AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION, INC.

VOLUME XIX • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY, 1977

// AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW

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THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION, INC.
SHELDON SOFFER, *Administrative Director*
130 West 56th Street
New York, New York 10019

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215 Kent Place Boulevard
Summit, New Jersey 07901

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Indexed in MUSIC INDEX and MUSIC ARTICLE GUIDE

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Pachelbel's *Christ lag in Todesbanden*: A Possible Influence on Bach's Work

by CRAWFORD R. THOBURN

It has long been acknowledged that J.S. Bach modeled some of his choral music on works by earlier composers. For example, the Bach biographer Philipp Spitta noted the similarity between Buxtehude's cantata *Jesu, meine Freude* and Bach's motet based on the same chorale.[1] It seems to me that a similar relationship exists between the cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden* by Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) and Bach's Cantata No. 4. If valid, this hypothesis may suggest solutions for two related problems that have confronted everyone who has attempted to deal with this work: the proper chronological place of the cantata in Bach's output, and its unique, retrospective structure and scoring. Yet a comparison of Pachelbel's setting with Bach's is interesting and instructive not only because of their possible connection, but also for the insights such a study provides into the musical essence of the latter.[2]

Early writers who dealt with Cantata No. 4, such as Spitta, believed that it was a youthful work which was rewritten for performance in Leipzig in the mid-1720's. This judgment was based largely on the conservative scoring of the cantata (five strings, including two violas, and four brass instruments), and the use of a chorale-variation structure that seemed anachronistic for the second decade of the eighteenth century. Parenthetically, Bach's *Jesu, meine Freude,* to which we have referred, follows a similar principle of composition and dates from the same decade. It appears that Spitta, by implication at least, recognized that Bach's cantata setting of *Christ lag in Todesbanden,* while seemingly simple and traditional in approach, is on closer inspection a sophisticated work evidencing a

[1] *J. S. Bach* (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), Vol. I, p. 308.

[2] The editions used for this discussion are as follows:

Bach, J.S., *Cantata No. 4,* ed. Gerhard Herz (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).

Pachelbel, Johann, *Christ lag in Todesbanden,* ed. Hans Eggebrecht (Basel: Bärenreiter Verlag 2875, 1954).

Measure numbers to which reference is made in this article are those of the respective editions.

mastery of materials that is not as consistently apparent in the cantatas that are definitely recognized as early works. I rather suspect that this is why Bach's Cantata No. 4 is performed more frequently than other so-called early cantatas — not because it is simple and easy to perform (which it is not, particularly), but rather because its musical quality is superior. Spitta, in attempting to reconcile the evidence with his own musical instincts, proposed that the cantata in its present form might be a reworking of an earlier cantata no longer extant.[3]

Contemporary scholars such as Gerhard Herz also maintain that Bach's setting is an early work, but believe on the basis of the copyist's handwriting and the manuscript watermarks that it was copied for a performance at Leipzig, and that only the final movement (verse VII) was written there.[4] Herz proceeds to speculate further that this cantata may very well be Bach's first attempt in this genre.[5] On the basis of musical evidence in the cantata itself and comparison with other Bach cantatas *ca.* 1708, I find Herz's latter hypothesis difficult to believe. I feel that Spitta was on the right track, but instead of a "lost" cantata being the basis for Bach's setting of 1724, could it not be that Pachelbel's cantata is the model for this work, just as Buxtehude's cantata was very likely an influence on Bach's setting of *Jesu, meine Freude*? Certainly, Pachelbel was well known to the Bach family, having been the teacher of Johann Sebastian's older brother Christoph, who was in turn his younger brother's teacher and guardian after their father's death. That the younger brother knew, and was influenced by, Pachelbel's organ compositions has long been acknowledged, and I think it is only reasonable to assume that he was acquainted with the latter's vocal works as well.

Before pursuing the possible relationship between the two works, let us consider some information about the material on which they are based. The melody and text of *Christ lag in Todesbanden* were written by Martin Luther, the melody being based on the plainsong hymn *Victimae Paschali Laudes.* It also bears a resemblance to the old German hymn *Christ ist erstanden* derived from the same plainsong source. The version of the melody used by Pachelbel retains the modal character of the original (Dorian), unlike the Bach version in E Minor with its raised leading-tones implying tonic and secondary dominant harmonies. In the Pachelbel setting, the melody generally moves in even note values, one per syllable of text, while the Bach version of the tune is occasionally decorated by passing tones which vitalize its melodic contour and emphasize the tonal rather than the

[3]Spitta, *op. cit.* II, pp. 393 ff.

[4]Herz, ed., *Cantata No. 4,*"Textual Note," p. 77.

[5]*Ibid.*, "Analysis — Versus I," p. 94.

modal implications of the melody. The chorale melody consists of two main sections, for purposes of our discussion labeled *A* and *B*. The *A* section is repeated, balancing the *B* section, which is twice as long. Each section of the melody may be further broken down into subsections (A^1, A^2, etc., as seen in Example 1). These designations will be used for greater convenience in identifying sections in our discussion of the music of both settings.

EXAMPLE 1

It is worthy of note that Pachelbel's version of the tune, while retaining the modal attributes of Luther's melody, does not entirely agree with it. He deleted certain passing tones and changed the first interval of B^3 from a minor third to a semitone. This version is employed consistently throughout the cantata. On the other hand, Bach retains the leap of a minor third in this phrase except in Verse VII where he adopts the semitone. Gerhard Herz, assuming that Cantata No. 4 was written before 1715, maintains in his edition of the work that this alteration of B^3, along with that of the first interval of A^1 and the third note of B^2, may be attributed to Bach.[6] But since the alteration of B^3 appears in Pachelbel's cantata, which was written before 1706, prior to the earliest probable date for Cantata No. 4, it appears that this particular alteration is not original with Bach. It also may be noted that in Pachelbel's rhythmic formulation of the first measure of B^4 one can see the germ of the syncopated motive that appears in the closing measures of three verse settings in his cantata.

