C.P.E. Bach's *Heilig*, H.778: Construction of Narrative Meaning

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C.P.E. Bach's *Heilig* is brief—just seven to eight minutes in duration. Composed for double chorus, double orchestra, and alto soloist, it was first performed in September 1776 as part of the musical material for the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, and eventually published by Breitkopf in 1779.[1] A remarkably appropriate piece for the celebration of the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, the text addresses the idea of angels and humans, with their differences and similarities. This article asserts the piece accrues a narrative meaning, through its harmonic, formal, instrumental, spatial, topical, and rhetorical procedures, telling the story of heaven and earth uniting through the church to praise God.

Bach programmed *Heilig* often, both in public concerts and various liturgical contexts. The Hamburg liturgy during his tenure was primarily established in two documents from the seventeenth century: the *Ordnung der Musik* of 1657 (which contained the schedule of figural music in the principal churches) and the *Vesperordnung* of 1699 (which established the orders of worship at the various services).[2] Just before Bach arrived in Hamburg in 1768, the ministerial authorities proposed that the closing of the *Praefation*, an antiphon traditionally performed on high feast days in Latin, instead be performed in German. The closing choral response of the *Praefation* is the text of the Latin Sanctus, and in the vernacular, was translated as "Heilig ist Gott! Heilig ist Gott! Heilig ist Gott! Der Herr Zebaoth! Himmel und Erde sind voll seiner Ehre."[3] It was this instruction that made the inclusion of a *Heilig* appropriate in the liturgy of the Hamburg churches. Other cities and institutions would have had their own contexts, in which such a piece might or might not be liturgically appropriate.

Bach's high regard for this *Heilig* is evidenced by the fact that in 1786, he placed it as the finale of a benefit concert that also included "I know that my Redeemer liveth" and "Hallelujah" from Handel's *Messiah*, and the Credo from his

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[1] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach *Heilig*, Wq217. ed. Günter Graulich. (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler-Verlag, 1975), ii

[2] Reginald LeMonte Sanders. *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Liturgical Music at the Hamburg Principal Churches from 1768 to 1788.* (PhD dissertation. Yale University, 2001), 36

[3] Ibid, 54

father J.S. Bach's Mass in B minor.[4] His pride in the work is also evident in a letter he wrote to Breitkopf in 1776:

> Here I display the greatest and boldest diligence for an exceptional work. This *Heilig* is an attempt to arouse greater attention and feeling by means of entirely natural harmonic progressions than is possible with any amount of timid chromaticism. It shall be my swan song of this type, and serve to ensure that I am not too quickly forgotten after my death.[5]

It is these "entirely natural harmonic progressions" that make the *Heilig* a remarkable piece. Several sections of the work are marked by inscrutable, non-functional harmonic progressions that serve a very particular purpose within the aforementioned narrative. My conclusions about the narrative are reached through score study and analysis, examination of previously published material, and an examination of Bach and the *Heilig*'s historical context, as it pertains to musical expression and meaning.

C.P.E. Bach In Hamburg

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was born in Weimar in 1714 to Johann Sebastian Bach and his first wife, Maria Barbara. After training with his father and attending Leipzig University, he was appointed to the service of Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia, later King Frederick II, as a harpsichordist in the King's *Kapelle* in Berlin.

After serving there, sometimes unhappily, for twenty-seven years, he applied to succeed his godfather Georg Philipp Telemann as the music director for the principal churches in Hamburg. He was appointed to the post in 1767, and arrived to fulfill his duties in 1768.[6]

Technically, Bach was employed by the city's Senate, rather than the Church. His duties were very similar to those of his father in Leipzig: he was on the faculty of the Hamburg Lateinschule as a music teacher (a duty which in practice was fulfilled by an assistant), and he organized the music for Hamburg's five principal churches (St. Michaelis, St. Jacobi, St, Katharinen, St. Nikolai, and St. Petri). Bach kept this post until his death in 1788. He was responsible for providing music for services and feast days, including Passion music, and the musical performances were divided evenly between the five principal churches, because there was only one ensemble.[7]

Bach wrote significant amounts of music to fill these needs, but most of his original music was composed for only the highest feast days. The rest of the time, the church music performed was the work of other composers whose music he found suitable. This other music was predominately by Telemann, Georg Benda, Carl Heinrich Graun, and Johann Friedrich Fasch, among others. For Passions, he often used his father's works as templates, and sometimes performed those very pieces.[8]

Bach primarily used pre-existing works by other composers for regular church performances

[4] Annette Richards. "An enduring monument: C.P.E. Bach and the musical sublime." in *C.P.E. Bach Studies,* ed. Annette Richards, 149-172. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 157

