

Bach and the Feminised *Galant*

SUZANNE ASPDEN

Although more than thirty years have passed since Robert Marshall proposed that we should consider Bach a stylistic 'progressive', his 1976 *Musical Quarterly* article is in many ways still influential, despite, or perhaps because of, the fierce criticism it sustained from Frederick Neumann.¹ For both Marshall and Neumann, and for many of those who have followed them, Bach's stylistic proclivities carry ideological weight. For Marshall, Bach's apparent willingness to embrace the *galant* indicated 'a kind of aesthetic tolerance and universality'.² For Neumann, on the other hand, Bach was the 'supreme embodiment' of the late baroque, and, in his 'faithful[ness] to the old style', was 'militantly anti-*galant*, anti-modern, anti-progressive . . . not just conservative, but reactionary or regressive'.³ And while more recent studies avoid simplistic polarisation, many still find socio-political meaning in Bach's stylistic choices; Laurence Dreyfus, for example, feels that Bach is 'better understood as a [Adornian] critic and interpreter of his age than as an old fogy [*sic*] or sometime panderer to novelty'.⁴

As Dreyfus's assessment suggests, over the past thirty years there has been ever-increasing subtlety in definitions of the *galant*, along with a growing appreciation of just how much Bach seems to have accommodated notions of *galanterie* in his later years.⁵ In the revisionist willingness to endorse the idea of Bach the progressive, the ideological complications surrounding the *galant* aesthetic in Bach's own day have sometimes been obscured, or at least only partially addressed, for the *galant* was by no means always synonymous with the 'modern', the 'progressive' or the 'enlightened', any more than its populism and

¹ Robert L. Marshall, 'Bach the Progressive: Observations on His Later Works', *Musical Quarterly* 62/3 (1976), 313–57; Frederick Neumann, 'Bach: Progressive or Conservative and the Authorship of the Goldberg Aria', *Musical Quarterly* 71/3 (1985), 281–94.

² Marshall, 'Bach the Progressive', 337.

³ Neumann, 'Bach: Progressive or Conservative', 281, 283.

⁴ Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach and the Patterns of Invention* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 243; see also Dreyfus, 'The Metaphorical Soloist: Concerted Organ Parts in Bach's Cantatas', *Early Music* 13/2 (1985), 247.

⁵ Most recently, see David Schulenberg, "'Towards the most elegant taste": Developments in Keyboard Accompaniment from J. S. to C. P. E. Bach', *The Keyboard in Baroque Europe*, ed. Christopher Hogwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 157–68; Gregory G. Butler, 'The *Galant* Style in J. S. Bach's Musical Offering: Widening the Dimensions', *Bach* 33/1 (2002), 57–68; and Bernhard Billeter, 'Modernismen in Johann Sebastian Bachs Kunst der Fuge', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 87 (2001), 23–53.

simplicity were always eschewed by Bach the intellectual composer. As a term in widespread use from the 1630s in France to Europe as a whole in the mid-eighteenth century, *galant* attained a status as ambiguous as it was all-embracing: Alain Viala points out that in mid-seventeenth-century France it encompassed not only ideas of 'amorous sentiment' but also 'an aesthetic and, beyond that, a social model, an ethic', and in so doing its 'far-reaching range . . . inscribed conflicts of all kinds'.⁶ As David Sheldon has observed, however, it is only in eighteenth-century Germany that one finds musical definitions of the *galant*, where a hunger for cultural refinement first prompted eager espousal of all things French (Johannes Mattheson being the most notable musical exponent), followed by a Germanocentric resistance.⁷

Even for those theorists, however, the *galant* represented 'more of a theoretical antithesis to the rule of tradition than an actual style'.⁸ The shifting musical applications of the epithet *galant* in the eighteenth century, which have made modern attempts at definition of the aesthetic somewhat hazy,⁹ might suggest that it was particularly susceptible to ideological appropriation. Indeed, as it came to stand as the kind of polite, Francophile antithesis to native rusticity in the writings of Mattheson, Quantz, and other advocates in German lands, the designation *galant* allowed music to play a part in much larger debates about social change.¹⁰ These debates, which were often at root driven by economic and

⁶ Alain Viala, 'Les Signes Galants: A Historical Reevaluation of *Galanterie*', trans. Daryl Lee, *Yale French Studies* 92 (1997), 11, 19. As Viala notes, 'a model that includes expressions such as *je ne sais quoi* and *délicatesse* (words that come back again and again in texts from this period) is an ideal that evades easy definition' (p. 23). For an ongoing sense of the ambiguity of *galant*, see Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1757): 'Il est difficile de bien définir toutes les qualitez qu'on attache à la personne d'un *homme galant*, ou d'un *galant homme*. . . . Il y a beaucoup de differences entre un *galant homme*, & un *homme galant*'. Cited in Beate Kutschke, 'Johann Mattheson's Writings on Music and the Ethical Shift around 1700', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 38 (2007), 28.

⁷ David A. Sheldon, 'Exchange, Anticipation, and Ellipsis: Analytical Definitions of the *Galant* Style', in *Music East and West: Essays in Honor of Walter Kaufmann*, ed. Thomas Noblitt (New York: Pendragon, 1981), pp. 225–26. See also John Walter Hill, 'The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini', in *Studies in Musicology in Honor of Otto E. Albrecht*, ed. John Walter Hill (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1980), pp. 158–96, who nonetheless takes issue with Sheldon's division of German response to the *galant* into two phases (159, 163).

