

J. S. Bach, the *Choralvorspiele* and the Late Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Notion

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The development of musical criticism in the latter half of the eighteenth century resulted in the publication of an increasing number of theoretical treatises and periodicals relating to the performance of liturgical organ music. A study of the opinions expressed in these publications affords us a glimpse of how organists and critics reacted to Bach's chorale-based organ music as it underwent a sustained period of transition; furthermore, the reaction of critics to the new editions of *Choralvorspiele* which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century allows us to monitor the evolution of the role of organist during this period.

This paper considers how four eighteenth-century theorists, Johann Mattheson, Daniel G. Türk, Friedrich Guthmann and C. H. Fiedler, viewed the genre, and suggests that their changing opinion may indicate how it was received at the time.¹

Mattheson and the chorale

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the philosophies of Pietism and the rationalism of the Enlightenment were affecting the weekly pattern of music in the worship of most Lutheran congregations. Emerging Pietist thinking regarded elaborate concerted church music as inaccessible. Followers of this philosophy sought to simplify both the spoken and musical elements of the liturgy, favouring an inward spirituality that emphasised the centrality of scripture.² As a result, music in church was restricted to the singing of approachable congregational chorales with simple organ accompaniment. The rationalism of the Enlightenment, on the other hand, sought to preserve the liturgical position of the chorale, although not without some musical concessions, such as updating its status, viewed largely as an archaism, to include simpler, more accessible melodies and texts.

¹ This paper serves as a general introduction to a research area which is more fully explored with respect to two of Bach's collections – the *Orgelbüchlein* and 'Great Eighteen' – in my forthcoming PhD thesis.

² See John Fletcher Hurst, *History of Rationalism: Embracing a Survey of the Present State of Protestant Theology* (London: Carlton & Porter, 1867) 3rd ed., pp. 160–61.

One of the foremost contributors to this discourse in the first half of the century was the Hamburg-based theorist Johann Mattheson. A prolific, often-controversial writer, Mattheson sought to rationalise musical thought while promoting the art as a new, progressive discipline. Geoffrey Webber has summarised his broad aesthetic vision, noting that Mattheson subscribed to the emerging idea of rationalism, which sought a fresh expression of musical pedagogy. Many of his writings were particularly relevant to the music of the Lutheran liturgy, and consequently attracted critical attention from within the church:

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, German opinion was becoming subject to the spirit of rationalism ... [Mattheson] argued for a fundamentally new approach to music in German society, and saw the key to its acceptance as being a change in the traditional view of musical education which held as its main aim the provision of able singers for the chorales on Sundays. He wished for a new openness towards music in all its aspects, which would keep up with the latest developments in music and not be obsessed with the past.³

Mattheson recognised a systemic problem with music pedagogy at this time, arguing that musical education based on the chorale presented a barrier to development. As a progressive, he argued for the integration of *theatralisches Kirchenmusic* into the existing Lutheran liturgy. *Theatralisches Kirchenmusic* was a new expression of chorale-based liturgical music, unpopular because of its association with the secular Italian genre from which it developed. Indeed, discussion of the position of chorale-based music is prominent in Mattheson's earliest writing. His polemic treatise *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre*, published in 1713, expresses the chorale at the top of a list of liturgical genres, above motets, contrapuntal organ music, *Kirchen-Sachen*⁴ and polyphonic choral music. While we cannot be certain that Mattheson's order of discussion indicates his perceived order of importance of these genres, his writing is an intriguing starting point. Mattheson explains that liturgical music should be understood as being derived from five separate components:

³ Geoffrey Webber, 'German Courts and Cities' in, *Companion to Baroque Music*, ed. Julie Anne Sadie (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1990), pp. 156–57.

⁴ Literally 'church affairs'. Probably a reference to miscellaneous musical items that formed part of the Lutheran liturgy.