[5] Klaus Hofmann. Vokalwerke. CD notes. (Königsdorf: Capriccio, 1988), 12

[6] Peter A Hoyt. "Rhetoric and Music—After 1750." Grove Music Online (www.oxfordmusiconline.com)

[7] Hans-Gunter Ottenberg. *C.P.E. Bach*. trans. Philip J. Whitmore. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 110

[8] Sanders, 123

because he believed his reputation and future rested on public concert music and oratorios, rather than on church music. There are many contemporary accounts bemoaning the stagnation of church music in Hamburg, and throughout northern Germany.[9] This is an especially important trend to note—the years 1768–1788 (the years of Bach's employment in Hamburg) were a transitional time in the dominant European musical culture and style.

This trend is demonstrated in Bach's other Hamburg musical activities as well. He organized a series of subscription concerts that ran throughout his time in Hamburg. He was also a highly respected keyboard teacher, and was often called in as an independent expert for auditions or appointments of musicians. He published large amounts of non-liturgical music at this time, including his most famous and highly regarded keyboard works, the six collections "für Kenner und Liebhaber" ("for connoisseurs and amateurs"). In fact, except for large scale choral works such as oratorios and the *Heilig*, all of his published music was for public concert or salon, such as concertos, sonatas, and songs.[10]

Bach's emphasis on secular concert music, even as he was primarily employed as a church musician, is part of the larger historical trend and transition to a new musical style in the mid-eighteenth century. Bach himself remarked upon the changes in his *Autobiography* of 1773:

> Who does not know the moment when a new phase, so to speak, started both in music as a whole and in its most accurate and refined performance in particular, whereby musical art rose to such a height that, as I have feared

in my [own] mind, it has already lost much in certain respects. I believe, along with many perceptive men, that the comedy [that is] now so popular has [played] the largest part in this [trend].[11]

While he speaks with some wariness about this "new phase," Bach himself was one of the first to usher what is now called the Classic style. In his own *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* ("Essay on the true Art of playing Keyboard Instruments"), he advocates a relatively new fingering style that utilizes the thumb to a much larger degree than previous styles. This allows for quicker turns and expressive virtuosic gestures, and lays the foundation for keyboard technique into the future.[12] Bach also writes in his *Autobiography* that "My chief effort, especially in recent years, has been directed towards both playing and composing as songfully as possible".[13] This is a perfect articulation of the primary distinction between the earlier (Baroque) musical style, and the new Empfindsam or galant style that was the primary predecessor to Viennese Classicism: an emphasis on songlike, periodic melody, as opposed to contrapuntal organization, in both vocal and instrumental music.[14]

At the time of the *Heilig*'s composition, Bach was in an important city, occupying a prestigious position, at a transitional time in European musical culture. He straddles the boundary between the Baroque and the Classic, in ways

[9] Ibid, 124

[10] Ottenberg, 112

[11] William S. Newman. "Emanuel Bach's Autobiography." *The Musical Quarterly* vol.51 no.2 (April 1965: 363–372), 367

[12] William J. Mitchell. "C.P.E. Bach's 'Essay': An Introduction." *The Musical Quarterly* vol.33 no.4 (October 1947: 460–480), 471

[13] Newman, 372

[14] Michael Broyles. "The Two Instrumental Styles of Classicism." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* vol.36 no.2 (Summer 1983: 210-242), 211

that make his music difficult to place. However, certain analytical frameworks pertain directly to this period, and it is through these that his music can be most fruitfully explored.

Contemporary Principles of Rhetoric and Topic

Two important analytical frameworks for music of this time period are rhetorical and topical analysis. Both of these systems figured into the compositional process, and a full understanding of works from this time cannot be approached without a command of these procedures. Composers, musicians, and audiences during the time of C.P.E. Bach were well acquainted with a vocabulary of rhetorical and topical devices. These systems allowed for the construction of works that function simultaneously on multiple levels of meaning. The gestures are crucial expressive signs, and as such, an understanding of them is required in order to analyze or perform music of the time with any sort of fidelity to that particular musical world.

Rhetorical analysis involves describing musical events in terms of the persuasive significance or meaning that they carry for an audience. It relates the idea of persuasiveness in speech to an audience's experience of a musical work. Often, this type of analysis involves labeling events with terms from classical rhetoric.[15] These principles of rhetoric can be found in the music of this time at every level, from the macro form of a work to micro gestures or signs.

