Bach and Money: Sources of Salary and Supplemental Income in Leipzig from 1723 to 1750*

NOELLE HEBER

It was his post as Music Director and Cantor at the Thomasschule that primarily marked Johann Sebastian Bach's twenty-seven years in Leipzig. The tension around the unstable income of this occupation drove Bach to write his famous letter to Georg Erdmann in 1730, in which he expressed a desire to seek employment elsewhere. The difference between his base salary of 100 Thaler and his estimated total income of 700 Thaler was derived from legacies and foundations, funerals, weddings, and instrumental maintenance in the churches, although many payment amounts fluctuated, depending on certain factors such as the number of funerals that occurred each year. Despite his ongoing frustration at this financial instability, it seems that Bach never attempted to leave Leipzig. There are many speculations concerning his motivation to stay, but one could also ask if there was a financial draw to settling in Leipzig, considering his active pursuit of independent work, which included organ inspections, guest performances, private music lessons, publication of his compositions, instrumental rentals and sales, and, from 1729 to 1741, direction of the collegium musicum. This article provides a new and detailed survey of these sources of revenue, beginning with the supplemental income that augmented his salary and continuing with his freelance work. This exploration will further show that Leipzig seems to have been a strategic location for Bach to pursue and expand his independent work.

Salary-related income

Available receipts allow us to verify that Bach's annual net salary for his Leipzig post totalled a little more than 100 Thaler, which was paid quarterly throughout the duration of his tenure as Cantor (1723–50).² However, this raises the question

Full references to standard Bach literature, and abbreviations used in Understanding Bach, 12 (2017) can be found at bachnetwork.co.uk/ub12/ub12-abbr.pdf.

- This article is an extended version of a paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Baroque Music (Canterbury, UK, 13-17 July 2016).
- Bach-Dokumente I, no. 23; The New Bach Reader, no. 152.
- ² Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 137, 157, 435. This salary consisted of 87 Thaler, 12 Groschen plus: 13 Thaler, 3 in the form of 'Holz- und Lichtgeld Trinit' ('wood and light money [at] Trinity'); 16.

of what evidence there is for the other sources of Bach's estimated annual income of 700 Thaler.³ Although we know that the total amount fluctuated, we could question whether his one-time estimation accurately represents his average salary over twenty-seven years. Unfortunately, the records are incomplete, but surviving evidence helps answer this question, at least partially.

Payments from legacies and foundations

A portion of Bach's salary was supplied by legacies and foundations set up in memory of wealthy benefactors of the Thomasschule. In most cases, the terms of the bequests required that the Cantor lead the boys' choir in a performance of motets or chorales on a specific date to honour the memory of the deceased benefactor. In turn, the Cantor and/or choirboys would receive an honorarium, which was taken from the interest earned on the legacy's capital. In each case, the Cantor would sign a receipt for the payment, and some of these receipts have been preserved.⁴ Michael Maul shows that over the course of 225 years (from 1525 to 1750), a total of 175 legacies were left for the benefit of the Thomasschule.⁵ The following table identifies those legacies which contributed directly to Bach's salary, according to payment receipts.

Table 1: Legacies contributing to Bach's income in Leipzig⁶

Legacy	Dates	Annual amount
Christian Lorenz von Adlershelm (d.1668)	1723-1750	1 Thaler, 16 Groschen ⁷
Wolfgang Berger (d.1615)	1723-1750	1 Thaler, 16 Groschen ⁸
Regina Bose (d.1680)	1723-1750 ⁹	1 Thaler, 8 Groschen, 9 Pfennig ¹⁰
Daniel Aegidius Heinrich (d.1683)	1723-1750	21 Groschen ¹¹
Krell ¹²	$1723 - 1750^{13}$	1 Thaler ¹⁴

scheffel Korn *Walpurg Martini* betagt (16 bushels of corn due at *Walpurg* [April 30] [and] *Martini* [Martinmas, November 11]); 2. Clafftern harte 6/4. Scheite (2 fathoms [of] hard [wood]/4 wood logs) welches lauter *ordinaria* sind' (which are all ordinary [wages in kind]') [*Bach-Dokumente* II, no. 435].

- ³ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 23; The New Bach Reader, no. 152.
- ⁴ Robert Marshall, 'The Nathan Bequest: Payment Receipts in the Hand of Johann Sebastian Bach, 1746 to 1748 (with a Fragment for the Year 1749 in the Hand of His Son)', in Jon Newsom and Alfred Mann (eds.), Music History from Primary Sources: The Rosaleen Moldenhauer Memorial; A Guide to the Moldenhauer Archives (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2000), 81–5.
- ⁵ Michael Maul, 'Dero berühmbter Chor': Die Leipziger Thomasschule und ihre Kantoren 1212–1804 (Leipzig: Lehmstedt Verlag, 2012), 38.
- ⁶ For more information on these legacies and for a listing of all legacies in Leipzig from 1507 to 1805, see Heinrich Geffcken and Chaim Tykocinski, *Stiftungsbuch der Stadt Leipzig: im Auftr. des Rates auf Grund der Urkunden und Akten des Ratsarchivs* (Leipzig: Bär & Hermann, 1905).
- ⁷ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 155; Hans-Joachim Schulze, 'Marginalien zu einigen Bach-Dokumenten', Bach-Jahrbuch, 48 (1961), 79–99, esp. p. 90.
- 8 Schulze, 'Marginalien zu einigen Bach-Dokumenten', 90.
- ⁹ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 144; Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 131a; The New Bach Reader, no. 109e. Receipts have been preserved from 1748 and 1750. Regina Bose was founder of this legacy and widow of the archbishop of the Thomaskirche. She died in 1680; it is likely therefore that Bach was receiving payments from 1723. Bach himself signed the receipt from 1748, but the one from 1750 was signed by Anna Magdalena, probably due to his poor eyesight by this time. See Hans-Joachim Schulze, Das Quittungsbuch des Nathanischen Legats (Leipzig: Kulturstiftung der Länder, 1995), 10.
- ¹⁰ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 144; Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 131a; The New Bach Reader, no. 109e.
- ¹¹ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 154.

