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Transformation:
Images, Emblems, and Forms

Authorised Transcript

Editors

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Authorised transcript* of a live video discussion with Wendy Heller (WH), Joel Speerstra (JS), Bernd Koska (BK), and Ruth Tatlow (RT), and moderated by Andrew Frampton (AF). Questions from the audience were asked by Tom Wilkinson (TW).

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*The following transcript has been edited and expanded for clarity and will at times differ from the spoken live discussion.¹

AF Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this first Bach Network session on the festival theme of 'Transformation'. I'm Andrew Frampton, and in this session, we're going to focus on the topic of 'Images, Emblems, and Forms'. And I'm delighted to introduce our expert panel today: Wendy Heller from Princeton University; Joel Speerstra from the Academy of Music and Drama at the University of Gothenburg; Bernd Koska from the Bach-Archiv Leipzig; and Ruth Tatlow, also from the Academy of Music and Drama at the University of Gothenburg. We're going to hear from each presenter first, and then there'll be time for discussion afterwards, including questions from the audience. So, without further ado, let's begin with Wendy, who's going to speak to us about 'Diana and the Pleasures of the Hunt'.

WH Cantata BWV 208, *Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd* ('What delights me above all is the lively hunt'), opens with an exquisite, evocative *recitativo* for the goddess Diana. She exults in the pleasures of the hunt in the early hours of the morning, before Aurora has fully shown herself. Playfully, Bach expands the final line of text. Diana's arrow flies confidently through the air with more than a hint of seductive charm, perhaps recalling Cupid's arrow. The continuo joins in the chase, as if the brief journey to the subdominant was only one of the many adventures in the forest that Diana habitually undertakes with her band of chaste nymphs. Emulating an Italian *arioso*, Bach thus transforms a familiar vision of Diana the Huntress into sound.

In the marvellous aria that follows, the continuo resumes its exuberant sprint through the forest. Not only do the horns join in, filling in the middle register in a way that allows the soprano voice to dominate, but Bach also contrives for Diana herself to imitate the sounds of the horn as a kind of embodiment of pleasure. The rest, I'm sure, is familiar to this audience: the moongazing Endymion fears that Diana will no longer bestow kisses upon him; his aria compares the snares of love to the hunt. Does she really prefer trapping animals to the snares of love? It seems that she does. She is willing to indulge in a brief bit of duetting, but the matter at hand is more important: honouring Duke Christian of Saxe-Weißenfels (1682–1736), for the belated celebration of his birthday on 25 February 1713.²

The proportions of this mini *dramma per musica* are admittedly peculiar. The intrigue between Endymion and Diana is resolved rather quickly. For the praising of Duke Christian, librettist Salomon Franck (1659–1725) has assembled a rather seemingly conventional crew of pastoral characters. In addition to Diana and Endymion, there is a goat god, Pan, to embody the Duke himself; and Pales, a Roman deity and companion to Pan, who had a surprisingly fluid gender identity in both ancient times and the early modern world.³ An avid hunter, the Duke was known for his extravagant spending and poor financial management, not to mention the misuse of the land under the care of these pagan deities.⁴ Thus, the lavish praise heaped upon him in the cantata, in hindsight, seems a tad unsavoury. That some movements were repurposed for sacred cantatas has always been somewhat reassuring.

I believe, though, that there is more to be gleaned about the cantata if we look more closely at the complex mythological background. Alfred Dürr had suggested that Diana had one day decided 'to devote herself to hunting' and thus was constrained to give up her lover, Endymion.⁵ But this is misleading. Diana had *always* been devoted to the hunt, and, as Ovid describes, she protected her band of virgins with a certain fierceness, turning Actaeon into a stag so that he would be destroyed by his own dogs after accidentally gazing at her while she was bathing, and then exiling the poor nymph Callisto after she had been made pregnant, after being raped by Jove.⁶ But the relevant sources do tell us of her one weakness, and that was for the shepherd moon gazer Endymion. Selene, a moon goddess, predecessor of Diana, deigned to love the extraordinarily beautiful shepherd Endymion, appearing to him at night to kiss him chastely; or, as depicted in numerous paintings, perhaps not so chastely.

In the early modern period, sometimes this is treated in a Neoplatonic fashion; other times authors played with the irony implicit in the writings of Ovid and Lucian of the chaste goddess being willing to give in to love. Virgil too emphasised the notion that Diana might not be so pure. In a famous line from the *Georgics* (3.391–3), he suggests that Diana's desire for Pan's white wool might have caused her to relinquish her legendary chastity. Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) made this particular love triangle explicit in the frescos for the Palazzo Farnese, which depicted a whole panoply of poorly behaved gods, and this was surely known in northern Europe. For instance, an engraving of an as yet unidentified German ceiling design in the [Herzog August Library in] Wolfenbüttel shows Diana at the centre of this erotic triangle between the two lovers.

