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Bach for the Future: The Future of Bach Performance

Authorised Transcript

Editors

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Authorised transcript* of a of a live video discussion with John Butt (JB), Michael Maul (MM), Margaret Urquhart (MU), and Mark Seow (MS), and moderated by Michael Marissen (MMar). Questions from the audience were asked by Alan Shepherd (AS), Unknown (U), Ruth Eldredge Thomas (RET), and Max Wong (MW).

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JOHN BUTT | MICHAEL MAUL | MARGARET URQUHART | MARK SEOW
discuss

Bach for the Future: The Future of Bach Performance

Live from the Bachfest Leipzig 2023

CHAIR: MICHAEL MARISSSEN

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

MMar My name is Michael Marissen, and I am Emeritus Professor of Music at Swarthmore College. My only role here will be to be essentially a traffic cop. One of the great issues in Bach studies is the relationship between time and eternity, and I will try to focus as much as possible on time. [laughter]

JB I thought I would begin by talking a little bit about historical performance – Historically Informed Performance. I think one of the things that we've learnt in recent decades is that it's not really a fixed body of knowledge in practice, that once you've learned it, you've got it, but that it actually continues to move; it's a moving target. And that new generations of performers and scholars will actually see new things in the past and get new inspiration from the past.

And it's not just a question of the established sources of performance style or whatever, but also what counts as historical performance. In other words, how broadly do you draw the net around the actual action of performance, in terms of context, meaning, audience, and so on? In other words, I think we have truly learnt that historical performance is never absolutely correct; there's no such thing, really. And if it was correct, we wouldn't actually know. There wouldn't be a sudden shout from heaven saying, 'Yes, spot on!'. In other words, history is used as a form of regeneration rather than as a form of correctness. And I think that's something that has really developed recently. And one of the things I think it has led to very strongly is that players and performers throughout the music profession are taking more responsibility for the knowledge of their instrument and how it fits in with other instruments, interest in their own history as performers, and so on.

So, rather than just learning the techniques of performance, all performers, I think, are beginning to become more interested in the history. And another thing that I think is growing is a sense of stylistic distinction, which history nudges us into doing. So, this leads me on to my experience with several modern orchestras, which I often work with. One thing I have noticed is the fact that Bach is no longer corralled – ha! 'Bach Chorale!' [laughter] – into a specialist category just to be played by old instruments, but modern orchestras are now beginning to play Bach, and quite often with a distinction of style compared with other types of music. And I think this is very important because it will contribute in the future to re-finding Bach's place within the classical canon, as somebody who really has a strong reception in later composers, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries. So, you can now programme Bach as part of a historical narrative if you want to. We can hear Bach more freshly, perhaps, because now orchestras are playing with a greater distinction of style. So, you could have a concert that involves, for instance, Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Stravinsky, and each of those would reflect one another, but also bring out different styles of performance.

Finally, looking beyond the concert hall: I think this is a very important aspect of Bach performance and indeed a lot of historical performance: finding new venues. And history can sometimes teach us about this, like the coffeehouse, for instance, or the café in modern times, taverns, the inn or the pub, forms of worship, forms

of movement. There are many ways in which we can sort of blend historical knowledge with modern forms of performance, which are not confined just to the concert hall. And I think that's a very important thing to do. In other words, I think Bach's music is very transferable, and there are both new and old ways of not just consuming this music as an audience, but also participating as an audience and sort of feeling what's going on with it.

And to end with this, of course, brings me back to one of my pet topics, which I know many of you also work on, which is the notion of embodiment: Bach and the physical. This is something that always tends to be forgotten in traditional Bach research – the notion that Bach's music relates to movement, to flows, to dance and so on, and the sheer existence that one has as a physical and mental being.² I think this is something that Bach as a composer does extraordinarily well, and because of the brilliance of the intellectual fabric of his music, we've sometimes forgotten that it also takes into account distance, time, movement, and gesture. And I think that that form of rediscovery is in the process of happening right now, and that is one of the most promising directions in which Bach performance and Bach reception and Bach participation will hopefully go in the coming decades.