While both composers set all seven verses of Luther's text, there are interesting discrepancies between the two versions. In some cases one discovers word changes which substantially alter the emotional feeling, if not the absolute meaning of the text. Most noticeable in this regard are the deviations found in Verse V, a movement which I believe had a special meaning and importance for Bach. Here the variants of text invariably intensify an imagery strongly conveyed by

[6] *Ibid.*, "The Chorale Melody," p. 83.

chromaticism and "cross" motives. They emphasize the immediacy of the act of crucifixion. Bach singled it out as the central event in the New Testament.

In settling upon a structural scheme for a chorale-variation cantata, a most important decision to be made involved the role of the chorale melody in the setting of each verse. It might be presented intact (*cantus-firmus* style), or the musical content of the verse might consist of fragments or motives derived from it and developed more or less freely (*concertato* style). A choice of scoring had to be made for each verse, at its simplest level involving a decision whether to set the verse chorally or for solo voice. Obviously, there were further choices to be made (such as voice or voices with instrumental obbligato or with continuo alone). Finally, the composer's task was to arrange these varying approaches so as to create a work that would be musically effective as a whole. Underlying all of these choices were three considerations of primary importance—the number of verses of the chorale text to be employed, the mood and meaning of each of the verses, and the problem of creating musical contrast within an extended work rigidly unified by its close dependence upon a single complete musical thought—the chorale melody. Bach's and Pachelbel's solutions were clearly within the stylistic conventions of their age. However, the choices each composer made, within the given framework, clearly delineate their personal styles.

The overall organization of Bach's Cantata No. 4 has been noted for its singularity by all writers who have discussed it. Seven verses of the chorale melody are set, as in the Pachelbel cantata. Bach scores the first, fourth (middle), and last verses for full chorus. The settings of the other verses are grouped in pairs; duet—solo (Verses II and III), and solo—duet (Verses V and VI), providing a complementary balance to the work. Thus, Bach opted for a totally symmetrical scheme for his scoring of the verses. Similarly, his choice of treatment—*cantus-firmus* or *concertato*—is symmetrical, but representing a different pattern. What we have described as *cantus-firmus* style is employed in Verses I, III, IV, V, and VII.

In the matter of overall structure, Pachelbel's cantata is not analogous to Bach's, although at first glance there is a correspondence between the layout of the first three verses. Considering the work as a whole, however, it becomes evident that his operating principle was merely the alternation of *cantus-firmus* and *concertato* styles. The only deviation from this pattern is in the last verse where full choral and instrumental forces are employed in a large *concertato* movement, presumably intended to balance, in length at least, a similarly extended first movement in *cantus-firmus* style. There is no

attempt to arrange the scoring of the different verses according to any particular pattern.

Nevertheless, the instrumental forces chosen by the two composers are similar. Pachelbel's string orchestra consists of two violins, usually playing in free counterpoint above the voices, and three violas which together with the bassoon double the four choral parts. Bach's orchestra is composed of two violins which function similarly as in the Pachelbel cantata, and two violas which together with the continuo double the three lower choral parts. There is also a direction that the four choral parts be doubled by cornetto and three trombones. It is this manner of scoring, among other things, which led to the assumption that this was an early cantata of Bach's—the use of two viola parts is infrequently found in his later works.

Another point of comparison to be considered is the length of individual movements. In Bach's setting, the longest movement is Verse V, which is flanked by movements approximately half that length. The only movement comparable in length to Verse V is the first. Verse V is also set apart from the rest of the composition by triple meter, and an alternation between *cantus-firmus* and *concertato* styles, a combination that is found in no other movement of the cantata.

The introductory thirteen measures of Pachelbel's cantata, though not separated from Verse I, might be considered analogous to Bach's *Sinfonia*. These introductory sections are of nearly the same length, and both are based upon a figure derived from the first notes of the chorale. In the settings of Verses I, II, and III, Pachelbel and Bach employ the same basic approach. Verse I is laid out as a large-scale chorale prelude with the *cantus firmus* presented in notes of long duration in the soprano part, the two violins moving freely in imitation above the lower strings, which double the respective voice parts. The second verse is set in both cantatas as a duet; in Pachelbel's, a duet for soprano and tenor, and in Bach's, a duet for soprano and alto. Verse III is a setting for solo voice in both works; in Pachelbel's for bass, and in Bach's for tenor.

Bach's setting adheres much more closely to the chorale melody in all verses than does Pachelbel's. Even in the verses which could not strictly be termed *cantus-firmus*—Verses II and VI—the musical content is so closely patterned upon the chorale that one never loses sight of it. Pachelbel, on the other hand, often invents new material in his *concertato* movements, retaining only variants of the B^4 fragment from the tune as a kind of refrain.

It becomes evident that even though the layout of verses in the two cantatas is based on different principles, six out of the eight

movements in Bach's cantata correspond in method to those of the Pachelbel setting. Four of the eight are directly analogous to verses in Pachelbel's work in their positioning within the cantata. In addition, there are significant motivic similarities.

Pachelbel's introduction ends conclusively with a picardy third as does Bach's *Sinfonia*. As we have observed, both are based on motives derived from the first notes of the chorale. Pachelbel's motive is a literal adaptation of the opening of A^1, while Bach's is derived from his interpretation of the opening, characterized by the semitone step, which plays such an important part in his later treatment of the cantata. In fact, one might say that this expressive use of the semitone functions throughout the cantata as a unifying musical gesture. As a result, its appearance in the Bach *Sinfonia* serves not as a mere introduction to the first verse, but rather provides a foretaste of the character of the cantata as a whole. One wonders if this movement was not composed after the verses had been set. Herz observes: "Among the ten instrumental movements that open early cantatas, only that of Cantata No. 4 is related to a chorale." Could the *Sinfonia* possibly be a revision, supplanting an earlier, more conventional introduction such as the one we find in Pachelbel's cantata?

The motifs in Verse I are of more literal derivation in Pachelbel's cantata than they are in Bach's; in fact, this holds true throughout the two cantatas in comparable places. One might see in Pachelbel's setting basic ideas that are used in an extended manner by Bach (Ex. 2).

