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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH IN THE EYES OF JOHANN MATTHESON:
ON THE CANTATA *ICH HATTE VIEL BEKÜMMERNIS*, BWV 21

ABSTRACT This article addresses the appraisal of Johann Sebastian Bach's music by Johann Mattheson, specifically the commentary on the cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV 21 which that Hamburg-based theorist included in a 1725 issue of his periodical *Critica musica*. Musicologists disagree as to the interpretation of Mattheson's words. However, most authors see them as derisive criticism of the cantata. In this article, the author polemicises with that view and analyses Mattheson's statement in a wider and deeper context.

KEYWORDS Johann Mattheson, Johann Sebastian Bach, cantata, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21

ABSTRAKT Artykuł porusza zagadnienie oceny twórczości kompozytorskiej Johanna Sebastiana Bacha przez Johanna Matthesona. W centrum zainteresowania znalazł się komentarz dotyczący kantaty *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21, który hamburski teoretyk w roku 1725 zamieścił w swoim czasopiśmie *Critica musica*. W literaturze muzykologicznej formułowane są rozbieżne opinie na temat treści tego komentarza. Przeważa pogląd, że Mattheson kantatę tę poddał szyderczej krytyce. W niniejszym artykule podjęto polemikę z taką opinią, analizując wypowiedź Matthesona w szerszym i głębszym kontekście.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE Johann Mattheson, Johann Sebastian Bach, kantata, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21

When I speak candidly and tell the truth from my heart, be it in earnest or in jest, I hear that my pen is prickly.¹

The cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV 21 is one of the best-known works by Johann Sebastian Bach.² The history behind its composition is not known. From the composer's handwritten notes on the cover of the score,³ we learn that in 1714 the work was performed in Weimar on the Third Sunday after Trinity. Over subsequent years, Bach performed this cantata many times,⁴ including in Köthen and Leipzig, and possibly in Hamburg, in 1720.⁵ It was there that it could have been heard by Johann Mattheson, one of the most important music theorists of the first half of the eighteenth century,⁶ since in 1725 he mentions it in his periodical *Critica musica*.

- 1 'Spreche ich aber frey heraus, und rede die Wahrheit von Herzen, theils im Ernst, theils im Scherz, so muß ich hören, meine Feder sey stachelicht', quoted after Johann Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot*, Hamburg 1728, p. 96.
- 2 See e.g. Reinhold Jauernig, 'Zur Kantate *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* (BWV Nr. 21)', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 41 (1954), pp. 46–49; Helene Werthemann, 'Zum Text der Bach-Kantate 21 *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen*', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 51 (1965), pp. 135–143; Paul Brainard, 'Cantata 21 Revisited', in: *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mendel*, ed. Robert Marshall, Kassel 1974, pp. 231–242; Martin Petzoldt, 'Die kräftige Erquickung unter der schweren Angst-Last. Möglicherweise Neues zur Entstehung der Kantate BWV 21', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 79 (1993), pp. 31–46; Christoph Wolff, 'Die betübte und wieder getröstete Seele: Zum Dialog-Charakter der Kantate *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 82 (1996), pp. 139–145; Klaus Hofmann, 'Bachs Kantate *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*. Ergebnisse und Hypothesen der Forschung', in: *Roemhildt, Bach, Mozart. Beiträge zur Musikforschung. Jahrbuch der Bachwoche Dillenburg 1998*, eds. Wolfgang Schult and Henrik Verkerk, Dillenburg 1998, pp. 13–16; Michael Maul and Peter Wollny, 'Quellenkundliches zu Bach-Aufführungen in Köthen, Ronneburg und Leipzig zwischen 1720 und 1760', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 89 (2003), pp. 97–141; Ute Poetzsch-Seban, 'Wann wurde *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21 erstaufgeführt?', in: *Telemann und Bach*, eds. Brit Reipsch and Wolf Hobohm, Hildesheim 2005, pp. 86–93; Krzysztof Moraczewski, 'Kantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21 Johanna Sebastianiana Bacha jako przykład dzieła muzycznego o semantycznie złożonej wartości estetycznej' [Johann Sebastian Bach's cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, BWV 21 as an example of a musical work of a semantically complex aesthetic value], *Studia Kulturoznawcze* 1 (2011), pp. 111–123; Klaus Hofmann, 'Anmerkungen zu Bachs Kantate *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* (BWV 21)', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 99 (2015), pp. 167–176.
- 3 See https://www.bach-digital.de/rsc/viewer/BachDigitalSource_derivate_00054264/db_bachst0354_pa001.jpg.
- 4 See e.g. Paul Brainard, '*Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* (BWV 21)', in: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke. Kritischer Bericht*, ed. Paul Brainard, series I, vol. 16, Leipzig 1984, pp. 99–156, at pp. 134–137; Eric Chafe, *Tears into Wine. J. S. Bach's Cantata 21 in its Musical and Theological Contexts*, Oxford 2015, p. 30.
- 5 In the autumn of 1720, Bach, chapelmaster and director of chamber music at the court of Prince Leopold von Anhalt-Köthen at the time, travelled to Hamburg, where – as we read in the composer's obituary – he played 'for the magistrate and many other municipal dignitaries' ('vor dem Magistrate, und vielen andern Vornehmen der Stadt'). See 'Nekrolog auf Johann Sebastian Bach', in: Christoph Lorenz Mizler, *Musikalische Bibliothek*, vol. IV, part 1, Leipzig 1754, pp. 158–176, at p. 165.
- 6 Johann Mattheson was born in 1681 in Hamburg, where he lived till his death, in 1764. He pursued a wide range of artistic and scientific work. He was a music theorist, composer, conductor, organist and singer. From 1715 to 1728 he was chapelmaster of Hamburg cathedral. He also dealt in linguistics and translated English literature. He worked on the second edition of Michael Richey's lexicon of Lower German dialect *Idioticon Hamburgense* (Hamburg 1755). Mattheson also worked in diplomacy (from

It cannot be ruled out that Mattheson was familiar with this work earlier, since in 1717, in his treatise entitled *Das beschützte Orchester*, he wrote: 'I have seen things by the famous organist of Weimar, Mr. Joh. Sebastian Bach, both for the church and for the fist, that are certainly such as must make one esteem the man highly'.⁷ This mention by Mattheson of the cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* has not escaped the attention of music historians. In the subject literature devoted to the music of Bach, we can read that Mattheson subjected this cantata to detailed analysis, without sparing its composer words of 'caustic' criticism, as Philipp Spitta wrote,⁸ concerning the repetition 'Ich, ich, ich' in the second movement of the work (chorus).⁹ Spitta's opinion has been shared by Carl Hermann Bitter, Albert Schweitzer, Arnold Schering, W. Gilles Whittaker, Karl Geiringer, Alfred Dürr, Gregory G. Butler, George B. Stauffer, Hans Joachim Marx, Wolf Hobohm, Klaus Hofmann, Christoph Wolff, Arno Forchert, Matthew Dirst and Reinmar Emans.¹⁰ Whittaker made the apt

1704 to 1755 he was secretary to the English envoy). He made his name as a master of journalism. Throughout his life, he wrote articles (usually anonymously), including for the newspaper *Staats- und gelehrte Zeitung des Hamburgischen unpartheischen Correspondenten*, which was read across Europe. In addition he was an author and publisher of four periodicals, two of them musical, namely, the monthly *Critica musica* (1722–25) and the weekly *Der musicalische Patriot* (1728). He wrote numerous works, including on music theory. Mattheson's correspondence has not yet been published. See e.g. Beekman C. Cannon, *Johann Mattheson. Spectator in Music*, New Haven 1947; Hans Joachim Marx, *Johann Mattheson (1681–1764). Lebensbeschreibung des Hamburger Musikers, Schriftstellers und Diplomaten*, Hamburg 1982; Holger Böning, *Der Musiker und Komponist Johann Mattheson als Hamburger Publizist*, 2nd ed., rev. and exp., Bremen 2014.

