’s criticism that Bach’s music lacked popular appeal due to his adherence to an outdated compositional style.69 Even the compliment paid by Johann Matthias Gesner in his publication

67 Ibid.
68 “Refutations to Scheibe,” NBR, 350.
69 See also Dreyfus, Patterns of Invention, 220.
on Quintillian, included the opening qualifying clause, “Favorer as I am of antiquity” before praising the “accomplishments of our Bach,” once more emphasizing the traditional roots of Bach’s music.70

Bach’s “developed inner voices,” as phrased by Mizler, also contributed to another aspect of Scheibe’s complaints, that is, the difficulty of Bach’s writing. The “impossible” demands of Bach’s music were an objection that is not limited to the eighteenth century. For centuries, performers have acknowledged that Bach’s writing is often challenging for instrumentalists and singers; however, within Scheibe’s criticism was the added facet of a stylistic juxtaposition between Bach’s complexity and the increasingly popular homophonic style heard in the opera house. Notably, Mattheson made this point several years before Scheibe when in 1731, in spite of limited exposure to Bach’s music, he stated that Bach’s writing was “unsingable” (as described in his treatise, Große General-Baß-Schule).71 Scheibe would have had far more exposure to Bach’s music while he studied at the St. Thomas school (and the difficulty of Bach’s music may have been a common grievance among his peers), but Scheibe did not limit his complaints to the difficulty of the writing, he also connected it to an “artifice.”72 His final comparison to von Lohenstein underlines that although “one admires the onerous labor and uncommon effort,” the difficulty of Bach’s compositions is “however vainly employed, since they conflict with Nature.”73 In response, Birnbaum did not address the implication that the difficulty of Bach’s music was also tied to his overarching “artificial”

70 BD II, 331-32; also cited in Dreyfus, Bach and the Pattens of Invention, 221, and with an excellent English translation in Parrott, The Essential Bach Choir, 173-74.
72 NBR, 338.
73 Ibid.
compositional style. Instead, he quoted Bach as stating, “that which I have achieved by industry and practice, anyone else with tolerable natural gift and ability can also achieve.” Clearly, Bach considered the mastery of his music as a simple matter of work habits rather than a stylistic approach that should be amended.

A final issue that aroused particularly passionate responses from Bach’s defenders was not one of musical aesthetics, but rather of personal credentials. When Scheibe referred to Bach as a *Musikant* he unleashed a furor of responses for a perceived undermining of Bach’s status as a court composer and cantor of St. Thomas. In his initial rebuttal of 1738, Birnbaum wrote:

> The Hon. Court Composer is called the most eminent of the *Musicanten* in Leipzig. This expression smacks too strongly of the mean and low, and does not fit the titles “extraordinary artist,” “great man,” “the admiration of whole nations,” which are applied to the Hon. Court Composer in what follows. The term *Musicanten* is generally used for those whose principal achievement is a form of mere musical practice … those who devote themselves voluntarily to it … This is in my opinion equivalent to wishing to pay a special tribute to a thoroughly learned man by calling him the best member of the last class of schoolboys.

Although the term *Musikant* was one of the points most vociferously argued by Birnbaum, whether Scheibe actually intended the word disparagingly remains debatable. Bach and his defenders interpreted this reference as a patronizing term more apt for an amateur musician than a learned master of music, whereas Scheibe protested to the contrary. It may be that Scheibe knew very well how the term would be received, or on the other hand, it may have been a misinterpretation owing both to a generational divide and the influence of Gottsched’s language reforms. In response to Birnbaum’s protestations Scheibe wrote,

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74 Ibid., 346.
75 Ibid., 340-41.
And why should we Germans be the only ones to give up the true old and general meaning of the
Musikant? The French say in their language: Musicien, the Italians according to their language,
Musico. Why should the Germans alone retain in their language the Latin word Musicus, and not,
like other races, give it an ending that conforms to their language.\(^\text{76}\)

As a disciple of Gottsched, Scheibe protested that he was simply retaining indigenous German
terms rather than foreign expressions.

Regardless of the intent, the term seemed to especially aggravate Bach. Indications are
that Bach was acutely aware of his own lack of academic credentials — he had already faced
years of tension with the Leipzig town council over his lack of university qualifications, and
his hesitancy to represent himself among his more academically experienced colleagues was
likely the motivation behind Bach’s recruitment of Birnbaum.\(^\text{77}\)

Birnbaum’s was not the only
expression of disapproval, for Mizler obviously agreed that the term was demeaning, writing,
“One may say ‘the Musikanten in the tavern at Golitz,’ but not ‘the Royal Court Musikanten in
Dresden;’ rather, ‘the Royal Capelle,’ ‘the virtuosi.’”\(^\text{78}\)

Even several years later, echoes of the
issue were raised by Mattheson, who wrote in a 1740 publication that Musikant was a word “so
much contested and resisted by some people,” and that “some even don’t want to be called
capellmeister, but only chamber or court musician.”\(^\text{79}\)

Regardless of the outcry, Scheibe did not

\(^{76}\) *Critischer Musicus*, 251-52; cited and translated by Buelow, “In Defense,” 92.

\(^{77}\) See Chapter 3 for more detailed information about Bach’s responses to his contemporaries. The only period
account explaining Bach’s recruitment of Birnbaum was Schröter’s “Summary” of 1746 where he wrote, “Since
[Bach] was not in a position, on account of the piling up of his official duties, to answer the Critical Musician
properly, Magister Birnbaum undertook the task” NBR, 353.

\(^{78}\) NBR, 349; BD II, 336.

refrain from continued use of the term, and likely poured even more “salt in the wounds” by referring to the “Cornelius” of his 1738 satirical article once again as the *Musikant.*

The widespread debate and the active role that Bach undertook in the initiation, publication, and circulation of Birnbaum’s pamphlets suggest that Bach was acutely aware of both Scheibe’s accusations and the polarized discourse that arose, yet in spite of the widespread publicity, Bach did not enter the fray himself. Two documents reveal the curiosity aroused owing to Bach’s recruitment of Birnbaum as his mouthpiece. After two years of responding to Birnbaum, Scheibe included this less-than-gracious remark within his slanderous “Cornelius” article of 1739, where the sarcasm is unmistakable.

Shame on you, Sir, that you once attacked such remarkable works of art. And do not make bold to express any longer your false and annoying opinion, or to maintain it, or to go so far as to use it to belittle me. I assure you that I will not let such insult stand. Though I cannot write against you myself, I will persuade one of my good friends to defend me against you. The learned man who is now writing you this letter according to my indications and ideas will protect me against you, you may be sure. Don’t let things come to that, for you might very easily rue it.

A far more sympathetic description was fashioned by Schröter, in his 1746 “Summary,” writing:

Perhaps those who have not read the critical pages and other writings in the matter will be anxious to know whether Capellmeister Bach has remained silent in the face of them. *Answer:* Since he was not in a position, on account of the piling up of his official duties, to answer the Critical Musician properly, Magister Birnbaum undertook the task….