Maria Lobwasser (d.1610)	1723-1750	2 Florins ¹⁵
Georg Friedrich Mentzel (d.1733)	1734-1750	2 Thaler, 16 Groschen ¹⁶
Anna Justine Meyer (d.1680)	1723-1749	5 Groschen ¹⁷
Sabine Nathan (d.1612)	1723-1749	2 Florins ¹⁸
Dr. Friedrich Philipp (d.1724)	1724-1750	16 Groschen? ¹⁹
Johann Priesing (d.1605)	1728-1750	21 Groschen ²⁰
Euphrosyne Rechtenbach (d.1677)	1724-1750	3 Thaler, 8 Groschen ²¹
Katharina Schwartz (d.1583)	1723-1750	10 Groschen, 6 Pfennig ²²
Regina Maria Sinner (d.1740)	1741-1750	10 Thaler ²³

NB The Pfennig (a copper coin) was the smallest unit of currency. The other (silver) coins mentioned in this article were valued as follows: 1 Groschen = 12 Pfennig; 1 Florin = 21 Groschen; 1 Thaler = 24 Groschen.

Bach received a total of 28 Thaler, 6 Groschen and 3 Pfennig from these legacies each year. However, Table 1 lists only fourteen of about twenty legacies that would have stipulated a payment for the cantor.²⁴ The following legacies should

- ¹² The receipt lists only 'Krellische *Legatum*' and does not specify which Krell Legacy it refers to, so it could be either the legacy left by Regina Krell (d.1685), who designated 200 Thaler to the *Thomasschule* or Gottfried Krell (d.1692) who left 500 Thaler to the school, attributing 6 Thaler to the teachers each year. See *Stiftungsbuch der Stadt Leipzig*, pp. 174 and 177.
- ¹³ *Bach-Dokumente* V, no. A 136a, p. 108. While we have receipts from only 1748-50, we can assume that Bach would have benefitted from this legacy throughout his tenure.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. See also *Bach-Dokumente* I, nos. 140-1. Apparently two additional receipts Bach signed in 1748 and 1749 were also linked to the Krell Legacy. See Stefan Altner, 'Wiedergefundene Legat-Quittungsbücher und Matrikelverzeichnisse der Leipziger Thomasschule, die auch die Bach-Zeit berühren,' *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 86 (2000), 119-37, esp. p. 121.
- ¹⁵ Bach-Dokumente I, nos. 137 and 145; The New Bach Reader, no. 109a.
- ¹⁶ Biannual payments of 1 Thaler, 8 Groschen. *Bach-Dokumente* I, no. 146; *Bach-Dokumente* II, no. 339; *The New Bach Reader*, no. 109c.
- ¹⁷ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 151.
- ¹⁸ For each of these 5 Florin receipts that Bach signed for, 3 Florins went to the choirboys. Robert L. Marshall, 'The Nathan Bequest,' 80-85; *Bach-Dokumente* III, no. A112; *Bach-Dokumente* V, nos. A111, A119–120, A133, A139, A143; *Bach-Dokumente* I, nos. 112–15, 120–21, 124, 126–29, 133, 139, 143R; *The New Bach Reader*, no. 230. L. Marshall, 'Vier unbekannte Quittungen J. S. Bachs und ein Briefauszug Jacob von Stählins', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 59 (1973), 88–90.
- ¹⁹ The Cantor was paid only after the students were guaranteed their share. *Bach-Dokumente* II, no. 265.
- ²⁰ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 242.
- ²¹ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 167; The New Bach Reader, no. 109d.
- ²² Bach-Dokumente II, no. 168.
- ²³ Biannual payments of 5 Thaler. Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 122a, pp. 103–4; Bach-Dokumente I, nos. 136, 138; The New Bach Reader, no. 109b. We have records of 5 Thaler paid twice a year to Bach from the Regina Maria Sinner Legacy. This generous amount was given to all teachers at the Thomasschule. As Sinner died in 1740, the dates listed in The New Bach Reader, no. 109a (1723–50) cannot be correct; they must be 1741–50, as listed in Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 122a. See also Altner, 'Wiedergefundene Legat-Quittungsbücher', 122 (the testament from Sinner can be found on p. 125) and Schulze, Das Quittungsbuch des Nathanischen Legats, 10.
- ²⁴ By the time of Bach's death there were 175 legacies that benefitted the Thomasschule (see Maul, 'Dero berühmbter Chor', 38), although it is difficult to determine exactly how many contributed specifically to Bach's salary. Marshall's estimation that around twenty legacies were making payments to Bach seems to be accurate (R. L. Marshall, 'The Nathan Bequest', 80). I would also like to thank Michael Maul for providing additional information concerning the legacies through private correspondence.

also have contributed to Bach's income, although for these we lack payment receipts.²⁵

Wolf Merker, der Ältere (d.1608) The interest on 100 Florins for the cantor and choir boys

(perhaps no longer viable)

Magdalene Helferich (d.1599) 1 Florin for the cantor each year Bartholomäus Meißner (d.1600) 12 Groschen for the cantor each year

Thomas Lebzelter (d.1605) 5 Florins for each of 7 'Kollegen und Präzeptoren' of the

Thomasschule on the 'Tage Thomae'

Thomas Wurmb (d.1613) ½ Florin each for the rector and cantor

Elisabeth Koblitz (d.1621) 1½ Florins for the cantor

Eduard Becker (d.1640) Interest from 100 Thaler for the teachers at the

Thomasschule

If we were to make a rough estimate based on this information, it seems that Bach could have received at most 50 Thaler per year from these funds.²⁶

Weddings and funerals

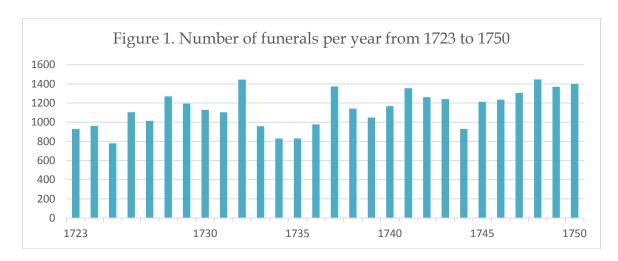
Providing music for weddings and funerals represented the most significant addition to Bach's income, partly because the Thomasschule was required by the city to participate in all public burials.²⁷ The Cantor was paid between 6 Pfennig and 1 Thaler for each funeral.²⁸ In his letter to Erdmann, Bach wrote that he had lost 100 Thaler one year as a result of fewer funerals.²⁹ If we take this figure literally, he must have been averaging well over 100 Thaler annually from funerals alone. The public records of deaths in Leipzig from 1723 to 1750 confirm that the number of funerals did indeed fluctuate from year to year, with a low of 779 funerals in 1725 and a high of 1,444 in 1732. Table 2 shows the precise number of funerals per year during this period; Figure 1 provides a graph of their fluctuating numbers.