EXAMPLE 2

PACHELBEL (Tenor part ms. 14-15)

BACH (Bass part ms. 1-4)

One might note in particular the melismatic treatment of the word "Leben" in the bass voice, which becomes much more elaborate and extended in Bach's setting (measures 29-32) (Ex. 3).

Finally, Pachelbel's setting of B^4 employs a syncopated motif, possibly foreshadowed in his singular rhythmic treatment of this chorale phrase, as we have remarked above. It is the same motif that Bach employs in his cantata (measure 68 ff.), but here it is treated sequentially and becomes the basis for an extended fugal *alla breve*

EXAMPLE 3

Pachelbel, Verse I (ms. 30-36) choral parts only

EXAMPLE 4

section which concludes the movement. Pachelbel uses it only for the length of the B^4 phrase in the *cantus* (Ex. 4). The use of this particular motif in the works of both composers furnishes an excellent example for comparison. I believe that Pachelbel recognized that the motif was a strong one, for he used it again to conclude his settings of Verses III and V, but in none of these is it developed as fully and at such length as in Verse I of Bach's setting.

Verse II is set in both cantatas as a duet accompanied only by continuo, in Pachelbel's work a duet for soprano and tenor, and in Bach's, a duet for soprano and alto. Pachelbel uses his setting again in Verse VI. It is a free *concertato* setting, and the only close resemblance to the chorale melody itself appears in phrase B^4. The motif used here is a decorated version of the chorale phrase, employing upper neighboring tones in a busy sixteenth-note pattern which is extended sequentially and imitatively between the two voices. Bach's setting adheres more closely to the *cantus firmus,* and the voice parts move more slowly, their momentum following the steady eighth-note pulse of the continuo in sequential suspensions. Below is a skeleton outline of the voices in Pachelbel's setting (Ex. 5), which may be compared with Bach's treatment at measures 43-53.

EXAMPLE 5

PACHELBEL (ms. 73-81)

Actual Voice Parts (ms. 73-75)

S. Hal - - - - - - - - le - lu - - ja,

T. Hal - - - - - - - - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - lu - - ja, Hal - - -

It is interesting that Pachelbel chose to set two such contrasting texts as those of Verse II and Verse VI to the same music. The first is suffused with melancholy—"No one among the children of men could conquer Death,"—and the second is exultant—"We celebrate the high feast with joyful heart and rapture."

Bach's Verse VI is dominated by continuous triplet figures. And again, in this instance, Bach has made more of a chosen rhythmic motif than Pachelbel. His sequential imitations ingeniously incorporate B^4 not only in the triplet figure itself, but also in the melodic outline arising from the sequence of imitative entries (Ex. 6).

EXAMPLE 6

+ = B^4 motive in each imitative entry.
o = B^4 motive outlined by the beginning of each sequential imitation.

Verse III is set by both composers as a vocal solo, in Pachelbel's work for bass and full orchestra (Ex. 7), and in Bach's for tenor, a florid solo violin part and continuo. Pachelbel's setting of this verse is similar in style to Bach's Verse V rather than Bach's Verse III. In fact, there is no verse in the Pachelbel cantata that is analogous to Bach's setting of Verse III.

There is a similar virtuoso treatment of the solo voice in both cantatas—extended range, large melodic leaps, and rhythmic vitality based on syncopation, but here one becomes aware of Bach's adjustment of musical means to the affection of a particular text phrase, or even of single words (e.g., "Krenz's Stamm", ms. 28). This contrasts markedly with Pachelbel's rather dogged adherence to the same musical setting for the repeat of phrases A^1 and A^2 which have different texts in each verse, or with his setting of Verses II and VI to the same music in spite of totally different affections. Pachelbel's setting of Verse III concludes with an extension of the syncopated motif derived from B^4 in the vocal part—the motif we have noted

EXAMPLE 7

Pachelbel, Verse III (ms. 82 - 86)

before in his setting of Verse I. The melismatic "Hallelujah" grows in Bach's Verse V into a glorious coda of fourteen measures. In Pachelbel's setting the solo voice merely fills out the chorale phrase of the first violin part (Ex. 8).

EXAMPLE 8

Pachelbel, Verse III (ms. 118-122)

Pachelbel's Verse IV has no direct counterpart in Bach's cantata. It is a curious setting, divided as it is between alto and tenor solos. The two voices never sing simultaneously in duet, nor even alternately in dialogue. It is as though Pachelbel had chopped the verse in two. In the first twelve measures, the full string complement plays figurations in imitation of trumpet calls to illustrate the text "It was a strange and frightful battle," sung by the solo tenor. After this the orchestra falls silent and only the continuo serves as accompaniment to the end of the verse. In the nineteenth measure, the alto solo takes over at the words "Holy Scripture has told us how one death devoured the other." The verse ends with five measures of imitative

sequences between continuo and solo voice on a motif derived from B^4 which bears a resemblance to various treatments in the Bach cantata. This is the only part of the movement that musically resembles the chorale (Ex. 9).

EXAMPLE 9

Pachelbel, Verse IV (ms. 147-151)

ALTO SOLO

-den. Hal - - - - - - - - - - - - - - le - lu -

CONTINUO

- ja, Hal - - - - - - - - - - - le - lu - - ja, Hal-le - lu - - ja.

In Verse V Pachelbel employs the old chorale-motet procedure, analogous in many ways to Bach's setting of Verse IV, except that the voices are doubled by strings and continuo, with two free violin parts playing above, as in Verse I, while in Bach's version the voices are supported by continuo alone. The principle of "pre-imitation," in which phrases of the *cantus* are introduced by points of imitation based on the phrase in question, is utilized by both composers. However, the motifs derived by each composer from identical material show again how Pachelbel's are more literal than Bach's, which are more imaginative and highly propulsive in their rhythmic drive. Pachelbel seems chained to the outline of the chorale, while for Bach the seeming restriction of the *cantus firmus* acts rather as a creative stimulus.