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80 NBR, 350.
81 NBR, 352.
82 NBR, 353.
It is true that Bach’s life continued to be demanding during the period of 1737 to 1739, but these sorts of demands had been undertaken by Bach for most of his career.83 The weight of Schröter’s explanation therefore seems weak in light of the tremendous workload Bach was able to sustain throughout his life, all the while actively engaging in his own written debate within the local arena. In his article defending Scheibe, George Buelow criticizes Bach’s decision to recruit Birnbaum, suggesting that Bach should not have been baited by Scheibe’s initial article at all, but rather should have let it pass.

Bach should have chosen to ignore Scheibe, but instead he allowed himself to be drawn into an embarrassing, lengthy controversy. His apparent decision to respond through Birnbaum permitted others to make him a tool, whether wittingly or not we cannot know, for those critical forces aligned against Scheibe.84

Given Bach’s personality and his responses to other tensions encountered in his career, however, it is inconceivable that Bach would not have reacted. His active involvement in Birnbaum’s articles is evidence of Bach’s most direct answer to Scheibe, and yet his music post-Scheibe also reveals different characteristics suggesting new motivating forces.

At no other time in Bach’s life was his music subject to such intense scrutiny and judgment by his musical colleagues as during the aesthetic dispute instigated by Scheibe. Malcolm Boyd writes that after the Scheibe controversy, “the effect on the music Bach was to write during the last decade of his life was profound,” suggesting that this episode became an

83 Events of each of those years include: 1737 — conflict with Elector Ernesti over school prefects, birth of his daughter Johanna Carolina, Bach’s resignation from the Collegium Musicum directorship, travels to Weissensee; 1738 — composition of cantata Anh. I 13 for the Easter fair, travels to Dresden; 1739 — publication of his Clavier-Übung III, death of his twenty-four year old son Johann Gottfried Bernhard, travels to Altenburg, Weissenfels, and Halle, and his return as director of the Collegium Musicum.

important catalyst for the change of compositional priorities occurring during the 1740s.\textsuperscript{85} It is notable that in his last years Bach created some of his most esoteric, serious music, but also some of his most light-hearted. This was the era when Bach created such iconic works as BWV 1080, *The Art of the Fugue*, BWV 1079, *Musical Offering*, BWV 769, Canonic Variations and BWV 232, *The Mass in B minor* apparently for entirely personal reasons — there is no evidence of a performance goal — but also his humorous, secular BWV 212, *Peasant Cantata*, which exudes unpretentious charm written very much to “taste.” Bach’s style of composition had been distinct throughout his career, and yet it seems that after his music became such a controversial subject of aesthetic debate, his resolution to create music dictated on his own terms grew even stronger.

**Beyond the Scope of the Debate – How Bach’s Music Intersected with the Aesthetic**

Bach’s compositions have intrigued and generated analysis for centuries, and although Bach scholarship remains prolific, his music continues to resist a narrow definition as either “traditional” or “progressive.” Theodor Adorno wryly comments, “If Bach was indeed modern, then why was he archaic?”\textsuperscript{86} It is dangerous to attempt to neatly summarize Bach’s later music as a direct response to his critics — as a musical evangelist for a traditional style of writing — for his music resists such facile categorization. Instead of representing the culmination of an era, as Bach was so famously described by Alfred Schweitzer, Bach continued to imaginatively synthesize influences that created music reaching beyond the confines of his era.\textsuperscript{87} Martin Geck


\textsuperscript{86} Adorno, *Prisms*, 139.

\textsuperscript{87} “Thus Bach represents an end point. Nothing starts with him; everything merely leads up to him.” Schweitzer, *Bach*, 3.
asserts that the last part of Bach’s life, in the 1740s, was more of a new beginning than an end point. He writes:

Bach is setting out to find a form of musical expression beyond established genres and styles, or the essence of music itself. Ultimately, the canon and the fugue are neither genres nor styles but compositional methods, though of a special kind – they are perfectly suited to represent his ideal of perfect harmony. As Birnbaum has explained, this ideal finds its realization when, in an ensemble of independent, euphonious voices, each works together perfectly with every other.88

Laurence Dreyfus has used David Wellbery’s excellent analysis of Enlightenment semiotics and aesthetics as the template for his description of Bach’s “hermeneutic” approach to composing.89 In Wellbery’s model, much of the eighteenth-century aesthetic was strongly motivated by the value of “entertainment,” an aesthetic that reinforced class structures, or by “emotion” designed to “move” the listener; however, Dreyfus suggests that Bach’s compositional style does not truly fit either. Bach’s music reflects a unique interpretation of the world around him, or a hermeneutic approach, that ultimately reaches beyond himself.90 This unique ability to interpret the world simultaneously as an individual and as a universalist has allowed Bach’s music to extend beyond the compositional expectations of his era to remain a powerful voice to subsequent generations.91

During the pronounced musical transition that occurred during the eighteenth century, Bach maintained a critical distance from the aesthetic discourse, and remained shaped by his

88 Geck, Bach, 221.


90 Dreyfus, Patterns, 240.

91 See all of Chapter 8 in Dreyfus, Bach and the Patterns of Invention, and John Butt’s discussion on the continued relevance of Bach’s Passions in Bach’s Dialogue with Modernity: Perspectives on the Passions, Chapter 5.
own inner criteria rather than by the dictates of “good taste.” Dreyfus makes the claim that the progressive musical thought of the day,

… for all its elegance and charm, had signaled a regression in technique and a demeaning of the divine task that Bach saw as entrusted in the composer. As it stands, only his music (at least in Germany) opposed these regressions, if only by doggedly pursuing a path at odds with the dominant aesthetic.92

A unique synthesis of tradition and progress, as exhibited in Bach’s music has been described by Adorno:

For it is precisely the archaic-sounding pieces which are often the most daring, not merely in terms of their contrapuntal combinations, which indeed draw directly on their earlier polyphonic arrangements, but also with regard to the most advanced aspects of the general effect.93

Therefore, even though Scheibe and other progressive critics maligned Bach for his adherence to traditional forms and style, his interpretation of these traditions pushed musical boundaries far beyond those of his “progressive” contemporaries.

Ironically, even as the progressive critics expressed their emancipation from the old-fashioned rules of polyphony, their adoption of symmetry and balance created new strictures that, in practical terms, resulted in a more confined musical structure than what had preceded. David Schulenberg writes, “but such freedom was dangerous for members of the next generation, whose style depended increasingly on the balancing of phrases within more or less symmetrical closed tonal designs. Thus the most successful works of C. P. E. Bach often

92 Dreyfus, *Patterns*, 244.
93 Adorno, *Prisms*, 140.
possess a more rigid architecture than do those of his father.”

Although J. S. Bach was criticized for his “artificial” aesthetic, the aforementioned “rigid architecture” that characterized music of the pre-Classicists paradoxically became subservient to the demands of “taste,” and in so doing replaced the confines of one aesthetic with another.