⁸ Sheldon, 'Exchange, Anticipation, and Ellipsis', p. 239.

⁹ On this problem in musical discourse, see David A. Sheldon, 'The Galant Style Revisited and Re-evaluated', *Acta Musicologica* 47 (1975), 240; Hill, 'The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini', pp. 158–59, 163. Mary Sue Morrow suggests that 'the style's precise musical characteristics remain fuzzy' in Daniel Heartz's *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003). See her review of *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780*, *Notes* 60 (2004), 960.

¹⁰ As Viala notes, the *galant* demonstrates that 'literature and its aesthetic are sites and stakes of social commerce' ('*Les Signes Galantes*', 28). On Mattheson's participation in a 'new bourgeois-oriented . . . ethics of virtue' through his interest in the *galant*, see Kutschke, 'Johann Mattheson's Writings on Music and the Ethical Shift around 1700'. Unfortunately, in revising musicology's simplistic understanding of the *galant* by demonstrating an ethical dimension, Kutschke discounts older (and other) meanings of the term in Mattheson's writings, and so does not see the productive tension surrounding the play of meaning of the term, as identified by Viala.

political concerns, expressed themselves in daily life through common social anxieties.

In particular, I would like to suggest that the politics of gender (increasingly in the eighteenth century a bellwether for broader social issues) made the *galant* a problematic mode in Bach's day, while they have been largely ignored in our own.¹¹ In turning to these politics now, I will take Marshall's article as a starting point, because Marshall himself inadvertently invoked such issues in his 'provocative' association of Bach's apparent turn to the *galant* in 'Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen' (BWV 51) with the virtuoso soprano, Faustina Bordoni-Hasse.

Marshall was not serious, of course: he knew that 'Jauchzet Gott', was too high for Faustina, although it was appealing to think that in 1730 Bach might have composed the cantata to offer as a tribute to the singer, whose 1731 arrival in Dresden was much heralded. In invoking Faustina's name Marshall *was* being provocative, for the singer and her novel, virtuosic style epitomised the excessive, hedonistic, commercialised world of opera – everything against which it seemed Bach stood. It is hardly surprising that Neumann responded vehemently, taking Marshall to task for describing 'Jauchzet Gott' as *galant* and, quite implausibly, suggesting that one of Bach's 'talented youngster[s] or falsettist[s]' in Leipzig could have managed it.¹²

Neumann was right on the first point: it was an over-simplification to equate the novelty of the *modo Faustinare* with the *style galant*, for the simplicity and charm of *galanterie* does not belong with the bravura display of 'Jauchzet Gott', despite the origins of both in *bel canto* singing of the early eighteenth century.¹³ J.

¹¹ On the discussion of gender issues in the eighteenth century as part of broader social commentary, see, for example, Laura Brown on gender roles in English tragedy ('The Defenseless Woman and the Development of English Tragedy', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 22 (1982), 429–43); Nancy Armstrong on the female conduct manual ('The Rise of the Domestic Woman', in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 96–141); Katherine R. Goodman on women's role in the public sphere in Bach's Leipzig ('From Salon to Kaffeekranz: Gender Wars and the Coffee Cantata in Bach's Leipzig', in *Bach's Changing World: Voices in the Community*, ed. Carol K. Baron (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), pp. 190–218). Kutschke notes the strong influence of the English 'moral weekly' on Mattheson's writings; 'Johann Mattheson's Writings on Music and the Ethical Shift around 1700', 29.

¹² Alfred Dürr makes the point that this cantata 'exceeds in range and technical demands' any of the other soprano-range cantatas Bach wrote for church performance in Leipzig; *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, rev. & trans. Richard D. P. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 540. It is worth noting that, of course, Bach had strong connections in Dresden, and could well have written pieces for Dresden singers, just as Anna Magdalena's notebook demonstrates that she copied pieces by the Dresden court organist, Christian Pezold, and by Hasse; see Robert L. Marshall, 'The Notebooks for Wilhelm Friedemann and Anna Magdalena Bach: Some Biographical Lessons', in *Essays in Musicology: A Tribute to Alvin Johnson*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Edward Roesner (Philadelphia: American Musicological Society, 1990), 196.

¹³ On the distinctiveness of Faustina's 'modern' style of ornamentation, see Pier Francesco Tosi, *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* (1723); Sergio Durante, 'Alcune considerazioni sui cantanti di teatro del primo settecento e la loro formazione', in *Antonio Vivaldi: Teatro musicale, cultura e società*. Studia di Musica Veneta, Quaderni Vivaldiani, eds. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giovanni Morelli, 2 vols (Florence: Olschki, 1982), ii, 427–81.