The sources are nicely summarized in the late 16th century by lithographer Vincenzo Cartari (c. 1531–1590), whose volume was also widely disseminated in northern Europe.⁷ And you can see the fables pretend the moon was in love with the shepherd, she lulls him to sleep and so on, and Cartari alludes to the story of Pan's as well. Now, these myths made not only an impression on the iconographical tradition in early modern Europe, but also inspired numerous operas and cantatas, beginning, for instance, with Francesco Cavalli's (1602–1676) *La Calisto* and continuing all the way to Pietro Metastasio's (1698–1782) *Endimione*, set by many, including Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782).⁸ But perhaps most relevant for our purposes is *Die geheime Liebe der Diana* ('The secret love of Diana'), with music by Reinhard Keiser (1674–1739) and libretto by Johann Ulrich König (1688–1744), performed in Hamburg in April of 1712.⁹

So, with this in mind, let's return to BWV 208. First of all, I propose that the mythological background would certainly have been known to many at Duke Christian's court, including Franck and probably Bach as well.¹⁰ These are not generic pastoral characters. They carry with them quite specific meanings, which conjure up a host of marriages and images, far better known in the early 17th century than they are for us today. Implicit in the praise of the Duke, then, might be some playful glosses on love intrigues, or other aspects of court life about

which we can only guess. Today, I suggest only one possibility: the cantata that was written in the aftermath of Duke Christian's marriage in 1712 to Louise Christine of Stolberg-Stolberg-Ortenberg (1675–1738), who was some seven years older than the Duke. The widow of John George III (1640–1710), Count of Mansfield-Eisleben, Stolberg bore children to neither of her two husbands.¹¹

We might glean something about the couple and their marriage from the famous *Weissenfelser Jagdpokal* ('Weissenfels Hunting Cup'), the costly cup that was commissioned in honour of their marriage. This was a playful, luxurious, and entirely secular object. The detail here, for instance, shows a distinctly bacchanalian scene; that's likely the drunken Silenos on the donkey. No less intriguing is the picture of Diana adorned with the moon crown. Now, this is not the young Diana's face that we have seen in so many paintings. Might this be a likeness of the 37-year-old bride? Was there an awareness that she was unlikely to give birth – and forgive me for saying this – at so advanced an age? [Laughter] The historical record thus far tells us relatively little about Louise Christine. Did she enjoy the hunt along with her husband? Might she have had a reputation for coldness or even chastity that likened her to the goddess? Who is Endymion in this story?¹²

Or perhaps the mythological framework merely provided cues for Bach's imagination. There is an earthiness both to this Diana and the one that Bach brings to life in the cantata, a sonic representation of a certain kind of female pleasure, and maybe a bit of love intrigue on the side. This is not Diana as the Virgin Mary. Rather, it is the fierce hunting goddess who loves Endymion, maybe Pan as well, but nonetheless chooses to spend her time as the carefree virgin in the forest. It is worth recalling that Pan, who we equate with the Duke in this, is not a hunter in this cantata – he is the caretaker. Regardless, for the 27-year-old Bach, who could not have known that his career as a composer would never permit him to explore the virtues and vices of pagan gods on the operatic stage, composing this birthday cantata was surely a great deal of fun. Thank you.

[Applause]

AF Thank you very much, Wendy. Let's move on now to Joel, who has a very intriguing title, 'Kuhnau and the Riddle of Laban's Deceit'.

JS Thank you, Andrew. Why does 17th-century keyboard music have so much cryptic material in it? Emblematic pictures, illuminated letters, elaborate printer's marks, random Latin mottos, introductions that have riddles in them. What if all of these riddles are simply part of the broader literary tradition? 'Although the literary riddle has received ample attention and scholarship, the situation is drastically different for music in general, and the Renaissance musical riddle in particular ... The riddle plays with *docere* and *delectare*: teaching and offering pleasure ... Riddles are a core element of the *serio ludere*, which sought to wrap serious issues in a ludic cloak.'¹³

No music book does this better than the biblical sonatas of Johann Kuhnau (1660–1722).¹⁴ For instance, why does the book begin with a picture of the book we just purchased, sitting open at the clavichord, the first choice of German organists for study and musical refinement?¹⁵ Is it only because there is enough light by the window for us to read it, or will we also become enlightened through the study of Kuhnau's examples? The musician is now improvising, like all good German organists; on the façade: *Dum ludo alludo*, 'When I play, I have fun', or 'When I play, I make allusions to something'. What follows is an emblem book for music readers. The music is the picture, and the Italian texts are the mottos. The two themes of David and Goliath battle with each other.¹⁶

[Music]

When we see David throwing a stone at Goliath's head, we can also hear it.

[Music]

And then Goliath falls.

[Music]

Then the Israelites chase the Philistines away, in a fugue that is also a terrible music theory pun: *fugare, fugare il nemico*, 'to rout the enemy'. What kind of other riddles can we find here, perhaps? Are there acrostics, where the first letter of each line spells a separate word? Are there anagrams, where the letters rearrange to make a sentence that reflects on the motto? Are there chronograms, where the capitalised letters reveal a date in Roman numerals? Or are there paragrams, where number alphabets give a sum that has a symbolic meaning? In his introduction, Kuhnau actually plays a game using the natural number alphabet, and it's a mathematical puzzle to reveal a hidden composer's name.¹⁷ It has some advanced mathematics, and, in a cryptic aside, he also says, 'by the way, my whole book works like this...'.¹⁸