Another factor that contributes to the particular rhythmic vitality of Bach's setting is worth noting. Both versions are of comparable length, but Bach halved the note values of the chorale *cantus firmus* employing quarter-notes (except in phrase B^4) while Pachelbel used half-notes. The resulting freedom from the restrictions of the *cantus firmus* gave Bach an opportunity to indulge in extensions of *concertato* material and symbolic gestures such as the canon in which "one Death swallows up the other" (measures 29-35), which make this movement far more "eventful" than Pachelbel's.

Pachelbel's cantata concludes with a setting of Verse VII in free style. This is unusual in a cantata of this type, for one might well expect a choral setting in which the chorale melody is prominent. The verse is set for chorus, strings and continuo with the same doublings as in the other choral verses. It consists of alternate homophonic and imitative sections and is concluded by an eighteen-measure variation on motives from B^4—the only reference, however veiled, to the chorale melody in this verse.

Bach's setting of Verse VII is, of course, a relatively straightforward version of the chorale for the entire ensemble. In this setting Bach adopts for the only time in his cantata the variant of the opening of B^3, commented on by Herz, which had been employed before by Pachelbel.

How do the factors which we have discussed relate to the questions originally posed? First, I believe that Pachelbel's cantata influenced Bach in writing Cantata No. 4, not in the sense of providing a basis for direct parody, but in more general but no less important ways. I believe Bach was indebted to Pachelbel for the idea of treating this particular chorale in variation form, something he did with only one other vocal work—the motet *Jesu, meine Freude*. Second, I believe he was influenced by Pachelbel's choice of scoring, and by his manner of setting certain verses of the chorale. Third, I believe that Pachelbel used motifs in his cantata that were adapted by Bach for his own setting. It seems to me that the similarities one finds in this respect are more than one might normally expect, even considering the fact that the two composers shared a common background and were setting the same chorale.

With regard to the problem of the definitive dating of Cantata No. 4, I have no new evidence to put forward. However, I must, with all due respect, pose the question: What is so unbelieveble about accepting the early 1720's as the date of composition for this cantata? Much of the case for an earlier date of composition has rested, it seems to me, on outward manifestations—the structure of the cantata and its scoring. There is surely no question that these features were archaic in the 1720's, but this may have caused scholars to overlook the evidence within the music itself.

Bach's early cantatas, such as No. 106 *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* and No. 21 *Ich hatte viel Bekümmerniss*, do not have the sustained tautness of construction and the marvelous equilibrium between contrapuntal structure and expressive musical representation of text that is found in Cantata No. 4. There is a mastery of formal procedure in evidence within the movements of this cantata that is

not maintained consistently in cantatas whose early dates are assured; Bach's handling of expressive detail here never obscures the formal scheme as it sometimes does in these early works. All the composer's resources are handled with economy, restraint and a wonderful aptness.

We must ask finally, however: If Cantata No. 4 was written in 1724, why did Bach revert to an archaic structure and scoring? We know that he tended to write sets, or groups of compostions following the same or similar principles, and that he did cultivate types of composition that were old-fashioned in the eyes of his contemporaries. *Jesu, meine Freude* was written in the mid-1720's, probably influenced by a cantata of Buxtehude that had been composed at least twenty-five years previously. Would not a "pairing" of these two retrospective great E Minor works be consistent with what we know of Bach's compositional habits? Thus, I do not think it at all improbable that Cantata No. 4 was written in the 1720's, based in some of its aspects on Pachelbel's *Christ lag in Todesbanden*.

Notes on Medieval Performance Practice

by JOEL KRAMME

It is generally agreed that sacred polyphonic performances prior to the middle of the fifteenth century, as a rule, involved accomplished trained soloists. There are, however, enough dissenting opinions to warrant fuller explanation and clarification; solo rendition of each part of the polyphonic texture seems to have been neither a musical ideal nor a matter of socio-economic consequence.

The earliest choir books were relatively small and could accommodate only three to four singers.[1] Yet this format soon grew to enormous proportions, culminating in the giant choir book of the last half of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries that could accommodate approximately fifteen singers.[2] Most iconographic sources of this period, however, picture groups of considerably smaller size. Printed part-book editions, with each part presented in a separate book, date from about the end of the fifteenth century and began to supersede the older choir books during the course of the next century.[3]

Manuscripts of polyphonic choral music dating from the Middle Ages seldom give much direct indication about expected manner of performance. Several Mass compositions in the famous Trent Codices (written during the years 1420-1480) specify "chorus" for the monophonic plainsong, which would imply solo ensemble performance of the polyphonic section. Highly unusual are the entries in a thirteenth-century manuscript of an *Officium de Circoncisione* pre-

[1]Manfred F. Bukofzer, "The Beginnings of Choral Polyhony," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1960), Chapter V, to which the discussion here is largely indebted.

[2]Willi Apel, "Score," *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 2nd ed., p. 759.

[3]*Ibid.* For futher information regarding notational formats, see Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Medieval Academy of America, 1953), p. XX.

served in the French city of Sens that record a careful distinction between *unus, chorus, ad organum* and *cum falsetto.*

In general, however, Medieval polyphony was performed by soloists. Evidence supporting this thesis includes the common occurrence of *quarto*-size manuscripts[4] and the official records of churches such as Notre Dame which indicate the consistent employment of four polyphonists. "The only type of choral singing generally practiced in the Middle Ages is that of the choir in unision."[5]

In attempting to explain the origins of choral part-singing, Andrew Hughes suggests that the first attempts most likely would have been with very simple music, as most Medieval choirs accustomed to singing only plainsong would have been ignorant of rhythmic notation. He alludes to a purely non-metric, homophonic style of polyphony that uses only one note value throughout and is scored without plainsong symbols.[6] Hughes conjectures that the evolution of choral participation in a four-part texture probably began with the simple rhythmicizing of a monophonic choral melody, the performance of a single voice in a polyphonic piece (against a solo voice or voices in the other parts), and a gradual expansion of the number of parts being rendered by the choir.

