

Trailing the Sources: A Pursuit of a Europe-wide Picture of Bach Reception in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

TANJA KOVAČEVIĆ

My research aims to contribute new insights to a Europe-wide picture of Bach reception, assuming a 'bottom-up' approach and focusing on hitherto unknown and under-researched sources so as to avoid filtered and prescriptive work-centred conclusions.

The plethora of discussions summed up under the heading 'reception' ranges from source-critical studies reconstructing the circulation of manuscripts and their relationships,¹ or quantifications of a composer's presence in the concert life of a given locale,² to identifications of influences through analytical readings of the works of other composers.³ From the outset this may seem as if one is trying to add apples to oranges. Of course, the desired end result may well be a fruit salad, but an understanding of the different dimensions of reception from a theoretical standpoint is necessary in order to determine and refine one's approach to the subject. The model applied by Heinemann - Hinrichsen⁴ neatly breaks it down into transmission

¹ For example, Yo Tomita, 'Bach Reception in Pre-Classical Vienna: Baron van Swieten's Circle Edits the "Well-Tempered Clavier" II' in *Music and Letters*, 81/3 (2000), 364-91.

² For example, S. Miklašić-Ćeran, 'Skladbe Johanna Sebastiana Bacha u koncertnom životu Zagreba između 1862. i 1940. Prilog istraživanju koncertnog repertoara u Zagrebu (Hrvatskoj)' / 'The Compositions of J.S. Bach in the Concert Life of Zagreb between 1862 and 1940. A Contribution to the Study of Concert Repertoire in Zagreb (Croatia)' in *Arti musices*, xxxiv/1-2 (2003), 83-131.

³ For example, W. Breig, 'Die cis-Moll-Fuge op. 131/1 als Dokument von Beethovens später Bach-Rezeption', *Rezeption als Innovation. Untersuchungen zu einem Grundmodell der europäischen Kompositionsgeschichte; Festschrift für Friedhelm Krummacher zum 65. Geburtstag* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), pp. 205-15.

⁴ M. Heinemann - H.-J. Hinrichsen, 'Mit Bach', in *Bach und die Nachwelt, Volume 1: 1750-*

(Überlieferung), tradition (Tradition), appropriation (Aneignung) and reception (Rezeption). I would like to explore these dimensions individually and in relation to each other, without - at least at this stage - attempting to rank them in order of importance.

Cataloguing projects, particularly those undertaken by smaller libraries, have created opportunities for new discoveries, especially in countries where comparatively few studies of Bach reception have been conducted. In addition to trawling their catalogues and sources, comparisons of how their respective cultural, political and economic idiosyncrasies shaped the local knowledge, tastes, traditions and aesthetic values will undoubtedly make for an exciting contribution to the picture of Bach reception.

Case study: Croatia

In the late 1960s, Croatia saw the beginning of a systematic cataloguing of music collections in collaboration with RISM. Over 200 archives holding musical material have been identified, but only a fraction sorted and catalogued.⁵ The conspicuous disparity in number between a precious few baroque sources and an abundance of those of a classical sway (e.g. works by Mozart, Haydn, Pleyel, etc.) has been attributed to less favourable political, social and economic conditions.⁶ Documentary evidence, however, speaks of music-making in aristocratic and bourgeois circles⁷ and close links with Vienna, where Bach's works, particularly his fugues, were appreciated,

1850 (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1997), p. 15.