- 7 'Ich habe von dem berühmten Organisten zu Weimar, Herrn Joh. Sebastian Bach, Sachen gesehen, so wohl vor die Kirche, als vor die Faust, die gewiß so beschaffen sind, daß man den Mann hoch aestimieren muß', quoted after Johann Mattheson, *Das beschützte Orchester*, Hamburg 1717, p. 222. This is the first printed mention of Bach. Eng. transl. in: *The New Bach Reader. A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, eds. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, rev. and exp. Christoph Wolff, New York 1999, no. 318.
- 8 Cf. Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1873, 1880, here vol. 1, 3rd ed. (1921), p. 633.
- 9 The cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* is in two parts and 11 movements. The introduction to the cantata consists of a sinfonia, which is followed by a chorus, aria (soprano), recitative (tenor), aria (tenor), chorus, recitative (soprano, bass), duet (soprano, bass), chorus, aria (tenor) and chorus.
- 10 Cf. Carl Hermann Bitter, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Berlin 1865, vol. 1, pp. 94–96, 221; Albert Schweitzer, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Leipzig 1908, pp. 155, 488; Arnold Schering, [Preface], in: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Cantata 'Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis' BWV 21*, London 1934, p. IV; W. Gillies Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach*, vol. 1, London 1959, p. 113; Karl Geiringer, *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Culmination of an Era*, London 1966, p. 150, n. 1, German edition, expanded: Karl Geiringer, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, Munich 1978, p. 141; Alfred Dürr, *Die Kantaten von Johann Sebastian Bach*, vol. 2, Kassel 1971, pp. 344–345; Gregory G. Butler, 'Der vollkommene Capellmeister as a Stimulus to Johann Sebastian Bach's Late Fugal Writing', in: *New Mattheson Studies*, eds. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx, Cambridge 1983, pp. 293–305, at p. 294; George B. Stauffer, 'Johann Mattheson and Johann Sebastian Bach: The Hamburg Connection', in: *New Mattheson Studies*, pp. 353–368, at p. 355; George B. Stauffer, 'Bach and the Lure of the Big City', in: *The Worlds of Johann Sebastian Bach*, ed. Raymond Erickson, New York 2009, pp. 243–266, at pp. 248–249; Hans Joachim Marx, 'Telemann aus der Sicht Matthesons', in: *Telemann und seine Freunde. Kontakte – Einflüsse – Auswirkungen*, ed. Ute Poetsch, vol. 2, Magdeburg 1986, pp. 36–42, at p. 40; Wolf Hobohm, 'Ein unbekanntes Urteil über Bach', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 73 (1997), pp. 17–27, at p. 27; K. Hofmann, 'Bachs Kantate *Ich hatte viel*

observation that taking compositional practice of that time into account, Mattheson's accusation is rather surprising.¹¹

A different interpretation of Mattheson's words about this cantata has been presented by Martin Petzoldt¹² and Martin Geck.¹³ In the opinion of these two musicologists, they do not contain biting criticism of Bach's composition; on the contrary – Mattheson is defending it in the context of the rule of composition formulated by Heinrich Bokemeyer, a cantor from Wolfenbüttel, that imposed considerable restrictions on the use of repeats of a verbal text in a musical work. Neither Petzoldt nor Geck elaborates on the supposed criticism of Bach's work made by Mattheson. So is it true – as Schering claims – that Mattheson 'poured a pailful of mockery' on the second movement of the cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, 'due to the alleged senseless verbal gibberish'?¹⁴ In order to answer this question, we should undertake a penetrating analysis of what Mattheson actually said and its context. Our considerations should begin with the description from the periodical *Critica musica*. Also presented in this article will be a synthesis of Mattheson's views on Bach, based on source texts.

CRITICA MUSICA

The monthly *Critica musica*, established by Mattheson, which appeared between 1722 and 1725 (with one hiatus of 18 months), was the first German-language music periodical. It was published in book form in two volumes (1722/23 and 1725).¹⁵ Each volume comprises four parts, which are divided into numbers. Mattheson formulated the periodical's programme on the title page, where we read the following:

Critica Musica, that is, the penetrating analysis and evaluation of many views, arguments and remarks – partly accepted, partly foolish – that can be found in published and unpublished musical writings old and new. Published by Mattheson in order to root out – as far as possible – all the grave errors and to support the flourishing of accurate musical knowledge.¹⁶

Bekümmernis', p. 14; Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach. The Learned Musician*, Oxford 2000, p. 213; Arno Forchert, *Johann Sebastian Bach und seine Zeit*, Laaber 2000, p. 341; Matthew Dirst, *Engaging Bach. The Keyboard Legacy from Marpur to Mendelssohn*, Cambridge 2012, p. 6; Reinmar Emans, 'Die Weimarer Kantaten', in: *Bachs Kantaten. Das Handbuch*, eds. Reimar Emans and Sven Hiemke, vol. 1, Laaber 2012, pp. 130–131.

11 W. G. Whittaker, *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach*, p. 113.

12 M. Petzoldt, 'Die kräftige Erquickung unter der schweren Angst-Last', pp. 31–32.

13 Martin Geck, *Bach. Leben und Werk*, Reinbek 2000, p. 332.

14 'Mattheson goß (1725) volle Schalen des Spottes aus über das angeblich sinnlose Wortgestammel der Chorstimmen in diesem Satze', quoted after A. Schering, [Preface], p. IV.