Research into the performance practices of fauxbourdon and the widespread use of the improvisational techniques of discanting and countering by English polyphonists has also raised the intriguing question of possible choral rendition.[7] Bukofzer agrees to the possibility, particularly as a later development, and sets forth his theory on the evolution of choral participation:

> Thus we have two trends side by side. One is the development of choral music from its beginnings about 1430 to the liturgical and chorus-conscious music of Ockeghem, Obrecht, and Josquin, the polychoral extension of the choral idiom with Willaert and the Venetian School, and the synthesis in Palestrina and Lasso. The other is the soloist trend, which is particularly strong in the secular literature of the chanson and the madrigal. Polychoral music took its cue from and developed out of the Gregorian unison chorus; this explains why the secular compositions are slow in taking up the new fashion. The Medieval church knew principally only the unison choir and the solo ensemble. The polyphonic choir was an idea foreign to the Medieval tradition. The beginnings of choral polyphony coincide with the beginnings of the musical Renaissance.[8]

[4]Gilbert Reaney, "Voices and Instruments in the Music of Guillaume de Machaut," *Revue Belgre de Musicologie* X (1956), p. 94.

[5]Bukofzer, *op cit.*, p. 176.

[6]Andrew Hughes, "Mensural Polyphony for Choir in 15th Century England." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XIV (Fall, 1966), p. 352.

[7]See Bukofzer, *op cit.*, and Ann Besser Scott, "The Beginnings of Fauxbourdon: A New Interpretation," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXIV (Fall, 1971), pp. 345-63.

[8]Bukofzer, *op cit.*, p. 189.

Medieval writers provide the modern researcher with almost no hints regarding vocal timbres of early singers. The few available references to voice quality emanate from recent studies and are little more than speculation. The theories presented by Gilbert Reaney and Paul Henry Lang on the question of nasal tone quality and its suggestion by physiognomical clues in early iconographic sources are no longer accepted. While the popularity of such relatively nasal-sounding instruments as bagpipe and shawm might suggest at least some tolerance of this tone quality in singers, there is no evidence to indicate that it was any more prevalent among early polyphonists than it is with modern singers.

While discussions concerning vibrato or tremolo can be found in the works of Renaissance and early Baroque writers,[9] its use in Medieval music remains a matter of speculation. Gafurius admits to its practice by some late fifteenth-century performers, but describes it as an undesirable element in tone quality. It is possible that such "imperfections" in tone production may well have plagued Medieval performers; but it is highly unlikely that any conscious attempt to ornament polyphony with regular variations in pitch or loudness would have been accepted. The regular use of vibrato by ensemble participants is a relatively recent practice in music and most certainly was not part of Medieval polyphonic performances. The use of vibrato as an occasional embellishment in solo performances cannot be discounted entirely, and was probably a fairly widespread practice among secular artists; there is no evidence to indicate its adoption by soloists in sacred music.

A number of modern writers have favored a revival of falsetto singing, stressing its compatability with the prevailing "light and high" tone color of Medieval music.[10] In view of the non-blend ideal quite correctly associated with Medieval music, the use of female voices in lieu of boys or falsettists may seem an obvious and appealing alternative. But it is not supported by the facts derived from research. The tone quality of the normal mixed choral ensemble should be considered justifiable in the performance of early sacred music only when no other solution is possible. If it is employed, the use of the modern mixed choir should encourage the light, soft, thin quality associated with boys' voices, an ideal not easily assimilated.

This is the first of two articles concerned with a study of early polyphonic performance practice. An article on Renaissance performance will follow in the July, 1977 issue of the AMERICAN CHORAL REVIEW.

[9]See Franchinus Gafurius, *Practica Musicae* (1496), translated and edited by Irwin Young (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 148; and Benige de Bacilly, *A Commentary Upon the Proper Art of Singing* (1668), translated and edited by Austin B. Caswell, (New York: The Institute of Medieval Music, 1968), pp. 20, 83.

[10]Roland S. Tatnell, "Falsetto Practice: A Brief Survey," *The Consort* No. 22 (1965), p. 32.

Choral Performances

Philadelphia — The name of the conductor is legendary, but the élan and the handsome appearance of the distinguished octogenarian belie his years.

Mogens Wöldike took the Copenhagen Boys' Choir on its first American tour. Traveling on a tight schedule from New England to the Midwest, the South, and the Virgin Islands, they visited a dozen cities in as many states. The tour was planned under royal patronage by a Danish National Committee (honoring the American Bicentennial), and while the singers appeared in a number of predominantly Danish communities, they joined the front rank of interpreters representing international concert life.

Wöldike shared his duties with Niels Møller, now the regular conductor of the choir Wöldike founded in 1924. Both of them are to be credited with artistic results that doubtless exceeded any norm their audience expected. It was, in short, the most beautiful choral sound I have ever heard. The quality of these wholesome young voices, their impeccable ensemble and articulation might be compared to the sound of a Baroque organ, yet the ever present flexibility of vocal phrase raised this austere quality to a realm beyond the king of instruments. Totally absent was any suggestion of sentimentality that even the purest boys' voices will at times carry; equally absent was any hint of the normal limitations—there was no moment of unevenness, no strain, no wavering of *a cappella* intonation.

This result was due in part to the excellent choice of program: the Italian Renaissance was represented by a Palestrina mass and a Palestrina motet, the German Baroque by Eccard's chorale settings and Schütz's *Geistliche Chormusik*; the concluding part of the evening featured early twentieth-century Danish music largely unknown in this country. The decent tenor of writing that characterizes these *a cappella* works by Carl Nielsen, Knud Jeppesen, and Vagn Holmboe stands up remarkably well after the trials and tribulations of contemporary choral music. One realizes again that Nielsen is probably the most original composer that a typically Scandinavian school has produced. Jeppesen, his pupil, is known to us primarily as

a Palestrina scholar, but his writing shows with what ease the domains of critical scholarship and creative composition were combined in his generation. The work of Holmboe, a student of Jeppesen, is marked by a new indebtedness to folk music; Bartók's influence is apparent.