What did that mean? Could Kuhnau have been playing with musical alphabets as well? The natural music alphabet we all know from Bach's signature, but here you can only write words containing the first eight letters of the alphabet. Ruth Tatlow's first book, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*, introduced me to a cryptic version of the music alphabet from Athanasius Kircher's (1602–1680) *Musurgia Universalis*, from 1650.¹⁹ Not only was Kircher's book available here in Leipzig, while Kuhnau also lived here; he also mentions Kircher in his introduction.²⁰ The cipher alphabet is simple and easy to remember, and it produces both pitches and rhythms. There were several musical alphabets in circulation in the 17th century. But this is the most common, and all of the rest of them also appear only in books specifically about writing in code.²¹

Kircher here writes about methods of generating new music. In the second sonata, King Saul is ill, and he is angry. If Saul's name had been Sal, in the Kircher alphabet,

he would just have been really sad in G minor. But with the 'u', he has an inbuilt dissonance that Kuhnau exploits. The modern Henle edition questions whether this chord is even correct. The footnote pleads in three separate languages that 'a' would really be better here.²² I'd like you to take two seconds to look at and memorise your reaction to the standardised shapes of all of those ties between all of those notes. In the original, Kuhnau composes the page like an emblem engraver, placing the dramatic 'Saul chord' in the middle, where you cannot miss it. And look at the active and expressive tie marks washing toward the 'Saul chord' like ocean waves.

In the third sonata, Jacob wants to marry Laban's daughter Rachel. But Laban tricks him into marrying a different daughter first. He shows Laban's deceit by deceiving our hearing; a deceptive cadence in Italian is also called *inganno*. Having found Saul so easily, I thought, 'all I need to do is write out the name of every main character, and I'll be done with this whole book in about a week'. And a year later I was still struggling! But if you write out 'Laban', it sort of appears at the beginning of this piece. But I have, as you see, used up the whole name in the first six bars, and I haven't described anything about the pattern or the structure of the piece. I went back to Kuhnau's muse, and I asked her very kindly for help. And the idea did come suddenly. Is she improvising over biblical stories, or over biblical words? Did Kuhnau write out the entire Italian motto and improvise an unmeasured prelude of sneakiness over it? You can hear it as well.

[Music]

I think the answer might be yes. L'IN-GAN-NO DI LA-BA...and then you turn the page, and you're rewarded with a surprise. The 'Laban chord' – 'Laban!'. Here is, I think, a partimento of sneakiness: perhaps Kuhnau composed this before he composed the piece.

[Music]

Kuhnau delights in constructing a puzzle book here of riddles at multiple layers. At the level of the motto, we enjoy discovering that *inganno* also means 'deceptive cadence', and we're patting ourselves on the back. Then we discover, 'oh dear, he's coded the entire motto into the music, coordinating each letter with a different deceptive cadence'. Only then can we enjoy that he's composed the pages visually to provide the final joke of the 'Laban chord' when we turn the page. Then we find that the second half of this section uses the other *inganno*, the manipulation of melodic material through hexachordal transposition. We can thus be forgiven if we start worrying about number alphabets at this point. The entire passage, counting the second section, is 77 measures long. Thank goodness, *inganno* is only 70 in the natural number alphabet – unless we don't count the seven-measure C major cadence of blissful consonance that divides the two *inganni*.

Thank you for listening.

[Applause]

BK Good afternoon, everybody. I would like to present on some pieces by contemporaries of Bach that I came across in my work when I was dealing with Bach's pupils. And I just want to show you what might be emblematic about these compositions.

The most obvious way to compose 'Bach' is, of course, to use the letters B-A-C-H as the notes, and I have collected here some very early examples of these. The first one is a fugue by Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713–1780), a very famous Bach pupil.²³ The manuscript is undated, but this piece can be connected with an anecdote that was printed in 1834.²⁴ We can read in this anecdote that Bach comes into the church where Krebs is at this moment playing in a church service, on the organ. And Bach comes into this church secretly, but Krebs notices him and starts improvising a fugue on the name of Bach. And Bach notices this, of course. And, after that service, Krebs writes this fugue down, and I think we can really be sure that this is the piece that was created in this situation, because when you have a look at the whole fugue, you can really see that it is largely of an improvised character. So, if this is true, if this anecdote really is based, to a certain degree, on the facts, then we must assume that this fugue was composed before 1750, probably at the time when Krebs was organist in Zeitz, near Leipzig. And this was from the year 1744 on, so I think this is the time when this fugue was composed. That's why it is the oldest known fugue on the 'B-A-C-H' theme that was composed by a person outside of the Bach family.

The second fugue is by Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), who was an organist in Vienna and was a contemporary of Haydn and Mozart.²⁵ But this copy of his fugue is dated 1753, so Albrechtsberger composed this fugue by the age of 17. It is unknown when or where Albrechtsberger first encountered Bach's music, but as we can see from this fugue alone, he must have known some works by Bach.

The third example was printed in the year 1755.²⁶ It is an anonymous composition, although it was attributed sometimes to Johann Christian Bach, but also to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788). Also, this fugue exists in different versions, and we cannot really be sure what is the background of this fugue, but I would say it is an anonymous composition. And it is one of the very rare examples that have been printed.