At the larger level, a composition could often be organized, at least in part, in the form of a classical oration, as follows:[16]

  I. Exordium (introduction)
  II. Narratio (statement of fact)
  III. Propositio (clarification of the issues at stake)
  IV. Confirmatio (arguments in support of a case)
  V. Confutatio (refutation of opposing arguments)
  VI. Peroratio (conclusion/summation)

These formal sections and functions were also used in literary composition, especially persuasive essays, letters, etc.[17] Not all of these sections were always present, and often they were mixed together or re-ordered. However, because rhetorical thinking was such a large part of education up into the nineteenth century, this framework (or one like it) would have influenced the organization of any thought presented through time. The link between rhetoric and music was so strong that a grammatical organization of music was a fundamental aesthetic grounding point in both Germany and France.[18]

Rhetorical organization could also be found in smaller ideas and gestures. There were many examples of specific declamatory stylistic ideas lifted from oratory and applied to music, such as *catabasis* (lowering of pitch to correspond to the idea of spatial lowness). There were also terms invented by musical theorists with a link

[15] Betsy Burleigh. *Haydn's The seasons: rhetorical analysis as a key to performance*. (DMA dissertation. Indiana University, 2003), 2

[16] Ibid, 23

[17] Elaine Sisman. "Rhetorical Truth in Haydn's Chamber Music." in *Haydn and the performance of rhetoric*. ed. Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 282

[18] Paul F. Marks. "The Rhetorical Element in Musical 'Sturm und Drang': Christian Gottfried Krause's 'Von der Musikalischen Poesie.'" *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* vol.2 no.1 (June 1971: 49–64), 55

to rhetorical ideas, such as *suspiratio* (breaking musical line with rests to correspond to the idea of lost breath).[19] These specific gestural types were interwoven to create dense patterns of reference and depiction, which then fit within the larger oratory framework.

Topical analysis is another crucial framework for understanding music of this time. A topic was a characteristic musical type that referenced and evoked an idea outside of the musical realm. This idea could be a location, an activity, a person or person-type, an emotion, etc.[20] A topic had two constituent parts: a signifier (the musical unit), and a signified (the idea being called up by the musical unit).[21] In order for an audience to perceive this type of organization, they must be literate in the system of signs within which the composer is working. Topics could be elements taken from the language of music, or ideas taken from other realms.[22] Topical content could have various levels of density, and could exist as large-scale musical types, or smaller stylistic gestures.[23] These varying degrees of topical specificity have implications for performance decisions, as well as theoretical analysis.[24]

Larger-scale topics were musical ideas that shape an entire work, or an entire section of a work. These include dance types and marches. These idioms, when used, evoked all of the associations a listener might have had with a particular dance or march type, such as militarism, courtliness, earthiness, etc.[25] For example, if the metric/rhythmic profile of a piece was quick duple, dominated by a pause after the first half of the measure, this evoked a gavotte, which connoted elegance and poise.[26]

Smaller-scale topical gestures were often more specific, and their ordering and juxtaposition could add layers of meaning, beyond what they signaled individually. These smaller topics were extremely diverse. For example, if a fanfare or hunting signal was incorporated into the musical texture, whether it was played by horns or not, it could evoke ideas of nobility, the countryside, or horns.[27] These ideas could then be placed in different contexts, to create multiple simultaneous readable meanings. It is through this complex web of musical meaning that Bach created the narrative within his *Heilig*.

Textual Analysis

The text of the *Heilig* is from three distinct sources, which were compiled by Bach himself. The introductory aria, "Herr, wert, daß scharen," was actually composed by Georg Benda, Bach's colleague in Berlin and Hamburg. It is taken from Benda's cantata *Ich will dir danken*.[28] Benda's aria is a setting of a poem by Johann Gottfried Herder, a German philosopher, poet, and literary critic.[29] A very well connected Enlightenment figure, he studied with Kant and

[19] Burleigh, 28

[20] Leonard G. Ratner. *Classic music: expression, form, and style.* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), 9

[21] V. Kofi Agawu. *Playing with signs : a semiotic interpretation of classic music.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 49

[22] Leonard G. Ratner. "Topical Content in Mozart's Keyboard Sonatas." *Early Music* vol.19 no.4 (November 1991: 615–619), 615

[23] Ratner 1980, 9

[24] Ratner 1991, 615

[25] Ratner 1980, 17

[26] Ibid, 14

[27] Ibid, 18

[28] Sanders, 273

[29] Richard Kramer. "The New Modulation of the 1770's: C.P.E. Bach in Theory, Criticism, and Practice." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* vol.38 no.3 (Autumn 1985: 551–592), 582

was a good friend of Goethe. The poem's text follows, with literal and poetic translations:

Herr, wert daß Scharen der Engel dir dienen
und daß dich der Glaube der Völker verehrt,
ich danke dir, Herr.
Sei mir gepriesen unter ihnen!
Ich jauchze dir!
Und jauchzend lobsingen dir Engel und Völker
   mit mir.