- ⁵ S. Tuksar in his paper 'Music Research Libraries, Archives and Collections in Croatia', *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, xxiii/2 (1992), p. 120, lists a total of 214 locations. To that number we ought to add a number Zagreb archives listed in a more recent publication compiled and edited by Vedrana Juričić, *Vodič kroz glazbene knjižnice grada Zagreba / A Guide through the Music Libraries and Collections in Zagreb* (Zagreb: Croatian Musicological Society - Croatian Libraries Association - Department for the History of Croatian Music of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1997). I wish to thank Prof. Tuksar for his advice on the current state of Croatian archives.
- ⁶ Fierce battles against the Turkish empire were fought throughout the seventeenth century, and Croatia's territory was reduced to 'remnants of the remnants'. Political disunity continued into the eighteenth century with Slavonia and Northern Croatia under Austro-Hungarian rule on the one hand, and Venetian Dalmatia on the other. Dubrovnik (Ragusa) was the only part that remained independent. See E. Stipčević, 'The Social and Historical Status of Music and Musicians in Croatia in the Early Baroque Period', *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, xviii/1 (1987), p. 3.
- ⁷ E. Stipčević, 'Glazbeni Barok u Hrvatskoj. Uvodna razmatranja' / 'Musical Baroque in Croatia. Introductory Discussion', in *Glazbeni barok u Hrvatskoj*, ed. Ennio Stipčević (Osor: Osorske glazbene večeri, 1989) p. 16; L. Šaban, 'Notna rukopisna knjiga Julijane Erdödy-Drašković iz 1779. godine' / 'The Music Manuscript Book of Juliana Erdödy-Drašković from 1779', *Arti Musices*, xiii/2 (1982), pp. 116-112; V. Katalinić, 'Croatian Musical Culture between 1750 and 1820: A Central-European and/or Mediterranean Issue?', *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, xxiv/1 (1993), p. 8.

studied, edited and performed.⁸ Croatian nobility had close family relations with the Esterházy court,⁹ subscribed to private Viennese concerts,¹⁰ and owned court-orchestras with musicians who were well travelled, some of whom studied under and even lived with Haydn.¹¹ Varaždin, Croatia's administrative centre from 1767-1776, was frequently referred to as 'little Vienna'.¹²

A short visit to Croatia's capital Zagreb unearthed some interesting finds. The library of the Croatian Music Institute (Hrvatski glazbeni zavod)¹³ houses the collection of Nikola Udina-Algarotti (Krk, 1791-Vienna, 1838), which contains 'V Duos pour deux Violons Composés par J. Seb. Bach' (an arrangement of the Fughetta BWV 961 and Duets from Clavierübung III for two violins), published by J.R. of Graben, Vienna. Although no further information on the publisher or date of publication was available, the Zagreb edition would have been published sometime between 1801 and 1838, a conclusion based on the fact that Hoffmeister, most likely the initial proprietor of the plate, published an edition bearing the same title in 1801.¹⁴

The Institute's old inventory book, kept from 1827 until the late 1890s, contains several entries of Bach's works. Although it occasionally lists information on the provenance of entries, dates of purchase or donation and price, a number of titles are no longer extant, so one can only speculate about their age, whether they are manuscripts or publications, etc. Such is the case with the '6 Sonata /gusle i glasovir' (Six sonatas /violin and pianoforte), which, entered as number six, appears to have been an earlier source. The entry of '24 Fugen' (Twenty-four fugues) looked initially as though it might be a prelude-less manuscript of the kind that was circulated in Vienna in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ However, a more likely possibility was that it concerned a printed fugue-only edition, such as the one edited by Louis Köhler and published in Leipzig around 1880 by J. Schuberth (p/n 4265); this was later confirmed to be the case.

⁸ Tomita, 'Bach Reception in Pre-Classical Vienna' (n 1).

⁹ Šaban, 'Notna rukopisna knjiga' (n 7), p. 102.

¹⁰ O. E. Deutsch, 'The Subscribers to Mozart's Private Concerts', *Music and Letters*, xxii/3 (July 1941), pp. 225-34; also Šaban (n 7) p. 109.

¹¹ Šaban *ibid.* pp. 102 and 109.

¹² As quoted by V. Katalinić, 'Croatian Musical Culture' (n 7), p. 7.

¹³ I wish to thank Nada Bezić of the Croatian Music Institute Library for providing me with information on and helping me access the Institute's music and archival material.

¹⁴ M. Zenck, *Die Bach-Rezeption des späten Beethoven zum Verhältnis von Musikhistoriographie und Rezensionsgeschichtsschreibung der 'klassik'*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft xxiv, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1986), p. 38; A Tobias Haslinger edition of the same work with a German title, *5 Duetten für Zwey Violinen... Neue Auflage*, dating from around 1830 appears in the catalogues of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute and the British Library (the British library catalogue has a question mark beside the year 1827).

¹⁵ Such as A-Wgm, Q 10782, discussed by Tomita, 'Bach Reception in Pre-Classical Vienna' (n 1), p. 370.