MMar Thank you very much. And perfect timing, by the way. Okay. Thank you for that, John, and now we'll turn to Michael.

MM Yeah, John has already mentioned so many important points, so it's really hard to say something after this. But actually, what I realised after five days [of] Bachfest, 'Bach for Future', with lots of younger groups performing, is that Bach performance is always on the move. Remember, two days ago we had the *St Matthew Passion* performed by Solomon's Knot. And next Saturday we will have Vox Luminus with the *St John Passion* as a Good Friday Vesper, or as part of a Good Friday Vesper. When we had this amazing Bach 'Requiem' called 'Et Lux' performed in the Anatomie-Institut, I realised one more time that Bach interpretation, Bach performance, has probably always been changing.³

I mean, looking back 40 years ago or so when Hamoncourt or Leonhardt came up with their Bach Cantata recordings or passions, or more recently with Gardiner reaching a certain level of perfection, maybe they thought, 'Now we have the original Bach sound back, and that's it'.⁴ But now, listening to these old recordings of Hamoncourt and Leonhardt is getting harder and harder for me, because things are always changing. And I'm sure that in 40 years when we look back to the performances and recordings of our own time, we also will think somehow that this, for certain reasons, is too old fashioned. There's probably only one constant thing, and that is the quality and the power of Bach's music. In the future they will still play the same notes, but the style or format of the performances might change.

I was totally impressed by the 'Et Lux' concert in the Anatomie-Institut.⁵ For those who were not at the concert, let me give a short explanation of what was going

on there: Julia Sophie Wagner, a Leipzig soprano singer, had the idea of creating a kind of requiem, using arias and choruses from Bach cantatas, doing what we in Bach scholarship call 'parody practice'. She asked a famous German writer to produce a poem that fit with the music of certain arias and choruses by Bach, and actually she told me that it was a lengthy struggle because he came up with texts of the correct metre and rhyme, but somehow it didn't work. So, she had to do a lot of work to bring it 'under the notes', to fit it with the notes and the music. Through this process she got a taste of how hard parody practice actually was for Bach and for Picander. It's not only about coming up with rhymes with the same metre; it is much more than this.

And this was not a typical requiem either. It was a modern interpretation reflecting on the questions: what will happen when we die? What is the meaning of life? And they combined it with music like 'Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht' [BWV 105/i] and 'Bleibt dir Engel, bleibt bei mir' [BWV 19/v], with the new text 'Werden wir uns wiederseh'n?' ('Shall we meet again?'). They told me they wanted to perform it at the Bachfest, and I said, okay, then let's go to a place where life and death co-exist, and we ended up in the Anatomie-Institut at Leipzig University. I came up with this location because it played a role in Bach research, when in the 1890s the Head of this Institute had to analyse the bones that were probably of Bach.⁶ At the beginning of our concert the Head of the Institute today [Prof. Dr. med. Ingo Bechmann] talked about this story and showed us a model of Bach's skull. And after the concert people were allowed to take selfies with the model. But that was the funny part. What they had created with the new text to Bach's music was very tasteful and amazing. I saw many people crying in the audience – the impact of this performance was very special, very profound. And in the end, it was because of the power of Bach's music, of course. I'm not sure if this really is the future of Bach interpretation. I mean, Bach's pieces have a future, and I'm sure that in two years or in 20 years the *St Matthew Passion* will be performed as we are doing it today. But there are many, many more options, and there will be many more options, and Bach's music will stand it.

MMar Thank you very much, Michael, for that. And let's turn finally to Margaret.