15 Johann Mattheson, *Critica musica*, 2 vols., Hamburg 1722/23, 1725, facs. ed. Amsterdam 1964, Laaber 2003.

16 'Critica Musica d.i. Grundrichtige Untersuch- und Beurtheilung vieler, theils vorgefaßten / theils einfältigen Meinungen, Argumenten und Einwürffe, so in alten und neuen, gedruckten und ungedruckten, Musicalischen Schriften zu finden. Zur müglichen Ausräutung aller groben Irrthümer und zur

In his writings, Mattheson, like other theorists, including Johann Gottfried Walther, pointed out to composers and performers shortcomings in their training, which earned him a great many enemies. In founding a music periodical, he sought to spread accurate musical knowledge among professional and amateur musicians alike.¹⁷ He promised to convey information that would be useful for budding young composers and would also point out weaknesses to more senior maestros.¹⁸

On the pages of *Critica musica*, Mattheson published theoretical works by other authors, which he furnished with commentaries. He also carried on polemics, as well as pondering issues linked to the art of composition. Most issues of the periodical end with a rubric containing news about musical life at home and abroad. Among other things, Mattheson presented news about publications (theoretical writings and sheet music), information about opera shows and concerts, and also about newly filled posts for organists, chapel-masters, singers and cantors. He also printed obituaries.

The first volume of *Critica musica* (part I, pp. 5–88) opens with Mattheson's pointed polemic with the views of Franz Xaver Anton Murschhauser, which the latter set out in his treatise *Academia Musico-Poetica bipartita, oder Hohe Schule der Musicalischen Composition*¹⁹ (the discussion concerned above all solmisation and modes). The next two parts of the first volume are devoted to the question of the superiority of Italian music over French or vice versa, which was being widely discussed at that time. In the second part (pp. 91–184), Mattheson reprinted a treatise first published in Paris in 1702 under the title *Parallèle des Italiens et des François en ce qui regarde la Musique et les Opéras*, written by François Ragueneau, a supporter of Italian music. In the third part (pp. 187–232), he included a work by an advocate of French music, entitled *Dissertation sur le bon goût de la Musique d'Italie, de la Musique Française, et sur les Opéra*²⁰ (wrongly attributed to Jean Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville). Mattheson

Beförderung eines bessern Wachsthums der reinen harmonischen Wissenschaft [...] heraus gegeben von Mattheson'.

17 See preface to the second volume of *Critica musica*.

18 See preface to the first volume of *Critica musica*.

19 Franz Xaver Anton Murschhauser was a German composer and theorist. From 1691 he was chapel-master of the Frauenkirche in Munich. In 1721 he published in Nuremberg the first part of a treatise entitled *Academia Musico-Poetica bipartita*, in which he discussed the teaching of intervals and modes. The treatise's publisher, unbeknown to Murschhauser, printed (no doubt for promotional purposes) two versions of the work with different title pages. The first version included information that the treatise had been written partly in order to 'give a little more light to the distinguished Mr Mattheson' ('dem vortrefflichen Herrn Mattheson ein mehrers Licht zu geben'). The cutting review of Murschhauser's treatise written by Mattheson represented his reaction to that provocative sentence. On learning the truth about the publisher's contemptible deed, Mattheson described the whole incident on the pages of *Critica musica* (vol. 2, pp. 164–168).

20 This publication first appeared in 1713 in the periodical *Mercur de France* and bore the title *Dissertation sur la musique italienne et française par Mr L. T. Pierre Bonnet-Bourdelot* reprinted the work in *Histoire de la musique et de ses effets depuis son origine jusqu'à présent* (Paris 1715, chapter XII, pp. 425–463), without providing the author's name and giving it the title *Dissertation sur le bon goût de la Musique d'Italie, de la Musique Française, et sur les Opéra*. Jules Ecorcheville assumes the publication to have been

provided a German translation for both publications. In addition, at the end of the second part, he included a biography of Jean-Baptiste Lully, since polemicists on both sides often focussed on Lully's music. In the fourth part (pp. 235–268), which concludes the first volume of *Critica musica*, Mattheson included Heinrich Bokemeyer's treatise *Die Canonische Anatomie*, devoted to the canon.

The text of the fifth part (pp. 1–64), which opens the second volume of the periodical, is written in the form of a dialogue between a pupil and a teacher. The discussion deals with the principles to be observed when composing a Passion work. Replying to the aspiring composer's questions, Mattheson refers to devices he employed in his own oratorio *Das Lied des Lammes* (Hamburg 1723), and also to an unnamed composer of a Passion that had been written – as Mattheson states – around thirty years earlier (so c.1695).²¹ The sixth part of the periodical (pp. 67–176) contains Mattheson's response to criticism of his two treatises *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*²² and *Das beschützte Orchester*, which was issued in 1720 by Georg Linicke, a violinist with the Hamburg opera. The seventh part (pp. 177–288) represents the continuation of the subject addressed in the previous part, as Mattheson cites here opinions on his dispute with Linicke expressed by such figures as George Frideric Handel, Georg Philipp Telemann, Johann Kuhnau, Johann Theile, Johann David Heinichen and Johann Philipp Krieger. Also in this part, Mattheson renews his discussion of solmisation, this time refuting arguments put forward by Johann Joseph Fux. In the eighth and last part of *Critica musica* (pp. 291–380), Mattheson includes another study by Heinrich Bokemeyer, entitled *Der melodische Vorhof. Das ist Herrn Heinrich Bokmeyers, Cantoris der Fürstlichen Schule in Wolfenbüttel, Versuch von der Melodica*. This work is devoted to the theory of melody and – as its author stresses – represents a pioneering work on the subject. Mattheson provided extensive commentaries to Bokemeyer's treatise, longer than the text they discuss. Those remarks include a mention of interest to us here about Bach's cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*.

written by a composer called La Tour (cf. Jules Ecorcheville, *De Lulli à Rameau, 1690–1730: l'esthétique musicale*, Paris 1906, p. 116). Cf. Georgia Cowart, *The Origins of Modern Musical Criticism. French and Italian Music 1600–1750*, Ann Arbor 1981, pp. 89, 124, and p. 176, n. 9.

- 21 This work is attributed to Handel. See *Passion nach dem Evangelisten Johannes*, in: *Georg Friedrich Händels Werke*, ed. Friedrich Chrysander, vol. 9, Leipzig 1860 and in *Die Hallische Händel-Ausgabe*, series I, vol. 2, ed. Karl Gustav Fellerer, Kassel 1964; Beekman C. Cannon, 'Johann Mattheson's "Inquiring Composer"', in: *New Mattheson Studies*, eds. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx, Cambridge 1983, pp. 125–168. Among those considered as the possible composer of this Passion in the musicological literature is Christian Ritter (c.1645–after 1717), who was a pupil of Christoph Bernhard. See Hans Joachim Marx, "... ein Merckmahl sonderbarer Ehrbezeugung". Mattheson und seine Beziehungen zu Händel', in: *Über Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke: Aspekte musikalischer Biographie. Johann Sebastian Bach im Zentrum*, ed. Christoph Wolff, Leipzig 1999, pp. 76–90, at p. 84; Hans Joachim Marx, 'Mattheson und seine Beziehung zu Händel', in: *Ausdrucksformen der Musik des Barock. Passionsoratorium – Serenata – Rezitativ*, ed. Siegfried Schmalzriedt, Laaber 2002, pp. 19–36, at pp. 23–27.
- 22 Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*, Hamburg 1713.