Lord, worthy, that assemblies of angels to you
   serve
and that you the belief of the people honors,
I thank you, Lord.
Was I blessed among them!
I rejoice to you!
And rejoice praise-singing to you angels and
   people with me.

Worthy Lord, because throngs of angels serve you,
And because you honor the beliefs of the people,
I thank you!
Blessed am I among them!
I rejoice to you!
And joyfully sing your praises with angels and
   people.

The poem is in free verse, and is largely dactylic. It is a prayer of rejoicing, directed to God, and it references both angels in heaven, and people on earth. It is relatively cohesive as a single unit, but can also be divided into two separate sections, "Herr…Herr," and "Sei…dir." Both halves reference humans and angels, and both halves are three (unequal) lines long. There is a slight shift in emphasis between the two, moving from explanatory in the first half to laudatory in the second.

The aria was probably added to the following choral section later, for the 1779 Breitkopf publication. In 1776, Bach performed a cantata by his brother, Johann Christoph Friedrich, for the Feast of St. Michael. In the Hamburg performing parts, there is an indication that a German Sanctus should be interpolated before the final chorale. In that case, an aria to that same Herder text, set by Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, would have come immediately before the *Heilig*. This most likely gave Carl Philipp Emanuel the idea to use the text in his published edition. In the publisher's autograph, the aria and chorus are actually on two different paper sizes and types: yet another indication that they were not originally together.[30]

The second and third text sources in the *Heilig* are both Latin liturgical text excerpts, translated into German. One is the first portion of the Sanctus from the Latin Mass liturgy. The excerpted text, and its translations (German and Latin) follow:

Heilig, heilig, heilig ist Gott, der Herr Zebaoth!
Alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll.

Holy, holy, holy is God, the Lord of Hosts!
All countries are your glory full.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus
   Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts
Full are heaven and earth glory your.

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[30] Ibid

The Sanctus is derived from the words of rejoicing cherubim in Isaiah 6:3. In the Mass liturgy, it is preceded by the Preface, in which the celebrant says "The heavens and the heavenly hosts together with the blessed Seraphim in triumphant chorus unite, saying…".[31] This text then has a direct thematic link with the Herder poem in the aria: both make repeated reference to the dichotomy between heavenly/celestial matters and earthly ones. The excerpted Sanctus text, like the Herder poem, works as a single unit, but can also be divided into two halves: "Heilig…Zebaoth," and "Alle…voll." In this text, though, the laudatory section comes first, and the (relatively) explanatory is second.

The third text source is a reference to the Latin Te Deum. Excerpted text and translations (German and English) follow:

Herr Gott, dich loben wir,	Lord God, to you praise we,
Herr Gott, wir danken dir!	Lord God, we thank you!
Te Deum laudamus:	Thee God we praise:
te Dominum confitemur.	Thee Lord we acknowledge

The Te Deum is a non-biblical rhythmical prose hymn. It is attributed to many authors, none of which is conclusive. The first portion of the Te Deum (not included in the *Heilig* text) makes explicit reference to the duality of heaven and earth, and includes a nearly exact statement of the Sanctus text, excerpted by Bach for the beginning of the choral section.[32]

These close, dense textual links indicate not only Bach's knowledge of Latin liturgy and contemporary poetry, but also point to the care

that he took in selecting the texts. It is important to note that his audience would have also needed to have such knowledge, in order to understand the textual references, particularly to the unheard Te Deum text. The full text of the *Heilig*, as compiled by Bach, is unified by the theme of the dual realms of heaven and earth, and their union through the praise of God.

Formal / Harmonic Analysis

The *Heilig* is in two distinct sections or parts. The original published title is *Heilig mit zwei Chören und einer Ariette zur Einleitung* ("Sanctus for two choirs with an introductory aria"). The introductory aria for alto is distinct from the second (choral) section in texture, tonality, instrumentation, and affect. The aria is in 2/4, with the tempo marking "Allegretto." It is scored for strings and continuo, along with the solo alto. The violas and continuo are almost exclusively in accompanimental quarter notes for the entire aria, and the violins and alto present the melodic material. The aria is solidly in G major right from the start, established by a clear I-IV-V-I progression within the first 4 measures. The overall form of the aria is A A' A" B.

The first thirteen measures (the A section, Example 1) present all of the motivic material for the aria in the violins. The first four measures are a lilting melodic statement by the violins in parallel sixths and thirds. Measures 5–8 present a quicker, more active melodic statement by the violins in unison, marked by a triplet figure at the beginning of each measure. Measures 9–10 have another unison violin melody, this time characterized by dotted rhythmic figures. Measure 11 has unison virtuosic scalar runs, and measures 12–13 have a dotted unison figure similar to measures 9–10, except this time it is cadential.