MU The HIP movement in itself, in some cases, is a kind of artistic research and has been very active since the mid-20th century. Recordings of 17th- and 18th-century music by HIP ensembles have been in progress since the 1970s. It has already been mentioned that Harmoncourt, Leonhardt, Gardiner, Koopman, and Suzuki have all recorded complete sets of Bach cantatas.⁷ The Nederlandse Bachvereniging is already halfway through the completion of video recordings of all of Bach's works. And you can see this, if you don't know it already, on YouTube, called 'All of Bach'.⁸ So, after yet another complete recorded set of Bach's sacred music, does this mean we are done with discovering and researching how Bach's church music was originally performed? Do we then turn our attention now and in the future to new audiences, new publicity, new packaging,

and new programming? In the present music scene, these are all important issues. But there is still so much to discover through performance itself.

The frontispiece of Johann Gottfried Walther's *Musicalisches Lexicon*, published in 1732 in Leipzig, depicts a violone player standing, playing a large five-stringed violone propped on the small stool, next to the church organist.⁹ He is using an underhand, so-called 'German' bow, and, in this picture, the time beater is standing between the violonist and the organist. But normally the violone player would have looked over the shoulder of the organist at his music. There are two large violones still preserved in Leipzig, which were used during Bach's lifetime in the main churches. This is one of the two instruments made by the luthier [Leonard] Pradter in Prague. One can just make out, I hope, the widely spaced sound holes, which indicate that the instrument was originally set up with a wider bridge – so something like the engraving on the left here – and probably had at least five strings, possibly six strings.

The violone is only one small part of the soundscape Bach might have heard in the chapels and churches of Weimar and Leipzig, for example. Yet we have often been playing the same set up in our present HIP performances: that is, a classical or more modern four-stringed bass tuned in fourths with gut strings. We very rarely have the opportunity of playing concerts of, or recording, Bach's music standing next to the organ in the organ loft of Baroque churches. And this is through financial and logistic constraints. I can envisage the HIP ensembles of the future making much wider use of video recordings and streaming to bring these possibilities to life, to wider performances. Thank you.

JB Just that final point about the organ lofts... I've done a few of those in Thüringen [Thuringia]. In the Eisenach Georgenkirche, for instance, I did a cantata with very small forces, and it's amazing how the focus of the building seems designed to project from that position. I mean, obviously many things must have changed over the centuries, but it was very striking that it had far more impact there than the Passion that we did at the other end of the building. Also, there's the organ in Waltershausen: I've done concerts from up in the loft there. And again, a very interesting way in which the organ, and the big string instruments that you have with it, provide an enveloping focus for the whole thing. And, as you say, new technologies, particularly video, are very, very useful in this regard.

MU Thank you. If I could add here, we've just finished putting out a recording session for Musica Amphion. It started 12 years ago, I believe, and we were playing in churches that Bach either played in or might have played in, so starting in Arnstadt and finishing in Pollnitz. And as John says, the resonance of the church was very interesting. When we made the first recording, we had no idea how that would work. We worked for three days recording with the microphones strung up a little way from the balcony, and then we discovered after a week that actually putting the microphones at the end of the church on the floor, where the congregation obviously would be, worked much better, so we had to start again

with it! [laughter] So, you see how much the space is important for the actual total experience of listening to Bach's music.

MM I can add that several times now we have experienced how much better it sounds in the St Thomas Church if you bring the singers in front of the orchestra. I remember we did this three or four years ago with the B minor Mass and the Tölzer Knabenchor, just 24 singers or so, and suddenly all these *stile antico* movements sounded extremely good.

So, all the singers and instrumentalists were on the same level, and the same happened just now with Herreweghe, at the Herreweghe concert.¹⁰ He arrived here and told us, we had no idea, that he wanted to have the choir in front of the orchestra. That crashed the livestream totally [laughter] – no chance anymore! – but it created completely different sounds, and many of the acoustic problems we were having in the St Thomas Church were solved.

JB Yes. And from what we know of positioning from the 17th and 18th century, it's almost always the case that the singers and even choruses, quite big ones like Handel's, are absolutely at the front. It's only when you get the incredible new culture of amateur choral societies that you have to put them behind. And then it's the sheer weight of numbers that makes the impact. I've even tried this in the Royal Albert Hall a couple of times, of having the chorus in front. And it's a difficult acoustic, but those who appreciated it found it good.