Conclusion: O holder Tag as a unique, personal commentary on Bach’s aesthetic environment

As a small, secular, commissioned chamber cantata written for the entertainment of wedding guests, it is hardly surprising that BWV 210 O holder Tag has attracted minimal attention within the larger body of Bach scholarship. In many ways the cantata is unremarkable. The music is not, for the most part, even newly composed, but rather is parodied from an earlier homage cantata that had itself already been used several times. As was typical of Bach’s secular works, the compositional style tends to be lighter than the liturgical cantatas, and pleasing galant traits are incorporated into arias based on dance rhythms. As such, a superficial look at the piece would suggest that it was one of Bach’s lesser works — a lovely piece that admirably fulfilled a patron’s wishes and provided extra income for a working musician. Where it becomes unusual, however, is in the strangely incongruent messages expressed, as well as the passionate prose with which these ideas are conveyed: a gently lilting aria states that music is not a true panacea for woe, and in fact misleads the listener; instead of recitative movements providing simple transitions between arias, Bach creates highly chromatic, lengthy declamations articulating compelling arguments for the value of music;

while other commissioned cantatas maintain a focus on the patron, Bach inserts an extended central section that builds a wide-ranging argument on the worth of music; and lastly, rather than a libretto that maintains a celebratory tone, acerbic lines referring to music’s detractors as “Satan’s children” and a “brood from hell” appear in recitatives. As such, many facets of this cantata do not conform to expectations. The incongruities between text and music, as well as the unusually impassioned arguments forming the core of the piece, convey a peculiar duality between function and freedom of expression. Bach fulfilled a patron’s wedding commission by formulating a lengthy, beautifully composed cantata, but also used the opportunity to create his own response to the aesthetic discourse of his critics.

That there was a specific intention to address the progressive critics who denigrated traditional musical forms cherished and honed by Bach is evident in both textual and musical amendments made in O holder Tag. Terms that were intimately associated with the intense aesthetic debates of the day, such as Melodie, Harmonie and angenehme, are put into entirely different contexts in the later revised version. Whereas the title and subsequent plot of BWV 210a celebrates the angenehme Melodei, or “pleasing melody” of Music as conveyed in a “pleasing” galant style of composition, all references to Melodie disappear in BWV 210. Instead, Harmonie becomes the central focus of the amended text. After the opening pointedly ironic twists of plot that present Harmonie as a source of derision, an impassioned argument in its favour forms the core of the libretto. I posit that this change of emphasis is not coincidental. Musically, the newly composed inner recitatives create another poignant dichotomy underscoring the message. Whereas O angenehme Melodei interpolates galant arias with more typical, transitional recitative movements, the new recitatives written for O holder Tag are some of the most complex, lengthy, and chromatic recitative writing found in any of his
cantatas. The insertion of these movements serves to transform the context of the contiguous arias both through the lengthy texts as well as through the chromatic harmonies employed. Again, the replacement of these key central recitatives transforms the work to such a degree that their inclusion speaks of Bach’s deliberate intent to create new significance to the message. The calculated dichotomies of this cantata, a work infused with *galant* idioms used as a vehicle for Bach to address critics dismissive of polyphonic complexity, serve to magnify the impact of the message. The duality of the music and message actually serves to heighten the impact and create a more powerful musical response than any of the written rebuttals produced by Bach’s defenders. In this manner, the sum becomes greater than the parts.

In his book exploring the enduring appeal of Bach’s Passions, John Butt illustrates how a similar duality that is heard in Bach’s soprano aria, “Blute nur, du liebes Herz” from the St. John Passion, deepens the textual message through the musical underpinnings. In this aria, Bach’s orchestral accompaniment alternates between a sighing motive and detached, almost mechanical interruptions, in contrast with the highly emotive and expressive vocal line on the text, “only bleed, you, my dear heart.” The relationship between voice and strings creates, in the words of Butt, “a subject-object separation: perhaps the interpolations are the heart, ticking along in its own way, or even the blood dripping as it would be seen by a detached observer.”95 As such, a dialectic dynamic is created between the text and accompaniment, which not only does not negate the other, but actually enhances the message conveyed, “as if the same phenomenon is being experienced from two points of view simultaneously.”96

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96 Ibid.
In much the same way, Bach creates a parallel dynamic between text and music within movements of *O holder Tag*. The fourth movement aria is a particularly poignant example of this dialecticism. Bach’s juxtaposition of the soprano line exhorting Music to be quiet because the *Harmonie* only serves to mislead, is conveyed through a gentle tapestry of interwoven, independent soprano, oboe d’amore, and violin parts. As the soprano sings, *Eure zarte Harmonie, ist vor die beglückte Eh’ nicht die wahre Panacee,* (your delicate harmonies are not the true panacea for the happy couple), every iteration of *Harmonie* is particularly expressive and intertwined with the other two solo instruments, underlining the beauty of the polyphonic word-painting. As such, the irony of the soprano text is revealed through Bach’s coinciding musical treatment. The libretto confirms this intent in the following newly composed recitative where the soprano begins by asking, “So then, does music mislead?” The answer to this, of course, is a resounding, *O nein!*\(^97\)

Scholars such as Laurence Dreyfus have acknowledged that Bach’s music was strikingly different than that of his contemporaries, created out of a highly individual, “hermeneutical” approach to the world around him. Dreyfus writes that, “[Bach’s] musical thought can be captured as a kind of critical response to the aesthetic trends of his day, which, with the hindsight of the later century, came to be called Enlightenment.”\(^98\) He suggests, however, that Bach’s critical response was borne less out of a deliberate action, and more out of a pervading compositional approach. He continues:

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\(^97\) Recitative text: *So glaubt man denn, daß die Musik verführe und gar nicht mit der Liebe harmoniere? O nein!* (So does one believe then that music misleads, and does not harmonize with love? Oh no!).

\(^98\) Dreyfus, *Patterns*, 219.
By a critical response to the Enlightenment I do not mean that Bach propounded a coherent philosophical position that was translated into music but rather the reverse: that as a result of his staunch Lutheran faith (with its belief in the ultimate fallibility of human works) and his own astounding powers of invention he developed an idiosyncratic approach to music which both challenged the value of contemporary aesthetic ideologies and formulated new ways of understanding, and hence composing, music.99

In contrast to this statement, when Bach made his revisions to create O holder Tag, I postulate that a much more deliberate approach than suggested by Dreyfus was undertaken by the composer. The cantata conveys its message on two levels. The idiosyncratic synthesis of musical styles that pervaded all of Bach’s compositions is conveyed in this work as well — although the cantata arias contain some of his most galant music, a purely homophonic, simple style is never fully delivered owing to Bach’s continuous development of inner voices throughout, coupled with the extensive, chromatic harmonies of the inserted recitatives. In O holder Tag, therefore, as in so much of Bach’s music, the unique mix of compositional styles provides an aesthetic statement that reaches beyond the constructs of his age. In the text amendments made to O holder Tag, however, I contend that Bach intended a very direct response to the conflicting aesthetics of the time, and as such, this work represents a glimpse into the mindset of the man, a personal response that is rare among his compositions.