And the last example is by Georg Andreas Sorge (1703–1778).²⁷ There is a copy at Yale University dated 1755, so also a very early piece. Sorge was organist in Lowenstein in Thuringia and a member of Mizler's *Societät der musicalischen Wissenschaften* ('Society of the Musical Sciences'). We know that he was an admirer of Bach's music, because he dedicated [to] Bach one of his prints of piano

sonatas and called Bach 'den Fürsten der Klavierspieler', so, 'the prince of all piano players'.²⁸ So, these are all early examples of B-A-C-H fugues known to me. Obviously, they're an homage to Bach. They were composed around Bach's death or shortly after that. And that's why we can assume that they were inspired by Bach's *Art of Fugue* where we find that Bach used the B-A-C-H motif himself. And obviously, some of his contemporaries used this model to honour Bach in some way.

Speaking about the *Art of Fugue*, there's another interesting example that I have found, in an inventory of the estate of an organist living in Auerbach in southwestern Saxony. His name is Johann Gottfried Moses (1751–1786), and after his death, his musical estate was auctioned in 1787.²⁹ And there we find some Bach pieces, and the most interesting is probably what is here number 157: the so-called '*Gerlachische Vollendung der Kunst der Fuge* ges[chrieben]', so, the 'completion of the Art of Fugue by Gerlach'.

What else can this mean, other than there's a completion, obviously, of the *Fuga a 3 Soggetti* of Bach's *Art of Fugue*. And the interesting question is now 'who is Gerlach?', of course. It's probably not Carl Gotthelf Gerlach (1704–1761), the Leipzig organist in Bach's time. I think that it was an organist named Gerlach, Georg Heinrich Gerlach (1709–1774), who was the teacher of this guy, Johann Gottfried Moses. Gerlach was born in Ohrdruf in 1704 [recte: 1709]. He studied in Leipzig then; we don't know if he came into contact with Bach. We only know that he was a member of Johann Gottlieb Gömer's (1697–1778) *Collegium musicum* when he was a student. Later, in 1734, he [G. H. Gerlach] became organist in Plauen, in Saxony. And he obviously decided not to compose a B-A-C-H fugue, but to complete the unfinished fugue of the *Art of Fugue*, which is, of course, a most challenging task.³⁰ As far as I know, these are the only known examples of such attempts. Of course, I haven't been able to find this composition; all we have is this reference here. But this alone, I think, shows that [G. H.] Gerlach was a great admirer of Bach's art and surely owned many more works by Bach which we don't know of in detail.

The last example I want to talk about is this musical print, the so-called *Musicalisches ABC* ('Musical ABC') composed by Johann Caspar Simon (1701–1776).³¹ This work was printed in Augsburg in 1749. It is a collection of very, very little fugues, or 'fughettas', as we can read in the title. It was dedicated to beginners on the organ, and organists and schoolmasters not working in major cities. When we have a look at the Fugue in G major, we can see that it is very closely modelled on Bach's fugue in the gigue style (BWV 577). So, we can assume that this organist, Simon, obviously knew this Bach work and probably owned more manuscript copies of his works.

Johann Caspar Simon was an organist and music director in Nördlingen, in southern Germany, from 1731; before that time, he studied at Jena University in Thuringia in the 1720s. And, in this time, he had musical training, and he wrote

about this time in his biography. I quote: 'Bach in Jena, the excellent organist, poured oil into the fire; and the incomparable *Capellmeister* Bach in Leipzig let the fire flare'.³² Probably Simon was not Bach's pupil, but he was obviously inspired by his composition. And it is interesting, if you have a look at the cantatas by Simon, that, for the cantatas, he took themes by Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) to compose his own cantatas, and really to such a great extent that you can really say that he was obviously, like, plagiarising Telemann. Now, the question is: did he do the same with Bach? Can we say that this is an homage or plagiarism? I'm not really sure; I would like to know what you think about this. But I find it really interesting that this piece was printed in 1749, so still in Bach's lifetime. And I really would like to know what Bach would have thought if he had seen this. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

AF Thank you very much, Bernd. And our final speaker is Ruth, who's going to talk to us about 'Transforming Word and Picture into Music'.

RT Did composers in Bach's time really transform word and picture into music? Bach is silent about his methods. So, how can we approach this topic with scholarly integrity? My solution has been to study sources that Bach knew, and to try, as far as possible, to understand his music with an 18th-century mindset. But there has been a lot of anxiety over extramusical imagery, symbols, codes, and numbers in Bach studies, and that has made the task difficult, and caused solid documentary evidence about compositional process to be sidelined.

Bach's contemporary Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) wrote at length on compositional invention in his comprehensive music treatise, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* ('The Perfect Kapellmeister') (1739). He systematises his points around 11 categories of *loci topici*, a technique popular with orators for generating ideas for speeches, and well known to anyone with a basic classical education.³³ Mattheson calls these 'Erfindungs-Quellen', 'sources of invention'.³⁴ His illustrations include how eminent composers put pictures into their music. 'The famous Johann Jakob Froberger' (1616–1667), he writes, 'knew how to represent entire stories on the clavier alone depicting his peers and their emotions'.³⁵ Mattheson owned a copy of Froberger's allemande 'On Crossing the Rhine'. And he continues: '[Dietrich] Buxtehude [1637–1707], the similarly esteemed former Lübeck organist, also wrote such pieces successfully, and among them portrayed the character of the planets in seven clavier suites'.³⁶ And continuing: 'Now, as this can be done to some degree on a mere instrument, how much better can it be accomplished with lively voices', i.e. in vocal music. 'Yet moderation must be maintained here: for whoever would want to push this too far might easily carry it to the point where forced, ridiculous and pedantic things creep in'.³⁷ Despite this warning, though, Mattheson nonetheless recommends their use, writing: 'Though many might think that it would require a good deal of coercion to apply these techniques to the art of musical composition, the following will convince everyone

that they not only can and do occur naturally, they are also part of the theory of invention'.³⁸

The richest source of invention, according to Mattheson, is the notation *locus* (*locus notationis*),³⁹ which puts words literally into the music through the external form and design of musical notes. A common notation *locus* technique is the simple number alphabet, whereby each letter is assigned a number: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, and so on.⁴⁰ And with this, the name Bach, B-A-C-H, translates famously as 14, hence the emblematic logo on the back of the Bachfest T-shirts.