Bach's letter to Erdmann was written in 1730, and so he would have been referring to 1729 as the year in which he lost 100 Thaler due to fewer funerals. These records show that there were only seventy-five fewer funerals in 1729 than in 1728, so even at 1 Thaler per funeral, a 100 Thaler loss seems to be an exaggeration. However, there had been a decrease of 182 funerals from 1724 to 1725 and then an increase of 325 funerals the following year. A fluctuation of 100

- ²⁵ Schulze, 'Marginalien zu einigen Bach-Dokumenten', 89–90.
- Bach would have also received payments for performances of cantatas for special occasions, such as the regular elections of the city council, the inauguration of the newly renovated Thomasschule in 1732 and the appointment of school rectors. Specific amounts for these performances are unknown. See Peter Schleuning, Vom Kaffeehaus zum Fürstenhof: Johann Sebastian Bachs Weltliche Kantaten (Hildesheim: Olms, 2014), 37.
- ²⁷ For rules applied to the *Thomaschor*, see Michael Maul, "welche ieder Zeit aus den 8 besten Subjectis bestehen muß": Die erste "Cantorey" der Thomasschule; Organisation, Aufgaben, Fragen', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 99 (2013), 11–77.
- ²⁸ Christoph Wolff, Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 410–11. On October 5, 1731 Bach was paid 1 Thaler for the funeral of Georg Heinrich Bose (Bach-Dokumente II, no. 295). For more information on how payments for such services provided by the Thomasschule were distributed among choir members, Cantor, Rector, Conrector and Tertius in the latter part of the 17th century, see Maul, 'Dero berühmbter Chor', 92.
- ²⁹ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 23; The New Bach Reader, no. 152.

Year	Funerals	Year	Funerals	Year	Funerals
1723	928	1733	958	1743	1,240
1724	961	1734	830	1744	928
1725	779	1735	829	1745	1,212
1726	1,104	1736	977	1746	1,236
1727	1,014	1737	1,372	1747	1,304
1728	1,269	1738	1,143	1748	1,446
1729	1,194	1739	1,049	1749	1,370
1730	1,127	1740	1,167	1750	1,400
1731	1,103	1741	1,354		
1732	1,444	1742	1,260		

Table 2: Number of funerals per year in Leipzig from 1723 to 175030



Thaler in one year could therefore have been possible, even if it had not been the case in 1729 specifically. 1725 must have been the year that a 'healthy wind blew,' as he wrote, perhaps increasing the frustration of the recently appointed cantor.

The school was not required to provide music for the less-frequent wedding ceremonies, although this was another prominent type of service.³¹ It can be assumed that Bach's fee for weddings was similar to that for funerals. The amount of 1 Thaler per wedding was proposed in his job offer from Halle in 1713,³² so he should have received at least this amount in Leipzig a decade later. According to Schweitzer, Bach was paid up to 2 Thaler for a wedding,³³ a fee that must surely also have been based on the social class of the bride and groom and on the contribution Bach made to their wedding.

While the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche each registered well over one hundred weddings per year from 1723 to 1750 (Table 3 and Figure 2),³⁴ records also include weddings that occurred in other locations. Bach would not have participated in all these weddings, but the numbers show their income potential.

³⁰ Leipziger Leichenbücher von 1723–1750, Stadtarchiv Leipzig.

³¹ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 411.

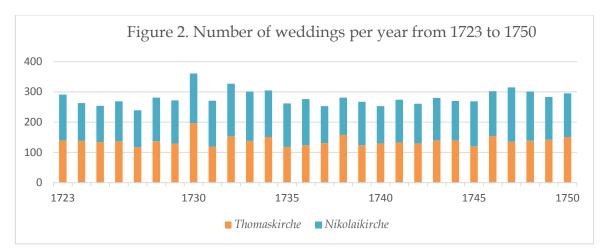
³² Bach-Dokumente II, no. 63; The New Bach Reader no. 48.

³³ Albert Schweitzer, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, trans. Ernest Newman, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 115.

In addition to the regular list of weddings, there is a section at the end of each book that lists weddings 'ohne Aufgebote' or without wedding banns. The numbers reported here include both categories.

Year	Thomaskirche ³⁵	Nikolaikirche ³⁶	Year	Thomaskirche	Nikolaikirche
1723	140	151	1738	158	123
1724	138	125	1739	124	143
1725	134	120	1740	130	123
1726	137	132	1741	133	141
1727	117	122	1742	130	131
1728	137	144	1743	140	140
1729	129	143	1744	140	130
1730	197	164	1745	120	149
1731	119	152	1746	154	148
1732	153	174	1747	135	180
1733	138	163	1748	139	162
1734	151	154	1749	142	141
1735	118	144	1750	151	144
1736	124	152			
1737	131	122			

Table 3: Weddings per year in the Leipzig churches from 1723 to 1750



Although Bach was responsible for making the musical arrangements for both weddings and funeral processions, and in theory for leading them himself, he often passed this responsibility over to the choir prefects.³⁷ He received payment regardless of whether he was personally involved or not.