J. Quantz is most commonly cited as associating the two, but while Quantz may link the *galant* style with opera singers such as Farinelli and Carestini, he does not appear to do so on the basis of the use of complex passage-work – the kind of passage-work commonly associated with Faustina (and Farinelli), and present in ‘Jauchzet Gott’.¹⁴ Instead, Quantz characterises ‘*galant* melodic style’ as ‘ornamented with many small figures’.¹⁵ In *On Playing the Flute*, Quantz criticises Italian opera singers for introducing too much passage-work, making ‘no distinction between the words’; he goes on: ‘Passage-work interrupts and destroys all expression of the sentiment’ and ‘From the excessive desire to sing passage-work the further evil frequently arises that for the sake of some singers whom it would be imprudent to offend, the composer and the poet are denied the freedom to think rationally’.¹⁶

While the relationship between the *style galant* and *bel canto* is somewhat tangential to my topic, it is again worth observing the ideological contentiousness of Marshall’s linking of Bach with opera – a genre as feminised in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth, the ‘excesses’ of which even Quantz objected to as irrational.

¹⁴ For the association of *galant* with *bel canto*, see Daniel Hertz and Bruce Alan Brown, ‘Galant’, *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10512>> (accessed 15 June 2010). For contempt of the new style of singing, see for example Luigi Riccoboni, who distinguishes Faustina as instigating the Italian fashion in which the ‘bizarre’ had ‘taken the place of the beautiful and simple’, and complains ‘that to force a voice to execute what a violin or an oboe can scarcely perform is to overturn nature’; *Réflexions historiques et critiques sur les differens théâtres de l’Europe* (Amsterdam, 1740), pp. 37–40, cited in Robert Freeman, ‘Farinello and His Repertory’, in *Studies in Renaissance and Baroque Music in Honor of Arthur Mendel*, ed. Robert L. Marshall (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1974), pp. 305–6. Bach’s critic, Scheibe, would no doubt have seen ‘Jauchzet Gott’ as conforming to the habit for which he railed at Bach, of notating of ‘every little embellishment’, because it made ‘the melody indistinct’.

¹⁵ J. J. Quantz, ‘Herrn Johann Joachim Quantzens Lebenslauf, von ihm selbst entworfen’, in Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, 5 vols (Berlin, 1754–1760; rpt. Georg Olms Verlag: Hildesheim & New York: 1970), i (1754), 197–250, trans P. Nettel, ‘The Life of Herr Johann Joachim Quantz, as Sketched by Himself’, in *Forgotten Musicians* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 292.

¹⁶ J. J. Quantz, *On the Art of Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (1966; 2nd edn. London: Faber, 1985), p. 331. He similarly criticises contemporary instrumental practice in Italy, which has strayed from vocal practice by the ‘excessive addition of extempore embellishments’ and in ‘performing many difficult feats upon their instruments’ (pp. 322–23). He says explicitly on ornamentation that while ‘*appoggiaturas* and the little essential graces related to them’ are ‘absolutely necessary for good execution’, ‘they must be used sparingly or they become too much of a good thing’ (p. 99). In a footnote to ch.18 para. 80, Quantz praises ‘Italian flattery, which is effected by slurred notes and by diminishing and strengthening the tone’ (p. 336). See also Quantz’s reminiscences on hearing his first Italian opera in 1719 and the ‘pure, but sensible, Italian style, from which the Italians have since strayed too far’ in Quantz, ‘The Life of Herr Johann Joachim Quantz, as Sketched by Himself’, p. 291. Quantz’s distinction between different types of ornamentation should serve as an important qualification to John Walter Hill’s general proposal that the *galant* was commonly seen as being ‘highly ornamented’ (‘The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini’, p. 162). In a style also consistently described as ‘light’, the kind of embellishment deployed was obviously very important.

This cantata was, indeed, far too ‘operatic’ for Bach’s traditional Leipzig services, where such music was explicitly forbidden by a sector of the Town Council, and where Bach was constantly harried by the rivalries between what Ulrich Siegele calls the ‘Kapellmeister’ and ‘Cantor’ factions.¹⁷ Indeed, Siegele suggests that Bach’s ‘Draft of a Well-Appointed Church Music’ – the statement that started Marshall on his speculations about Bach’s ‘progressive’ tendencies – may have been written at the instigation of the Kapellmeister faction, in response to its conservative rivals’ hounding of Bach.¹⁸ However, while Bach was the modernising Kapellmeister faction’s candidate he was hardly their first choice, being an organist rather than an opera composer; and as such he was ‘exposed to criticism from [both] sides’.¹⁹ In this context, and in a broader musical environment in Leipzig in which taste turned increasingly toward lighter styles, Bach would of course have been acutely aware of and perhaps somewhat conflicted about stylistic matters.²⁰

Bach’s dealings with town council factions may seem rather removed from the gendering of the *galant* but the musical anxieties that split the Council were symptomatic of larger social divisions. Musical concerns were perhaps particularly acute where ideas of *galanterie* were concerned because, as already intimated, the *galant* itself carried tensions within its aesthetic, tensions which were to do with the location of virtue and the assertion of cultural status in an age of increasing social mobility.²¹ In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, courtly society generally encouraged fixed codes of conduct as a means of ensuring behavioural legibility, with *galanterie* particularly governing relations between the sexes. As these learned behaviours became commodified as a means of facilitating social movement within burgeoning cities, suspicion of their superficial nature prompted the search for new authenticities – a search resulting in the mid-century vogue for *sensibilité*. Thus Rousseau, in his *Lettre à d’Alembert* (1768), took Molière to task for devaluing his title character in *Le Misanthrope*,

¹⁷ Partly for this reason, it has been suggested that the cantata was originally designed for Weissenfels and the virtuosa, Pauline Kellner. See Klaus Hofmann, ‘Bachs Kantate “Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen” BWV 51: Überlegungen zu Entstehung und ursprünglicher Bestimmung’, *Bach-Jahrbuch* 75 (1989), 43–54; Eva-Maria, Ranft, ‘Zur Weissenfelser Hofkapelle in Hinblick auf die Bach-Forschung’, in *Weissenfels als Ort literarischer und künstlerischer Kultur im Barockzeitalter*, ed. Roswitha Jacobsen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 97–107.