But these number words were intended to be more than a self-reference. They were part of a technique used to generate invention. Christian Friedrich Hunold (1680–1721), for example, uses the name 'Margaretha', which has a number value of 88. As the words 'meine Seele' ('my soul') also come to 88, Hunold can use these equal, or parallel, words to make a paragram, from which ideas for a short poem are then generated.⁴¹

The most famous paragrammatist in Bach's time, Johann Friedrich Riederer (1678–1734), recommends keeping a book with an alphabetical list of key words and their number values.⁴² Key words that a church musician using the common number alphabet might have had in his book include 'Jesus' (value 70) or 'Jesu' (value 52). But how to get these into music? Mattheson suggests using *loci topici* techniques in: 1) the value of the notes; 2) inversions and permutation; 3) repetition, and 4) canonic passages.⁴³

Another obvious way is using the number value of the prominent name or word to help decide the number of notes at a particular place. A composer can highlight a creative device of this kind by combining it with a prominent or unusual musical effect. My illustrations are from the Leipzig version of Bach's Cantata BWV 147, *Hertz und Mund und That und Leben* ('Heart and mouth and deed and life'). In the phrase 'Daß ich dich meinen Heyland nenne' ('That I may name you my Saviour'), Bach writes a very long melisma, 65 notes, to the words 'meinen Heyland nenne' ('name my Saviour'). Now, the number value of the word 'Heyland' is 65, suggesting that this key word was Bach's inspiration for the 65-note melisma, a double meaning as the tenor literally names the Saviour ('Heyland', 65). Bach uses the technique again for the next melisma in the aria, on the word 'brenne' ('burn'): 55 notes, when the number value of 'brenne' is 55.⁴⁴ Another melisma comes at the most heartrending point in the *St John Passion* (BWV 245), with the whipping of Jesus. No listener can miss this. He writes a graphic sequence on the words 'geißelte ihn' ('they flogged him'), with 8 × 3 notes in the rhythm, later heard as 'Kreuzige, kreuzige!' ('Crucify, crucify!'), followed by a sequence of eight triplets, and then the cadence; 53 notes in all for 'geißelte ihn'. Bach could have continued this to any number of notes, but he chose 53, which strongly suggests the presence of a parallel invention.

My example of transforming picture into music is again from Cantata BWV 147. The prescribed gospel reading is the visitation, Mary's visit to her cousin. Her fiancé, Joseph, and Elizabeth's husband, Zechariah, are not mentioned in the Gospels at this point. However, Bach's allocation of voices and keys to the arias strongly imply a story with four protagonists, as in these famous artworks.⁴⁵ Joseph, who had considered breaking off his engagement to Mary, sings the tenor part, 'Help, Jesus, help, that I too may profess you in faith and obedience' ('Hilff, Jesu, hilff, dass ich auch dich bekenne...Im Glauben und Gelassenheit', No. 7). Elizabeth, suffering social disgrace because she's pregnant at such an advanced age, may be represented by the alto: 'Do not be ashamed, O soul, to profess your Saviour' ('Schäme dich, o Seele, nicht / Deinen Heyland zu bekennen', No. 3). She also is the one who sings, 'He jumps, he hops inside me' ('Er wird bewegt, er hüpfet und springet', No. 8). And the obedient Virgin Mary in the soprano aria (No. 5): 'My Saviour, choose my believing soul' ('Mein Heyland, erwähle / Die gläubende Seele'). Although Bach does not put names in his score, his choice of related keys for these arias supplies a further connection between the couples: Mary and Joseph in D minor and F major, and Elizabeth and Zechariah in A minor and C major, respectively.⁴⁶

These are just two methods that Bach could have used to transform word and picture into music. There are many more documented sources of invention. They were not codes. They were not symbols or mysteries. They were a technical resource to help the composer and the listener. And I hope that Bach studies will embrace these and many other documented 18th-century methods with confidence and integrity, and allow them to enrich our experience of hearing and understanding Bach's music. Thank you.

[Applause]

- RT I have a question for Joel, which is about the use of symbol, and the use of code, which are both words that I avoid avidly because of the anxiety I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation. Do you deliberately use it?
- JS There's a role for using these words, to engage people outside of the discourse, to awaken an interest. But I absolutely understand that the way you have framed it today is, 'is this necessary', going on?
- RT Yeah. Thank you.
- TW While researching the music based on the B-A-C-H theme, have you gained a sense of how well-distributed the *Art of Fugue* was in the mid-18th century? And a second question: do you think it's possible that Bach deliberately left the final fugue unfinished as a challenge to others?
- BK Yeah, well, that's a different question, if it was intended or not. Well, we know the story that is written on the manuscript, that Bach died while composing it. We

don't know if this is really true, or if it really was intended the way it was printed. It is not easy to say how well-distributed it was. I think we have the number of the copies that were produced, but I don't have it in mind now; I think it was only 200 or 300 maybe. But, of course, we don't know where these copies of the *Art of Fugue* went. I think we don't have many examples, we don't know many places where this really was present, which makes it even more interesting if we now have these examples of people who obviously knew this work.