Instrumental maintenance and payments from churches

Bach was also responsible for the oversight of instruments at both the Thomaskirche and the Nikolaikirche. Receipt books detail the payments for instrumental maintenance until 1734/5. The amounts fluctuated from 2 to 25 Thaler per year at each church, depending on the work that was required.³⁸ He additionally received payments for directing choirs and musical performances, resulting in annual amounts of roughly 13 Thaler from the Thomaskirche and 9 Thaler from the Nikolaikirche. For the 'Old Service' at the Paulinerkirche, Bach

³⁵ Traubücher St Thomas von 1723–1750, Kirchliches Archiv Leipzig.

³⁶ Traubücher St Nicholas von 1723–1750, Kirchliches Archiv Leipzig.

³⁷ Spitta II, 194.

³⁸ Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 160–1; Bach-Dokumente III, no. 161a, pp. 651–2; The New Bach Reader, note to no. 110.

received 13 Thaler and 10 Groschen each year from 1723 to 1750.³⁹ These figures show that the church-related income could have generated roughly 50–100 Thaler per year. Therefore, based on loose estimates of these various categories, the 700 Thaler total could have consisted of:

Base salary 100 Thaler
Legacies 50 Thaler
Weddings/funerals 400–500 Thaler
Income from churches 50–100 Thaler

The figures must be stretched a little to arrive at the 700 total, making it difficult to argue in favour of this average income. Without Bach's letter to Erdmann, and based on these receipts alone, we derive a lesser sum, far from whatever higher amount Bach was led to believe he would receive. Based on various sources in the archives of the Thomasschule, Michael Maul also drew the conclusion that the total income for the Cantor in 1720 was 800 Gulden, which would equal 700 Thaler. This amount rose to 800 Thaler in 1820, compared to the amount paid to the school Rector, which rose from 700 Gulden in 1729 to 1200 Thaler in 1820. The documentation of conflict over some of the fees shows that they were indeed not always fixed, but rather fluctuated, perhaps at times unjustly.

Freelance income

Bach simultaneously engaged in a plethora of activities outside his primary occupation. From travelling for performances to publishing and selling his own works, these pursuits expanded his sphere of professional activity well beyond the Leipzig churches and the Thomasschule.

Organ examinations and performances

Bach was often invited to other cities for organ examinations and guest performances. Table 4 traces all such documented work and its compensation, when known, during his years in Leipzig.

Table 4: Performances and organ examinations. The date listed is the one found on the corresponding payment slip or record (P), receipt from Bach (R), or, when these are unknown, the date of service (S) or of acknowledgement thereof (A).

Date	Service	Compensation
August 30, 1723 (P)	Commissioned cantata for election of Leipzig	Unknown ⁴²
-	city council	
July 18, 1724 (P)	Guest performance at Cöthen court with Anna Magdalena	60 Thaler (including travel expenses) ⁴³

- ³⁹ *Bach-Dokumente* II, no. 196; Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 313. This sum was made up of payments for music at high festivals (*Bach-Dokumente* V, no. B 137a, p. 130).
- ⁴⁰ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 23; The New Bach Reader, no. 152; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 312.
- ⁴¹ Maul, 'Dero berühmbter Chor', 156.
- ⁴² Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 286–7. While providing a cantata for this event fell under the responsibility of the *Thomaskantor*, Bach was paid an extra fee for his composition.
- ⁴³ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 184; The New Bach Reader, no. 117.

June 1725 (P) June 1725 (P)	Organ examination in Gera Organ examination in Gera	30 Thaler ⁴⁴ 34 Florins, 6 Groschen
February 23, 1725 (S) June 23, 1725 (P)	Guest performance in Weißenfels (BWV 249a) For printing costs and repairing the harpsichord at Nikolaikirche	(second payment) ⁴⁵ Unknown ⁴⁶ 3 Thaler, 8 Groschen ⁴⁷
September 21, 1725 (S) December 15, 1725 (P)	Guest performance at Sophienkirche, Dresden Guest performance at Cöthen court with Anna Magdalena (for birthdays of Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold)	Unknown ⁴⁸ 30 Thaler ⁴⁹
January 5, 1728 (P) ⁵⁰	Guest performance at Cöthen court for New Year's Day festivities	24 Thaler ⁵¹
January 12, 1729 (S)	Performance of BWV 210a before Duke Christian on his visit to Leipzig; see <i>Bach-Jahrbuch</i> , 80 (1994), 7–22	Unknown ⁵²
March 25, 1729 (P)	Guest performance at Cöthen for Prince Leopold's funeral, accompanied by Anna Magdalena and Wilhelm Friedemann	230 Thaler (including expenses) ⁵³
1731 (S)	Organ recital at Sophienkirche, Dresden	Unknown ⁵⁴
November 12, 1731 and February 2, 1732 (S)	Organ examination at Stöntzsch	Unknown ⁵⁵
September 1732 (P)	Organ examination at Cassel	160 Thaler (including expenses for him and Anna Magdalena) ⁵⁶
July 1733 (S) October 14, 1734 (R)	Dedication of <i>Missa</i> , BWV 232/I in Dresden Performance before the King and Queen in Leipzig (BWV 215)	Unknown ⁵⁷ 50 Thaler ⁵⁸
June 16, 1735 (P)	Organ examination at Marienkirche, Mühlhausen	9 Thaler, 13 Groschen, 8 Pfennig ⁵⁹