DER MELODISCHE VORHOF AND THE MENTION OF THE CANTATA

ICH HATTE VIEL BEKÜMMERNIS

Der melodische Vorhof consists of two chapters. The first chapter, entitled 'Von dem Texte', contains general reflections on the relationship between words and melody. Several of Bokemeyer's observations merit our attention. He begins by stating that words are the noblest element of good music, since they bestow 'true life' on a melody. According to Bokemeyer, instrumental music is only good for amusement, whereas music with a text is 'praiseworthy'. He also mentions that poetry is better suited to musical settings than prose, although he admits that it is very difficult to write a good melody to a bad text.

Commenting on these assertions, Mattheson writes that contrary to what we read in *Der melodische Vorhof*, words are not an element of music, since music can exist also without them, and all thoughts and emotions can be expressed by means of sounds alone. As for vocal music, according to Mattheson a melody infuses words with true spiritual life, and not the other way around.²³ He points out that if a composer was intending to write a vocal work, he ought to be guided by the meaning of the words contained in the text. He stresses that the musician must be blessed with melodic inventiveness, since the essence of the true art of music is the refined composition of a melody. The view that instrumental music was merely a form of amusement drew robust opposition from Mattheson, who was strongly convinced that instrumental music was also 'praiseworthy', although he admitted that music with words was 'more praiseworthy'. He did not share Bokemeyer's opinion that a poor text made it difficult to compose beautiful music, writing that there were thousands of examples of excellent melodies written to poor verse. He cited the example of a chorus from Lully's ballet *L'Idylle sur la Paix*, which begins with the words 'Qu'il régne ce Heros, qu'il triomphe toujours' ('May this hero reign, may he triumph always').

In the considerations closing the first chapter, Bokemeyer states that a composer ought to present the text in a clear way, avoiding devices that might make it more difficult to understand. He has in mind the erroneous division of a text through the use of cadences, rests and repeats. According to Bokemeyer's recommendations, before composing a work, one should analyse the meaning of the text; among other things, one should consider which words may be repeated and which may not. The principles governing the use of repetition form the subject of the second chapter, 'De Repetitione Textus', in which he formulates the rule allowing one to repeat only those utterances or parts thereof which form a coherent whole. In addition, he countenances the repetition of emphatic words, since – so he argues – 'repetitio emphatica'

23 In my book entitled *Niemiecka nauka kompozycji w XVII i na początku wieku XVIII* [German composition teaching in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century] (Warsaw 2019), p. 199, like Werner Braun in 'Deutsche Musiktheorie des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts' (in: *Geschichte der Musiktheorie*, vol. 8, part 2, eds. Theodor Ertelt and Frieder Zaminer, Darmstadt 1994, p. 316), I gave the erroneous information that Mattheson stated that it was the words that bestowed 'true life' on the melody.

and ‘pathetica’ is not just used in everyday speech, but appears also in the Bible, for which he gives six examples: ‘I, I am He who blots out your transgressions’ (Isaiah 43:25), ‘Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us’ (Psalm 123:3), ‘Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song!’ (Judges 5:12), ‘Comfort, O comfort my people’ (Isaiah 40:1), ‘Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory’ (Psalm 115:1), ‘Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name’ (Psalm 29:1–2).²⁴

Mattheson regarded these examples as very good. In his assessment, however, the rule given by Bokemeyer curbed the composer’s freedom too much. A composer could not – as he wrote – forgo introducing fugato sections into a work, for example, or repeats which did indeed make the text more difficult to read. In his opinion, after the first statement of an utterance, one could repeat its constituent parts in any way. At the end, the complete utterance should be restated. For example, Mattheson analysed the clause ‘his steadfast love endures for ever’ (‘Gottes Güte währet ewiglich’, Psalm 136). For him, the pattern of repeats might look as follows: ‘his steadfast love endures for ever, his steadfast love, his steadfast love endures, his steadfast love endures for ever, for ever, endures for ever, forever endures his steadfast love, his steadfast love endures for ever’.²⁵ Mattheson also stressed that the composer, in order to present a beautiful melody, had the right to repeat a sentence that did not contain any particular emotional charge.

In addition, Mattheson reproached Bokemeyer for considering only the grammatical structure of a sentence, passing over its contents. Consequently, he questioned the correctness of many of the examples of repeats given by Bokemeyer, including in the sentence quoted from the Gospel according to St Matthew (11:28), in which Bokemeyer repeated the word ‘all’ (‘alle’): ‘Komm her zu mir alle, alle, die mühselig und beladen sind’ (‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens’). As Mattheson rightly noted, the call contained in this sentence is addressed not to all people, but only to those who were ‘weary’ and ‘carrying heavy burdens’. So highlighting the word ‘all’ through repetition is an error. Then commenting on the passage concerning analysis of the sentence ‘The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want’ (‘Der Herr ist mein Hirt, mir wird nichts mangeln’, Psalm 23:1), Mattheson regards the repetition of its first part as correct, since the second part is merely a complement and can function independently.

24 ‘Ich, ich tilge deine Übertretungen um meinetwillen’; ‘Sei uns gnädig, Herr, sei uns gnädig’; ‘Wolaufl, wolaufl, Debora! Wolaufl, wolaufl, und singe ein Liedlein’; ‘Tröstet, tröstet mein Volck!’; ‘Nicht uns, Herr, nicht uns, sondern deinem Namen gib Ehre’; ‘Bringet her dem Herrn, ihr Gewaltigen, bringet her dem Herrn Ehre und Stärke. Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens’, quoted after J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 2, p. 346. German text taken from Martin Luther’s Bible translation; Eng. text from *The New Revised Standard Version*.

25 ‘Gottes Güte währet ewiglich; Gottes Güte, die Güte Gottes währet; die Güte Gottes währet ewiglich, ewiglich; sie währet ewiglich; ewiglich währet die Güte Gottes; Gottes Güte währet ewiglich’, quoted after J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 2, p. 347.

Bokemeyer attached a great deal of weight to the correct use of rests in a musical work. He addressed this question when discussing the principles governing repeats in relative clauses. One of his rules established that a clause beginning with a conjunction could not be repeated, e.g. 'he leads me beside still waters' ('Und führet mich zum frischen Wasser', Psalm 23:2). He added that if such a clause was repeated and that repeat was accompanied by rests, then that would be a serious error. According to Bokemeyer, such an error was committed by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow in the first movement of his cantata *Das ist das ewige Leben*:

e.g. the otherwise famous Zachow repeats as follows: 'And this, this, this is eternal life, this is eternal life, that they, that they may know you, the only true God' (three bars of rests). This is followed by a fugue: 'and Jesus Christ whom you have sent'.²⁶

And at this point in *Der melodische Vorhof* we read Mattheson's comment, quoted in the musicological literature:

In order that good old Zachow may have company, and not be quite so alone, let us set beside him an otherwise excellent practicing musician of today, who not for a long time²⁷ does nothing but repeat: 'I, I, I, I had much grief, I had much grief, in my heart, in my heart. I had much grief, etc. in my heart, etc. etc., I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc. I had much grief, etc., in my heart, etc., etc.' Then again: 'Sighs, tears, sorrow, anguish (rest), sighs, tears, anxious longing, fear and death (rest) gnaw at my oppressed heart, etc.' Also: 'Come, my Jesus, and refresh (rest) and rejoice with Thy glance (rest), come, my Jesus (rest), come, my Jesus, and refresh, and rejoice ... with Thy glance this soul, etc.'²⁸

26 'Eg. Der sonst berühmte Zachow repetirt also: *Das das das ist das ewige Leben, ist das ewige Leben, daß sie dich, daß sie dich, daß du allein wahrer Gott bist* (drey Tact Pausen) iam sequitur Fuga: *Und den du gesandt hast, Jesum Christum erkennen*', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 2, p. 366.