JS Just a follow up to the conversation we began with; I just looked over my notes. I used the word code once, and I really did mean it, and it probably is good to define that. 'Steganographica' is the art of writing in code in order to not be understood. And I mentioned code because the music alphabets also appeared in those books, like Schott's *Steganographica*. And Kircher is not using it as a code. He's using it as an *ars combinatoria* invention for creating new music.⁴⁷

AF I just wondered if I could ask Wendy a very quick question. Could you just expand more about the classical and mythological background of what you were discussing?

WH Oh, thanks so much. I think what's so interesting about this is how vibrant these myths were, and trying to understand the ways in which they might have been received. So, for instance, in König's preface to the Heinichen cantata that I very briefly mentioned, he [the poet] expresses some anxiety about, you know, what do we do with these tales? And the French do this all the time, and the Italian students all the time, and can we do this, too? And he even says...so, the inspiration, the idea that Diana has secret loves opens up this whole sort of territory of exploration. And there's a point where, I think, it's in König's preface, where he says something like, 'is he a king, is he a hunter, is he a stargazer?'. So, we've got these complicated relations, relationships, *vis-a-vis* Diana as the chaste virgin, as the Virgin Mary, or not, as this completely carefree huntress.

And what struck me in trying to think about this, well, can we say something more about this cantata other than 'the Duke was an avid hunter'? There seemed like there's a lot more to say about Diana and about her music, as it's her hunting that is really foregrounded, more than Pan, who's kind of the guy of the land, but you know; he takes care of sheep, but he's not so interested in killing them. So, what might we do when we try to think through this piece? So, part of it is taking the unfamiliar task of thinking: can we think about myth in this cantata not necessarily in a sort of Neoplatonic or sacred context, and see if that does that get us anywhere with Bach? And that's a bit what I'm trying to do with this.

AF And so, also, I guess, transforming our ideas about how we approach this music.

WH Right, you know, thinking about transformation, and how can we do that? But there's something about when Diana is going 'ha ha ha ha' in her first aria. I mean, it's just it's not really like any other soprano aria I can think of, you know. It's not

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen ('Raise a shout to God in all lands'); it's not Cantata BWV 51. It's elaborate, but it's a different kind of elaborate. I don't know, hopefully a bit of metamorphosis.

AF Fantastic. Well, it's time to bring this session to a close. Thank you to all four of our speakers for such a rich and inspiring set of presentations. Do join us for the next session if you can, and there'll be time to continue the discussion in the break. But before that, let's thank our panel once again.

[Applause]

Notes

- ¹ The spelling has been standardised following British English norms. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are by the editors.
- ² For a complete translation, summary of the cantata's background, and analysis, see Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, trans. Richard D.P. Jones (Oxford University Press, 2005), 799–805. On the dating and the manuscript, see also Hans-Joachim Schulze, 'Wann entstand J.S. Bachs "Jagdkantate?"', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 86 (2000), 301–5. For an extensive investigation of the actual performance of the cantata in 1713, including a reconstruction of the guest list, a persuasive hypothesis about the venue, and interpretation of the mythological figures, see Joachim Säckl and Henrike Rucker, 'Höfische Festmusiken. Bachs "Jagdkantate" und "Schäferkantate" im Lichte der Weissenfelder Fürstengeburtstage von 1713 und 1725', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 106 (2020), 103–36.
- ³ 'Pales', in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. M. C. Howatson (Oxford University Press, 2011). Ovid discusses Pales in Book 4 of the *Fasti* (especially 4.721–4.782) in conjunction with the celebration of the Feast of Parilla, celebrated on April 21 as Rome's birthday. Virgil refers to Pales in the opening of *Georgics* 3, dedicating his poem to the 'goddess of the flocks'. While both Virgil and Ovid depict a female Pales, the Roman author Marcus Terentius Varro described Pales as a male god.
- ⁴ Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 802, writes: 'One of the more woeful aspects of his royal household was the prince's mismanagement of his land, which in later years induced the Kaiser to set up a royal commission to administer his finances'.
- ⁵ Paraphrased from Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach*, 802–3, who explains more fully: 'One day Diana devotes herself exclusively to hunting, and her disappointed lover Endymion asks her whether she no longer loves him. Diana replies that she does indeed still love him but that today the priority must be to honour Prince Christian on the birthday.'
- ⁶ On Diana and Actaeon, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.16–205; on Diana and Callisto, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2.441–446.
- ⁷ For an edition that would have been known to Franck and Bach's contemporaries, see, for example, Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines deorum, qui ab antiquis colebantur...* (Frankfurt, 1687).
- ⁸ For a detailed discussion on the mythological sources for the Pan-Diana-Endymion love triangle, see Wendy Heller, *Emblems of Eloquence: Opera and Women's Voices in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (University of California Press, 2003), 185–8.
- ⁹ Johann Ulrich König, *Die entdeckte Verstellung, oder: Die geheime Liebe der Diana* (Hamburg, 1712).
- ¹⁰ Säckl and Rucker, 'Höfische Festmusiken', 105, propose that Duke Christian had a deep artistic inclination and was interested in poetry, suggesting that he, too, would have been well aware of the mythological histories of these figures.
- ¹¹ Jochen Vötsch, 'Luise Christine zu Stolberg-Stolberg', in *Sächsische Biografie*, ed. Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde, <https://saebi.isgv.de/biografie/24376> (last revised on 1 April, 2026).
- ¹² Säckl and Rucker, 'Höfische Festmusiken', 125–6, see the mythological figures as representing the dynastic transition enacted by the marriage. The authors propose that Louise Christine represents Diana (as I also suggest), Endymion her former husband, the late Count Johann Georg III of Mansfield, while Pan and