The examples of this fine choral literature reflect the age-old polyphonic legacy of the North and its remarkable revival in recent times. Behind the achievement of this choir stands the organization of one of the most modern choir schools we have. Originally inspired by Wöldike's work as Copenhagen Cathedral organist and director of the Danish State Orchestra, the establishment of the Copenhagen Boys' Choir was closely associated with Wöldike's performances and recordings that set a new standard for choral performance practice of the Baroque in the 30's and 40's. Municipal and state support paved the way for a choir school, as permanent operating basis, which recently celebrated the choir's 50th anniversary in the newly built St. Anne's Gymnasium serving 700 boys and 450 girls from the ages of eight to nineteen. Vocal instruction is to a large extent given by alumni of the choir handing down a tradition whose quality reaches a steadily growing number of choral organizations.

Poul Nielsen, headmaster of St. Anne's School, was in charge of arrangements for the tour. The initial concert, given at Philadelphia's historic First Reformed Church, was under the auspices of the All-Philadelphia Boys Choir, Robert G. Hamilton, director. The host choir ably contributed a group of American works to the program which contained only a segment of the tour's total repertoire—one that could not have characterized this choir more admirably.

—A.M.

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—The Moravian Church traces its origins back to the Bohemian theologian John Hus who was burned at the stake as a heretic in 1415. (The Moravian Church still commemorates the martyrdom of John Hus with special services on July 6th). Followers of John Hus eventually founded a society called "Unitas Fratrum," which broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1467, making it the oldest Protestant denomination. The society gradually spread throughout Bohemia, Moravia, and southern Poland, continuing its tradition of congregational participation in the worship service. The Thirty Years' War, a predominantly religious struggle between Protestant and Catholic elements in Central Europe, had a disastrous effect on the Unitas Fratrum and their leaders were either killed or driven into exile. For nearly a hundred years the traditions of the church were passed on in secret from generation to generation.

In 1722 a group of refugees from Moravia found protection in Saxony on the estate of Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, who encouraged them to renew their church. New services and customs were instituted, among them a devotion to evangelism. It was this evangelical zeal that first brought the Moravians to this country. It also brought to America one of its strongest musical traditions, for music flourished in the Moravian service, reflecting all the vigor and grace of the rising symphonic style.

Twenty-six years ago, the late Thor Johnson, then conductor of the Nashville Symphony and a dedicated Moravian, conceived the idea of a festival to celebrate the unique contribution Moravian music has made to the cultural history of America. In the ensuing years attendance at the festivals mushroomed as more music lovers, both Moravians and non-Moravians, discovered the enriching musical experience these festivals offered. The Twelfth Early American Moravian Music Festival held in Bethlehem, Pa. last summer and dedicated to the memory of Thor Johnson surpassed them all.

Originally the biennial festivals were held alternately at one of the two major Moravian centers, Winston-Salem, N.C. and Bethlehem. In 1969 the festival moved to New York with headquarters at Riverside Church. At this open festival the rich musical heritage of the early Moravian settlers could be brought to the attention of a much wider audience. Participants in the week-long event gathered daily to study eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century choral scores made available in modern editions through the continuing efforts of the Moravian Music Foundation based in Winston-Salem. At the end of the week, the singers, together with top-ranking soloists and instrumentalists from New York, presented public concerts of the newly learned music. Along with the principal activity of rehearsals and performances, the festival also offered opportunities to attend seminars and tour organ installations in major New York churches.

The plan of the Bethlehem Festival was laid out along the same lines, but its progress and attendance were larger, its pace more intense. The largest and most active group at the festival was the chorus—230 out of 350 registrants participated. They embarked on a five-hour daily rehearsal schedule (split into morning, afternoon, and evening sessions) and produced three excellent concerts at Central Moravian Church at the end of the week. The cohesive force for all this activity was Richard Schantz, chairman of music at Moravian College and director of music at Central Moravian Church—an equally able, dynamic and delightful choral conductor. Monica Schantz was the excellent accompanist. Twenty-four states, including

Alaska, were represented, as well as Canada, the Virgin Islands, and Antigua; there were also visitors from Germany.

The initial program consisted of two short anthems by John Antes (1740-1811) and the first modern performance of *Psalm 103* for chorus, soloists, and orchestra by David Moritz Michael (1751-1827). Instrumental music included the festive *Symphony in C* by Franz Danzi, a contemporary of Beethoven, and the *Terzetto in A Major* by Johann Daniel Grimm. (Some of the music in the Moravian Archives is not by Moravian composers, but was copied by them for their personal use and brought to this country when they emigrated from Europe. In some instances these manuscripts have been found to be the only existing copies of works that had been considered lost.)

Two major works made up the second program: the *Psalm of Joy* compiled by Johann Friedrich Peter for use at the first organized peace celebration on July 4, 1783 in Salem, N.C., and a new work by Karl Kroeger, director of the Moravian Music Foundation. His *Pax Vobis*, which is dedicated to the memory of Thor Johnson, is a strong, exhilarating work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra in which brasses play an important part as they do in the Moravian heritage.

Also presented during the week was an exciting new work *Ein Glaube-eine Kirche* (1976) for organ, brasses and electronic effects, by Larry Lipkin, a member of the music faculty at Moravian College. As with Karl Kroeger's *Pax Vobis*, it served to add a modern element against the background of the fine musical tradition that still flourishes within the Moravian Church.

The week ended with a Sunday afternoon Festival Service of music entirely by Moravian composers. Represented were Peter, Antes, Michael, Johannes Herbst, Josef Riepel, and Christian David Jaeschke — names that will, no doubt, become more familiar as the work of the Moravian Music Foundation continues its steady progress.

—Alfreda Hays

Washington — They like to do things in threes on Mount Saint Alban — maybe the Holy Trinity has something to do with it. When the Cathedral Choral Society was last heard in concert, John Corigliano's *Dylan Thomas Trilogy* was the *pièce de resistance*; in their recent concert John La Montaine's three-part Sacred Service was featured. To complete the evening, Leo Sowerby's *The Throne of God*, commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the Cathedral in 1957, was added.

The La Montaine work (like the Corigliano) is in three parts: a *Te Deum* composed in 1964 in honor of the completion of the Gloria in Excelsis Tower and first performed then; *Birds of Paradise*, characterized by La Montaine as "a sermon through music . . . on the infinite efflorescence of living things" and first heard locally on this occasion; and a *Mass of Nature*, commissioned by the estate of J. F. Brogan in memory of his mother, which was receiving its world premiere.