In conclusion, the essence of the message contained in the two central movements of O holder Tag summarizes the underlying message conveyed in the cantata; that complexity of beautifully wrought Harmonie does not mislead, nor is it “turgid” or “confused.” It is not to be ridiculed and equated with von Lohenstein’s florid style of poetry, but rather, respected as the highest form of a God-given musical art. In the words of the fifth-movement recitative at the

99 Ibid.
core of the cantata, the *Harmonie* of music connects humanity with the most profound of our experiences:

Certainly, kind Nature
draws us by it onto a higher path.
It is, like Love, a great heavenly child, only it is not, like Love, blind.
It steals into all hearts
And can be with the exalted or the lowly.
It entices the mind to heaven
And can tell enamoured souls of the glory of the Most High.
Indeed, though Love is elsewhere called far stronger than death,
Who would deny that Music strengthens us in death’s extremity.
O wonderful playing!
You, you are much revered.\(^\text{100}\)

Through the revisions made to *O holder Tag*, therefore, Bach provided the most eloquent of all responses to his detractors, conveyed through his most powerful strength, his music.

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Appendix A

“O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit,” BWV 210: Text and Translation

1. Recitative
O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, Willkommen, frohe Stunden!
Ihr bringt ein Fest, das uns erfreut, Weg,
Schwermut, weg, weg, Traurigkeit!
Der Himmel, welcher vor uns wacht, hat euch zu unserer Lust gemachet: Drum lasst uns fröhlich sein!
Wir sind von Gott darzu verbunden, Uns mit den Frohen zu erfreun.

(O lovely day, O hoped-for time, Welcome, happy hours!
You bring a celebration that makes us joyful. Away, sorrow, away, away, sadness!
For heaven, which watches over us, has made you for our delight:
So let us be happy! We are commanded to this by God to rejoice amidst the joyful.)

2. Aria
Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder,
Werfet die entzückte Brust
In die Ohnmacht sanfte nieder!

(Play, you lively songs, Throw the delighted breast to swoon, softly down!
But through the strings’ delight strengthen and again revive it!)

3. Recitative
Doch, haltet ein, ihr muntern Saiten; denn bei verliebten Eheleuten soll’s stille sein.
Ihr harmoniert nicht mit der Liebe; denn eure angebornen Triebe verleiten uns zur Eitelkeit,
Und dieses schickt sich nicht zur Zeit.
Ein frommes Ehepaar will lieber zu dem Dankaltar mit dem Gemüte treten und ein beseeltes Abba beten;
Es ist vielmehr im Geist bemüht und dichtet in der Brust ein angenehmes Lied.

(But, stop, You lively strings; for around this loving wedding couple it should be quiet.
You do not harmonize with love; for your inherent inclination misleads us into vanity,
and this does not befit us at this time.
A pious wedding couple would rather proceed towards the thanksgiving altar with their feelings,
And offer an inspired prayer to "Abba"; this is much more of the spirit’s concern and writes in their breast a most pleasing song.)

4. Aria
Ruhet hie, matte Töne, Matte Töne, ruhet hie!
Eure zarte Harmonie ist vor die beglückte Eh’ nicht die wahre Panazee.

(Quiet here, weary notes, Weary notes, quiet here!
Your delicate harmony is for this happy wedding day not the true panacea.)

5. Recitative
So glaubt man denn, dass die Musik verführe und gar nicht mit der Liebe harmoniere?
O nein! Wer wollte denn nicht ihren Wert betrachten, auf den so hohe Gönner achten
Gewiss, die gültige Natur zieht uns von ihr auf eine höhere Spur.
Sie ist der Liebe gleich, ein großes Himmelskind,
Nur, dass sie nicht, als wie die Liebe, blind.
Sie schleicht in alle Herzen ein und kann bei Hoh’ und Niedern sein.
Sie lockt den Sinn zum Himmel hin und kann verliebten Seelen des Höchsten Ruhm erzählen.
Ja, heißt die Liebe sonst weit stärker als der Tod,
Wer leugnet? die Musik stärkt uns in Todes Not.
O wundervolles Spiel! Dich, dich verehrt man viel.
Doch, was erklingt dort vor ein Klagelied, das den geschwinden Ton beliebter Saiten flieht?

(So then does one believe that music misleads and does not harmonize at all with love?
O no! Who would not admit its merits, which here such noble patrons honour?
For certain, its worthy nature draws us to a higher path.
It is like love, a mighty child of heav’n, though it is not in this like love, blind.
It steals into all hearts and can be with the high and the humble.
It calls the mind up to heaven and can tell of the highest glory to loving spirits.
Indeed, love is called much stronger than death,
Who denies it? Music strengthens us in death’s need.
O wonderful playing! You, you we greatly honour.
You, you make us much better.
But what is heard there like a lament, from which the hurried sound of beloved strings flee? )

6. Aria
Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt, ihr Töne, denn ihr klingt dem Neid nicht schöne,
Eilt durch die geschwärzte Luft, bis man euch zu Grabe ruft!

(Hush, ye flutes now, hush, your tones, for you do not sound beautiful to envy,
Hurry through the blackened air to the man who calls you from the grave!)

7. Recitative
Was Luft? was Grab? Soll die Musik verderben, die uns so großen Nutzen gab?
Soll so ein Himmelskind ersterben, und zwar für eine Höllenbrut?
O nein! Das kann nicht sein.
Drum auf, erfrische deinen Mut! Die Liebe kann vergnügte Saiten gar wohl vor ihrem Throne leiden.
Indessen lass dich nur den blassen Neid verlachen, was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern machen?
Genug, dass dich der Himmel schützt, wenn sich ein Feind auf dich erhitzt.
Getrost, es leben noch Patronen, die gern bei deiner Anmut wohnen.
Und einen solchen Mäzenat sollst du auch itzo in der Tat an seinem Hochzeitfest verehren.
Wohlan, lass deine Stimme hören!

(What air? What grave? Should music be destroyed that gave to us such a great service?
Should such a child of heaven perish, and only for a brood of hell?
O no! That can not be.
So rise, renew your courage! Love can endure very well the charming strings before its throne.
And meanwhile only laugh at the pale envy, what would Satan’s children make of this song?
It is enough, that you have heaven’s protection, whenever an enemy fumes at you.
Be of good cheer, there still live patrons who gladly live by your charms.
And to such a Maecenas should you even now, in fact at this his wedding feast pay honour.
Come forth, let your voice be heard!)

8. Aria
Großer Gönner, dein Vergnügen muss auch unsern Klang besiegen, denn du verehrt uns deine Gunst.
Unter deinen Weisheitsschätzen kann dich nichts so sehr ergötzen, als der süßen Töne Kunst.
(Great patron, your enjoyment must also vanquish our sound,
For you impart on us your goodwill. And among your wisdom’s treasures can you not inspire such pleasure as sweet music’s charming art.)