[31] Ron Jeffers. *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire Volume I: Sacred Latin Texts.* (Corvallis: Earthsongs, 1988), 55
[32] Ibid, 215

Example 1: *Heilig*, measures 1–13

At measure 14 (A'), the alto joins, and the instruments play the exact same material that appeared in measures 1–11. Then, there is an extension of the scalar motive, moving to C major, IV of G major.

The third major section, A", begins at measure 29. It has the alto and violin lilting parallel melody, and then launches directly into an extended sequential scalar section, moving through B major, E minor, and A major, leading to D major in measure 36, V of the original key. In measures 36–37, there is a return to the dotted cadential figure, except it cadences deceptively, moving into A minor.

The last major section, B, is the final nine measures of the aria (measures 38–46). It consists of more 32nd note scalar passages in the violins, modulating back to G major, with a simple countermelody in the alto line. The aria ends with an authentic cadence in G major, but it is imperfect, with the violins and alto ending on B. Thus, there is only a sense of partial closure.

The choral section begins at measure 47. It is in common time, and the tempo is marked "Adagio". It is scored for double four-part choir and double orchestra. In each orchestra there are 3 trumpets, timpani, 2 oboes, first violin, second violin, and viola. There is only one continuo section, which plays for both orchestras. The two choirs are labeled evocatively: the first is "Chor der Engel" ("Choir of Angels"), and the second is "Chor der Völker" ("Choir of the People"). Harmonically, the choral portion only stabilizes at the end. The overall form is A B Fugue C D A' D'.

The A section consists of striking antiphonal alternation between the two ensembles for measures 47–75. The first seven measures are for choir 1, and have only the voices accompanied by colla parte strings (Example 2). The text is "Heilig". Harmonically, this phrase is inscrutable: it begins in E major (after the aria ended in G major), and moves through V of E into V6/5 of C#, eventually cadencing in C# major. Most of this harmonic movement occurs using secondary dominants and inversions. The voice leading is intelligible, but non-functional.
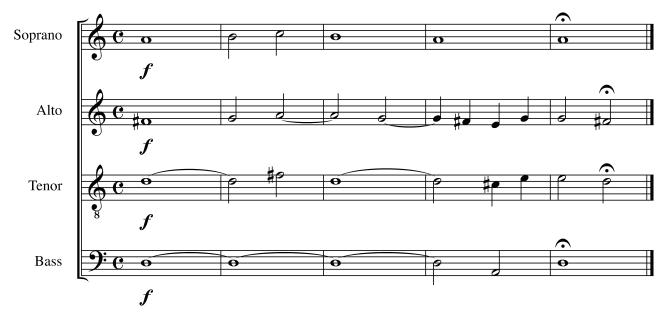
Example 2: *Heilig*, measures 47–53

After choir 1 cadences in C# major, choir 2 enters forte with all instruments except trumpet 3 and timpani in D major. The text is "Heilig". Rather than playing only colla parte, there are dotted figures in the strings. Harmonically, these five measures of choir (Example 3) are very straightforward and functional, and they cadence in D major.

Example 3: *Heilig*, measures 54–58

In measures 59-63, choir 1 again enters with colla parte strings, this time in B major, first inversion (third relation from the previous cadence, like the move from G to E at the end of the aria). The text is now "Heilig ist Gott". Again through smooth but non-functional voice leading, choir 1 moves into secondary dominants of E minor in various inversions, to V6/5 of F# major, and cadences in F# major.

Choir 2 then enters fortissimo with tutti instruments in measures 64–68. This phrase is in G major (a minor second higher than the previous choir 1 cadence, like the move from C# to D after the first choir 1 statement). The text is "Heilig ist Gott". The strings again have dotted figures, except in diminution from last time, resulting in an intensification. This phrase is harmonically very straightforward, consisting only of the tonic and dominant of G major in different inversions.

Choir 1 has the next seven measures (measures 69–75), and while the colla parte string texture is still present, it is in pulsed quarter notes, resulting in further intensification. The text is totally new: "der Herr Zebaoth." Harmonically, it is again a non-functional phrase, starting in F minor, moving through A major, into a cadence on B major.

In measure 76, the B section begins, when everyone in both choirs and orchestras enters fortissimo, and the two merge into one ensemble (i.e. choir 1 tenor = choir 2 tenor, orchestra 1 oboe 1 = orchestra 2 oboe 1, etc.). It is solidly in C major (a minor second higher than the previous choir 1 cadence again). The text is again "der Herr Zebaoth," and the shorter dotted figures from measures 64–68 are even more prevalent than they were before. This phrase is eight measures long (measures 76–83), and after the initial C major, it moves functionally through A minor and F major, back to C major.