The Sacred Service is big and impressive, striking in imagery and notable in orchestration. Unfortunately, however, it did not seem too well suited to the peculiar acoustical characteristics of a cathedral with its slow reverberation time, and much of the text was lost as a consequence.

The Sowerby, on the other hand, had a timelessness one would expect from a creator who had devoted much of his life to music of the church, and it stands up well. Even so, the more rapid text passages were blurry and the chorus was frequently covered by the orchestra, which otherwise did very well for conductor Paul Callaway. The Society sang out with spirit and made a joyful noise unto the Lord.

* * *

In addition to the Bicentennial gift to the United States of the Zeiss Model VI planetarium — an awe-inspiring instrument — the Federal Republic of Germany commissioned a musical work from one of its most extraordinary composers, Karlheinz Stockhausen.

The new work, dedicated by its creator "to the American pioneers on earth and in space," is called *Sirius*, and had its public world premiere in the Spacearium in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum before an audience of some 250 who were alternately mystified and amazed.

Actually, only a portion of *Sirius* — the "summer" section, which runs about forty-five minutes, was premiered. Stockhausen is taking *Sirius* on a world tour after its last performance in the Spacearium, and the other seasons will be added as the work moves from country to country.

Sirius begins with what seems like the sound of a simulated landing on the star by a space machine, generated electronically by Stockhausen himself from a central point in the blackness of the dome-shaped auditorium. After the landing, the four human (or

superhuman) protagonists who present the work appear — North (representing the Earth, the Man, the Night, the Winter, and the Seed, sung and spoken by bass Boris Carmeli), South (representing the Water, the Woman, the Midday, the Summer and the Blossom, sung and spoken by soprano Annette Meriweather), East (representing the Fire, the Youth, the Morning, the Spring and the Bud, played by trumpeter Markus Stockhausen, the composer's young son) and West (representing the Air, the Friend or Beloved, the Evening, the Autumn and the Fruit, played by bass clarinetist Suzanne Stephens) — and the composition begins.

It is hardly necessary to explain that Stockhausen's conception of music differs markedly from that accepted as normal by the average American. He is little concerned with such familiar things as tempo, rhythm, melody, harmony, meter; he is much concerned with the organization of sounds, whether derived from nature, machines, or human sources. For him an electronic sound generator is merely a new and versatile source of different sounds, of special importance because it enables him to work with spatial parameters, with sound in movement, so to speak.

Stockhausen is also mystic, and he has combined his experimentation with electronic sound in an attempt to penetrate some of the deeper riddles of human existence — the meaning of life itself. For him, Sirius, "the alpha star of Canis Major, 8.7 light-years distant," is the center and source of all knowledge. "It is the sun of our local universe. Two hundred million suns with their planets and moons circle around it and live from its light. For the inhabitants of Sirius, music is the highest form of vibration," Stockhausen insists. "For this reason, music has attained its highest development on Sirius. Every musical composition is linked to the rhythms of the stars, the time of year and day, the elements, and the existential differences of the living beings . . . . Sirius transfers some of these principles of musical form and creation onto our planet."

The work is in three phases: "The Presentation," "The Wheel" and "The Annunciation." In "The Presentation," the four protagonists are introduced. In "The Wheel," the twelve melodies of the zodiac are the signs of the month, and according to the season of the performance, the work begins with one of the four main melodies (Aries, Cancer, Libra or Capricorn). Since we are now in Cancer, *Sirius* began with its melody.

"Within 'The Wheel,' " says Stockhausen, "all is continuous change and transformation: the rhythm, melody and timbre transform themselves independently and, at times jointly into one another. Also, one is always emerging as another is departing."

After "The Wheel," the protagonists (plainly speaking as citizens of Sirius) deliver "The Annunciation:"

> Only this period of creation has the virtue — still undiscernible for you — that in the entire eternal infinite it is the only one in which I, creator of all worlds, have completely taken on the nature of human flesh. I have chosen for myself within the entire, immense Universe, this particular capsule, and within this, the local universe whose central sun is Sirius, and amongst the 200 million suns rotating around Sirius, I have chosen just your Earth where I would incarnate as human being. Here I will raise, for all times and eternities to come, children completely similar to me, who, together with me, will some day reign over the entire infinite.

Both words and music are strange and moving — one does not really know how to react to them. At times we must suppress the inevitable urge to laugh at what we do not understand, but that impulse quickly disappears in the face of the evident sincerity and complete conviction of the composer of this strange work.

In listening to *Sirius*, Stockhausen says, "one perceives how the newly discovered means and structural possibilities of electronic music can awaken a new consciousness of illuminations, transformations, and melding of creations. Impossible with the old musical devices, they approach closer and closer the art of metamorphosis in nature."

Much as one may be puzzled by Stockhausen's strange art, there is a ring of truth in it. It is truly music at the very edge of our comprehension, music that reaches out into the unknown of human and cosmic psyche.

* * *

A feature at Wolf Trap Farm Park this past season was Gustav Mahler's gigantic Eighth Symphony, nicknamed by an impresario (to Mahler's discomfort) the "Symphony of a Thousand" because that was roughly the number of performers Mahler used when he conducted the world premiere in 1907. Julius Rudel had at his command somewhere around 400 musicians — the National Symphony (greatly augmented in size for the occasion), the 250-voice Scottish National Orchestra Chorus, the 30-voice Washington Cathedral Summer Children's Chorus and 10 soloists from the Wolf Trap Company.

Certainly, his musicians did not reach anywhere near a thousand in number. He really didn't need a thousand, but to tell the truth, another 100 or so choristers would have helped to balance the huge orchestra. Even with 400 people or so on it though, the Filene

Center's enormous stage still looked mighty crowded. With everything going full blast (including additional brass from the balcony at several climaxes), it was hard to hear the singers. This was a pity, because it was clear from the quieter passages that the Scottish ensemble, now touring the country, is an excellent one.