27 The English translation (*The New Bach Reader*, no. 319) is mistaken at this point, since the original reads 'nicht für die lange Weile' ('not for a long time').

28 'Damit der ehrliche Zachow (Händels Lehrmeister) Gesellschaft habe, und nicht so gar allein da stehe, soll ihm ein sonst braver *Practicus hodiernus* zur Seiten gesetzt werden, der repetiert nicht für die lange Weile also: *Ich, ich, ich, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen. Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen. Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen. Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen. Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, ich hatte viel Bekümmernis in meinem Herzen, in meinem Herzen* itd. *Hernachmahl so Seufzer, Thränen, Kummer, Noth* (Pause) *Seufzer, Thränen, ängstlichs Sehnen, Furcht und Tod* (Pause) *nagen mein beklemmtes Herz, it. Komm, mein Jesu, und erquickte* (Pause) *und erfreu mit deinem Blicke diese Seele*', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 2, p. 368. Translation after *The New Bach Reader* (no. 319), except for the expression 'nicht für die lange Weile', which was mistranslated as 'for a long time'. See n. 27.

In this commentary, Mattheson faithfully quoted (he no doubt knew the score) excerpts from the second movement (chorus, soprano part), third movement (aria) and eighth movement (duet, part of the soul) of the cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*.²⁹ Yet he did not conduct a detailed analysis of the work, as we can read in the musicological literature. We should also correct the information that Mattheson, when quoting the beginning of the text of the second movement, sharply criticised the numerous repeats of the word 'ich'. After all, similar devices cited by Bokemeyer which appear in the Bible, e.g. in Isaiah ('Ich, ich tilge deine Übertretungen um mienet willen'), did not draw any reservations from Mattheson. His intention was quite different, since the pattern of repeats employed by Bach in the second movement agrees with Mattheson's rule that words, phrases or sentences may be repeated, even if they do not form an integral whole in terms of their content, on condition that the content is presented before and after the chain of repeats. Mattheson reiterated the substance of that principle several times in *Critica musica*, strongly emphasising that it was the meaning of the words, and not the grammatical structure, that determined whether a given utterance could be repeated.

As regards the third and eighth movements of the cantata, Mattheson marks the places where Bach introduces a rest. The flow of the music in the third movement is filled with short (crotchet and quaver) rests, evoking the sighing and weeping mentioned in the text. This was a practice encountered frequently in the work of Baroque composers. Theorists included this device in the catalogue of musical figures and called it *suspiratio* (*stenasmos*).³⁰ Bach often used *suspiratio* when setting words related to tears, pain or yearning, and this is a very important figure in musical rhetoric. Sometimes *suspiratio* is linked to the breaking-up of a word into syllables. Bokemeyer passed over the possibility of using rests in the musical interpretation of a text, and that is what Mattheson wished to draw his attention to.³¹ Finally, as for the eighth movement of the cantata, the use of rests results from the formal design of this movement, which is a dialogue between the soul and Jesus.

BACH IN THE WORDS OF MATTHESON

Mattheson was regarded by his peers as a master of irony, and his commentary to Bokemeyer's words concerning Zachow's cantata is a good example of this. He was also

29 In the cantata, biblical texts are in the majority. The second movement comes from Psalm 94:19, the sixth from Psalm 42:12, the ninth from Psalm 116:7 and the eleventh from the Book of Revelation 5:12–13. We do not know, however, who wrote the poetical texts of the other movements, though their style is reminiscent of the poetry of Salomon Franck.

30 See e.g. Mauritius Vogt, *Conclave thesauri magnae artis musicae*, Prague 1719, p. 7; Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon*, Leipzig 1732, new ed. Kassel 2001, p. 224.

31 Mattheson addressed the interpretation of the verbal text in the fifth part of *Critica musica*. Incidentally, in German music theory, the interpretation of the verbal text justified breaking the rules of composition.

considered to be a writer with a very sharp pen.³² Telemann, who supported Mattheson in acquiring new subscribers for *Critica musica*, wrote in a letter to Johann Friedrich Armand von Uffenbach of 4 October 1724:

If you wished, most noble sire, to subscribe to the above-mentioned periodical [*Critica musica*] for yourself or for someone else, it would be a service to him [Mattheson] and I would be deserving of great gratitude, although I would receive no assurance that it would spare me from his prickly pen, which knows no friends or foes.³³

Mattheson's journalistic style was described in a similar way by Johann Kuhnau.³⁴ Mattheson dealt ruthlessly with his adversaries. Evidence to that effect includes his caustic review of Murschhauser's treatise, in which we read about 'useless scribblings' containing 'stupid rules', the composer of which is 'a mediocre musical Don Quixote'. In Mattheson's ultimate appraisal, Murschhauser, in his 'lousy work', did not discuss the most important issues relating to the art of composition, although in the preface he proudly declared that his publication was a comprehensive work.³⁵ One could cite a great many examples of other trenchant utterances by Mattheson addressed to various musicians.

Besides words of criticism, Mattheson also expressed in his writings – and this should be strongly emphasised – words of considerable recognition and admiration, for works by such composers as Telemann, Handel, Johann Gottfried Walther, Reinhard Keiser and Johann Sebastian Bach. There is a view in the musicological literature³⁶ that Mattheson held a grudge against Bach for not sending him his autobiography, despite his requests, which he intended to include in a collection of musician biographies entitled *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*,³⁷ on which he was working. One argument in support of that opinion was supposedly the fact that Handel, who also failed to respond to a request from Mattheson, was included in the collection nevertheless. Mattheson wrote the biographical article about Handel himself. It should be stressed, however, that this article concerns primarily the period when Handel was active in Hamburg, where he met and befriended Mattheson. After Handel left for London,

32 See e.g. a review of the first issues of *Critica musica* that appeared in *Staats- und gelehrte Zeitung des Hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten* (no. 79, 1722). Cited in H. Böning, *Der Musiker und Komponist Johann Mattheson*, p. 317.