At measure 84, the tempo marking changes to "Alla breve moderato," and the fugue takes place, lasting twenty-six measures. The two ensembles continue to be united as one. The text for the fugue is "Alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll." The subject is four measures long, there is one countersubject, and the answers are all tonal. The tutti instrumental ensemble plays colla parte, and the order of entrances is bass, tenor, alto, soprano. At the soprano entrance, trumpets and timpani enter. At measure 100, there is an episode in which each of the parts trade off an eighth note motive from the countersubject.

The C section begins at measure 109, when choir 2 and orchestra 2 drop out. Orchestra 1 has material that is derived from both the fugue subject and countersubject, while choir 1 has harmonized long-note statements of Martin Luther's German *Te Deum* chorale. The text is also the German *Te Deum*'s text ("Herr Gott, dich loben wir, Herr Gott, wir danken dir!"). At measure 132, there is some instrumental overlap between the two orchestras, and then orchestra 1 drops out while orchestra 2 and choir 2 have the same German *Te Deum* material transposed up a perfect fourth.

The D section begins at measure 156, when ensemble 1 has melodic material from the fugue with strings colla parte, moving from F major to D minor on the text "Alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll". Measures 164–176 then see choir 2 and orchestra 2 tutti on similar material, expanded, and moving from D minor through G major to a deceptive cadence.

A' begins with a six measure non-functional long-note phrase for choir 1 and colla parte orchestra 1 strings on the text "Heilig is Gott, der Herr". This is a return to the opening alternation idea. Ensemble 2 tutti has three measures of fugue-inspired material in D minor (on "alle Lande…"), leading to another deceptive cadence, and another six measure non-functional choir 1 phrase (on "Heilig ist…"). In measure 192, ensemble 2 tutti has more fugue-inspired material (on "alle Lande…"), ending in C major, where ensemble 1 tutti picks it up, and has modulating fugue-related material (finally on "alle Lande…").

Section D', measures 205–224, has massive forte united forces playing the fugal material on the text "alle Lande sind seiner Ehre voll". They move through A minor, G major, C major, D minor, and back to C major. For the concluding five measures, the ensembles split again, and echo each other on the same "alle Lande" text, and cadence together in C major.

Rhetorical / Topical Analysis

The formal structure of the *Heilig* is delineated through melodic material, instrumentation, and text. However, these sections do not simply exist as units in relation to each other. They also serve rhetorical functions, and fit into a larger, persuasive outline. The aria as a whole functions as an *exordium*, or introductory section. It opens the piece in a pleasing way, and the melodic material is very memorable. The *peroratio*, or conclusion, is measure 205 to the end. It contains motivic elements from the fugue, and although it is mostly with both ensembles together (as a solid tutti concluding device), in the last five measures the ensembles split, which reminds the listener that there are indeed two groups that have coalesced into one.

The aria's various melodic motives are defined by their rhythmic profile, and each motive has a particular topical idea (see Example 4). The first motive (measures 1–4, 14–17) is in the pastoral topic, with pedal bass, light syncopation, and parallel melodic thirds and sixths. The second motive (measures 5–8, 18–21) is in the bourrée dance topic, marked by duple meter, a short upbeat, and light articulation. The third motive (measures 9–10, 22–23) is in the march/martial topic, with brisk, crisply articulated dotted rhythms in duple meter. The fourth, and most common, motive (measures 11, 24–26, 33–35, 38–46) is in the brilliant topic, characterized by rapid virtuosic sequential passagework. The fifth (cadential) motive (measures 12–13, 27–28, 36–37) is also in the march/martial topic. All of these topics evoke earthly and earthy ideas (nature, dancing, military, etc.), and as such, the aria as a whole is very grounded in earthly matters.

Example 4 on next page.

Example 4: *Heilig*, measures 1–13

The aria also has several smaller rhetorical flourishes. In measure 23, the word "Herr!" ("Lord!") jumps up a minor sixth, which is an example of *anabasis* (high pitch for "Lord on High"). Another rhetorical device is in measures 40–43. Each time there is a pairing of the words "Engel" ("angels") and "Völker" ("people"), the statement of "Engel" is at a high pitch level, which drops lower for "Völker." This *anabasis/catabasis* pairing draws attention to the spatial distance between angels in heaven and humanity on earth. Finally, the very last note of the aria is an *abruptio*, or quickly broken-off note. This functions to deny full closure to the aria.