Rudel did make one tactical error in deploying his forces — he placed the soloists behind the orchestra and just in front of the chorus and not in the usual place in front of the orchestra. The inevitable result was that they were just about inaudible at times.

Altogether, diction was the biggest problem of the night, and since the Latin and German texts of the 90-minute symphony were not supplied in the program book, it was hard to follow all the vocal hoopla taking place on stage.

To make things even more difficult, Rudel could not possibly have had much by way of rehearsal time (Mahler had a full summer to prepare for the premiere in Munich), so that the few rough spots which popped up during the evening were both understandable and forgivable. All things considered, a performance of the Eighth with such nuance and such power is the sort of miracle only a conductor with Julius Rudel's experience and musicianship can manage. Despite flaws in the realization of the score, the effect of the Eighth on the surprisingly large audience was electrifying, and the ovation for Rudel and his colleagues was still going on after I had managed to make my way out of the amphitheater.

—Irving Lowens

Report from Germany

A program of choral music from the Renaissance was presented recently in the Baroque church of Ottensen near Hamburg, historic site of Klopstock's grave. Detlef Wieghorst, choirmaster at the church, had chosen works by three Flemish masters — music of glowing intensity and brilliance that ranged from the stark texture of fifteenth-century polyphony to the rich sound of sixteenth-century counterpoint.

Guillaume Dufay, the oldest of them, was represented by a hymn and an antiphon in which a strict three-part choral setting alternates with solo verses of the cantor or verses sung by three solo voices. In the works of the second composer — Josquin des Prez — an involved five-part motet texture is also punctuated by solo interpolations. That

the opening text of the rhythmically live motet *Illibata Dei virgo nutrix* continues with lines that complete an acrostic rendering of Josquin's name and place of origin is characteristic of a Renaissance attitude that merged Heaven and Mount Olympus. Two six-part psalms by Orlando di Lasso, youngest of the three, who was active in Munich for more than forty years, are marked by intense chromaticism, changes of color that suggest enharmonic progressions, and extremely bold rhythmic patterns. Their expression is one of both mounting fear and reaffirmed faith.

The picture of the Renaissance would have been incomplete without examples of secular music, which Wieghorst placed between the choral works: suite movements for lute and harpsichord and for both instruments combined, and choral songs accompanied by chitarrone. Some of these were scored by the conductor from manuscript parts in the Hamburg State Library and the University's resources, among them two elegies from the second half of the sixteenth century. The first of these, *Je ne veut plus que chanter* by Francois Roussel, is characterized by short rhythmic motifs broadening in each verse to extended laments; the second, *Qui prestera la parole* by Didier Le Blanc, consists of brief phrases separated by interjections of solo voice and chitarrone. The same playful texture enhanced Passereau's famous genre piece *Il est bel et bon*.

—Rudolf Maack

Report from Switzerland

The open air theater in Arranno near Lugano was recently the scene of a musical event of historical significance — the revival of two sacred works for chorus, soloists, and orchestra by Georg Philipp Telemann, whose fame as church music director in Hamburg eclipsed that of his contemporary Johann Sebastian Bach in their time. *Das befreite Israel* (Israel Liberated) and the *Donnerode* (Ode of Thunder) have since been made available through editions by Wolf Hobohm (Bärenreiter, Kassel—European American Music Distributors, Clifton, N.J.). The autograph scores for both works were preserved in the Berlin State Library, but that of the *Donnerode* was lost during the Second World War. Hobohm's edition of this work is based on a copy in the Schwerin Library.

Both works date from Telemann's seventh decade, a period which lies beyond the crisis of his creative career. They are based upon texts which, following the model of Klopstock's Odes, tend towards a new, lofty style of expression. The *Donnerode* forms part of Andreas Cramer's poetic psalm translations from which Bach's son

Carl Philipp Emanuel drew many a song text. *Das befreite Israel* is a musical poem by Friedrich Wilhelm Zacharias, who invariably had his works printed only after they had been set to music and performed by Telemann.

Neither poet wrote texts intended for *da capo* arias; their verses follow one another without recitative portions. This fact determines Telemann's musical structure: strings of arias are placed between choruses. Their character is predominantly song-like in *Das befreite Israel*, whereas in the *Donnerode* the aria style is full of nervous emotion such as may have been dictated by the composer's reaction to the news of the Lissabon earthquake. Both works were originally written for the service of worship; *Das befreite Israel* in 1759; the first part of the *Donnerode* in 1756 and the second part in 1762. Telemann witnessed twelve repeat performances in Hamburg before he died in 1767, hailed as "the aged composer with the light pen."

The new poetic style of "noble simplicity" forms the musical diction of these works from Telemann's last years. Yet his plain melodic and harmonic texture is enhanced by his apt use of instrumental color and idiom. In *Das befreite Israel* the appearance of the Lord is announced by a gush of woodwind sound; the death of horse and rider in the Red Sea is pictured in a *furioso* postlude; the chorus "The mighty have fallen" is followed by a turbulent orchestral episode with two horns and three clarinos. Not only the choice of text but also a number of motivic turns point to the greater work to which this one is related — Handel's *Israel in Egypt*; Telemann was well acquainted with it. On the other hand, a gentle *Siciliano* soprano aria — the finest of the work — points far beyond Telemann's time to Mozart.

Handelian, too, is the imposing chorus, with duet interpolation, that forms the beginning and end of the *Donnerode*. Again Telemann shows adroit obbligato instrumentation in the arias — the alto aria with a serene oboe d'amore accompaniment is a good example. Against it stand thundering coloratura passages in a tenor aria, horn calls in a baritone aria, clarino signals in a flaming bass aria, and rolling tympani accents to a bass duet. In the second part of the work a soprano aria graced by a duet of flutes precedes two stark bass arias, and after a quiet chorale, accompanied by the continuo instruments only, the work ends with the return to the opening chorus.

For the performance of both works the Cologne Pro Musica Chorus, trained by Johannes Hömberg, was joined by the Mainz Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Günter Kehr. His élan guided the listener over many a weak spot.

—Rudolf Maack

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