9. Recitative
Hochteurer Mann, so fahre ferner fort, der edlen Harmonie wie itzt geneigt zu bleiben;
So wird sie dir dereinst die Traurigkeit vertreiben. so wird an manchem Ort
Dein wohlverdientes Lob erschallen. Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein, Ja wie ein fester Stahl
beständig sein, bis dass er in der ganzen Welt erklinge.
Indessen gönne mir, dass ich bei deiner Hochzeit Freude ein wünschend Opfer zubereite und nach
Gebühr dein künftig Glück und Wohl besinge.

(Esteemed good Sir, strongly continue, as now, to maintain favour with noble Harmony; for it will
henceforth drive away your sadness. And then your well-deserved praise will resound everywhere.
Your fame will endure like a diamond-stone, yes, like the hardest steel, it will be steadfast, until it
resounds throughout the whole world. And meanwhile permit me, amidst your wedding’s joy, to
prepare the desired offering, and, after dues, sing to your future happiness and health.)

10. Aria
Seid beglückt, edle beide, Edle beide, seid beglückt!
Beständige Lust Erfülle die Wohnung, vergnüge die Brust, bis dass euch die Hochzeit des Lammes
erquickt.

(Be happy, noble couple, noble couple, be happy!
May constant delight fill your dwelling, bring joy to your heart, until you are refreshed at the Lamb’s
own wedding feast.)

(English translation by Charlene Pauls)
"O angenehme Melodei," BWV 210a: Text and Translation

1. Recitative
O! angenehme Melodei! Kein Anmut, kein Vergnügen
Kommt deiner süßen Zauberei und deinen Zärtlichkeiten bei.
Die Wissenschaften anderer Künste sind irdnen Witzes kluge Dünste:
du aber bist allein vom Himmel zu uns abgestiegen,
So musst du auch recht himmlisch sein.

(O pleasant melody! No charm, no pleasure approaches your sweet enchantment and your tenderness.
Knowledge of other arts is but earthly wit’s clever vapours: for you alone descended to us from heaven,
And so, truly you must be of heaven.)

2. Aria
Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder, werfet die entzückte Brust in die Ohnmacht sanfte nieder;
Aber durch der Saiten Lust stärket und erholt sie wieder.

(Play, you inspired songs, cast the enchanted breast gently down into swoon;
But through the strings’ delight, strengthen and revive it again.)

3. Recitative
Ihr Sorgen, flieht, flieht, ihr betrübten Kümmernisse!
Ein singend Lied macht herbes Grämen süße,
Ein kleiner Ton tut Wunderwerke und hat noch mehr als Simsons Stärke, weil er,
oder Bangigkeit wie ein Philisterheer sich wider unsre Ruh erregt,
Die Qual zerstreut und aus dem Sinne schlägt.

(You cares, flee, flee, you troubled woes! A song being sung makes bitter griefs sweet,
A little note works wonders and has more strength than Samson’s, for it,
when sadness or anxiety like a host of Philistines, chafes against our repose, it dispels torment and thrusts it out of the mind.)

4. Aria
Ruhet hie, matte Sinne, matte Sinne, ruhet hie!
Eine zarte Harmonie ist vor das verborgne Weh die bewährte Panazee.

(Rest here, tired senses, tired senses, rest here!
A tender harmony is for hidden woe the proven panacea.)

5. Recitative
Wiewohl, beliebte Musica, so angenehm dein Spiel, so vielen Ohren ist,
So bist du doch betrübt und stehest in Gedanken da.
Denn es sind ihr’ viel, denen du verächtlich bist;
Mich deucht, ich höre deine Klagen selbst also sagen:

(Although, beloved Musica, your playing is so pleasing to so many ears, yet you are distressed and stand there lost in thought. For there are many to who scorn you; I think I hear your complaints themselves also saying:)

6. Aria
Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt, ihr Töne, klingt ihr mir doch selbst nicht schöne; Geht, ihr armen Lieder, hin, weil ich so verlassen bin!

(Be silent, you flutes; be silent, you notes, you do not sound fair even to me; Go, you poor songs, for I am so forsaken!)

7. Recitative
Doch fasse dich, dein Glanz ist noch nicht ganz verschwunden und im Bann getan! Ja, wenn es möglich wär, dass dich die ganze Welt verließe und deine Lieblichkeit verstieße,

(Yet compose yourself: your lustre is still not quite faded and banned! Indeed, if it were possible that the whole world forsook you and rejected your loveliness,)

Continuation with words from the Duke Christian/ Flemming version: So komm zu deinem teuren Herzog/ Flemming in seinem Schirm und Schatten her. Er weiß allein, wie Wissenschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müsse sein.

(Then come to your dear Duke/ Flemming into his shelter and shade. Only he knows how knowledge and art must be valued.)

Continuation with words from the Unknown Patrons version: So komm zu unsre werten Gönner in ihre Gunst und Neigung her. Sie wissen allein, wie Wissenschaft und Kunst zu schätzen müsse sein.

(Then come to our honoured patrons into their favour and inclination. Only they know how knowledge and art must be valued.)

8. Aria

(Great Duke/ Flemming, all knowledge finds protection at your feet: You stand by these arts. But among them all your gracious favour loves a pleasing melody.)

Unknown Patrons version: Werte Gönner, alles Wissen findet Gunst² bei euren Füssen, Ihr stehet denen Künsten bei, aber unter denen allen Liebt eur gültiges Gefallen ein angenehme Melodei.

(Honoured patrons, all knowledge finds favour at your feet: you stand by these arts. But among them all your kind favour loves a pleasing melody.)

² Dürr, uses the word, Grund (foundation) here. Dürr, Cantatas, 878.
9. Recitative

Duke Christian/ Flemming version:
Durchlauchtigst/ Erleuchtet Haupt, so bleibe fernerweit der edlen Harmonie mit deinem Schutz geneigt!

(Illustrious/ Exalted head, then henceforth remain with your protection inclined to noble harmony!)

Unknown Patrons version:
Geehrten Gönner, so bleibet fernerweit der edlen Harmonie mit eurer Gunst geneigt!

(Honoured patrons, then henceforth remain with your favour inclined to noble harmony!)

Solange sie noch Kinder schöner Stimmen zeiget, so wird sie alle Zeit dein/ eu’r Lob und deinen/ euren Ruhm besingen; und wenn es ihr erlaubt, vor dein/eu’r beständig Blühn sich itzt bemühn, ein wünschend Opfer vorzubringen.

(As long as it still exhibits lovely children’s voices, then it will at all times sing of your praise and your fame; and if it be allowed, for your ongoing goodfortune, it now brings forward a desired offering.)

10. Aria

Duke Christian/ Flemming version:
Sei vergnügt, großer Herzog/ Flemming, Großer Herzog/ Flemming, sei vergnügt!
Dein fürstliches/ gräfliches Haus vermehre den Schimmer und breite sich aus, bis selber das Glänzen der Sonne verfliegt.

(Be content, great Duke/ Flemming, Great Duke/ Flemming, be content! May your princely/ count’s house increase in luster, and spread it abroad till even the brilliance of the sun vanishes.)

Unknown Patrons version:
Seid vergnügt, werte Gönner, werte Gönner, seid vergnügt!
Ein ewige Lust bestelle die Wohnung in euerer Brust, bis diese das Singen der Engel entzückt.