The choral section is also marked by rhetorical and topical procedures that call attention to the distance between heaven and earth. Most fundamentally, the two ensembles are labeled, one "Chor der Engel" and one "Chor der Völker". For the first seventy-five measures, every time the angelic choir 1 has a statement, they are accompanied solely by colla parte strings, and are profoundly harmonically dislocated and alienated. This is a use of the sublime topic, marked by a

sense of shock and ungroundedness. In contrast, each time the people's choir 2 has a statement, they are accompanied by both strings and winds, and are solidly in a standard, common key (D major, G major). The rhythmic profile of earthly ensemble 2 is slow and dotted, in the French overture topic connoting royalty and dignity. There is also no harmonic thread running through the section: the angels and humans are in no way connected, and are very distant from each other. This topical and harmonic juxtaposition enhances the separation between the divine and the human.

Measures 76–109 have the two ensembles uniting to form one body. They unite in C major, a key associated with perfection and purity.[33] For measures 76–83, they are in the French overture/majestic/royal topic. Then, in measures 84–109, there is the fugue. Fugues are part of the strict or learned topic.[34] The strict style is also associated with an alla breve meter, which

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[33] Brian E. Burns. "Elements of *Empfindsamkeit* in the *Heilig*, Wq.217 (H.778) of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach." *Choral Journal* vol.46 no.9 (March 2006: 11-23), 17

[34] Ratner 1980, 23

appears in these measures, as well. This topic is closely associated with church, worship, and sacrament.

Measures 109–155 go back to alternating between the two ensembles, but this time, they have the same material, and the blocks are longer. In measures 109–134, the heavenly ensemble has the fugal material with a long-note harmonized version of Luther's German *Te Deum* chorale, "Herr Gott dich loben wir." It is set relatively low in the voices. Then, in measures 132–155, the earthly ensemble has the exact same texture and material, except they perform it a perfect fourth higher, set relatively high in the voices. The two ensembles are reaching for each other: the angels go low, and the people go high. This chorale setting section would have some of the same church worship associations for north German Protestants as the fugue, in that both are used in sacred settings.

Measures 156–176 see the ensembles still alternating, but this time using only the fugue's material. Significantly, even though the ensembles perform at different times, they are linked harmonically. They move smoothly and functionally as an alternating whole from F major through D minor to G major. Even in separation, they are now united.

Suddenly, at measure 177, the earthly ensemble 2 has an *abruptio*, and the heavenly ensemble enters in a totally disconnected key with only colla parte strings. It is a return to the sublime topic, ungrounded and ethereal. When earthly ensemble 2 reenters, they still have the fugue-inspired material, but rather than being harmonically disconnected from ensemble 1, they pick up directly where ensemble 1 left off. The same alternation happens again: sublime,

ethereal ensemble 1 is re-grounded by earthly ensemble 2. Finally, in measure 197, the heavenly choir returns to the strict style fugue material, and then from measure 205 to the end, both ensembles unite as one in the rejoicing fugue material.

Synthesis: Construction of Narrative Meaning

The idea that music can tell a story is a well-traveled musicological minefield. At the most basic level, narrative consists of the conflict between two or more elements arranged within a system. This conflict results in a reevaluation of these elements, through time.[35] The difference between literary and musical narrative is the medium, and the manifestation of the conflicting elements.[36] The *Heilig* presents just such a situation: two elements (angels/heavenly beings and people/earthly beings) are placed in a system, in relation to each other, and their status changes through time. This change in status is manifested through all the elements of the composition that have thus far been explicated: text, harmony, form, rhetoric, and topic. Because each of these analytical parameters were part of a shared cultural vocabulary, Bach could have reasonably expected that the narrative meaning be conveyed to his audience largely intact.

Another procedure adds to the narrative quality of the piece: spatial positioning of musical forces. The *Heilig* was first performed in St Michaelis, one of the five churches served by Bach in Hamburg. It was constructed with an upper loft, and a lower space for the organ. The *Hamburg Correspondent* of October 25 1776 printed that

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[35] Byron Almen. *Narrative Archetypes in Music: A Semiotic Approach.* (PhD dissertation. Indiana University, 1998), 3
[36] Ibid, 5

"the work for two choirs is being performed in the spacious Michaeliskirche in such a way that the choir of Angels will be performed from the gallery above the body of the church, and the choir of People from the organ…".[37] In this arrangement, the relationship between heaven and earth is not only musically represented, but visually and acoustically represented, making the duality even more explicit.