¹⁸ See Ulrich Siegele, ‘Bach’s Situation in the Cultural Politics of Contemporary Leipzig’, in *Bach’s Changing World*, ed. Baron, pp. 127–173; this essay is translated and abridged from the article ‘Bachs Stellung in der Leipziger Kulturpolitik seiner Zeit’, published in stages from 1983 to 1986 in the *Bach-Jahrbuch* 69, 70 and 72. On the Kapellmeister faction’s role in the creation of the ‘Draft’, see p. 159.

¹⁹ Siegele, ‘Bach’s Situation’, p. 162. The Kapellmeister faction’s first choice had been Telemann, then later Fasch and Graupner, who were all known as opera composers (p. 161).

²⁰ On the interest in lighter styles, see Christian Ahrens, ‘Joh. Seb. Bach und der “neue Gusto” in der Musik um 1740’, *Bach-Jahrbuch* 72 (1986), 69–79; trans. in *Bach* 33/1 (2002), 69–83.

²¹ On these problems in German-speaking lands, see Kutschke, ‘Johann Mattheson’s Writings on Music and the Ethical Shift around 1700’.

failing to see that his sincerity represented true *honnêteté*, which was preferable to the '*honnête homme* of fashionable society' who defined the duplicitous *galant*.²²

If the *galant* aesthetic in the early eighteenth-century exemplified easy politeness, with clearly codified rules making it accessible to all, that same accessibility also rendered it vulnerable to criticism.²³ This vulnerability was implicit even among advocates of the *galant*. Johannes Mattheson's espousal of a listener-centred aesthetic reveals a sense of internal conflict, as he wrestled down the natural tendency to write 'artistic pieces [that] can engross a sensible composer so that he can sincerely and secretly delight in his own work', in favour of a focus on the listener's auditory pleasure: 'I have often composed something that seemed to me trifling, but unexpectedly attained great favour. I made a mental note of this, and wrote more of the same, although it had little merit when judged according to its artistry.'²⁴ J. J. Quantz, another firm supporter of the *galant*, also had qualms about the fashionable rejection of the musically difficult, asking whether 'counterpoint' should 'be blamed if amateurs do not have a taste for it because of their lack of understanding'?²⁵ When such reservations were expressed by supporters of the style, it is little wonder that later critics were strident in their rejection of the artificiality and populism of the *galant*.²⁶

These problems concerning the location of musical value were implicitly gendered.²⁷ While Mattheson and others stressed the value of catering to audience demand even if that meant producing 'trifling' pieces of 'little [artistic] merit', there remained a concern to justify the *galant* aesthetic in appropriately 'masculine' terms by associating it with ideals of rationality.²⁸ Thus in 1728 J. D. Heinichen explained that 'a good composer of taste' should '[make] his music, as

²² Viala, '*Les Signes Galantes*', 17–19. Viala notes that Rousseau's critique of the *galant* plays on the Old French origin of the word in the verb *galer*, which 'means to play, and more precisely, to play tricks, to make a show of cunningness and deceit', and particularly concerned seduction of women (19).

²³ On the French history of the *galant*, see Alain Viala, *La France galante: essai historique sur une catégorie culturelle, de ses origines jusqu'à la Révolution* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2008).

²⁴ Johann Mattheson, *Critica musica*, 2 vols (Hamburg, 1722–25), i, 346; cited in David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 94. Yearsley notes the sense that 'visible exertion undermined *galant* affectation' in both Mattheson and Scheibe (p. 100).

²⁵ Quantz's concern is expressed in terms remarkably similar to Mattheson's; see *On Playing the Flute*, p. 23.

²⁶ See Hartz and Brown, 'Galant', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed 15 June 2010.

²⁷ On the gendering of genre (and style) see Matthew Head, "'Like Beauty Spots on the Face of a Man": Gender in 18th-Century North-German Discourse on Genre', *Journal of Musicology* 13 (1995), 148–50.

²⁸ Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint*, p. 94. Advocates of the musical *galant* appear to have been following their literary predecessors in associating the style with good taste and reason; thus, for example, Charles Perrault distinguished the literary *galant* from its libertine namesake: in the former 'love has no part', but instead 'involves all fine and delicate manners in which one speaks with an agreeable and unrestrained gaiety'; *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes* (1693), cited in Viala, '*Les Signes Galantes*', 21.

a matter of course, popular and pleasing to the reasonable world'.²⁹ In 1747 Bach's critic, J. A. Scheibe, founded his discussion of taste on healthy reason:

Bad taste is ... an unhealthy ability of reason to judge what the senses experience. Good taste requires a healthy reason just as much as healthy senses. If the senses are spoiled, then a false perception arises, and reason will also judge falsely, because it is misled by the senses. Perception begins with the senses, the decision or judgment, however, comes from reason.³⁰

As we have already seen, reason was a watchword in Quantz's criticism of excessive passagework.