- 44 Bach-Dokumente II, no. 183; Bach-Dokumente V, no. B 189c, pp. 137-8, B 189d, p. 138. Bach also received 10 Thaler for travel; 17 Thaler, 8 Groschen, 8 Pfennig for provision; 7 Thaler, 8 Groschen for wine; and 2 Thaler, 12 Groschen as daily wage for the calcant ('Bälgetreter'). Maul shows that the date recorded in Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 183 and 183a should be 1725 rather than 1724. It also seems that Bach was accompanied by two others on this journey, possibly William Friedemann and Anna Magdalena. See Michael Maul, 'Johann Sebastian Bachs Besuche in der Residenzstadt Gera', Bach-Jahrbuch, 90 (2004), 101-19.
- Bach-Dokumente II, no. 183a. The payment for this organ examination was split between two Kassen or cash registers (note to Bach-Dokumente II, no. 183a). Bach also received 13 Florins, 15 Groschen for travel costs; 19 Florins, 17 Groschen, 8 Pfennig for provisions; and 8 Florins, 8 Groschen for wine.
- ⁴⁶ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- ⁴⁷ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 190.
- ⁴⁸ Bach-Dokumente II, 193; The New Bach Reader, no. 118.
- ⁴⁹ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 199; The New Bach Reader, no. 117.
- The performance took place on December 22, 1725 but the payment was made two years later. See *Bach-Dokumente II*, nos. 199 and 241, and *The New Bach Reader*, no. 117.
- ⁵¹ Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 199, 241; The New Bach Reader, no. 117.
- ⁵² Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- ⁵³ Bach-Dokumente, no. 259; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- ⁵⁴ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208
- ⁵⁵ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 298.
- ⁵⁶ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 318; The New Bach Reader, no. 158.
- ⁵⁷ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- ⁵⁸ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 119; The New Bach Reader, no. 172.
- ⁵⁹ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 365. Bach also received 6 Thaler, 8 Groschen for meals.

June 22, 1735 (P)	Organ examination in Weißensee	11 Florins, 9
		Groschen ⁶⁰
December 1, 1736 (S)	Organ Recital at Frauenkirche, Dresden	Unknown ⁶¹
1737-38 (S)	Organ project in Weißensee	Unknown ⁶²
May 5, 1738 (R)	Performance of cantata BWV Anh. I 13 for	58 Thaler ⁶³
	the King's visit to Leipzig	
September 7, 1739 (A)	Organ testing at the Schloßkirche, Altenburg	Unknown ⁶⁴
c. 1742 (A)	Organ disposition for Bad Berka	Unknown ⁶⁵
December 13, 1743 (A)	Organ examination at Johanniskirche, Leipzig	Unknown ⁶⁶
August 1746 (P)	Organ examination in Zschortau	5 Thaler, 12
-		Groschen ⁶⁷
September 27, 1746 (P)	Organ examination at Wenzelskirche,	22 Thaler ⁶⁸
	Naumburg	
1747 (S)	Guest performance at Berlin court	Unknown ⁶⁹
1747 (S)	Guest performance at Potsdam court	Unknown ⁷⁰
January 12, 1748 ⁷¹	Examination of an organ built by H.A.	Unknown ⁷²
	Cuntzius, location unknown	

These records show that Bach's organ examinations and guest performances were about as frequent in Leipzig through the 1730s as they had been in Weimar and Cöthen (on average one to two per year), but that his fees increased over time. From 1723 to 1739, he generated an average of just over 45 Thaler per year from these engagements.⁷³ This can be considered an absolute minimum because there were many tasks for which the payment is unknown. While it does not appear that his position in Leipzig would have necessarily brought about more invitations for organ inspections and performances than his previous posts, we

- 60 *Bach-Dokumente* V, no. B 365a, p. 155.
- ⁶¹ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 389; The New Bach Reader, no. 191; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 143; Werner Braun, 'Ein unbekanntes Orgelbau-Attestat von Johann Sebastian Bach', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 85 (1999), 19–33.
- ⁶³ *Bach-Dokumente* I, no. 122; *The New Bach Reader*, no. 201. While 8 Thaler went to the town pipers, it is unclear whether Bach also had to pay the other musicians from the 58 Thaler (*The New Bach Reader*, commentary to no. 174).
- ⁶⁴ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 453; Wolff, The Learned Musician, 143 and 208.
- ⁶⁵ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 515.
- 66 Bach-Dokumente II, no. 519.
- ⁶⁷ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 545.
- ⁶⁸ Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 548 and 550. The original receipt (no. 548) indicates that Bach was paid 8 Dukaten. Herr Silbermann was paid the same amount, totalling 16 Dukaten. The second document (no. 550) specifies the conversion of 16 Dukaten to 44 Thaler. Expenses for this trip are listed in Bach-Dokumente II, no. 550a: 23 Thaler, 6 Groschen for the accommodation of 6–8 people; 2 Thaler, 12 Groschen, 3 Pfennig for beer; and 7 Thaler, 8 Groschen for wine.
- ⁶⁹ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 208.
- 70 Ibid. Wolff's listing of 'professional travels' includes a few additional trips not included here because the purpose of the trip was unknown or was unrelated to freelance work (audition in Leipzig, harpsichord purchase in Berlin, etc.).
- Date of a letter written by Bach confirming the quality of the organ. Wolf Hobohm, 'Ein unbekanntes Gutachten Johann Sebastian Bachs', *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 63 (1977), 135–8, esp. p. 137.
- ⁷² Wolff, The Learned Musician, 143; Hobohm, 'Ein unbekanntes Gutachten Bachs', 135–8.
- This figure includes compensation for travel, since in many cases the travel and honorarium were paid together. Related to these guest performances, Bach's commissioned compositions would have also been compensated. Many of them would have been composed for events that already appear in the above table or in conjunction with the collegium musicum.

will see that living in Leipzig was central to his obtaining greater freelance opportunities.

Private music lessons

During his years in Leipzig, Bach gave private lessons to at least seventy-one students, compared with only three students during his six years in Cöthen.⁷⁴ The single existing receipt for his private clavier teaching in Leipzig is dated 18 December 1747, and is for the sum of 6 Thaler for a lesson given to Eugen Wenzel, Count of Wrbna.⁷⁵ Considering that the Cantor was paid at most 1 Thaler for a funeral, a fee of 6 Thaler for a lesson would have been significant. In 1732, Christian Heinrich Gräbner was sent by his father to study with the Cantor for two years. His father wrote that lessons with Bach had represented a 'significant cost' for him.⁷⁶ Most likely, wealthy amateurs paid the fee of 6 Thaler per lesson while professional students would have paid less or exchanged goods and services for the lessons.⁷⁷ These services may have included participation in regular cantata performances.⁷⁸

Without receipts, it is impossible to determine how much supplemental income Bach would have earned from teaching, given the variety of students, their circumstances, and the unknown length of study with each one. What is evident is that his private teaching potentially provided significant supplemental income, even though not all students were paying a monetary fee for the lessons. For example, if he had taught just three lessons per month to wealthy amateurs who paid 6 Thaler per lesson, he would have earned 216 Thaler over the course of a year, which was more than twice his base salary. Or, if students had stayed for a year of instruction at a time for 80 Thaler each, a fee Bach had charged for such a service back in Weimar, just one private boarding student per year would have almost doubled his base salary.⁷⁹ As the university was certainly a draw to wealthy amateur musicians, Bach must have realised from his experience in Cöthen that his potential for earning extra income through private teaching was greater in Leipzig than it had been in a smaller city.