MU If I could add something in here: we also noticed that different instruments sometimes work. In Holland, we particularly detest the *viola da spalla*, but you notice that someone sitting playing a cello behind the balcony doesn't project outwards very well, whereas a *viola da spalla*, which for arias perhaps has a coarser sound, projects outwards beautifully. And this ties in with what Mattheson was talking about.

[Audience members are now invited to ask questions.]

AS I seem to remember reading an anecdote somewhere about Bach being with one of his sons in a cathedral in Berlin and realising there was a whispering gallery just by looking at it.¹¹ So, to what extent do you think that Bach understood or knew about all these acoustics of buildings?

JB I mean, I think part of the way that J.S. Bach was brought up in this sort of sense of craftsmanship and learning about how to make organs, how to do organs, how to play several different instruments, that sort of all-roundness of learning, learning about acoustics as you learn about how to use your fingers, is something that we can't quite imagine today, at least at the same level. And I suspect that there is an element of that culture, that apprenticeship culture, that we can't absolutely replicate, but we can at least imagine. And that might well indeed involve an incredible intuition of acoustic space.

- U This is a question for John. Yes. I'm just wondering if you could say a little more about the research into the embodiment and the movement aspect that you were referring to.
- JB Well, several people here have done even more than I have. Bettina [Varwig] and Mark [Seow] have both worked on this aspect, but I have written a little bit about Bach and dance, and the notion of dance as a regulation of something that's intrinsically 'good'; movement, in other words, being good as opposed to bad, which...some areas of Christianity saw it as bad.¹² But the notion of actually honing dance and honing movement as a way of controlling your inner urges, as it were, but also relating to other people, is very strong within the dance tutors, not just of France, but also those of Germany of the time. A man called Pasch, in particular, and several others in Leipzig itself were writing about this.¹³ So it's quite clear that dance was seen, rather like music was seen, as something that, if treated well and organised well, could actually be very beneficial, both for the individual and for the community. And I think this whole side of things is one that has tended to be ignored in Bach scholarship. And it would be very useful to see that...I mean, if you think back to Luther's time...I think it was in a Georg Rhuau publication when he said, you know, that this music reminds you of a dance around a dance in heaven. You can see how music and dance are seen as partners, really, in terms of useful art, or art which can be used towards the benefit of individual and community.
- MW Hello. Thank you very much. I'm trying to imagine Bach performance in, say, 50 years' time. And there was mention about Bach parody during this year's Bachfest, where there is a concert with electronic music as well. And, so, I'm wondering whether there might be a future in a performance practice that is Bach-inspired rather than a reinterpretation of Bach's notes. And to what extent do you think there is room for that to be mainstream in the way that perhaps, you know, historical performance was seen to be a little bit innovative a few decades ago and has now developed into something that is maybe not mainstream, but at least with very strong traditions of its own?
- MM What we are already realising is that there are many, many more options to perform Bach today than there were maybe 20, 30, 40 years ago. And maybe it will become broader and broader. And I like this. I'm sure there will still be these traditional performances. At the moment, I have the impression that nobody is interested that much anymore in conductors. So, there are all these successful young ensembles; they have a leader, but it's not the classical conductor anymore. And maybe that's the direction we will be going in for the next 10 or 20 years. And then maybe they will rediscover the conductor in Bach performances, with all the advantages! [laughter] I don't know. So, I'm sure that in 50 years we will have a wide variety of ways to deal with Bach's music, including performing the original piece with nothing changed. But on the other hand, the idea of coming up with new texts or changing instruments will also still happen because everybody loves the music, but some people struggle with the texts. But what we have seen from

the 'Et Lux' performance was that the power of this music is so strong. And if you manage to come up with a new text that really touches people but at the same time fits perfectly to Bach's music, the impact can be really 'wow'. This is not an 'Aufruf', a call for creating new texts for Bach's music. Definitely not. But as an option to bring the music closer to a broader audience, I guess it's a good, or not the worst, idea.