On the other side of the argument, disquiet about the superficiality of the *galant*, traditionally classified as 'light', 'frivolous' and 'humorous',³¹ was associated with the gendered polarisation of the beautiful and the sublime (which would be most clearly theorised by Edmund Burke in 1759), with a consequent demotion of the 'feminine' aesthetic of the formulaic 'beautiful' in favour of the inspired masculine grandeur of the sublime.³² Thus C. F. D. Schubart, in an essay published posthumously in 1806, rejected the 'comic style' by contrasting it with the sublime:

Since the comic taste has caused so much devastation among us, our first endeavour must be to confine this taste as much as possible, and make room once more for the serious, heroic and tragic, for pathos and the sublime . . .

All these elements at this time were associated with masculinity; indeed, Schubart had already associated them with Bach some twenty years earlier.³³ In fact, in his 1752 preface to Bach's *Art of Fugue*, Marpurg had already contrasted the 'manly character' of Bach's contrapuntal writing with the 'effeminate song' of the *galant* style, the taste for which he attributed to 'the tender ears of our present age':

²⁹ Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint*, p. 94.

³⁰ Cited in George J. Buelow, 'In Defence of J. A. Scheibe against J. S. Bach', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 101 (1974–75), 99.

³¹ Association of the *galant* with these characteristics was explicit from early in the century; see Hill, 'The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini', pp. 160–66, and the quotation from Baron, below.

³² The distinction Edmund Burke makes between the sublime and the beautiful in his seminal treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759), relies on gendered attributes: the beautiful is 'small', 'smooth', 'polished', 'light and delicate' and founded 'on pleasure', all characteristics already denigrated in other English treatises as less morally and aesthetically valuable than those inherently masculine attributes associated with the sublime. On the gendering of the sublime in late eighteenth-century Germany (especially Koch in 1777) see Head, 'Like Beauty Spots', 151.

³³ Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna, 1806), p. 274; cited in Head, 'Like Beauty Spots', 146. In 1684–85, Schubart opposed Bach's 'inexhaustible' 'vastness' (sublime attributes) in his 'bold modulations ... great harmony [and] novel melodic passages' with 'the craving for smallness that is gaining more and more ground among a new generation [that] has almost completely lost the taste for such gigantic works'; see Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, rev. Christoph Wolff, *The New Bach Reader: A life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 369–70.

The contemporary composer, who considers the fugue the child of ancient aberration, gives the mechanic no opportunity to make his listeners sensible of the charms of a fugue. Thus the manly element which should prevail in music remains quite absent from it; for it may be believed without further testimony that the composer who has made himself particularly acquainted with fugues and counterpoint—however barbaric this last word may sound to the tender ears of our time—will let something of their flavour inform all his other works, however *galant* they are meant to be, and will set himself against the spreading rubbish of womanish song.³⁴

Despite the appeals to rationality, the *galant* had indeed always been particularly associated with women—the *art de plaire* practised by the male *galant* inevitably had the fair sex as its object.³⁵ This association is widely apparent not only in the concept's late-seventeenth-century French origins and its emphasis on pleasure, but also in the subsequent dissemination of the aesthetic. Ernst Gottlieb Baron in 1727 explained why he thought the *galant* style appealed particularly to women:

Galant and obliging France, which usually shows itself to best advantage, makes music more jocular through its free and lively nature and, if I may say so, makes it almost careless and trifling, more than all other civilised nations; on that account it affects ladies more than serious and substantial souls.³⁶

Mattheson demonstrates that ambivalence about the value of the *galant* was strongly linked to gender issues in a footnote to *Das forschende Orchestre* (1721):

There is a difference between 'galant' and 'galant' [*sic.*]. . . . If Herr Rector Hübner describes pedantry and the gallantry as two epidemics, he considers the latter as not much good, just as today various women and nasty diseases are attributed the praedicatio 'galant'. The Italians however consider a *galant huomo* a dexterous, adept, brave and candid fellow. . . .³⁷

³⁴ Wilhelm Marpurg, 'Vorbericht' to *Der Kunst die Fuge durch Herrn Johann Sebastian Bach* (Leipzig, 1752); trans. *New Bach Reader*, pp. 375–77. The association of the *galant* and effeminacy is already present in Johann Heinrich Buttstedt's *Ut, me, sol, re, fa, la, tota Musica et Harmonia aeterna ...* (1717), designed as a response to Mattheson; for discussion see Hill, 'The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini', pp. 162–63.