(Be content, honoured patrons, honoured patrons, be content! May an eternal delight make its dwelling in your breast till it is enraptured by the singing of angels.)

(English translation adapted from Richard D. P. Jones) 3

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3 Dürr, Cantatas, 876-79.
Appendix B

“Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten,” Secular Wedding Cantata BWV 202: Text and Translation

Recipients and Poet unknown
Solo Soprano

1. Aria
Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten,
Frost und Winde, geht zur Ruh!
Florens Lust
Will der Brust
Nichts als frohes Glück verstatten,
Denn sie träget Blumen zu.

(Give way now, dismal shadows, frost and wind, go to rest!
Flora’s delight will grant our hearts nothing but joyful fortune, for she comes bearing flowers.)

2. Recitative
Die Welt wird wieder neu,
Auf Bergen und in Gründen
Will sich die Anmut doppelt schön verbinden,
Der Tag ist von der Kälte frei.

(The world becomes new again; on hills and in valleys charm will be added to make them twice as beautiful. The day is free from cold.)

3. Aria
Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden
Durch die neugeborne Welt.
Ja, weil sie ihm wohlgefällt,
Will er selbst ein Buhler werden.

(Apollo hurries with swift horses through the newborn world.
Yes, because this delights him so much, he himself would like to be her lover.)

4. Recitative
Drum sucht auch Amor sein Vergnügen,
Wenn Purpur in den Wiesen lacht,
Wenn Florens Pracht sich herrlich macht,
Und wenn in seinem Reich,
Den schönen Blumen gleich,
Auch Herzen feurig siegen.

(Likewise Cupid also seeks his pleasure, when purple laughs in the meadows, when Flora’s splendour becomes glorious, and when in his kingdom, like the beautiful flowers, enflamed hearts also triumph.)

5. Aria
Wenn die Frühlingslüfte streichen
Und durch bunte Felder wehn,  
Pflegt auch Amor auszuschleichen,  
Um nach seinem Schmuck zu sehn,  
Welcher, glaubt man, dieser ist,  
Dass ein Herz das andre küsst.

(When the spring breezes blow, and waft through the colourful fields, Cupid also prowls about in search of his own gems, which, people believe, he finds when one heart kisses another.)

6. Recitative  
Und dieses ist das Glücke,  
Dass durch ein hohes Gunstgeschicke  
Zwei Seelen einen Schmuck erlanget,  
An dem viel Heil und Segen pranget.

(And this is good fortune, when through the good fortune of fate two souls become as one jewel, radiant with health and blessing.)

7. Aria  
Sich üben im Lieben,  
In Scherzen sich herzen  
Ist besser als Florens vergängliche Lust.  
   Hier quellen die Wellen,  
   Hier lachen und wachen  
   Die siegenden Palmen auf Lippen und Brust.

(To become adept in love, to jest and caress is better than Flora’s passing pleasure.  
Here the waves surge, here triumphant palms laugh and watch over lips and breast.)

8. Recitative  
So sei das Band der keuschen Liebe, Verlobte Zwei,  
Vom Unbestand des Wechsels frei!  
Kein jäher Fall  
Noch Donnerknall  
Erschrecke die verliebten Triebe!

(May the union of chaste love, beloved couple, remain free from the fickleness of change!  
May no cruel hardship, no thunderbolt frighten your loving desires.)

9. Gavotte  
Sehet in Zufriedenheit  
Tausend helle Wohlfahrtstage,  
Dass bald bei der Folgezeit  
Eure Liebe Blumen trage!

(May you see in contentment, a thousand bright and prosperous days, so that soon, as time passes, your love may bring forth flowers!)

(English translation by Charlene Pauls)

Cantata (Serenata) for the Wedding of Peter Hohmann (von Hohenthal) and Christian Sibylla Mencke, November 27, 1725
Poet Johann Christoph Gottsched; Music lost

Serenata

1. Aria Die Natur
Auf! süß-entzückende Gewalt,
Die du aus Gottes Hand entspringest,
Und alles, was ich bin,
durchdringest, Komm, zeige dich, in lieblicher Gestalt.
Auf, süß-entzückende Gewalt!

(Up, sweet-enchanting power, You who from God’s own hand arises, and pervades all that I am. Come, show yourself in your charming form. Up, sweet-enchanting power!)

2. Recitative, Die Natur (Nature)
In allem, was der Bau der Welt,
In ungezählten Himmels-Kreisen,
Vor seines Schöpfers Augen stellt;
In allen Thieren, die das Feld,
Lufht, Erde, Wald und Wasser in sich hält,
Ja selbst in Bäumen Stein und Eisen,
Zeigt sich die ungeschwächte Krafft
Der allerstärcksten Leidenschaft.
Wer merckt nicht überall die Liebe?
Wer spürt nicht, daß durch ihre Triebe
Das ganze Welt-Gebau besteht?
Den daß es noch bisher nicht gar zu Grunde geht,
Das macht der Liebe festes Band.
Sie hemmet gantz allein der Sachen Unbestand.

(In all that is created in the world, in heaven’s immeasurable spheres that stand before their Maker’s eyes; in all the creatures that the field, air, earth, wood, and waters contain; Yes, even in the trees, stone, and iron are shown the undiminished strength of almighty passion.
Who does not notice love everywhere? Who does not see that through its power the whole world has been formed? For that it has not yet gone to ruin, is caused by love’s most constant bond. It alone steadies the world’s inconstancies.)

3. Aria, Die Natur (Nature)
Entfernet euch, ihr kalten Hertzen,
Entfernt euch, ich bin euch feind.
Wer nicht der Liebe Platz will geben,
Der flieht sein Glück, der haßt das Leben
Und ist der ärgesten Thorheit Freund;
Ihr wehlt euch selber nichts als Schmertzen;
Entfernt euch, ihr kalten Hertzen,
Entfernet euch, ich bin euch feind.

(Remove yourselves, you frigid spirits, remove yourselves, I am your foe. He who does not make room for love, shuns good luck; he who hates life and is a friend to wicked folly; you who choose no course but sorrow; remove yourselves, you frigid spirits, remove yourselves, I am your foe.)

4. Recitative, Die Schamhafftigkeit (Modesty)

Wie das? O gütige Natur!
Soll ich denn auch zur Liebes-Fahne schweren?
Soll ich denn auch die stille Lockung hören,
Die deine Krafft in mir erregt?
Ach nein, Natur, ach nein!
Die Liebe kann kein Kind der wahren Tugend seyn.
Ach nein, ich glaub es nicht!
Ich fühle, daß das Hertz mir schlägt,
Das warme Blut erröthet meine Wangen,
Wenn man zu mir vom Lieben spricht.
Ich fühle zwar ein heimliches Verlangen;
Doch deckt es sich mit steter Blödigkeit.
Ich fürchte stets der Frechheit Netze,
Und sorge, daß nicht mir der Zeit,
Die wachsende Verwegenheit
Die Regeln Göttlicher Gesetze,
Durch diesen schlauen Trieb verletze.
Drum weg damit! ich höre nicht,
Was die Natur vom Lieben spricht.

