



the composers represented were generally those regarded as the best in Madrid (such as Francisco Corselli, Manuel Cabaza, Brunetti and Juan Oliver Astorga), and the works tended to display virtuosic traits and idiomatic stylistic features consistent with the developing instrumental writing of the period. Finally, Miguel Simarro (Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Barcelona) explored what was the real innovation of the late eighteenth century: the string quartet. Contrary to the general assumption, the string quartet was established in Madrid from the late 1760s, however incipiently, and enjoyed a certain presence there. Again, Simarro's paper went beyond Boccherini by focusing on the quartet series of two lesser-known composers, Manuel Canales and Joseph Teixidor. Simarro discussed themes such as the influence that Boccherini's Op. 11 exerted on Canales (in his two sets published in Madrid in 1774 and London in 1782) and the formal regularity of movements and tonalities in Teixidor's quartets (in one set from c1801).

In addition to the seminar there was a piano recital given by Beatriz Montes (Universidad de La Rioja). Works by Haydn and Beethoven were combined with ones by Spanish contemporaries rarely performed in the concert hall, including Mateo Albéniz, Antonio Soler, Joaquín Montero, José Larraz and Pedro Nuez. The seminar was part of a three-year research project entitled 'Public, Town, Style: Musical Life in Madrid during the Enlightenment (1759–1808)' supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science based at the Universidad de La Rioja. The project will continue in the near future with a further seminar.

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## POETS, MOTHERS, AND PERFORMERS: CONSIDERING WOMEN'S IMPACT ON THE MUSIC OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

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An optimistic title summoned an international group of scholars to the Yale Institute of Sacred Music in New Haven. Of the Poets – to whom two engaging papers were devoted, and who made cameo appearances in several other presentations as well – one was a mother, Christiane Mariane von Ziegler. None of her three daughters lived beyond the age of ten. The perpetually pregnant spouse of J. S. Bach, Anna Magdalena Wilcke, lost more than half of her thirteen children. In the conference, Anna Magdalena did double service as the only lifelong mother and the only female performer who apparently ventured outside the confines of the home. So the bleaker title might have run: Childless Poets, Beleaguered Wives and an Oppressed Mother and Her Abandoned Career as a Performer. That's hardly a tag to interest funders and a wider public. But it has to be acknowledged that the picture for women in general and female musicians in particular in the period was not a pretty one.

Wendy Heller (Princeton University) opened the proceedings with a provocative and wide-ranging keynote lecture on Friday evening; it was a wise decision on the part of the lively conference organizer Markus Rathey (Yale University) to invite her Bachward from her usual precincts in the Italian seventeenth century so she could energize the often isolated and staid (and, as Rathey pointed out in his introduction, predominantly male) world of Bach studies. Heller argued that the prevailing conception of Bach is tied up with his masculinity, and she brought her point home by opening with an image of the statue of the composer unveiled in Arnstadt in the Bach year of 1985. This bronze presents a reclining Bach in snug breeches, and, as Heller observed, it 'challenges the viewer with uncompromising confidence, arrogance, and a less than subtle representation of masculine prowess'. But if we open our eyes and ears, a more feminine aspect can be allowed to emerge from the composer's music. Heller artfully wove into her remarks her own teenage confrontation with Bach's *Magnificat* – the Cantic of Mary, the central female figure in the



Christian tradition – and that work's crucial role in her own musical development. After surveying the masculine contours of Bach historiography as well as the methodological minefield that surrounds the issue of gender in Bach's music, she returned for the final section of her lecture to the *Magnificat*, and in particular to the soprano aria 'Quia respexit', drawing our attention to the feminized affect of this music and its intimate approach to text setting. This is an aria rich in potential meaning when considered in the light of Luther's attitudes towards women, and more especially towards the Virgin Mary (who maintained continued, if transformed, importance in Lutheran Germany after the break with the Roman church). Heller was careful to point out that simply because the part is written for a high voice (and in the performance of sacred music in the churches of Bach's Leipzig this would have been sung falsetto or, perhaps, by a boy), the vocal range does not necessarily evoke the feminine. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences were adept at looking past the gender of the singer himself (or herself). But Heller cautioned scholars against seeking refuge in what she called the 'gender-free zone', that dubiously safe terrain where music is allowed to remain untainted by hermeneutic approaches concerned with embodiment.

Heller's broad ruminations, along with her nuanced reading of passages from the *Magnificat*, proved to be an excellent overture to the more focused studies that followed over the next day and a half. In 'Women's Roles in the Liturgy' Tanya Kevorkian (Millersville University) presented some of her important archival work on Bach's Leipzig, and provided depth to these findings by considering them against an array of eighteenth-century theological, journalistic and historical sources; she showed that although Leipzig remained true to the Pauline injunction against letting women speak in church, their placement on the ground floor of the church gave them a critical role in congregational singing. This position also allowed them a more immediate connection with the give and take of Lutheran liturgy, and may have encouraged the attentive devotions that were often idealized by male clerics. Further, Kevorkian cited contemporary tracts criticizing women for using the church as a showplace for their fashionable clothes. Sacred austerity could not curb the forces of sexual attraction; real life flourished behind the theocratic ideal.