- U When I listen to Bach's cantatas and oratorios, I look at the words, which are fine, and they're a starting point. But they don't really inform my enjoyment of them. The words are fairly ordinary. The music is magnificent and from my perspective, far, far surpasses the words. Last night we went to hear the concert of *The Art of Fugue*.¹⁴ There's no story there. There's no libretto. It was a deeply moving performance, pure music. Bach is pure music in that sense. But you know, there is text in the choral music which gets handed round in the programmes. Can you comment on the relationship between text and music in Bach's choral music, and why I should be paying more attention to it than I do?
- JB If one thinks of somebody from Bach's time, like Gottfried [Ephraim] Scheibel, who does say that if something works really well in the opera house, and people are really moved by it, why can't you just transfer that and the whole mechanism of the music into the church and put it with a sacred text? So, there's a sense that the link between text and music is a little looser than many people might want to guess. But there's still this notion of the music obviously having a relationship to a broader text, a text of the world or the text of the universe, as it were. And I think that might be getting also to what you're saying there: that there's a sense of text as something much broader than the words that happen to be there. It's the text of life, the text of our age. And, of course, in terms of Bach reception, that 'metatext', if you want to call it that (just invented that!), is actually what changes, and what Bach's music amplifies in a certain sense. So, yes, this issue of the melding and the blending is a really, really interesting one.
- MS We could also think about how non-texted music functioned within Bach's time, within this theological context, and this idea that even music without text has a text. It's some sort of prayer towards God, it is worship, it is 'Amen'. So, this idea is a bit more blurry, I think, than just absolute or programme.
- JB Yes, it's amazing how you can trace back this same argument about absolute and programme music to about 1850, 1840, and it's still valid in a funny sort of way. It's really very interesting how much music tells on its own. And quite often when you describe what music tells you on its own, you actually end up talking about a text again. So, it slips over very easily.
- RET I have two questions. One is for Mark [Seow], talking about physiology. I wonder how much volume plays into Bach studies, especially because we live in a world that...I mean, I walk around with earplugs in most of the time because things are so loud. And, so, I wonder how Bach studies has dealt with his music in terms of

volume? And the second question is one for John. You mentioned Bach entering the canon in a new way. And this is a question that I've always harboured: how much is Bach really in the canon?

JB Well, let me start with that last one. If Bach was in the canon, if the canon as we know it today, and inherited today, began at the beginning of the 19th century, then Bach is, as it were, retrofitted into it right at the very beginning. And you could relate this to various social factors, consumption, musical consumption factors, building of concert halls, and so on. So, from that point of view, Bach was almost, you could say, like an Old Testament that was absorbed into the emerging classical canon around 1820 and beyond. I heard a performance of Brahms' First Symphony the other week, and I thought, gosh, Brahms couldn't have written that first movement if he'd not heard the opening of the *Matthew Passion*. And as soon as you start to look for this in the 'canonic' (so-called) composers, you see more and more and more how virtually all of them...it's very hard to think of anybody who's not influenced by Bach. And we were talking about how Bach could be reused in the modern age; well, in fact, you hear him being reused throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Does that answer the canon question sufficiently? I suppose this leads into what happens in the future. Does Bach carry on being connected to what we might call 'canonic music'? That's a problem as we have perhaps a multi-canon now, which is not just a question of Western classical, popular, rock, folk music, but also world music. And I suspect we're going to get close to the notion of a multi-canon. But again, given that Bach is so influential on so many people in the pop and composition worlds and the jazz world, one might well imagine that he will be consumed, digested, and regurgitated in new ways to come.

MM And, look, at the moment, my impression is that today, all over the planet, Bach is performed more than ever before, and it's still growing.

JB Well, more and more clavichords are being built! So, I suppose it might get quieter as well, in a sort of personal sense. [laughter] I suspect it'll go both ways, to be honest.

MM Were you at the concert featuring Dorothee Oberlinger, two days ago at the Kupfersaal?¹⁵ There they used loudspeakers for the lute and recorder, and it worked quite well. And I was thinking about whether this would work with the clavichord and some loudspeakers that maybe allows the audience to have the same experience as the players. Why not? If you have good speakers? [laughter] No subwoofer, of course!