³⁵ See the late seventeenth-century definitions of *galant* provided in Viala, 'Les Signes Galantes', 20. On seventeenth-century French origins and the association with women, see also Claude Habib, *Galanterie française* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006); Verena von der Heyden-Rynsch, *La Passion de séduire: une histoire de la galanterie en Europe* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005). In early eighteenth-century London, publications such as *Entertainments of Gallantry: or Remedies for Love. Familiarly Discours'd, by a Society of Persons of Quality* (1712), and *The LadiesLibrary ... by a Lady* (1714) discussed 'entertaining Novels, and Histories of Gallantry' as explicitly and exclusively appealing to a female audience. In the opinion of the author of *The LadiesLibrary*, the insidious moral effects of such writings, which might 'insensibly . . . lead the Heart to Love', meant that 'none but Ladies of good Taste and solid Judgment should be trusted' with such literature (p. 25).

³⁶ Ernst Gottlieb Baron, *Historisch-theoretisch und practische Untersuchung des Instruments der Lauten ...* (1727), p. 175; cited in Hill, 'The Anti-Galant Attitude of F. M. Veracini', 164.

³⁷ Cited in Kutschke, 'Johann Mattheson's Writings on Music and the Ethical Shift around 1700', 30.

The *galant* was also associated with women in Bach's Leipzig. As Christian Ahrens has shown, many of the numerous musical publications issued in 1730s–40s Leipzig appealing to 'the popular goût' or 'present gusto' were explicitly directed at the female market, stating, for example, that they 'could also be played by a woman without any great effort' or were 'quite easy yet pleasing to the ear, and ... are therefore suited for women as well as for other connoisseurs who prefer to play something light and pleasant'.³⁸

The association of musical *galanterie* with women relied generically on dance music in particular. The now oft-cited *Sperontes' Singende Muse an der Pleisse* designed for bourgeois (female) sensibilities, is comprised almost entirely of pieces labelled as dances ('menuet' and 'polonaise' feature particularly) or 'arias'. Such easy pieces, serving as songs and dances, permitted both individual enjoyment and potential social usefulness.³⁹ They also highlighted the association between the *galant* and the female sex through an emphasis on dance's embodiment of music: the clarity of the *galant's* codes, in other words, made palpable the physicality of the dance.

For evidence that such physicality was problematic we might turn to a composer whose *galant* tendencies are readily accepted: Handel's oratorios are full of dances, the most overtly physical of which are associated with the heathen. Indeed, their very idolatry and religious perversion is signalled by their love of dance and revelry. Two examples from *Athalia* and *Samson* give a flavour of these hedonistic heathen romps. The catchy, short-breathed, motto opening of 'To song and dance' in *Samson* indicates the emotional simplicity of the tenor's invocation, which Handel has reinforced by anacrusically emphasising the word 'dance'. The chorus 'The gods who chosen blessings shed' from *Athalia* demonstrates another approach to the representation of dance: it features a rollicking but ultimately vacuous violin line, emphasised by the paucity of melodic interest in the vocal parts (or harmonic interest in the bass), which in turn ensures that the piece's momentum is maintained solely through its rhythmic physicality.

This association of dance (and particularly modern dances) with unthinking sensuality is underlined by a contrasting alignment of the Israelites with traditional, even antiquated, religious music: in *Samson*, for instance, the chorus 'Hear, Jacob's God!' was modified from 'Plorate, filii Israel' in Carissimi's *Jepthe*, a work written nearly 100 years earlier. As Ruth Smith has shown, Handel's contemporaries identified with the Israelites, equating the heathen with those threatening Britain's interests. I think we can see this pervasive association between dance music and Britain's 'others' as an early example of exoticism, in

³⁸ Ahrens, 'Joh. Seb. Bach und der "neue Gusto" in der Musik um 1740', trans. in *Bach* 33/1 (2002), 70–73.

³⁹ Matthew Head points out the importance of the 'usefulness' of female accomplishment in German literature on the subject in the later eighteenth century; see Matthew Head, "'If the pretty little hand won't stretch": Music for the Fair Sex in Eighteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52 (1999), 218.

which depiction of the 'other' as problematic depends on the feminised embodiment of music in *galant* dance.⁴⁰

If the problematic nexus of the *galant*, its embodiment in dance and feminised enjoyment, is not clear enough in Handel, it is made absolutely explicit in Bach's *dramma per musica*, *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*, probably written for performance by the Collegium Musicum in 1729. At a time when Bach was being pulled to and fro by Leipzig's competing musical demands while endeavouring through the Collegium Musicum to establish a voice for himself independent of the church, his selection of this famous Ovidian story of musical judgment between the differing musical styles of Pan and Phoebus-Apollo could be telling on several levels. Bach's librettist, Picander, has Pan stake his claim to musical supremacy over Phoebus, in a direct reference to Ovid, by invoking audience appreciation:

Das Nymphenchor,
 Das mein von mir erfundnes Rohr
 Von sieben wohlgesetzten Stufen
 Zu tanzen öfters aufgerufen,
 Wird dir von selbstem zugestehn:
 Pan singt vor allen andern schön.⁴¹

The elaboration of subsequent aesthetic judgments owes nothing to Ovid, however, instead reflecting the temper and language of the times. Thus Pan's supporter, Midas, praises the ease with which one could learn Pan's music in terms Mattheson would have recognised:

Ach Pan! Wie hast du mich gestärkt,
 Dein Lied hat mir so wohl geklungen,
 Dass ich es mir auf einmal gleich gemerkt.
 Nun geh ich hier im Grünen auf und nieder
 Und lern es denen Bäumen wieder.
 Der Phoebus macht es gar zu bunt,
 Allein, dein allerliebster Mund
 Sang leicht und ungezwungen.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For the association of women and luxury (in the eighteenth-century sense) as being threatening to nationhood, see Reichardt's *Wiegenlieder*, cited in Head, "'If the pretty little hand won't stretch'", 215.