Pales represent the earlier generation, the previous Duke Johann Georg of Weissenfels and his widow (Duke Christian's mother). The authors argue as well that it might also reflect Louise Christine's passion for hunting, speculating that she might have been involved in commissioning the work. This is certainly a reasonable hypothesis; however, it fails to take account of the complexity of the mythological reputations that these characters embodied.

- ¹³ Katelijne Schiltz, *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 18.
- ¹⁴ Johann Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung einiger biblischer Historien* (Leipzig, 1700).
- ¹⁵ Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung*, ii.
- ¹⁶ Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung*, 12.
- ¹⁷ 'Zu vorhers aber soll er wissen, dass ich einem iedweden Buchstaben diejenige Zahl zugeeignet habe die ihm des Alphabets Ordnung nach zukommt: Alls A. bedeutet 1, B. 2 und so forth.' ('But first he must know that I have allotted every letter a number corresponding to its position in the alphabet: A equals 1, B. 2 and so on.') Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung*, viii.
- ¹⁸ 'Es ist auch diese meine gantze Arbeit, wie meine Jungfer Musa auf dem ersten Kupfferblatte deutlich zu verstehen giebet, nichts anders als ein solcher Lusus.' ('This whole work of mine, as my very first Musa clearly reveals on the initial copperplate, is nothing other than such a game.') Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung*, viii.
- ¹⁹ Ruth Tatlow, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 103; Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis, sive Ars Magna Consoni et Dissoni* (Rome, 1650).
- ²⁰ Kuhnau, *Musicalische Vorstellung*, x.
- ²¹ For instance, see Giambattista della Porta, *De Furtivis literarum notis vulgo* (1602), 156. Della Porta's pioneering work on code went through many editions. The 1602 edition at Yale University Library is the first to include a music alphabet and the earliest instance of a published music alphabet I have found. Della Porta's alphabet is the same as the one that appears in Kircher.
- ²² Johann Kuhnau, *Sämtliche Werke für Tasteninstrumente*, ed. Norbert Müllemann (G. Henle Verlag, 2014), 129.
- ²³ KrebsWV 434; D-B Mus.ms. 12034, 11–3.
- ²⁴ *Altenburger Blätter. Wöchentliche Mittheilungen für das Herzogthum Sachsen-Altenburg* 5, no. 30 (1834), 239.
- ²⁵ D-SWI Mus. 727.
- ²⁶ *Opere scielte d'alcune Sonate ed altre pezze di Galanteria per il Cembalo solo de Compositori tedeschi ed italiani. Opera Ima. Alle Spese di Giovanni Ulrico Haffner, Suonatore di Liuto in Norimberga* (Nuremberg, 1755), 10–4 (D-LEb, Kulukundis II.3 Wq 62.9).
- ²⁷ US-NH LM 4944e.
- ²⁸ 'Noch eins. Der Fürst aller Clavier-Spieler Herr Capellmeister Bach in Leipzig ist auch todt. Die Reihe kommt auch an uns...' (Sorge, 'Mitteilung von Bachs Tod', Lobenstein, September 7, 1750). See Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze (eds.), *Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bachs 1685–1750*, Bach-Dokumente II (Bärenreiter/Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969), 486–7, no. 622.
- ²⁹ Staatsarchiv Chemnitz, Grundherrschaft Auerbach/IV, no. 36, fols. 18–21.
- ³⁰ See Bernd Koska, *Bachs Thomaner als Kantoren in Mitteldeutschland*, Forum Mitteldeutsche Barockmusik 9 (Ortus, 2018), 100–4.
- ³¹ J.C. Simon, *Musicalisches A. B. C. in kleinen und leichten Fugen...* (Augsburg, 1749; second edition, Augsburg, 1754).
- ³² 'Bach in Jena, der vortrefliche Organist, goß Oel ins Feuer; und der unvergleichliche Capellmeister Bach in Leipzig brachte es in volle Flamme'. See Hans-Joachim Schulze and Andreas Glöckner (eds.), *Dokumente zu Leben, Werk und Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1685–1800. Neue Dokumente, Nachträge und Berichtigungen zu Band I–III*, Bach-Dokumente V (Bärenreiter, 2007), 164, no. B 499b.
- ³³ Tatlow, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*, 92–4, 115–8. For Mattheson's coverage of the *loci topici* see Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), Book 2, Chapter 4, 'Von der melodischen Erfindung' ('Of the melodic invention'), 121–132. See also Ernest C. Harris, *Johann Mattheson's Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A Revised Translation with critical commentary* (UMI

Research Press, 1981) for a literal English translation of Mattheson's treatise. Unless otherwise stated, the shortened English translations given below are by the author.

