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# *Discussing* BACH

Issue 3 (October 2021)

Bach and the *Thomaskantorat*

## Editorial Introduction

Editors

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## Bach and the *Thomaskantorat*

A discussion with Steven Zohn, Barbara M. Reul, Ursula Kramer, and Michael Maul

Moderated by Ruth Tatlow. Recorded on Wednesday 18 August 2021



STEVEN ZOHN | BARBARA M. REUL | URSULA KRAMER | MICHAEL MAUL

discuss

*Bach and the Thomaskantorat*

Welcome to this third issue of *Discussing Bach*, featuring a live conversation on 'Bach and the *Thomaskantorat*'.

In September 2021 Swiss national Andreas Reize was elected the eighteenth *Thomaskantor* since Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) held the post. The appointment hit the international headlines because Reize was the first non-Lutheran appointed to this distinguished position since the Reformation. Our discussion, however, was not stimulated by this momentous event, but rather by Michael Maul's ground-breaking history of St Thomas School, published first in German in 2012 and then in English translation as *Bach's Famous Choir: The Saint Thomas School in Leipzig, 1212–1804* (Boydell Press, 2018). Since our aim at Bach Network is to disseminate new original insights about J. S. Bach's life and compositions, it was natural to organise a round table discussion around Michael's book at the first opportunity, which happened to be the 2019 Bach Network Dialogue Meeting. Unfortunately, Michael was not able to be present, and so

instead of viewing the long history of the *Thomaskantorat* from Bach's vantage point, the discussion focused on the election process in 1722–1723 that was to result in Bach's appointment. No fewer than three candidates – Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), Christoph Graupner (1683–1760), and Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1658) – were approached by the Leipzig town council before Bach. Telemann authority Steven Zohn, Graupner specialist Ursula Kramer, and our very own Bach Network council member and Fasch expert Barbara M. Reul accepted our invitation to form the 2019 dialogue panel. The programme committee commissioned them to take a fresh look at why these three contemporaries of J. S. Bach decided against accepting the *Thomaskantorat*, to see where this conversation would take us.

But this was not the end of it. With the launch of *Discussing Bach* converging with the pandemic period, we realised that 'Bach and the *Thomaskantorat*' could valuably be revisited: we could create a new, live, recorded discussion, and this time with Michael, the virtuosic Bach scholar, taking part, as originally planned. In mid-August 2021, when the recording took place, none of the contributors knew what the others would say. This produced a live discussion in every sense, with immediate responses and reactions sparking new ideas. For instance, Michael heard about Steve's fantasy ideas for the first time, and his excitement can be witnessed in the recording. The exercise also led to a deeper and unanimous appreciation of why the Leipzig town council ultimately chose Bach.

And the ideas have continued to develop. Published with this issue are two peer-reviewed articles – one each by Steven Zohn and Barbara M. Reul (see pp. 15–30 and 31–44 respectively) – a first in the short history of *Discussing Bach*. Ursula Kramer has also written an article on this topic, which has been accepted for publication in German in the 2023 *Bach-Jahrbuch*. Furthermore, the Authorised Transcript (see pp. 2–13) includes additional comments and insights that were left out in the heat of the moment, or for which there was no time in the discussion. Our expectation is that further new ideas, questions, and responses will be generated, published, and enter the canon of Bach scholarship. We will keep the *Discussing Bach* and the YouTube pages updated accordingly.

We are grateful to everyone who has played a part in bringing this issue of *Discussing Bach* to fruition. We hope that these materials will become a catalyst for you, whether viewer, reader, or listener, to engage in deeper discussion with your colleagues, friends, and family about Bach's impact on music history as the most famous *Thomaskantor* of all.

Ruth Tatlow (Danderyd, Sweden)  
Barbara M. Reul (Regina, Canada)

7 October 2021

## Contributors



**Ursula Kramer** has been Professor of Musicology at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz since 2007. Her research interests and publications focus on court culture of the landgraviate Hesse-Darmstadt with emphasis on Christoph Graupner, the history of incidental music, as well as chamber music for woodwinds. She is also active as a bassoonist.



**Michael Maul** is head of the research archive at the Bach-Archiv in Leipzig and has served as the artistic director of the Leipzig Bachfest since 2018. His numerous publications include the monographs *Bach's Famous Choir: The Saint Thomas School in Leipzig, 1212–1804* (Boydell Press, 2018) and *Barockoper in Leipzig (1693–1720)* (Rombach, 2009). He is also the author of the radio series 'Universum JSB' (Deutschlandfunk) and part of the new radio podcast 'Die Bach-Kantate mit Maul & Schrammek' (MDR Klassik).



**Barbara M. Reul** is Professor of Musicology at Luther College, University of Regina, and has published widely in both English and German on musical life at the Court of Anhalt-Zerbst and its long-time Capellmeister J. F. Fasch (1688–1758). She has also co-edited several volumes of the *Fasch-Studien* series (most recently vol. 15, *Musik in Anhalt-Zerbst*, 2019) as well as the monograph *Music at German Courts, 1715–1760: Changing Artistic Priorities* (Boydell Press, 2011).