⁴¹ 'The chorus of Nymphs, / Which my reed, invented by me, / Of seven well-placed pipes, / Has often summoned to dance, / Will of their own accord admit to you: / Pan sings more beautifully than anyone else'.

⁴² 'Ah Pan, how you have invigorated me! / Your song sounded so well to me / That I have learned it at once. / Now I shall go up and down here in the country / And teach it to the trees. / Phoebus makes it far too florid, / But your most lovely mouth / Sang easily and unforced'.

This was, in other words, just the kind of appeal to female pleasure that supporters of the *galant* emphasised. However, Bach and Picander had other ideas: Phoebus, in affirming the feminine association of Pan's *galant* style, also confirmed its lower status in the aesthetic hierarchy: 'Vor Nymphen bist du recht; allein, die Götter zu vergnügen, Ist deine Flöte viel zu schlecht'.⁴³ Similarly, the god Tmolus, in judging the competition and asserting Phoebus's victory, awards Pan the lesser prize of singing 'for the forest' and its nymphs (neatly associating the simplicity of the *galant* with that of the idealised pastoral).⁴⁴

So, the *galant* in Bach's Leipzig was subject to conflicting interpretations, presented both as the mode of clarity, rationality and polite sociability, and at the same time as one of hedonistic, feminised pleasure—physical rather than intellectual. Bach too, pulled between Leipzig's differing musical interests, seems to have expressed ambivalence about new musical idioms: when he adapted Pergolesi's famous *Stabat Mater* to a paraphrase of the fifty-first psalm, he overlaid its simple *galant* textures with a filigree of baroque elaboration.⁴⁵ While Kenneth Nott sees this as a demonstration of Bach's stylistic eclecticism in his later years, Richard Will suggests that Bach's decision to repeat the new work's final 'Amen' in F major was aligned with contemporary concern about the effeminate sentimentalism of the *galant* in Pergolesi's work.⁴⁶ Bach's repeated, parallel major 'Amen' operated, in other words, as a form of masculine containment of the supposed 'irrationality' of the affective, *galant* style of Pergolesi's piece, enclosing its emotionalism in a rational, moral framework.⁴⁷ Katherine Goodman sees a similar act of containment in the ending to the Coffee Cantata, which holds out the prospect of feminine subversion of paternal control in the added ninth verse, only to undermine that rebellion in turn with another added verse incorporating the defiant female coffee drinker within patriarchal

⁴³ 'For the nymphs you are right; However, to please the gods Your flute is far too wretched'.

⁴⁴ 'Pan singet vor dem Wald, / Die Nymphen kann er wohl ergötzen. / Jedoch so schön als Phoebus Klang erschallt, / Ist seine Flöte nicht zu schätzen'. ('Pan sings for the forest, / The nymphs he might well delight. / Yet with such a lovely sound as Phoebus makes / His flute is not to be compared'.) The association of the *galant* with the pastoral vein on the basis of stylistic simplicity is more a musical theme than a literary one.

⁴⁵ Kenneth Nott, "'Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden": Observations on Bach and the *Style Galant*', *Bach* 23/1 (1992), 3–30 (18).

⁴⁶ Nott, "'Tilge, Höchster'", 28–30; Richard Will, 'Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and the Politics of Feminine Virtue', *Musical Quarterly* 87 (2004), 593, 604–5. Nott notes that Bach's 'mixed' style is also present in other cantatas (he cites the bass arias in cantatas 195 and 100), and describes on p. 28 the 'distinguishing features of this "mixed" style [as including] relatively simple instrumental parts and the employment of several mannerisms such as static inner voices, slow harmonic rhythm, periodic phrasing, short-long rhythms, syncopated figures, and cadences suspended on 6/4 chord resolutions or the like (frequently combined with florid, irregularly phrased voice parts). An important component of this stylistic blend is the use of dynamics which go beyond Bach's usual practices'.

⁴⁷ On music designed for women as a form of containment, see Head, "'If the pretty little hand won't stretch'", 215; Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound: Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 69 (cited in Head, 217); and on the association between women and musical emotionalism, see commentaries cited by Head, 218–19.

social structures.⁴⁸ Although I am not sure I would agree with her that this verse merely subjugates female coffee-drinkers, its setting as a light-hearted, modern bourée does create a sense of complacent sententiousness.⁴⁹

Bach's containment of the *galant* is not a simple dismissal of the style. If we return to *The Dispute between Phoebus and Pan*, which seems most clearly to critique a feminised *galant* dance music in its text, we find that, just as Marshall suggested, Phoebus's one aria, 'Mit Verlangen, drück ich deine zarten Wangen', has a decidedly *galant* manner. Its emphasis on longing and pleasure is demonstrated in a vocal line with all the formal phrase balance of the dance, suffused with delicate ornamentation. By contrast, in Pan's aria 'Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge', the text of which promises unrestrained physicality, Bach avoids the kind of lighter, *galant* dance forms we might expect would get the 'Nymphenchor' leaping:

Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge,
So wackelt das Herz.
Wenn der Ton zu mühsam klingt
Und der Mund gebunden singt,
So erweckt es keinen Scherz.⁵⁰

Instead, he effectively presents Pan as musically inept; no more able to create an enjoyable dance in the A section of his aria than he is to master the 'laboured' style in his B section. Just as the canonic opening and over-emphasis on the oscillating third figure throughout the first section marks Pan's inability to provide rhythmic and metrical nuance for dancers, so the chromaticism, unprepared dissonances and ungainly lines of the second section demonstrate his general musical ineptitude. Midas's awkward subsequent attempt to recall Pan's canonic texture proves the difficulty of Pan's music – even for his admirers – and gives the lie to Midas's earlier assertion that he had learned Pan's song 'at once' ('Dass ich es mir auf einmal gleich gemerkt'); Midas justifies his reward of donkey's ears, even as he sings. As such, it seems Bach holds Pan and his ilk up to ridicule simply for being poor musicians, not for representing the *galant* idiom *per se*.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Goodman, 'From Salon to Kaffeekranz', p. 210.

⁴⁹ Mattheson described the bourée as 'content and self-composed' (Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 1739), and it was included among the lighter, more 'popular' dances in suites of the time, including Bach's own, where he often featured two bourées, the first of which was repeated (*da capo*-style) after the second, 'a common treatment of the so-called popular dances in the suite'; Meredith Ellis Little, 'Bourrée' in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03732>> (accessed 22 June 2010).

⁵⁰ 'For dancing, for leaping, / Thus shakes the heart. / If the note sounds too laboured / And the mouth sings with restraint, / It arouses no mirth'.

⁵¹ This conclusion is also reached by Gerd Reinäcker in 'Nachdenken über sinnvolles Musizieren? Marginalien zu J.S. Bachs *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*', in *Bach und die Stile*, ed. Martin Geck (Dortmund: Klangfarben Musikverlag, 1999), pp. 161–68.

We might say, then, that Bach's attitude to employing the *galant* was, as for Scheibe, contingent upon the rationality of its use. If this seems to contradict the idea of the feminisation of the style that I have proposed, I think the two can be reconciled—that is to say, it is of course rational to exploit a *galant* effect where stereotypically 'feminine' sentiments are being expressed.⁵² Thus Phoebus's aria, 'Mit Verlangen', takes the eminently *galant*, feminised sentiments of love and longing as its subject. In such pieces there is an enjoyment of melodic sensuality in and of itself. We might indeed say something similar of the vocal pyrotechnics of 'Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen', which embody and perform the text's rejoicing.

Of course there remains an element of discursive containment, of rationalisation of this sensual enjoyment for both these pieces, which is determined as much by the technical demands of the music as by the text: vocal virtuosity and contrapuntal artifice alike require a degree of physical and intellectual control on the part of the performers (and perhaps listeners) which delimits sensory indulgence. However, these acts of containment do not lessen our enjoyment of the *galant*: far from it. Rather they offer, as all such moments do, a space in which we may all the more readily relinquish ourselves to musical pleasure because we know there is a controlling framework: we revel as much in bravura technique as in euphonious sound. Thus Phoebus's follower Tmolus praises his music by asserting that proper artistic appreciation allows one to 'lose' oneself in contemplation:

Aber wer die Kunst versteht
Wie dein Ton verwundernd geht
Wird dabei aus sich verloren'.⁵³

As Alain Viala suggests for French literature of the later seventeenth century, the *galant's* characteristic play between reason and the passions thus assumes a 'therapeutic function', becoming 'the space in which a social integration is achieved and displayed by a proper balancing of the affects and of the mind'.⁵⁴

Such a hopeful assessment might seem a pleasant point on which to conclude, but of course Tmolus's rapturous reverie is merely a hiatus in a didactic trajectory that culminates with vindictive punishment of Midas's aesthetic dissent. Neither have we moved much beyond such controlling gestures, it seems, for how else should we understand the rancour that greeted Marshall's departure from critical orthodoxy? The pluralism implicit in Viala's idealised *galant* synthesis of reason and passion might briefly be indulged, but, as the *galant's* gendered associations further reinforce, such tolerance lasts only as long as larger hegemonic narratives

⁵² At the 14th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music (Belfast, 30 June–4 July 2010), Elizabeth Joyce, in 'The Baroque and Lutheran views of the world embodied in Bach's cantata *Was frag ich nach der Welt* (BWV 94)', discussed Bach's use of dance to invoke worldliness in BWV 94, a theme which could certainly be linked to women and to contemporary ideas of female sinfulness.

⁵³ 'But he who understands the art / With which your sounds are wonderfully made / Thereby loses himself [in contemplation]'.
⁵⁴ Viala, 'Les Signes Galantes', 23.

are respected. That those narratives often served (and serve) to frame and restrain the perceived inherent sensuality of music itself makes the heated discussion of the *galant*'s appearance within eighteenth-century music particularly interesting and—appropriately perhaps, for the idiom—both ironic and poignant in equal measure.