Publications

Bach began to publish and sell his own works in the 1720s. While there was not yet much focus on publishing manuscripts of music in Leipzig, it was nevertheless a city known for its book fairs and for several local book

- ⁷⁵ Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 135a, 108; The New Bach Reader, no. 250.
- ⁷⁶ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 319.
- Wolff, The Learned Musician, 411; The New Bach Reader, no. 250.
- ⁷⁸ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 327.
- ⁷⁹ Bach-Dokumente V, nos. B 53a-c (pp. 116-119) and B 53ba (p. 274); The New Bach Reader, no. 312.

This number of private students has been documented by a list of student names in *The New Bach Reader*, 314–17. Michael Maul has uncovered information about a previously unknown student of Bach, Gottfried Benjamin Fleckeisen. As one of Bach's students at the St Thomas School, he is not counted here as one of Bach's private students. See Michael Maul, 'Having to perform and direct the music in the Capellmeister's stead for two whole years': Observations on How Bach Understood His Post during the 1740s', trans. Barbara M. Reul, *Understanding Bach*, 12 (2017), 37–58.

publishers.⁸⁰ It was the custom to share handwritten replicas of music at the time, and we know that at least a few sales were made from Anna Magdalena's copies of Bach's manuscripts.⁸¹ However, publishing locally would allow composers to disperse their music more broadly.⁸²

Bach started modestly, printing just one or two partitas at a time for a few years, followed by collections of keyboard works (*Clavier-Übung*) and other compositions. He included the phrase 'published by the author' ('In Verlegung des Autoris') on the title pages of the individual partitas and of the various volumes of the *Clavier-Übung*.⁸³ This entrepreneurial endeavour involved personal financial risk and required good business skills, so it seems wise to have started with a modest investment, increasing his venture as sales grew. Since these keyboard works were technically difficult, they would have appealed to a limited audience, which would have restricted their selling potential. Yet Bach must have had enough success to continue to self-publish.⁸⁴ His activity in this sphere progressed as he printed the following works over the course of fifteen years.

- 1726 Clavier-Übung, Part 1, Partita 1 (BWV 825)85
- 1727 Clavier-Übung, Part 1, Partitas II and III (BWV 826 and 827)86
- 1728 Clavier-Übung, Part 1, Partita IV (BWV 828)87
- 1729 Clavier-Übung, Part 1, Partitas V and VI (BWV 829 and 830)88
- 1731 *Clavier-Übung*, Part 1 (Op. 1, BWV 825–30)⁸⁹ Two known printings, possibly three,⁹⁰ 2 Thaler per copy⁹¹
- 1735 Clavier-Übung, Part 2 (BWV 831 and 971),92 two known printings93
- 1736 *Musicalisches Gesang-Buch*, ed. Georg Christian Schemelli (music composed and arranged by Bach)⁹⁴
- 1739 *Clavier-Übung*, Part 3 (BWV 552, 669–89 and 802–5)⁹⁵
- ⁸⁰ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 374.
- ⁸¹ See Yo Tomita, 'Anna Magdalena as Bach's Copyist', *Understanding Bach*, 2 (2007), 59–76. In 1791/2 one Kremler was paid 30 Thaler, 7 Groschen, 6 Pfennig to copy one of Bach's fugues, and in 1795/7 he was paid 10 Thaler, 20 Groschen for the same (*Bach-Dokumente III*, no. 969a, p. 515).
- ⁸² George B. Stauffer, 'Leipzig: A Cosmopolitan Trade Centre', in George J. Buelow (ed.), *The Late Baroque Era: From the 1680s to 1740* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1993), 254–95; see p. 261.
- ⁸³ Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bachs Klavierübung: Kommentar zur Faksimile-Ausgabe* (Leipzig/Dresden: Peters, 1984), 25.
- ⁸⁴ Wolff, Bachs Klavierübung, 21.
- ⁸⁵ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 156; The New Bach Reader, no. 127.
- 86 *Bach-Dokumente* I, nos. 159, 160.
- 87 Bach-Dokumente I, no. 162.
- 88 Bach-Dokumente I, no. 164, The New Bach Reader, notes to no. 127.
- ⁸⁹ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 165; The New Bach Reader, no. 155.
- 90 Wolff, The Learned Musician, 379; Wolff, Bachs Klavierübung, 23.
- ⁹¹ Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 379. It appears that J. G. Walther had purchased this collection for 12 Groschen and then, in 1735, passed it on for 8 Groschen. See *Bach-Dokumente* II, no. 361.
- ⁹² Bach-Dokumente I, no. 168; Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 323, 366, 370.
- ⁹³ A second edition was most likely printed in 1736, indicating that the first edition must have seen successful sales. See Wolff, *Bachs Klavierübung*, 28.
- ⁹⁴ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 379; The New Bach Reader, no. 178.
- 95 Bach-Dokumente I, no. 169.