Mark Peters (Trinity Christian College) gave a fascinating account of the librettos of the ground-breaking Leipzig poet Mariane von Ziegler, who provided the texts for a run of nine Bach cantatas in the spring of 1725. These were among her first public works, and through Bach's music Ziegler's poetry was given voice in sacred services that explicitly marginalized women. Peters argued that given the poet's commitment to defending women's right to be heard, it is not surprising that silence and voice figure prominently in her cantata poetry. By looking closely at Bach's treatment of Ziegler's lines devoted to this theme in a remarkable aria with inset recitative in BWV74, Peters showed that the composer, defying paradox, set these evocations of silence with great ingenuity and sensitivity. That women – including Ziegler herself, who was a fine singer – could not perform these works was an irony that was not lost on the author. We will never know if Bach was one of several other men of his generation also critical of the silencing of women in church music.

Next Katherine Goodman (Brown University), the leading literary historian of Leipzig's eighteenth century, shared new research into Luise Adelgunde Gottsched's extensive music library. Gottsched was the wife of Leipzig's chief literary theorist and sometime Bach librettist, J. C. Gottsched. She was herself a prolific and gifted author who nonetheless believed that a woman's role was to support her husband and that she should shy away from credit for her efforts, literary and otherwise; these views stood in stark contrast to those of von Ziegler. Gottsched was also an admirer of Bach's keyboard works, which she described in a letter to her future husband as exceedingly difficult. The catalogue of her musical holdings shows a large number of operas, lute works and keyboard music by Handel, one item (unspecified) by Bach and a host of publications by fashionable composers. Women were thought intellectually incapable of composing, yet Goodman has discovered a cantata by Luise Gottsched on her husband's poem commemorating one of the couple's first wedding anniversaries. This ambitious piece shows us a real musician for whom music was much more than bourgeois accoutrement.

In 'Femininity as Metaphor in Lutheran Piety' Janette Tilley (City University of New York) turned back to the seventeenth century and to (male) theological interpretations of the Song of Songs, which drew on female imagery. This exegetical tradition, along with poetry and emblematics of the period, depicted the



heaven-bound spirit as a woman, one whose purity was heated with metaphors of ardent love for Jesus. A rapturous, sensuous eschatology resulted. Tilley went on to offer thought-provoking suggestions about femininity in Bach's highly sensual representations of the soul in the bass–soprano duets of BWV49 and in that by-now-venerable site of feminist interpretation, BWV140, a work that inspired Susan McClary to talk gender politics back in the Bach year of 1985. Tilley suggested that Bach is adept at dressing the soul as a woman, if not in elaborate galant dress, then in the simple but sensuous shift of the devoted bride of Christ.

Tilley provided a valuable methodological and historical backdrop to Rathey's paper, 'Gender Identities in the Christmas Oratorio and Its Secular Models'. Drawing on visual and literary sources of the period, and aided by his keen sensitivity to the diverse ways Bach reused his own work, Rathey argued that in their form as state music conceived for the glorification of Bach's Saxon rulers, these secular cantatas articulate and embrace themes of male control and reason. By reading Bach's music against contemporary notions of gender, he effectively contrasted the musical representations of feminine whim and sensuality found in the original versions with the more positive values projected when these cantatas were parodied for use in the church service, especially in the largest repository for these transformed secular pieces – the *Christmas Oratorio*. Rathey's paper developed an important theme adumbrated in those of Heller, Kevorkian and Tilley: that the sacred space was one that allowed, even encouraged, representations of femininity. With the exception of the literary contributions made by von Ziegler, that representing was done by men.

Your conference reporter (David Yearsley, Cornell University) concluded Saturday's final session with a paper entitled 'What is a *Sängerin*?'. By examining images and definitions of the *Sängerin* (female singer) in publications from Anna Magdalena Bach's lifetime, I tried to shed light on the changing expectations and restrictions attached to female performance in the period. I suggested that the move from the courtly setting of Cöthen was a step backward for the Bach women in terms of performing possibilities. In 'enlightened' Leipzig, the opera having closed in 1720, it was increasingly difficult for women to enter the public space to make music. But there were nonetheless some chances, and I imagined a performance of Bach's 'Coffee Cantata' (BWV211) with Bach at the harpsichord and his eldest daughter Catherina Dorothea in the role of the impertinent daughter, Liesgen. The issues of containment, voice, intergenerational conflict and patriarchal control are played out in this satirical intermezzo, and Bach's treatment of them casts an unsettling historical pall over the future lives of his daughter and widow.