(What is this? O gracious Nature! Should I also swear allegiance to love’s flag?
Should I then also listen to that soft coaxing that your power stirs within me?
Ah no, Nature, ah no! For love cannot be a child of honest virtue.
Ah no, I do not believe it! I feel that when my heart beats, warm blood reddens my cheeks, when one speaks to me of love. In truth I feel a secret longing that hides itself in constant bashfulness. I worry that the net of folly, the fickle foolhardiness, may do injury lest the rule of godly order I disregard.
Away with it! I will not heed what Nature says of love.)

5. Aria, Die Schamhafftigkeit (Modesty)

Unschuld, Kleinod reiner Seelen,
Schmücke mich durch deine Pracht.
Keine Laster, keine Flecken,
Sollen mir das Lilien-Kleid
Unberührter Reinigkeit,
Durch der Liebe Schmutz bedecken,
Der auch Schnee zu Dinte macht.
Unschuld, Kleinod reiner Seelen
Schmücke mich durch deine Pracht.

(Chasteness, jewel of pure spirits, adorn me with your splendour. No dishonour, no impairment shall my lily-white cloak of unsullied purity, darken through the stain of love that can also make snow as ink.
Chasteness, jewel of pure spirits, adorn me with your splendour.)
6. Recitative, Die Tugend (Virtue)
Du irrest, liebes Kind,
Du irrest sehr in diesem Stücke,
Ich bin so grausam nicht gesinnt.
Ich hasse zwar der Geilheit Laster-Stricke,
Durch welche dieß verdammte Weib
Die wilden Jugend Fuß umschlinget;
Biß daß sie endlich Seel und Leib
In tausendfaches Unglück bringet.
Allein die Liebe rechter Art
Hat dessen Arm, der alles lencket,
So wohl als mich, den Sterblichen geschencket.
Sie scheut nicht meine Gegenwart,
Und meine Glut schlägt offt mit ihren Flammen
Gantz lieblich zusammen.

(You err, my dear child, you greatly err in these things. My purpose is not so wicked.
I hate the vicious wiles of lewdness with which the fallen woman so often ensnares the wanton foot of youth until she has brought both soul and flesh to distress a thousand-times over.
Alone, love of proper sort has guided his arm, and gifted to all mortals, me as well.
It does not shrink from my presence, and my own fire together beats in a lovely unison with the flames of passion.)

7. Aria, Die Tugend (Virtue)
Folge nur den sanften Trieben.
Die dein zartes Hertz gespürt.
Wenn dich ihre Flamme rührt,
O so laß nur deine Sinnen,
Eine Seele lieb gewinnen,
Die sich durch die Tugend ziert,
Und die must du ewig lieben.
Folge nur den sanften Trieben,
Die dein zartes Hertz gespürt.

(Only follow those soft emotions, which your tender heart perceives. When you are stirred by their flames, oh, then let your senses tenderly win a soul, which is graced by its virtue, and whom you must love forever. Follow those soft emotions, which your tender heart perceives.)

8. Recitative, Die Natur (Nature)
Nun hörst du ja, die Tugend selbst stimmt ein.
Wirst du der Liebe denn gantz wiederspenstig seyn?

(Now you hear how Virtue agrees. Will you then be wholly against love?)

Die Natur
Ersticke nicht länger das wallende Wesen,
Das meine Hand dir eingepflantzt.

(Die Schamhaftigkeit)
Der Tugend-Spruch ist zwar von grosse Krafft,
Und sollte mich fast überwinden:
Allein, ich fürchte doch die starke Leidenschaft,
Und weiß mich nicht darein zu finden.

(Die Natur)
Ersticke nicht länger das wallende Wesen,
Das meine Hand dir eingepflanzt.

(Die Schamhaftigkeit)
Die Liebe scheint sehr Unruh voll
Und ungestüm zu seyn.

Ich wollte wohl; ---doch nein!
Ich weiß nicht, was ich machen woll?

(Die Natur)
Verwirff die blöde Phantasey,
Und mache dein Gemüthe frey,
Das sich durch irrende Gedancken,
In den vermeynten Tugend-Schrancken,
Mit steter Blödigkeit umschantzt.
Wie ist es? hörst du mich?
Mich dünckt, du änderst dich,
Ich kann es an deinem Gesichte schon lesen.
Ersticke nicht länger das wallende Wesen,
Das meine Hand dir eingepflanzt.

(Nature)
(No longer suppress your passionate nature, which my own hand has planted in you.

(Modesty)
In truth, Virtue’s speech is great in strength and very nearly wins me over:
But yet, I still fear the strong force of passion and do not know how to find it.

(Nature)
No longer suppress your passionate nature, which my own hand has planted in you.

(Modesty)
Love appears full of turmoil and violence.
I might wish; — but no! I do not know what I should do.

(Nature)
Discard your foolish fantasy, and set your spirit free that through your own misconceptions within the confines of so-called virtue, is instead confined by bashfulness.
How is it? Do you hear? I think you will be changed, I can already read it on your face. No longer suppress your passionate nature, which my own hand has planted in you.)

Gefährlicher Entschluß!
Den ich anitzo fassen muß.
Wohlan, Natur! ich folge deine Trieben,
Doch sage mir, was soll ich lieben?

(Die Natur)
Ach sorge nicht, der Himmel sorget schon,
Der hat, eh du daran gedacht,
Den ewig-festen Schluß gemacht,
Durch wen er dich vergnügen wollen,
Und wen dein reines Hertz am ersten lieben sollen.

(Modesty)
(Dangerous resolve! That I am now constrained to make! Lead on, Nature! I’ll follow your directions, but tell me this: what should I love?

(Nature)
Ah, have no fear, for heaven takes care, and even before you gave it thought, its everlasting will decreed the one through contentment will be brought to you, and whom your spotless heart should first love.)

11. Aria, Die Natur (Nature)
Selbst der Höchste schliesset Ehen,
Die ihm wohlgefällig sind.
Wenn die Menschen nicht verstehen,
Welchen Pfad ihr Fuß soll gehen,
Da versorgt er und verbindet
Manches tugendhaffte Kind.
Selbst der Himmel schliesset Ehen,
Die ihm wohlgefällig sind.

(Even the Highest seals marriage, when it wins His approval. When mortals do not understand which path their foot should take, he looks after them and unites each good and virtuous child. Even heaven seals marriage, when it wins its approval.)

12. Recitative, Die Schamhafftigkeit and Das Verhängnis (Modesty and Destiny)
So wird es auch vielleicht geschehen,
Daß seine Vater-Huld bald auf mein Wohl wird sehen.

(Das Verhängnis)
Sieh da, du tugendhafftes Hertz,
Nimm hin das Kleinod meiner Liebe.
Verwandle deine Furcht in Schertz,
Und laß hinfort die reinen Triebe
Nur ihm allein,
Wie seine Brust nur dir, gewidmet seyn.
Die Wohlfahrt soll auf allen Seiten, Dich, neu-verknüpftes Paar, begleiten!