The most interesting item in the library is the *Missa in Es* (1828) by Varaždin composer Leopold Ebner (1769-1830). In the *Et vitam* section of the Credo, Ebner reworked Fugue VII from WTC II, a fact previously unknown to all but a narrow circle of Croatian musicologists.¹⁶ Although Ebner modified the subject to accommodate the text or simplify the melodic content, he essentially followed the fugue's disposition until near the end, when he suddenly decided to abandon the model altogether. Other changes, such as octave displacements in the bass line, were probably dictated by the limited performing conditions at his disposal. Ebner's treatment demonstrates a different approach from the majority of familiar arrangements of Bach's fugues dating from the same period.¹⁷ Although the degree of alteration makes it difficult to determine Ebner's model, one variant in the score points to a Viennese model of the Mozart-van Swieten-Traeg circle.¹⁸ However, this may just be a case of Ebner exercising his compositional prerogative. A more definite conclusion calls for a more detailed study of the score.

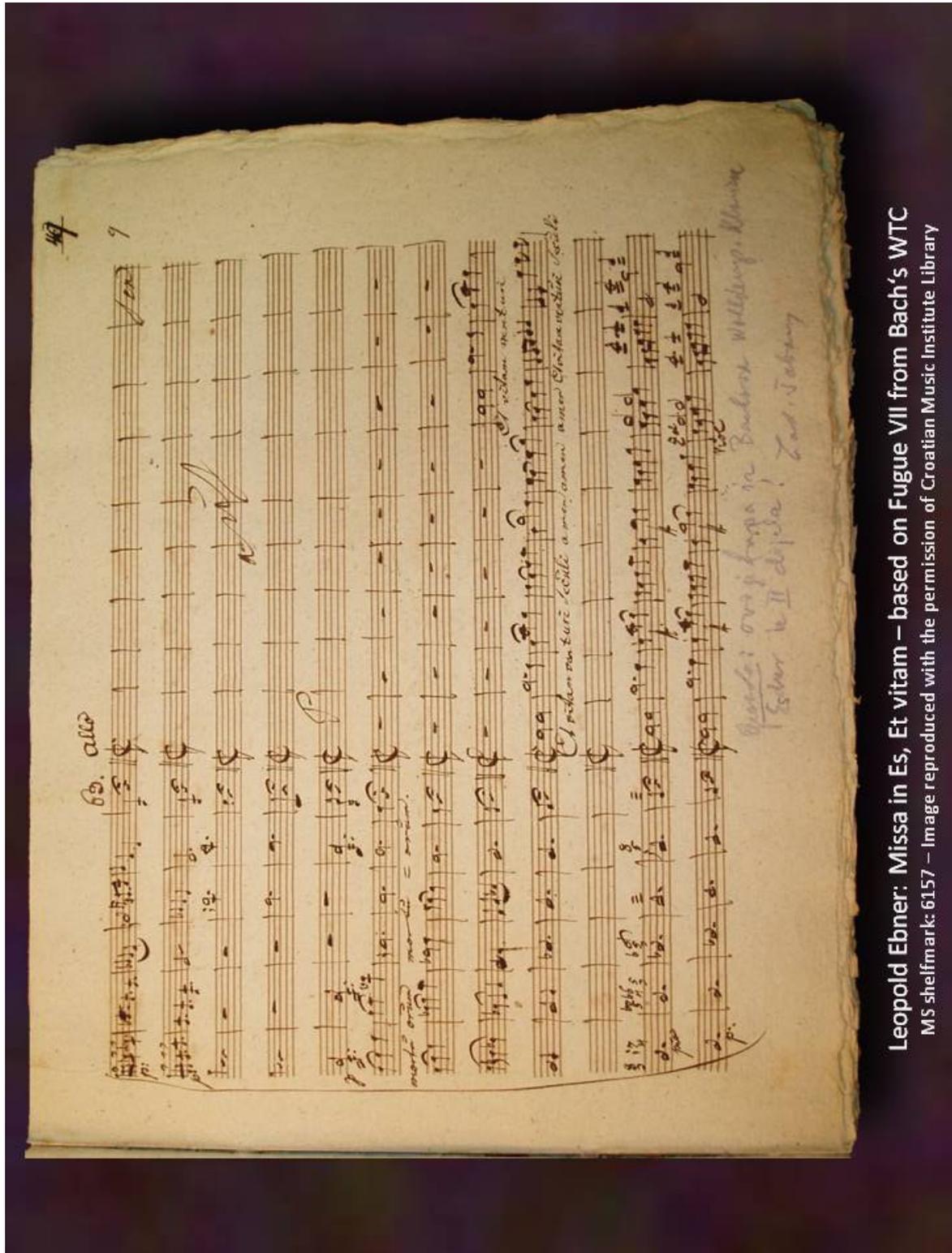
Although research in Croatia has registered a meagre amount of sources relevant to Bach reception, Ebner's case suggests a reality different from the current source situation. Have the socio-political circumstances perhaps been thought to have had a greater impact than was actually the case? It is also peculiar that the only study to date discussing the reception of Bach in Croatia (Miklaušić-Ćeran: 2003) places its beginnings nearly a century later than in the rest of Europe.¹⁹ Scant as they may be, the sources reveal an earlier Bach presence and, with a fair amount of material yet to be looked at, there is hope that this picture may change further.

