

Editorial

I am very glad to be able to introduce the twelfth volume of *Understanding Bach* – the journal of Bach Network UK. Contributors come not only from England and Ireland but from Hungary, Germany and America. So although we are centred in the British Isles, our journal – like our dialogue meetings – has a truly international reach.

The American scholar Stephen Crist, who has published distinguished work on Bach's arias, focuses on the arias of the Weimar cantatas in an extended version of a paper presented at BNUK's Sixth Dialogue Meeting in Warsaw, 2013. Stephen's findings are sometimes unexpected. He shows, for example, that the arias of the Weimar Bach tend to be stricter and less flexible than those of Handel from roughly the same period. We have here, then, a fresh and significant contribution to the well-worn Bach-Handel comparison.

The Hungarian musicologist Gergely Fazekas, who has already contributed to *Understanding Bach* 10 (2015) and 11 (2016), gives a detailed discussion of Kyrie I from the B minor Mass in an extended version of a paper presented at the 17th International Conference on Baroque Music in Canterbury, 2016. One of his outstanding conclusions is that Bach's subsequent use of the Adagio introduction in the course of the Kyrie proves that this Adagio belonged to the movement *ab initio* and was not a later addition, as other scholars have believed.

Michael Maul, one of a team of distinguished scholars from the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, presents an article originally published in the *Bach-Jahrbuch* in 2015. For our journal, it has been translated into English by Barbara M. Reul. This is our second translation of an article from the *Bach-Jahrbuch*, the idea being to make important German articles more accessible in English-speaking countries. Michael records his finding of documents that shed new light on Bach's attitude to his Leipzig post in the 1740s. In particular, a formerly unknown student at the *Thomasschule*, Gottfried Benjamin Fleckeisen, claims that he had to perform and direct the music at the two principal Leipzig churches in place of Bach for two whole years.

The American violinist and musicologist Stacey Davis gives an extended version of a paper presented at the Baroque music conference in Canterbury last year (see above). It takes the attractive form of a dialogue between Stacey and the remarkable Baroque violinist Rachel Podger, focussing on Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin. Execution of Bach's implied polyphony is discussed at length. We are delighted to include live audio and video in this article, linked to our recently opened YouTube channel, a development we hope will facilitate

dialogue between analysis, perception and performance – key aspects of Stacey’s research.

Harry White, Professor of Musicology at University College Dublin, who is currently writing on Fux, Bach and Handel, presents a nuanced critique of postmodern views on Bach. Harry’s refusal to ‘take sides’ gives his essay an air of authority; and it is gratifying for us to be able to include an article with a philosophical remove from the musical text as a contrast to most of the other contributions.

The Young Scholars’ Forum includes two articles. First, Noelle Heber, an American violinist and violin teacher resident in Paris, gives an extended version of a paper presented at the Baroque music conference in Canterbury last year. She gives a thorough and comprehensive survey of Bach’s sources of remuneration during the Leipzig period. Finally, Hannah French, who has recently completed her doctoral thesis at Leeds, summarizes her research into Henry Wood’s performances of orchestral Bach at the BBC Proms. She also indicates the later direction of her work, taking into consideration Wood’s interpretations of Bach’s large-scale vocal works and his arrangements of cantata arias for concert use.

I would like to thank profusely those colleagues who have undertaken the arduous task of peer-reviewing the articles presented here. I am sure the authors would agree that they have benefitted from the penetrating criticism of the reviewers, even though the task of accommodating their views has necessarily involved a considerable amount of additional work. I would also like to thank my co-editors – Ruth Tatlow, Yo Tomita and Barbara M. Reul – who have each brought their own areas of expertise to bear on the texts under consideration.

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