(So perhaps it will also happen that His father-love will soon be drawn to my well-being.)

(Destiny)
(See here, you most virtuous heart, take the gem of my love. Transform your fear to joy, and let henceforth your pure emotions attend to him alone, just as his breast is devoted to you. Prosperity should follow all your ways, O newly wedded-pair!)
13. Aria, Chor der Nymphen an der Pleiße (Choir of Nymphs on the Pleisse River)
Lebe, neues Paar, vergnügt!
Selbst das Schicksal hats gefügt,
Daß der Zweck von eurem Hoffen
Nach Verlangen eingetroffen.
Lebe, neues Paar, vergnügt!
Glück und Wohlfahrt, Heyl und Seegen,
Müsse deiner Tugen wegen,
Sich um deine Wohnung legen,
Lebe, neues Paar, vergnügt!

(Live, newly-weds, in contentment! Fate itself has brought to pass that the object of all your longings be accomplished here. Live, newly-weds, in contentment! Luck and fortune, health and blessing will settle on your dwelling because of your virtue; live, newly-weds, in contentment!)

(English translation by Charlene Pauls)
“Vernügte Pleißenstadt,” Secular Wedding Cantata BWV 216: Text and Translation

Poet: Picander; Music extant in parts only
Recipients: Johann Heinrich Wolff and Susanna Regina Hempel, Leipzig, February 5, 1728

Neiße, Soprano
Pleiße, Alto

1. Duet Aria, Neiße and Pleiße
Vergnügte Pleißenstadt/ Beglückte Neißenstadt
Dein Labsal/ Blühen wächst und glänzt vor andern allen.
Wer seine Lust an deinem Prangen/ deiner Schönheit übt, beide
Der wird und bleibt in dich verliebt, dem kann es nirgends mehr gefallen.

(Contented Pleisse- /O happy Neisse- town, your pleasure/fortune grows and shines above all others. Whoever takes joy in your great splendour/beauty will abide in love with you, and will not find more pleasure elsewhere.)

2. Recitative S A
(Neiße)
So angenehm auch mein Revier,
So weicht mein Schönstes doch von mir.
Wohin,
Du anmutsvolle Hempelin?

(Pleiße)
Da, wo sie selber die Najaden
An Pleißens Ufern eingeladen.

(Neiße)
Ach, Pleißenstrand, verhasster Pleißenstrand!
Wer hat dich ihr
So eingelobt und schön genannt?
Du hast ja selbst bei dir
An schönen Kindern Überfluss,
Was willst du sie aus meiner Gegend holen?
Drum sag ich jetzo mit Verdruss:
Du hast mein Bestes mir gestohlen.

(Neisse)
(However pleasant my shores may be, yet still does the fairest take leave from me. Where to, most charming Miss Hempelin?)

(Pleisse)
Here, where the very Naiad daughters have summoned her to Pleisse’s banks.

(Neisse)
Ah, Pleisse’s shore, hated Pleisse’s shore! You who has sung praises to her and called fair?)
You have an abundance of your own beautiful children, why would you then steal from my shores? Therefore do I say with some dismay: you have stolen my finest from me.

3. Aria S
Angenehme Hempelin,
Deine See ist sonder Mängel,
Dein Gesicht ist wie der Engel,
Englisch ist dein ganzer Sinn,
Angenehme Hempelin.
Allerliebste Hempelin,
Du, du warest meine Zier,
Aber seit du nicht bei mir,
Ist auch meine Krone hin,
Allerliebste Hempelin.

(Charming Hempelin, your soul is free from blemish, your face is like an angel’s, angel-like is your whole being, Charming Hempelin. Dearest Hempelin, you, you who were my ornament, but as soon as you left me, my crown also left. Dearest Hempelin.)

4. Recitativo A
Erspare den Verdruß,
Beliebter Neißenfluß,
Und sende deine Hempelin
Zu mir mit gutem Willen hin!
Komm, wèhle hier
Auch unter meinen Söhnen!
Gesetzt nun, es gefiele dir
Darunter auch ein Bräutigam
Vor eine deiner Schönen,
So hast du allemal
Hierinnen eine freie Wahl.
Genung, dass ich will alle Morgen
Dein schönes Kind mit Glück und Heil versorgen.

(Forget your dismay, beloved Neisse stream, and send your Hempelin to me with your good wishes! Come, choose here from my sons! Suppose now that you would take a groom for one of your beauties, you have free choice at any time. Rest assured that every morning I will provide happiness and health to your fair child.)

5. Aria A
Mit Lachen und Scherzen,
Mit Küssen und Herzen
Verbindet die Liebe das ewige Band.
    Da scheinen die Jahre wie Tage verschwunden,
    Da werden auch selber die Stunden
    Minuten genannt.

(With laughing and joking, with kissing and hugging, love unites in an undying bond. Then will all the years vanish as mere days, then will even the hours be like minutes.)
6. Recitativo A S
(Pleiße)
Wie lieblich wird sie nun
Von meinen Weibern aufgenommen!
Schau, wie sie freundlich mit ihr tun!
Sie heißn sie durch mich willkommen.

(Neiße)
Es sei, nachdem ich überführt,
Dass meine Hempelin
An ihrer Freude nichts verliert.
Geliebter Wolff; der ihr geneigt und treu,
Nimm sie in ihrem Kranze hin!

(Pleiße)
Die Haube wird sie morgen kriegen.

(Neiße)
Das ist ja so der Jungfern ihr Vergnügen.

(Pleiße)
Indessen schließ ich dieses Zwei
In mein getreues Wünschen ein.

(Neiße)
Mein Sinn soll wie der deine sein.

(Pleisse)
(How sweetly has she now been accepted by my ladies!
See how they friendly they are to her! They send their welcome to her through me!

(Neisse)
I hope, now that I have brought my Hempelin that she may not lose her joy.
Beloved Wolff, who is inclined and true to her, take her now, decked in garlands!

(Pleisse)
The wedding veil will bring her tomorrow.

(Neisse)
That brings contentment to maidens.

(Pleisse)
In the meantime I send my most sincere good wishes to this pair.

(Neisse)
My mood shall be like yours.)

7. Aria, Duet A S
(Pleiße)
Heil und Segen
Müß euch, wertes Paar, verpflegen,
Wie mein Fluss die Auen labt.

(Neiße)
Und die Wonne, die ihr habt,
Soll und wird sich mit Ersprießen
Reicher als mein Strom ergießen.

(Neiße, Pleiße)
So werden die [die Wiegen/ die Seelen] mit [Kindern/ Wollust] geziert, beide
Und solches je länger, je lieber geführt.

(Pleisse)
(My streams will bring you health and blessing, precious pair, as my streams the fields attend.

(Neisse)
And the pleasure that you have, should and will well up with springs richer than my own flowing
waters.

(Neisse and Pleisse)
Then will the cradles/ souls with children/ gladness be crowned, and such joy the longer enjoyed, the
greater will become.)

(English translation by Charlene Pauls)
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