¹⁶ Ladislav Šaban, on his discovery of the manuscript, noted this in the manuscript itself. Subsequently it merited a mention by Zdravko Blažeković in his entry on Ebner in *MGG 2 völlig neu bearbeitete Ausgabe, Personenteil* (1999–2007), Vol. VI (2001), pp. 42–44, but has nevertheless remained unknown to Bach scholars. I wish to thank Prof. Blažeković for pointing me in the direction of Ebner's manuscript.

¹⁷ The majority of arrangements do not depart significantly from the model; they are usually transcriptions for specific instruments, rather than arrangements in the sense of re-composition. One such example is Benjamin Jacob's arrangement for 'Organ or Piano Forte' of the F-major fugue from part 2 of the '48' (BWV 880) dating from around the same period (1827?). An example of a fugue arrangement, which contains a significant quantity of newly composed material, is the overture to Charles Edward Horn's comic opera *Rich and Poor*. The fugue he uses is, curiously, the same E-flat major fugue that Ebner chose. However, unlike Ebner, Horn actually states that the score was 'composed and *selected*' (my italics) by him, although he does not name Bach as the composer of this 'selection'. See 'Chronology of the English Bach Awakening', in *The English Bach Awakening*, ed. M. Kassler (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 26.

¹⁸ Bar 12, 4th bass note a-natural instead of a-flat; see Tomita, J. S. *Bach's "Das Wohltemperierte Clavier II": A Critical Commentary, Volume II: All the Extant Manuscripts* (Leeds, 1995), p. 270.

¹⁹ S. Miklaušić-Ćeran: 'Skladbe Johanna Sebastiana Bacha u koncertnom životu Zagreba', p. 129; later in the text, however, the author herself agrees that conclusions about Bach reception cannot rest on a study of one city's concert programmes and reviews alone.



Leopold Ebner: *Missa in Es, Et vitam* – based on Fugue VII from Bach’s WTC
MS shelfmark: 6157 – Image reproduced with the permission of Croatian Music Institute Library

My plans include further research in countries where little work has been undertaken in the area of Bach reception. Recent discoveries in Germany - of the new aria, BWV 1127, and the earliest scores in Bach's hand found in Weimar - prove that even in countries where a significant amount of research has been carried out, there are still opportunities for new contributions towards the overall picture of Bach reception, which I do not want to overlook. Closer to home, a hitherto unknown manuscript copy of Bach's Violin solos (BWV 1001-1006) has resurfaced in Manchester. The inscription on the flyleaf suggests a connection with Carl Friedrich Zelter, owner of an extensive collection of Bach's works, and a later one, in pencil, with Louis Spohr, whose hand is most likely to be the origin of the numerous corrections pencilled in the score. I will discuss this source in more detail at the Thirteenth Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music in Leeds.

As there are uncertainties associated with trailing sources, I remain open-minded about the concept of source itself: I do not only wish to pursue manuscript sources, but also such items as theoretical treatises and organ tutors which cite Bach's works, arrangements and transcriptions, influences in the works of other composers and anything else that could potentially add to the fruit salad that is reception.