33 'Wollten demnach Ew. HochEdelgebohren etwa für *Sich*, oder auch noch für jemand mehr, obiges *Journal* mithalten, so wäre jenem damit gedienet, und erwürbe ich darbey einen großen Dank, ob schon nicht die Versicherung, von seiner stachelichten Feder verschonet zu bleiben, die weder Freund noch Feind zu [schonen] sonst gewohnt gewesen', quoted after Georg Philipp Telemann, *Briefwechsel*, eds. Hans Grosse and Hans Rudolf Jung, Leipzig 1972, p. 216.

34 See letter from Kuhnau to Mattheson included in *Critica musica*, vol. 2, p. 239.

35 See J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 1, p. 74.

36 See A. Schweitzer, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, p. 161; Gregory G. Butler, 'Der vollkommene Capellmeister as a Stimulus to Johann Sebastian Bach's Late Fugal Writing', in: *New Mattheson Studies*, eds. George J. Buelow and Hans Joachim Marx, Cambridge 1983, p. 294.

37 Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, Hamburg 1740.

their relations became looser. In *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, Mattheson did not conceal the fact that he had no detailed information about Handel's activities in London. As for Bach, we may assume that Mattheson did not have enough information about his life and work to be able to prepare a biography. Yet Bach was not entirely omitted from *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*. His name appears in the index, since encounters with the Leipzig cantor were mentioned by Johann (Ján) Francisci (1691–1758), Johann Balthasar Reimann (1702–49) and Lorenz Christoph Mizler. Mizler entered into a keen polemic with Mattheson over the role of mathematical knowledge in musical training.³⁸ Writing about his own education, Mizler noted that he had gained a great deal from his contact with Bach and had also benefitted from studying the works of Mattheson. As a master of subtle irony, Mattheson furnished this information with the following comments:

The latter [Bach] was certainly and in truth just as little instrumental in teaching him [Mizler] the supposed mathematical bases of composition as the man to be named next [Mattheson himself]. This I can guarantee.³⁹

As already written at the start of this article, Mattheson first mentioned Bach in 1717, in his treatise *Das beschützte Orchester*. Thereafter, he wrote with great respect about him several times. In 1728, in his other periodical, *Der musicalische Patriot*, he numbered him – alongside such figures as Christoph Graupner, Handel, Johann David Heinichen, Conrad Friedrich Hurlebusch, Reinhard Kaiser, Gottfried Heinrich Stölzer, and Telemann – among the composers 'whom Germany can boast about' and whose music 'moved the heart'.⁴⁰ In addition, he recalled Bach's visit to Hamburg, during which – as he related – the composer gave organ concerts in various churches in the city, to universal admiration.⁴¹ He also described with indignation the vain efforts by 'a great virtuoso' (i.e. Bach) to secure the post of organist of St James's in Hamburg.⁴² Three years later, in the treatise *Grosse*

38 Unlike Mattheson, Mizler strongly stressed the importance of mathematical knowledge to the study of music. See Christoph Lorenz Mizler, *Musikalische Bibliothek*, Leipzig 1742, vol. 2, part 3, p. 103.

39 'Dieser hat ihm gewiß und wahrhaftig eben so wenig die vermeinten mathematischen Compositions-Gründe beigebracht, als der nächstgenannte. Dafür bin ich Bürge', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Grundlage*, p. 231. Eng. transl. in *The New Bach Reader*, no. 305.

40 J. Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot*, p. 50 and p. 218.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 316.

42 As is widely known, in September 1720, the position of organist at St James's in Hamburg became vacant. In the church documents, Bach's name appears on the list of candidates for the post. However, Bach, possibly on learning that after his election he would be obliged to pay a lofty sum of money, withdrew his candidature. The circumstances surrounding the election of a new organist caused a storm among the residents of Hamburg, including Mattheson, who condemned the common practice in the city of selling church positions. See e.g. Joachim Kremer, 'Die Organistenstelle an St. Jakobi in Hamburg: eine "convenable station" für Johann Sebastian Bach?', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 79 (1993), pp. 217–222; Philipp Tonner, 'Bachs Bewerbung in Hamburg – eine Frage des Geldes?', *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 18 (2001), pp. 207–231.

General-Baß-Schule,⁴³ Mattheson praised Bach's piano partitas.⁴⁴ In addition, he quoted the subject and countersubject of the organ fugue from the *Fantasy and Fugue* in G minor, BWV 542 (see Fig. 1 and 2). Without naming Bach, he wrote: 'I know very well where this subject comes from and who previously set it down on paper'.⁴⁵



Fig. 1. Johann Mattheson, *Grosse-General-Baß-Schule*, Hamburg 1731, p. 34 (subject)

43 Johann Mattheson, *Grosse General-Baß-Schule, oder: der exemplarischen Organisten-Probe zweite, verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage*, Hamburg 1731.

44 George B. Stauffer wrote that Mattheson claimed in his treatise *Grosse General-Baß-Schule* that Bach's works were not songful (G. B. Stauffer, 'Johann Mattheson and Johann Sebastian Bach', p. 364). Stauffer did not cite a particular page of that treatise, but he no doubt had in mind the passage in which Mattheson invoked the history of his polemic with the poet Gottfried Benjamin Hancke. See J. Mattheson, *Grosse General-Baß-Schule*, pp. 443–446. In his work *Poetischer Staar-Stecher* (Leipzig 1730), Hancke wrote that as regards organ playing, Bach's skills were superior to those of Mattheson, who was also outstripped as a composer by Handel, Heinichen and Telemann. In response, Mattheson stated in the periodical *Hamburger Nachrichten aus dem Reiche der Gelehrsamkeit* that one of those composers wrote unmelodic phrases that could not be enjoyed by persons blessed with good taste. Wolf Hobohm stated that Mattheson had in mind Bach (W. Hobohm, 'Ein unbekanntes Urteil über Bach', p. 23). See also: *Fremdschriftliche und gedruckte Dokumente zur Lebensgeschichte Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750*, eds. Werner Neumann and Hans-Joachim Schulze, Kassel 1969 (= Bach-Dokumente 2), no. 305. However, that remark probably concerns the music of Handel; in the biography of that composer included in *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, Mattheson mentioned that Handel, when in Hamburg, had written very long arias and cantatas that were devoid of grace and true taste, although as regards fugues and counterpoints, particularly of the improvised variety, he was more proficient than Johann Kuhnau. At that time, Handel supposedly knew little about melody, whereas Mattheson found Kuhnau's works to be melodious and songful (see J. Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, p. 93). In *Critica musica* (vol. 1, p. 71), Mattheson reproached Handel for using the same tunes in his operas. According to the Hamburg theorist, the lack of sufficiently developed melodic invention in Handel was due to the fact that, unlike him (i.e. Mattheson) and Reinhard Keiser, he was not an active singer. See Melanie Wald, 'Die ungleichen Zwillinge. Matthesons deutsche Ausgabe von Mainwaring's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Georg Frederic Handel* als Medium der Selbstreflexion', in: *Johann Mattheson als Vermittler und Initiator*, eds. Wolfgang Hirschmann and Bernhard Jahn, Hildesheim 2010, pp. 165–180, at p. 178. It should be strongly emphasised here that Mattheson held Handel's skill in counterpoint in very high regard, but was quite reserved with regard to his operas. See Hans Joachim Marx, 'Händels Beziehung zu Johann Mattheson', in: *Georg Friedrich Händel und seine Zeit*, ed. Siegbert Rampe, Laaber 2009, pp. 218–227, at p. 224.