After dinner delegates joined a large audience for an outstanding concert by the Yale Voxtet, a group made up of eight graduate students, along with an ensemble of period instruments. The programme included two cantatas with texts by von Ziegler (one sacred, set by Bach, and one secular, with music by Telemann), selections from the *Anna Magdalena Bach Book* of 1725, and a wonderfully sung and acted 'Coffee Cantata', with coupons for a buy-one-get-one-free at a downtown New Haven locale included at the back of the concert brochure – a promotion that the enterprising Leipzigers of Bach's day would certainly have appreciated.

Three more papers followed on the Sunday morning. Yo Tomita (The Queen's University of Belfast) presented an updated version of his work on 'Anna Magdalena as Bach's Copyist'. Through painstaking analysis of the sources and the relationship between Bach's hand and his wife's (the two were often nearly indistinguishable) he cast a withering light on recent claims that Anna Magdalena composed many important works ascribed to her husband. Tomita's careful study also buttressed the reliability – questioned by various scholars and musicians – of Anna Magdalena's copying. Along the way, he offered tantalizing glimpses of the Bach family at work; he hypothesized that Anna Magdalena may have been called on as an emergency copyist, especially in the winter, when the ranks of Bach's assistants were thinned by illness. From the welter of detail, these and other vivid images of real people emerged.

Andrew Talle (Peabody Institute, Johns Hopkins University) offered the weekend's most memorable vignettes of female performance in his presentation on 'The Reception of J. S. Bach's Keyboard Music among Women before 1750'. After adducing ample evidence that men viewed women's native talent for music as limited by an inherently feminine form of arrested development, he discussed two previously undiscovered diary accounts of female performance in German homes. In both, tours of a house reached their crowning



set piece when a daughter or wife played and sang at the harpsichord. The second of these diary entries comes from an English visitor to the Gottsched home in Leipzig, where Luise is shown to have been more than simply a diverting amateur. She played Handel, not Bach, for the British tourists. Agreeing with patriarchal opinion that it was inappropriate for women to force themselves into the public sphere, she had the chance to let her music sing only within the walls of her apartment, like the caged bird that accompanied so many images of women at their harpsichord.

Finally, Ellen Exner (Harvard University) moved us from Leipzig to Berlin and to ‘Hohenzollern Women and the Legacy of J. S. Bach’. She reminded us that in this city that was so vital for the reception of Bach’s oeuvre, modern musical culture was forged not in the court of Frederick the Great, but instead in urban salons in the centre of the city. Crucial to this reception were the efforts of Frederick’s younger sister, Anna Amalia, an avid organist, a composer and a collector of Bach’s music. Often removing himself from Berlin to the tranquillity of Potsdam, Frederick was in fact the peripheral figure in this thriving musical scene where the latest styles could coexist with an appreciation for the classics, of which J. S. Bach became the most important. Why the diplomatic capital of Anna Amalia as a bride to a foreign ruler was never realized remains a mystery, but here was yet another unmarried woman who admired Bach’s music and went on to play a crucial role in its ascendance to the canonic temple. The towering shadows of men, whether Frederick the Great or J. S. Bach, obscure the other half of music history: that belonging to women. But thanks to this conference, and the research and thought it will doubtless inspire, female lights, even if only a few, were kindled in the darkness.

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SACRED MUSIC IN THE HABSBURG EMPIRE 1619–1740 AND ITS CONTEXTS  
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Given the sheer scale and extent of musical activity undertaken in the Holy Roman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one could be forgiven for remarking that the gulf between music then and history now has rarely been so wide. This is in spite of a continuous seam of scholarship attached to this repertory which began with the publication of Ludwig Ritter von Köchel’s studies of the Imperial Chapel in Vienna and of Johann Joseph Fux in 1869 and 1872 respectively (*Die Kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle in Wien von 1543–1867* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1869; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1976), *Johann Josef Fux, Hofcompositor und Hofkapellmeister der Kaiser Leopold I., Josef I und Karl VI von 1698 bis 1740* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1872; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1988)). Even today, Vienna and its musical satellites in the baroque period make a much less prominent appearance than ought to be the case in general histories of European music. The music of the Austro-Italian Baroque, for all its tantalizing engagement with absolutism, Counter-Reformation propaganda and political servitude, has not received the cultural history it deserves.

The richness of this music – its stylistic and generic diversity, its embodiment of extramusical ideas (above all, perhaps, the *Pietas Austriaca*) and its astonishing dissemination across Europe – was the focus of a recent conference on sacred music in the Habsburg Empire organized by Tassilo Erhardt (Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg) together with Steven Saunders (Colby College, Maine), Herbert Seifert (Universität Wien) and Robert Rawson (Canterbury Christ Church University). The conference took place at the Roosevelt Academy in Middelburg in the south-west of the Netherlands.

Twenty-one papers in eight sessions (prefaced by a performance of Carissimi’s *Jephthe* and Bertali’s *La strage degl’innocenti*) surveyed a notably wide range of topics. Although I concentrate below on papers directly concerned with the eighteenth century (because of the context in which this report is published), I