**Steven Zohn's** research focuses on Telemann and members of the Bach family. He is the author of *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and *The Telemann Compendium* (Boydell Press, 2020), and has edited volumes for the C.P.E. Bach and Telemann critical editions. Active as a player of historical flutes, he is also Laura H. Carnell Professor of Music Studies at Temple University.

## Further reading and listening

Kramer, Ursula. 'Christoph Graupner', <https://christoph-graupner-gesellschaft.de/>, s.v. 'Biographie' (2014), 'Musik' (2018), 'Rezeption' (2010).

Kramer, Ursula. 'The Court of Hesse-Darmstadt'. In *Music at German Courts, 1715–1760: Changing Artistic Priorities*, eds. Samantha Owens, Barbara M. Reul, and Janice B. Stockigt. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011, 333–363.

Kramer, Ursula. "'was ihn zur mutation bewege". Christoph Graupner und seine Bewerbung um die Stelle des Leipziger Thomaskantorats'. To be published in *Bach-Jahrbuch* 109 (2023).

Maul, Michael. *Bach's Famous Choir: The Saint Thomas School in Leipzig, 1212–1804*. Trans. Richard Howe. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018.

Maul, Michael. *Barockoper in Leipzig (1693–1720)*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2009.

Maul, Michael. 'New Evidence on Thomaskantor Kuhnau's Operatic Activities, Or: Could Bach have been allowed to compose an opera?', *Understanding Bach* 4 (2009): 9–20.

Reul, Barbara M. "'It was impossible for me to leave" – Johann Friedrich Fasch and the Thomaskantorat in 1722', *Discussing Bach* 3 (October 2021): 31–44.

Reul, Barbara M. 'Sharing Resources: J. F. Fasch, J. S. Bach, and Princely Funeral Music at the Courts of Anhalt-Zerbst and Anhalt-Köthen', *Musicology Australia* 41/2 (2019): 106–120.

Reul, Barbara M. 'The Court of Anhalt-Zerbst'. In *Music at German Courts, 1715–1760: Changing Artistic Priorities*, eds. Samantha Owens, Barbara M. Reul, and Janice B. Stockigt. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011, 259–286.

Zohn, Steven. *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Zohn, Steven. 'Telemann as Thomaskantor? An Historical Capriccio', *Discussing Bach* 3 (October 2021): 15–30.

Zohn, Steven. *The Telemann Compendium*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020.

### Select performances of liturgical cantatas

G. P. Telemann. <https://youtu.be/YobY6A3ij7I>

J. F. Fasch. <https://youtu.be/4FlgdeSvIHs>

C. Graupner. <https://youtu.be/INHxepGAv3Y> and <https://youtu.be/GQwfSTA5evA>

J. S. Bach. <https://www.bachvereniging.nl/en/bwv/bwv-22/>

N.B. Updates on the topic in the form of new publications by the four contributors will be given on the *Discussing Bach* webpage.

## Editorial and Production Team

Editorial Team: Ruth Tatlow, Barbara M. Reul, Yo Tomita

Technical Support: Fred Fehleisen, Benton Froc, Ben Tatlow

## About Bach Network and *Discussing Bach*

[Bach Network](#) was founded in 2004 to create a forum to talk about Bach's music. Early conversations evolved into [Dialogue Meetings](#), which became Bach Network's primary physical means of discussion. From these meetings came our online journal *Understanding Bach*, where the fruit of new research discussions could be studied and enjoyed. What was missing from the written journal articles was the immediacy of the dialogue conversation and questions. This is where *Discussing Bach* enters the picture.

*Discussing Bach* is a brand-new multimedia, web-based publication superseding Bach Network's open access journal [Understanding Bach](#) (2006–17). Featuring scholars engaged in ground-breaking research, each issue of [Discussing Bach](#) comprises:

- Editorial Introduction;
- Link to the live video discussion with optional subtitles;
- Authorised Transcript of the live discussion;
- Further reading and listening;
- Topic-specific articles may also be published as part of the issue.

**Citation style:** Each of the above components will require a different citation style. Please follow carefully the instructions given in your preferred style guide.

**Copyright:** Bach Network holds the copyright to the discussion to protect the intellectual copyright of the researchers' ideas, some of which will be unpublished at the time of recording. Authorised subtitles are provided to facilitate accurate citation.

**Future issues:** The aim of *Discussing Bach* is to stimulate discussion of new research insights. Scholars are selected to contribute because of the impact of their latest research discoveries, as well as their peer-reviewed publications, whether already in press or under contract, and/or because they are sponsored by a competitive research programme.

Topics planned for forthcoming issues include 'Bach and the Corporality of Emotions' and 'Bach and Humour'.



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## Upcoming meetings

Tenth Dialogue Meeting, Madingley Hall, Cambridge. 18–22 July 2022

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The following individuals are members of the Bach Network Council; some are also trustees of the Bach Network Charitable Trust:

John Butt

Andrew Frampton

Richard D. P. Jones

Michael Maul

Szymon Paczkowski

Barbara M. Reul

Stephen Roe (Chair of Trustees since November 2017)

Stephen Rose

Peter Smaill (Chair of Trustees 2010–October 2017)

Ruth Tatlow (Council Chair from 2010)

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