45 'Ich wuste wol, wo dieses Thema zu Hause gehörte, und wer es vormahls künstlich zu Papier gebracht hatte', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Grosse-General-Baß Schule*, p. 34. This work was no doubt on the programme of a Bach organ recital in Hamburg.

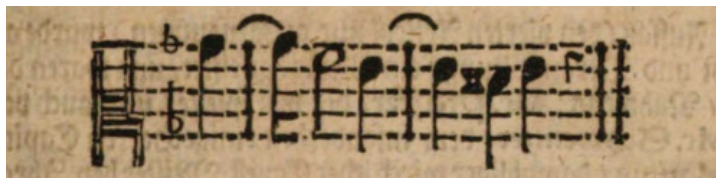


Fig. 2. Johann Mattheson, *Grosse-General-Baß-Schule*, Hamburg 1731, p. 35 (countersubject)

In 1737, meanwhile, in the treatise *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft*,⁴⁶ he quoted the subject of the fugue from the Violin Sonata in A minor, BWV 1003 (see Fig. 3).⁴⁷ He furnished this example with the following comments:

Who would believe that these eight short notes would be so fruitful as to bring forth a counterpoint of more than a whole sheet of music paper, without unusual extension, and quite naturally? And yet the skilled and in this species particularly fortunate Bach has set just this before the world; indeed he has in addition introduced the subject here and there in retrograde motion.⁴⁸

46 Johann Mattheson, *Kern musicalischer Wissenschaft*, Hamburg 1737. In 1738 Mattheson published a supplement to this treatise entitled *Gültige Zeugnisse über die jüngste Matthesonisch-Musicalische Kern-Schrifft*, in which he placed letters addressed to him by Johann Paul Kunzen and Johann Adolph Scheibe with their opinions on *Kern musicalischer Wissenschaft*. Scheibe, in his letter, included words of acknowledgement for Mattheson's work but took issue with some of his statements. Mattheson furnished this letter with comments, in the form of notes. Scheibe's observations included the remark that creating the impression of naturalness in music required a composer to possess considerable knowledge and intellect, while refined works were the fruit of ordinary labours. He also expressed the opinion that Bach's church works were masterful ('künstlich') and painstaking ('mühsam'). In his note to these words, Mattheson did not comment on the remarks concerning Bach, but he did remind Scheibe that in the preface to *Kern musicalischer Wissenschaft* he had written that a pupil should begin learning about melody from lighter and natural things, and not from 'laborious affectations' ('mühsame Künsteleien'). He added with irony that Scheibe seemed to him to compose works with the utmost facility. In the conclusion of his letter, Scheibe stated that Mattheson's choice of musical examples was perfect throughout the treatise.

47 Mattheson quoted this subject inaccurately, no doubt from memory.

48 'Wer sollte wol denken, daß diese acht kurze Noten so fruchtbar wären, einen Contrapunct von mehr, als einem gantzen Bogen, ohne sonderbarer Ausdehnung, gantz natürlich hervorzubringen? Und dennoch hat solches der künstliche, und in dieser Gattung besonders glückliche Bach in Leipzig ieder mann vor Augen geleyet, ja, noch dazu den Satz, hin und wieder, rücklings eingeführt', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft*, p. 147. Translation after *The New Bach Reader* (no. 326) except for the final expression, 'rücklings', which was mistranslated as 'in inversion'. Gregory G. Butler, when commenting on this quotation (*Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 294), gave the erroneous information that Mattheson had criticised Bach's music as 'artificial'. It should be explained that the German adjective 'künstlich', which today does indeed mean 'artificial' or 'forced', in the eighteenth century was used to mean 'finely wrought', or 'masterful'. See e.g. *Duden – Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, 7th ed., Berlin 2011, p. 1073; also Günther Wagner, 'Die Bach-Rezeption im 18. Jahrhundert im Spannungsfeld zwischen strengem und freiem Stil', *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* 1985/86 (1989), pp. 221–238, at p. 228.

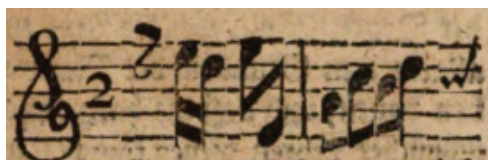


Fig. 3. Johann Mattheson, *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft*, Hamburg 1737, p. 147

In the final part of *Kern melodischer Wissenschaft*, Mattheson listed, in alphabetical order, the great masters of fugue, who included Bach, Fux, Handel, Johann Krieger, Kuhnau, Telemann and J. G. Walther. In 1749 Mattheson's most important work was published, namely, the treatise *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*,⁴⁹ in which he again expressed his admiration for Bach's virtuosic abilities, stating that with regard to organ playing, 'no one could easily surpass Handel in organ playing, unless it be Bach in Leipzig'.⁵⁰ He also quoted the following words by Bach, transmitted by Johann Abraham Birnbaum in *Unpartheyische Anmerkungen über eine bedenkliche Stelle in dem sechsten Stück des critischen Musicus* (Leipzig 1738): 'that which I have achieved by industry and practice, anyone else with tolerable natural gift and ability can also achieve'.⁵¹ Those words elicited the following reflection from Mattheson: 'In that regard, I thought to myself: if this were true, then how is it possible that there is only one such master in the world and no one can compare to him?'⁵² He also drew attention once again to the compositional work of the Leipzig cantor and cited the subject of the canon BWV 1074, which Bach dedicated in 1727 to a lawyer of his acquaintance, Ludwig Friedrich Hudemann (see Fig. 4), as an example of supreme artistry. In chapter XXIII of *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, given over to double fugue, we read:

As regards double fugues, with three subjects, as far as I am aware, only my own work has appeared in print, under the title *Die wohlklingende Fingersprache*. The first and second parts, 1735, 1737, which – out of modesty – I will not praise to anyone, but rather I would wish that a similar thing be composed by the famous Mr Bach of Leipzig, who is a great master of the fugue.⁵³

49 Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Hamburg 1739, new ed. Kassel 1999.

50 'es müste Bach in Leipzig seyn', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 636. Eng. tr. in *The New Bach Reader*, no. 330.

51 'Wozu ich es selbst, durch Fleiß und Uibung habe bringen können, dazu muß es ein andrer, der nur halbwege Naturell und Geschicke hat, auch bringen', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 234. Eng. transl. in *The New Bach Reader*, no. 344.

52 'Dabey dachte ich, wenn das wahr wäre, wie könnte denn ein solcher Meister der einzige in der Welt seyn, und ihm keiner gleich kommen?', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 234.