The introductory aria, with its earth-centered topics and use of the organ in the continuo, would have been performed by the lower earthly ensemble. Its harmonic intelligibility also relates it to earthly ensemble 2. The text concisely introduces the elements involved in the piece, and their relationship: there are angels and people, which are separate, but which are united in their praise to God. It ends abruptly, shockingly, and then down from the upper gallery come the sublime angelic choir's voices, accompanied only by strings, evocative of heavenly lyres. They are disembodied, disconnected, ethereal, and otherworldly. When the people's ensemble enters, it is much more familiar, recognizable, and coherent. It is dignified and royal, but of this world. The two groups are opposed in every possible way. Their text is the same, though: "Heilig ist Gott." As the two ensembles alternate, they intensify, until they both come together, in the most perfect key, to praise God as one.

At the fugue, they are still united, but at this point, rather than focusing on the royalty of God, the strict church style topic draws the listener's attention to the church's history, and the long tradition of worship music. At the entrance of the chorale, another more recent aspect of the church's history is evoked. The listener is being taken through a brief history of music in worship. At the same time, when the ensembles alternate,

they reach towards each other in pitch. Once they have been perfectly united in praise, they long to return to that state. When the fugue material returns and they are still alternating, they are actually quite close: their harmonic relationship is such that in a performance space, it would seem like a single musical idea is being passed seamlessly from one group to the other.

When the sublime angelic sound returns suddenly, it is no longer unreachable by the earthly ensemble. Instead, the two are harmonically connected, again giving the impression of the ensembles uniting. When they literally all become one again, they move through a variety of keys, until they again reach C major. This point is highlighted by a change in instrumentation: the brass and timpani drop out, and the voices are the unquestioned focus. At the very end, the two groups are fully integrated: they nimbly alternate with each other, signaling a high level of connection and cooperation.

Using analytical frameworks from this particular transitional period in music history, an overarching narrative can be found within the *Heilig*. Angels and humans, at first separate, realize that their praise is more perfect when united. Through the church, they become gradually more connected over time, until by the end they triumphantly form a single praising host.

Conclusion

Once the narrative structure of the *Heilig* has been investigated, one is still left with the question of how exactly to perform it. Will an audience in 2015 be as literate in the various

[37] Bach 1975, i

systems of reference and meaning? Will they be receptive to the narrative even if it is intelligible to them? These questions have no clear answers, and can be asked of any music from the past. Rather than being consumed by these issues, one can take them into account as part of the process of assembling a performance that is both faithful to the past, and relevant and interesting to an audience today.

Because the *Heilig* was conceived for performance in service, and premiered as feast music, the original performing forces would have been the same as those available to Bach on any feast day in Hamburg. He regularly had at least eight vocalists (all male: alto falsettists and boy sopranos), and sometimes as many as eleven.[38] For the instrumental ensemble, including town trumpeters and occasional auxiliary players, he regularly had between fourteen and nineteen players.[39] Due to Bach's evident pride in the *Heilig* in particular, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the forces might have been further augmented.[40]

In relation to tempo and rhythm, two of the most highly regarded treatises on mid-eighteenth century performance practice originate from sources very close to Bach: Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Quantz was in King Frederick II's service at the same time as Bach) and Bach's own *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*. From these sources, several broadly relevant issues can be identified:

1. According to Bach, "the briskness of allegros is expressed by detached notes and the tenderness of adagios by broad, slurred notes"[41]

2. According to Bach, "short notes which follow dotted ones are always shorter in execution than their notated length"[42]

3. According to Quantz, "In four-four time it is important to note that if a stroke goes through the C…the notes receive a different value, so to speak, and must be played twice as fast as when the C has no stroke through it"[43]

These three points are particularly relevant to the *Heilig*, and while there are of course multiple interpretations, these points should at least be considered when assembling a performance.

Outside of these treatises, there is another source to help indicate proper tempi. Bach wrote a letter in December 1779 stating that "the fugue in my *Heilig*, by itself, without repetition, which must not be [taken], must take no longer than three minutes".[44] This indicates that the alla breve tempo should be approximately half = 96. Keeping the above point 3 in mind, that would indicate that the Adagio should be taken with the quarter note more than twice that slow, and the aria's Allegretto should be taken with the quarter note slightly faster than 96.

There is of course no way to know exactly how the *Heilig* would have been played. We can know with more certainty, though, how it might have been heard and interpreted. Then, the decision for the performer is whether to preserve logistical specifics, broader expressive meaning, both, or neither.

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[38] Sanders, 99

[39] Ibid., 83

[40] Ibid., 102

[41] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. *Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments*. trans. William J. Mitchell. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), 149

[42] Ibid, 157

[43] Johann Joachim Quantz. *On playing the flute.* trans. Edward R. Reilly. (London: Faber, 1985), 64

[44] Kramer, 584

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