MMar Okay. Thank you very much. Let's thank our panel then.

[applause]

Notes

- ¹ The spelling has been standardised following British English norms. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are by the editors.
- ² See *Discussing Bach* 1 (2020), 'Bach and Emotion: 'Zur Recreation des Gemüths'', *Discussing Bach* 4 (2022), 'Bach and the Corporeality of Emotions', and John Butt, 'Bach and the Dance of Humankind', in Davinia Caddy and Maribeth Clark (eds.), *Musicology and Dance* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 19–48.
- ³ The performances referred to here took place as part of the Bachfest Leipzig 2023, 'Bach for Future': No. 63, 'Passion' (*St Matthew Passion*, BWV 244), Chad Kelly (organ), Solomon's Knot, 12 June 2023; No. 147, 'Passion als Karfreitagvesper' (*St John Passion*, BWV 245 [1749 version]), Bart Jacobs (organ), Vokalensemble Klanggewandt, Raphael Höhn (tenor – Evangelist), Lóránt Najbauer (bass – Pilate), Viola Blache (soprano), Stefanie True (soprano), Alexander Chance (alto), Jan Kullmann (alto), Raffaele Giordani (tenor), Florian Sievers (tenor), Sebastian Myrus (bass), Vox Luminis, Lionel Meunier (conductor), 17 June 2023; No. 37, 'Et Lux' (*Et Lux: Pasticcio aus Kantatensätzen von J.S. Bach*, Requiem für Vokalquartett und Kammerorchester), Julia Sophie Wagner (soprano), Elvira Bill (alto), Daniel Johannsen (tenor), Matthias Winckler (bass), Jakob Lehmann (conductor), Eroica Berlin, 11 June 2023.
- ⁴ See, for example, Johann Sebastian Bach, *Das Kantatenwerk*, cond. Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt (Teldec/Das Alte Werk, 1971–1989); Johann Sebastian Bach, *Cantatas*, Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists, cond. John Eliot Gardiner (Deutsche Grammophon/Soli Deo Gloria, 1999–2000; 2005–2013).
- ⁵ The performance of the pasticcio Requiem 'Et Lux' took place in the Hörsaal of the Institut für Anatomie at the University of Leipzig on 11 June 2023.
- ⁶ See Wilhelm His, *Anatomische Forschungen über Johann Sebastian Bach's Gebeine und Antlitz: nebst Bemerkungen über dessen Bilder* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1895).
- ⁷ In addition to the recordings mentioned above, see Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Complete Cantatas*, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, cond. Ton Koopman (Erato/Challenge Classics, 1994–2005); Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Sacred Cantatas*, Bach Collegium Japan, cond. Masaaki Suzuki (BIS, 1995–2013); Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Secular Cantatas*, Bach Collegium Japan, cond. Masaaki Suzuki (BIS, 2004–2018).
- ⁸ Netherlands Bach Society, 'All of Bach', <https://www.bachvereniging.nl/en/allofbach> and <https://www.youtube.com/BACH> (accessed 15 August 2024).
- ⁹ Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon oder Musicalische Bibliothec* (Leipzig: Wolfgang Deer, 1732).
- ¹⁰ Bachfest Leipzig 2023, No. 26, 'Best of Kantaten-Jahrgang I/Best of the Annual Cycle of Cantatas I' (*Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, BWV 190; *Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen*, BWV 65; *Herr, wie du willst, so schicks mit mir*, BWV 73; *Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen?*, BWV 81), Aisling Kenny (soprano), Alex Potter (alto), Benedict Hymas (tenor), Johannes Kammler (bass), Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe (conductor), 10 June 2023. A video recording of this concert is available on YouTube via the Bach-Archiv at <https://youtu.be/-edTAYkzqyo> (Bachfest Leipzig), and via Deutsche Welle at <https://youtu.be/46FTnX6gwg4> (accessed 15 August 2024).
- ¹¹ This anecdote is related by Forkel in Chapter 4 of his biography of Bach: 'Als er im Jahr 1747 in Berlin war, wurde ihm das neue Opernhaus gezeigt. Alles was in der Anlage desselben in Hinsicht auf die Ausnahme der Musik gut oder fehlerhaft war, und was Andere erst durch Erfahrung bemerkt hatten, entdeckte er beym ersten Anblick. Man führte ihn in den darin befindlichen großen Speise-Saal; er ging auf die oben herum laufende Gallerie, besah die Decke, und sagte, ohne fürs erste weiter nachzuforschen, der Baumeister habe hier ein Kunststück angebracht, ohne es vielleicht zu wollen, und ohne daß es Jemand wisse. Wenn nemlich Jemand an der einen Ecke des länglicht viereckichten Saals oben ganz leise gegen die Wand einige Worte sprach, so konnte es ein Anderer, welcher übers Kreuz an der andern Ecke mit dem Gesichte gegen die Wand gerichtet stand, ganz deutlich hören, sonst aber Niemand im ganzen Saal, weder in der Mitte, noch an irgend einer andern Stelle. Diese Wirkung kam von der Richtung der an der Decke angebrachten Bogen, deren besondere Beschaffenheit er beym ersten Anblick entdeckte. Solche Beobachtungen konnten und mußten ihn allerdings auch auf Versuche führen, durch ungewöhnliche Vereinigung verschiedener Orgelstimmen vor und nach ihm unbekannte