53 'Von Doppelfugen, mit dreien Subjecten ist, so viel man weiß, nichts anders im Kupffer-Druck herausgekommen, als mein eignes Werck, unter dem Nahmen: *Der wol klingenden Fingersprache*. Erster und zweiter Theil, 1735, 1737, welches ich, aus Bescheidenheit niemand anpreisen mag; sondern vielmehr



Fig. 4. Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, Hamburg 1739, p. 556

Mattheson's wish was granted, as 13 years later, in *Philologisches Tresenspiel*, he wrote with admiration about the collection *Die Kunst der Fuge*, published in 1751, after Bach's death, which – as he wrote – would astonish French and Italian composers writing fugues. In conclusion, he stated that 'Germany is and will certainly remain the homeland of the organ and the fugue'.⁵⁴

Only once did Mattheson express subtle disapproval of Bach. That occurred not in the context of his compositional work, but in respect to what Bach wrote in a letter to George Friedrich Einicke on 10 December 1749.⁵⁵ The matter concerns a familiar polemic, well described in the musicological literature, triggered by a brochure entitled *De vita musica*, written by Johann Gottlieb Biedermann, head of a grammar school in Freiberg, published in 1749.⁵⁶ Biedermann treated the profession of musician with contempt and in his brochure expressed the opinion that there was no need to teach music in schools. Mattheson reacted robustly to those words, publishing in 1749 a polemical tract entitled *Mithridat wider den Gift einer welschen Satyre, genannt 'La Musica'*. Mattheson returned to the dispute with Biedermann in the treatise *Sieben Gespräche der Weisheit und Musik*, in which he included the above-mentioned letter from Bach to

wünschen mögte, etwas dergleichen von dem berühmten Herrn Bach in Leipzig, der ein grosser Fugenmeister ist, ans Licht gestellt zu sehen', quoted after J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 591.

54 'Deutschland ist und bleibet doch ganz gewiss das wahre Orgel-und Fugenland', quoted after Johann Mattheson, *Philologisches Tresenspiel, als ein kleiner Beytrag zur kritischen Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, Hamburg 1752, p. 98.

55 The original of Bach's letter has not survived. We know its contents from Mattheson's copy included in his treatise *Sieben Gespräche der Weisheit und Musik*, Hamburg 1751, p. 183.

56 See e.g. Walter Kolneder, *Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Leben, Werk und Nachwirken in zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, Wilhelmshaven 1991, pp. 251–252.

Einicke, in which the composer informed his addressee with satisfaction that, besides Mattheson's treatise *Mithridat*, also published in the near future would be a review by Christoph Gottlieb Schröter. He also expressed the hope that further critical texts would be published that would 'cleans[e] the author's [Biedermann's] dirty ear and it would be better suited to listening to music'.⁵⁷ Bach employed word play here, since the German word 'Dreck-Ohr' ('dirty ear') resembles the word 'Rector' (headmaster). This sarcastic play-on-words was not to Mattheson's liking, as he furnished the words 'Dreck-Ohr' with a commentary in French: 'Expression basse et degoutante; indigne d'un Maitre de Chapelle; pauvre allusion au mot: Reçtor' ('A base and disgusting expression, unworthy of a Capellmeister; a poor allusion to the word: Rector').⁵⁸

Throughout his life, Mattheson reviewed the works of other musicians and writers. In *Der musicalische Patriot*, he assured his readers that the judgments he issued did not ensue from a feeling of bitterness, but from a love of the truth.⁵⁹ In questions of musical assessment, he did not indulge even his friends. Telemann, for one, knew about this, reading in *Critica musica* an unflattering opinion of his cantata *Vergnügen des Gehörs im Frühling*.⁶⁰ So if we analyse everything that Mattheson says about Bach, we can state with the utmost conviction that, apart from one critical remark, the sharp, cutting pen of the Hamburg theorist did not reach the composer of the cantata *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*.

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57 'es werde des Auctoris Dreckohr gereinigt, und zur Anhörung der Musik geschickter gemacht werden', quoted from J. Mattheson, *Sieben Gespräche*, p. 183.

58 Quoted after *ibid.*, p. 183.

59 See J. Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot*, pp. 94–95; also *Critica musica*, vol. 1, p. 56.

60 See J. Mattheson, *Critica musica*, vol. 1, pp. 103–104. Mattheson published several unflattering opinions of works by Telemann. For example, in *Der musicalische Patriot*, he criticised two of Telemann's operas, namely, *Die verkehrte Welt* and *Adelheid*. That criticism no doubt offended Telemann, as in a letter to J.F. A. von Uffenbach of 26 July 1729 he wrote that Mattheson, in *Der musicalische Patriot*, wrote 'lamentable things' that were 'not worth reading'. Despite the disagreement, the two musicians remained lifelong friends. See also Hans Joachim Marx, 'Telemann aus der Sicht Matthesons', in: *Telemann und seine Freunde. Kontakte – Einflüsse – Auswirkungen*, vol. 2, Magdeburg 1986, pp. 36–42.

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH W OCZACH JOHANNA MATTHESONA: WOKÓŁ KANTATY
ICH HATTE VIEL BEKÜMMERNIS BWV 21

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest zagadnieniu oceny twórczości kompozytorskiej Johanna Sebastiana Bacha przez Johanna Matthesona, jednego z najważniejszych teoretyków muzyki pierwszej połowy XVIII wieku. W centrum zainteresowania znalazła się wzmianka dotycząca kantaty *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis* BWV 21, którą hamburski teoretyk w 1725 r. zamieścił w swoim czasopiśmie *Critica musica*. W literaturze poświęconej twórczości Bacha można przeczytać, że Mattheson kantatę tę poddał szczegółowej analizie, nie szczędząc jej kompozytorowi słów ostrej krytyki, która dotyczyła częstego powtórzenia słów „Ich, ich, ich” (pol.: Ja, ja, ja) w chórze pierwszym. Pogląd taki wyrazili Philipp Spitta, Carl Hermann Bitter, Albert Schweitzer, Arnold Schering, W. Gilles Whittaker, Karl Geiringer, Alfred Dürr, George B. Stauffer, Gregory G. Butler, Hans Joachim Marx, Wolf Hohobhm, Klaus Hofmann, Christoph Wolff, Arno Forchert, Matthew Dirst i Reinmar Emans. Natomiast Martin Petzold oraz Martin Geck przedstawili odmienną interpretację słów Matthesona, jednak tego wątku obaj muzykolodzy w swoich pracach nie rozwinęli. Przeprowadzona w niniejszym artykule dokładna analiza wypowiedzi hamburskiego teoretyka i jej kontekstu wykazała, że Petzold i Geck mieli słuszną rację pisząc, że nie zawiera ona szyderczej krytyki kompozycji Bacha, lecz wręcz przeciwnie – Mattheson broni jej w kontekście sformułowanej przez Heinricha Bokmeyera, kantora z Wolfenbüttel, reguły kompozytorskiej narzucającej duże ograniczenia w zasadach stosowania w utworze muzycznym powtórzeń tekstu słownego.

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