- One known printing, % 3 Thaler per copy 97
- 1741 Goldberg Variations, Keyboard Practice (BWV 988)⁹⁸
- 1747 Canon zu 6 Stimmen (BWV 1076)⁹⁹
- 1747 Einige canonische Veränderungen über das Weynachts-Lied, Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her (BWV 769)¹⁰⁰
- 1747 Musikalisches Opfer (BWV 1079), ¹⁰¹ 1 Thaler per copy ¹⁰²
- 1750 Sechs Choräle (Schübler Chorales, BWV 645–50)¹⁰³

This limited information concerning printing costs and selling prices does not allow for precise calculations of potential profit from this endeavour.¹⁰⁴ We do know that Bach paid 2 Thaler, 12 Groschen to Breitkopf to print two hundred copies of the title pages of the *Musicalisches Opfer*.¹⁰⁵ Added to this would have been the cost of engraving the copper plates, a process that could take six to eight hours per plate.¹⁰⁶ The engraving itself was usually the most costly aspect of printing a score and at times represented half of the total cost of reproduction.¹⁰⁷ It has been suggested that Bach might have employed past or present students to engrave his works to cut costs.¹⁰⁸ A year after publication, Bach wrote that he had originally printed one hundred copies of the *Musicalisches Opfer*, given away most of them to good friends, and otherwise sold them for 1 Thaler each.¹⁰⁹ To resolve the inconsistencies in numbers, one might think that he had printed double the

- ⁹⁶ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 379.
- ⁹⁷ Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 455, 456 and 482; The New Bach Reader no. 333.
- 98 Bach-Dokumente I, no. 172.
- ⁹⁹ The New Bach Reader, no. 242. This was a 1747 reprint of Bach's portrait version in 1746. See NBArev I/3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 176; The New Bach Reader, no. 243.
- ¹⁰¹ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 173; The New Bach Reader, no. 24. Known also as the 'Royal Prussian Fugue Theme' (The New Bach Reader, no. 248; Bach-Dokumente III, no. 558a, p. 656).
- ¹⁰² Wolff, The Learned Musician, 430; Bach-Dokumente I, no. 49; Bach-Dokumente III, no. 558a p. 656; The New Bach Reader, nos. 248, 257.
- ¹⁰³ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 175; The New Bach Reader, no. 238; Albert Clement, 'On the Inner Correlation of the Six Chorales BWV 645–650 and its Significance', Bach, 34/2 (2003), 1–62, esp. pp. 51–3.
- ¹⁰⁴ There are several receipts for the printing of texts from the archives of Breitkopf & Härtel (Leipzig). See *Bach-Dokumente* II nos. 310, 313, 336, 343, 345, 357, 362, 367, 385, 416, 428, 451, and 487. Furthermore, the overall production would have also included costs for shipping publications, which records show would have ranged from 2–6 Groschen per mailing. See *Bach-Dokumente* V, no. B 27a, pp. 112–13.
- ¹⁰⁵ Bach-Dokumente II, no. 556; The New Bach Reader, no. 246.
- ¹⁰⁶ F. M. Scherer, 'An Early Application of the Average Total Cost Concept', *Journal of Economic Literature*, 39/3 (2001), 897–901.
- Steven Zohn, 'Telemann in the Marketplace: The Composer as Self-Publisher', Journal of the American Musicological Society, 58/2 (2005), 275–356, esp. p. 284. In 1740 Telemann announced 44 copper plates for sale. Although precise prices are not available, the advertisement indicates that plates would cost 100 Thaler for a work that could have a retail price of 3 Thaler. Thus 34 copies would need to be sold to cover the price of the plates. See Zohn, 'Telemann in the Marketplace', 337
- ¹⁰⁸ Gregory G. Butler, 'The engraving of J. S. Bach's *Six Partitas'*, *Journal of Musicological Research*, 7 (1986), 3–27, esp. p. 24; Zohn, 'Telemann in the Marketplace', 284.
- ¹⁰⁹ Bach-Dokumente I, no. 49, Bach-Dokumente III, no. 558a (p. 656); The New Bach Reader no. 257. This is also the price that was advertised in the Leipzig newspaper.

number of copies of the front matter in anticipation of a second printing of the engraved music. Or, as assumed by both Joel Sheveloff and Gregory Butler, he may have printed varying numbers of copies of each section of the work, selling separate sections on demand, including the title page with each sale.¹¹⁰

Bach took advantage of the local fairs in Leipzig to publicise and market his works, and advertised them in a local newspaper (*Leipziger Post-Zeitungen*).¹¹¹ He also engaged six colleagues and his sons to sell his publications throughout Germany on commission.¹¹² Thus his keyboard works were widely distributed, and his publicity strategy seems to have enabled him to reach a buying audience, which in turn would have encouraged his publishing efforts. The progress of his publishing activity suggests that this was a business worth pursuing.

Sales and rentals

Bach operated a small book and music sales business in Leipzig, where he sold copies of his own publications and works by his sons, students and colleagues. His 'for sale' stock appears to have included *Der General-Baß in der Composition* by Johann David Heinichen (1728), *Musicalisches Lexicon* by Johann Gottfried Walther (1732), *Clavier-Übung* III by Johann Ludwig Krebs (1741) and keyboard publications by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1745–8) and Conrad Friedrich Hurlebusch (1735 and 1736). He also provided a manuscript-copying service and rented out his own manuscripts. His

Bach additionally oversaw instrumental rentals and sales. Four monthly receipts from 1747 show that he was renting a clavier for 1 Thaler, 8 Groschen per month to his student Eugen Wenzel for at least six months. 116 On March 20, 1748, he wrote a letter demanding that Johann Georg Martius return an overdue harpsichord within five days. 117 On May 6, 1749, about one year before his death,