- ³⁴ Ibid., 123, §21.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 130, §72. 'Es hat der berühmte Joh. Jac[.] Froberger, Kaisers Ferdinand III Hof-Organist, auf dem blossen Clavier gantze Geschichte, mit Abmahlung der dabey gegenwärtig-gewesenen, und Theil daran nehmenden Personen, samt ihren Gemüths-Eigenschafften gar wol vorzustellen gewust.'
- ³⁶ Ibid., 130, §73. 'Buxtehude (Dietrich) der gleichfalls hochgeschätzte, ehemaliger Lübeckischer Organist, hat dergleichen auch mit gutem Beifall seiner Zeit zu Papier gebracht, und untern andern, di[e] Natur oder Eigenschafft der Planeten, in sieben Clavier-Suiten, artig abgebildet.'
- ³⁷ Ibid., 130, §74. 'Kan solches nun einigermaassen auf einem blossen Instrument allein geschehen, wie viel mehr und besser wird es mit lebendigen Stimmen auszurichten seyn. Doch muß darin gute Maasse gehalten werden: denn, wer das ding, ohne sonderbare Bescheidenheit, gar zu weit treiben wollte, dürffte es leicht dahin bringen, daß viel gezwungenes, lächerliches und pedantisches mit unterlaufen müste.'
- ³⁸ Ibid., 124, §24. 'Ob nun gleich mancher denken dürffte, es würde grossen Zwang erfordern, alle diese Dinge zur musicalischen Setz-Kunst hinzuziehen; so wird doch die Folge einen ieden überführen, daß solches nicht nur [auf] gantz natürlicher Weise geschehen könne, sondern[,] daß es auch in der That bey der Erfindungs-Lehre so seyn müsse....'
- ³⁹ Ibid., 124, §25.
- ⁴⁰ The definitive study of the tradition of number alphabets and their use in Bach's time is currently Tatlow, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*.
- ⁴¹ Christian Friedrich Hunold, *Die Allerneueste Art Zur Reinen und Galanten Poesie zu gelangen*. (Hamburg, 1707), 540. See also Tatlow, *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet*, 92–4.
- ⁴² Johann Friederich Riederer, *Catalogus derer Eintaused funffzig Paragrammatum Cabbalisticorum Trigonalium* (Nuremberg, 1719), Introduction to the Impartial Reader, unpaginated [pages 8–9]. 'Wer viel Cabbalistica hurtig zu machen gedenket / und das Alphabet noch nicht genugsam im Kopffe hat / thut wol / wann er sich ein apart-Büchlein hält / die Haupt-Wörter / die er einmahl schon gebraucht / oder sonst accurat ausgerechnet / alphabeticô ordine hinein zeichnet / und sich hernach derselben / wann es zumal Eyl hat / um so viel füglicher bedienet / da er dann die halbe Mühe erspart / wiewohl es einem / der darinn albereit bewandert ist / wenig helfen wird / dann wann ich mir die Zahlen bekandt gemacht / se[t]ze ich sie so leicht auf das Papier hin / und werde eher damit fertig / als einer / der das vorkommende Wort erst unter so viel hundertten heraus klauben und nachsehen muß / sonderlich wann dessen Finger nicht allzugelencke sind.' ('Anyone who wants to write paragrams quickly and does not yet have the alphabet fully committed to memory would do well to keep a separate little book with the main words in alphabetical order, listing those already used and otherwise, with an accurate calculation [of their numerical value], so that when he is in a hurry, they are readily to hand, and this will save him half the effort; although it will be of little help to someone who is already well versed in it [the number alphabet], as once I have familiarised myself with the numbers, I can easily put them down on paper and finish sooner than someone who has to pick out the word in question from among hundreds and then look it up, especially if his fingers are not particularly nimble.')
- ⁴³ Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, Book 2, Chapter 4, §25. Mattheson lists these four main techniques, and illustrates them in the following paragraphs, §26–34.
- ⁴⁴ Ruth Tatlow, *Bach's Church Cantatas* (Oxford University Press, 2025), 101. In the common natural alphabet 'Heyland' is 65 (H=8, E=5, Y=23, L=11, A=1, N=13, D=4) and 'brenne' is 55 (B=2, R=17, E=5, N=13, N=13, E=5).
- ⁴⁵ We do not know if Bach had seen any contemporary or early paintings of the Visitation of Mary, but it is interesting that these two paintings and many other depictions of the Visitation include the two men. The two images – Giuseppe Maria Crespi (c. 1710), 'The Visitation', <https://sammlung.staedelmuseum.de/en/work/the-visitation>, and Giuseppe Porta (1530–1575), 'The Visitation of Mary', <https://sammlung.staedelmuseum.de/en/work/the-visitation-of-mary-3> – are both held at the Städel Museum, Frankfurt.
- ⁴⁶ Tatlow, *Bach's Church Cantatas*, 106–7.
- ⁴⁷ Gaspar Schott, *Schola steganographica* (Nuremberg, 1665).