Wirkungen hervor zu bringen'. ('When he [Bach] was at Berlin, in 1747, he was shown the new opera house. Whatever in the construction of it was good or faulty in regard to the effect of music, and what others had only discovered by experience, he perceived at first sight. He was taken into the great saloon within the building; he went up to the gallery that runs round it, looked at the ceiling, and said, without first investigating any further, that the architect had here introduced an artifice, perhaps without intending it, and without anybody's knowing it. For if a person up there at one corner of the saloon, which was in the form of an oblong parallelogram, whispered a few words against the wall, another, who stood with his face turned to the wall, at the corner diagonally opposite, could hear them distinctly, but nobody else in the whole room, either in the centre or in any other part. This effect arose from the direction of the arches in the ceiling, the particular nature of which he discovered at the first look. Such observations could and naturally did lead him to attempt to produce, by the unusual combination of different stops of the organ, effects unknown before and after him'.) Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (Leipzig: 1802), critical edition in Christoph Wolff and Michael Maul, *Johann Nikolaus Forkel: Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke (Leipzig 1802): Edition, Quellen, Materialien, Bach-Dokumente VII* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2008), 5–89, at 33, trans. in Arthur Mendel, Hans T. David, and Christoph Wolff (eds.), *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), 415–482, at 439.

¹² Butt, 'Bach and the Dance of Humankind'; see also Bettina Varwig, *Music in the Flesh: An Early Modern Musical Physiology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023), and Mark Seow, 'Metaphors for Listening in Johann Sebastian Bach's Germany' (PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2022).

¹³ Johann Pasch, *Johann Paschens Beschreibung wahrer Tanz-Kunst: nebst einigen Anmerckungen über Herrn J.C.L.P.P. zu G. Bedencken gegen das Tantzten* (Frankfurt: 1707).

¹⁴ Bachfest Leipzig 2023, No. 80, 'Die Kunst der Fuge Orchestriert' (*Die Kunst der Fuge*, BWV 1080, Version und Instrumentation von Hermann Scherchen (1963)), Avinoam Shalev (harpsichord), MDR-Sinfonieorchester, Dennis Russell Davies (conductor), 13 June 2023.

¹⁵ Bachfest Leipzig 2023, No. 58, 'Zwiegespräch' (BWV 997, BWV 1007, BWV 1034, BWV 1035, BWV 1013, BWV 974), Dorothee Oberlinger (recorder), Edin Karamazov (lute), 12 June 2023.