- Joel Sheveloff, J. S. Bach's Musical Offering: An Eighteenth-Century Conundrum (Lewiston: Mellen, 2013), 116–17; Gregory Butler, 'The Printing History of J. S. Bach's Musical Offering: New Interpretations', The Journal of Musicology, 19/2 (2002), 306–31, esp. p. 327.
- Bach-Dokumente II, no. 224; Stauffer, 'Leipzig: a Cosmopolitan Trade Center', 262. Bach had anticipated that Part III of the Clavier-Übung would be ready in time for the Easter fair in 1739 (Bach-Dokumente II, no. 434) but it was in fact not available until September of that year (Bach-Dokumente II, no. 455).
- Wolff, The Learned Musician, 375; Bach-Dokumente II, no. 224 (see also Bach-Dokumente II, no. 391), Bach-Dokumente III, no. 558a (p. 656); The New Bach Reader, no. 248. These colleagues were based in Dresden, Halle, Lüneburg, Brunswick, Nuremberg and Augsburg, and his sons were in Halle and Berlin.
- ¹¹³ Wolff, The Learned Musician, 412.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid.; Bach-Dokumente II, nos. 260, 527–29, 567–8, 363, 373, 492; The New Bach Reader, no. 140. See also Werner Neumann, 'Einige neue Quellen zu Johann Sebastian Bachs Herausgabe eigener und zum Mitvertrieb fremder Werke', in Musa-Mens-Musici: Gedenkschrift für Walther Vetter (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969), 165–8.
- ¹¹⁵ Wolff, *The Learned Musician*, 412. Bach's autograph copy of the Sanctus in D Major (BWV 232^{III}) ended up in the hands of Franz Anton Count Sporck of Lissa and Prague, and apparently was never returned. See *Bach-Dokumente* III, p. 638.
- ¹¹⁶ Bach-Dokumente I, pp. 130–2 and 134–5; Bach-Dokumente V, no. A 135, p. 107; The New Bach Reader no. 249. Eugen Wenzel was Count of Wrbna-Freudenthal and at the time a student at the University of Leipzig. See note to The New Bach Reader, no. 249. He has already been mentioned above as one of Bach's private students.
- ¹¹⁷ Bach-Dokumente III, no. 45c (p. 627); The New Bach Reader, no. 256.

Bach sold a fortepiano to Count von Branitzky in Bialykstock (Poland) on behalf of Mr. Barthelemy Valentin and wrote a receipt for the amount of 115 Thaler. ¹¹⁸ He seems to have received a commission of 1 Thaler, 16 Groschen. ¹¹⁹

Renting and selling books, printed music and instruments took place exclusively in Leipzig and seem to have been confined to the last decade of Bach's life.

Direction of the collegium musicum

Bach assumed leadership of the *collegium musicum* in Leipzig in 1729.¹²⁰ Perhaps due to frustration with his post as cantor, Bach pursued his activities with this ensemble vigorously until 1737 and then from 1739 to 1741 or later. The *collegium musicum* performed chamber music every Friday at the *Zimmermannsche Kaffeehaus* and additionally on Tuesdays during the spring and autumn trade fairs.¹²¹ These 'rush-hour' concerts must have drawn many people to the coffee house, where they could enjoy beer, coffee, and tobacco pipes while listening to beautiful new music performed by young talented musicians. Bach, whose presence helped fill the venue, would have been compensated with money and drink.¹²²

The collegium musicum also performed for large-scale celebrations, often associated with the royal family in Dresden. The special occasions that most often solicited the ensemble's services from 1729 to 1744 involved royal celebrations: birthdays, name days, and coronations. Werner Neumann compiled a list of thirty such performances from the Leipzig newspapers. How these were compensated is an intriguing question. Only two royal performances, both during the king's visits to Leipzig, are listed by Neumann, and for these Bach received 50 Thaler (14 October 1734) and 58 Thaler (5 May 1738). There are not records to prove that Bach was paid for the other performances. His position as director of the collegium musicum provided the opportunity to perform secular works for public occasions and to benefit financially.

After at least twelve years of leadership (with a two-year break), Bach retired from this position sometime after the coffee-house owner, Gottfried Zimmermann, died in May 1741. However, it seems that he continued to lead the ensemble for special performances in 1745 and 1749. 126

¹¹⁸ Bach-Dokumente III, no. 142a (p. 633); The New Bach Reader, no. 262.

¹¹⁹ Bach-Dokumente III, p. 633, notes to no. 142a.

¹²⁰ Bach-Dokumente I, 20; The New Bach Reader, no. 130.

¹²¹ Christoph Wolff, 'Bach's Leipzig Chamber Music', Early Music, 13/2 (1985), 165–75, esp. p. 168.

¹²² See Herbert R. Pankratz, 'J. S. Bach and his Leipzig Collegium Musicum', The Musical Quarterly, 69/3 (1983), 323–53, esp. p. 348; Werner Neumann, 'Das Bachische Collegium Musicum', Bach-Jahrbuch, 47 (1960), 5–27, esp. pp. 20–3; and Andreas Glöckner, 'Bachs Leipziger Collegium Musicum und seine Vorgeschichte', in Christoph Wolff (ed.), Die Welt der Bach Kantaten, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1997), 105–17, esp. p. 111.

Neumann, 'Das Bachische Collegium Musicum', 5–27, esp. pp. 13–20. According to Neumann (p. 21) we cannot expect this listing to be complete.

¹²⁴ See above, p. 8, Table 4: 'Performances and organ examinations'.

¹²⁵ Wolff, 'Bach's Leipzig Chamber Music', 168.

¹²⁶ Schleuning, *Vom Kaffeehaus zum Fürstenhof*, 88. On these occasions they would have performed the *Ouvertüre h-Moll* (BWV 1067) and the cantata, *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan* (BWV 201).

Conclusion

Considering the extent of Bach's freelance work in the 1740s, one may wonder how he had time to keep up with the demands of his job as Cantor. In his recent research, Michael Maul gives us reason to believe that Bach had withdrawn somewhat from his duties, leaving certain responsibilities to one of his talented students, Gottfried Benjamin Fleckeisen, for at least two years. Bach was already in conflict with the authorities in Leipzig and took longer journeys away from the city in the 1740s. The evidence of Bach's increased pursuit of freelance activities, especially as self-publisher and salesman—fields in which he was still active during the 1740s—concurs with Maul's conclusion that Bach withdrew more and more from his duties as Cantor during the last decade of his life.

As Bach had shown in his letter to Erdmann in 1730, his salaried post as Cantor in Leipzig and its accompanying duties were sources of frustration. Since payment amounts fluctuated from year to year, an average yearly salary of 700 Thaler seems to be an optimistic estimate. Yet although he communicated a desire to 'seek his fortune elsewhere,' Bach remained in Leipzig for the rest of his life, employed there while continuing to expand his independent work. He seems to have found the greatest potential for earning extra income through private teaching, guest performances and direction of the *collegium musicum*. It was probably in his best financial interest to remain in Leipzig, for it was there that he finally found his 'fortune' in freelance activity.

Maul, 'Having to perform and direct the music in the Capellmeister's stead for two whole years', 37–58.