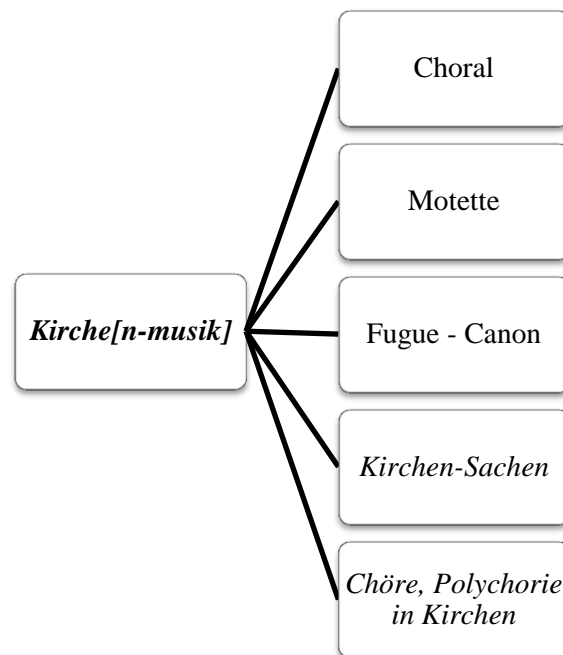


Figure 1: Johann Mattheson's *Gattungseinteilung* of Church Music (1713)⁵

In *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), Mattheson seeks to define the emotive ideas of rhetoric and *Affekt* from a wider vantage point, and argues for their application to both secular and sacred genres.⁶ He deals with several areas which impact directly upon the composition of chorale-based organ music.⁷ For example, he recognises the ability of music to inform, an idea that, with respect to the *Choralvorspiele*, has the potential to resonate on two levels: (1) the pedagogical relationship between the music and the player, and (2) between the player and the listener. Mattheson believed music had an important role in teaching a 'moral lesson'; again, this translates directly to the *Choralvorspiele* and its central role in enhancing liturgy and worship. Although Mattheson aims to convince the reader

⁵ Johann Mattheson, *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre, oder universelle und gründliche Anleitung, wie ein galant homme einen vollkommenen Begriff von der Hoheit und Würde der edlen Music erlangen... Mit beygefügtten Anmerckungen Capell-Meister Keisers* (Hamburg: Auf Unkosten des Autoris / Schillers Wittwe, 1713), p. 172.

⁶ 'In *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739) ... Mattheson proceeded ... to combine aesthetic premises with those concerned with technical aspects of composition ... for only in melody and not in "harmony" - polyphonic writing being the traditional object of compositional theory - could music manifest itself as a language of the emotions (*Empfindungssprache*)'. See Ruth Katz, 'Johann Mattheson', in *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music. 3: Essence*, eds. Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus (New York: Pendragon Press, 1987), p. 63.

⁷ As a prolific writer of cantatas, Mattheson was certainly familiar with chorale-based genres. Also, as Kathryn Welter demonstrates, based on evidence elsewhere in Mattheson's *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, Mattheson was familiar with Johann Pachelbel's miscellany of organ chorales *Erster Theil etlicher Choräle* which he considered to be excellent examples of the genre 'models [of chorale writing] not to be dismissed'. See Kathryn Jane Welter, 'Johann Pachelbel: organist, teacher, composer: a critical reexamination of his life, works, and historical significance' (Dissertation: Harvard University, 2006), p.136. There are no extant organ chorales by Mattheson.

to apply this thought across a range of genres, it is easy to see how the *Choralvorspiele*, in particular, fits with his aesthetic view. Without the passion of *Affekt*, Mattheson explains, there is no virtue; and in the author's aesthetic vision, the true material of virtue is expressed as musical sentiment:

Where there is no passion or affect, there is no virtue. When our passions are ill they must be healed, not murdered. It is true, nevertheless, that those affects which are our strongest ones, are not the best and should be clipped or held by the reins. This is an aspect of morality which the musician must master in order to represent virtue and evil with this music and to arouse in the listener love for the former and hatred for the latter. For it is the true purpose of music to be, above all else, a moral lesson [*Zucht-Lehre*].⁸

Mattheson argues for the appropriate musical application of many sentiments in the course of *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, even towards the musical portrayal of emotions such as jealousy and envy. However, he connects the idea of sadness with the sacred, arguing that this 'moving and beneficial' emotion encompasses a range of others. Such emotions surfaced regularly in the pattern of Lutheran worship: from a wider perspective, they occur in the penitential seasons of the year, evoking, for example, emotions associated with the Old Testament theology of The Fall of Adam or, in the New Testament, the Passion narrative. More frequently, an organist was required to improvise, with suitable *Affekt* and rhetoric, of course, at the appropriate points in the Lutheran liturgy.

Mattheson argues that violent emotions generate the most musical inventiveness. He describes the extemporised *Vorspiele* of the period: the skill, we are told, lies in the player's individual portrayal of these 'harsh characteristics'; on the organ, these colours could correspond to subtlety and suitability of registration change, in order to portray vivid theological imagery. However, Mattheson urges a note of caution: the skill is not only in playing quavers and semi-quavers ('notes with many tails will not suffice'), but in maintaining a lyrical, or 'proper singing quality':

As far as anger, heat, revenge, rage, fury, and all other such violent emotions are concerned, they are far more suitable to all sorts of musical inventions than the gentle and agreeable passions, which must be treated with more refinement. It is not enough, however, to rumble along, to make a lot of noise, and to go at a fast clip; notes with many tails will not suffice, contrary to the opinion of many people. Each of these harsh characteristics demands its own particular treatment and, despite strong expression, must have a proper singing quality. This is our general rule that should never be forgotten.⁹

⁸ Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister, Das ist Gründliche Anzeige aller derjenigen Sachen, die einer wissen, können, und vollkommen inne haben muß, der einer Capelle mit Ehren und Nutzen vorstehen will* (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1739), p. 15. Translation by Hans Lenneberg in 'Johann Mattheson on Affect and Rhetoric in Music: Part One', *Journal of Music Theory* 2/1 (1958), 51.

⁹ Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, p. 18. Translation by Lenneberg in 'Johann Mattheson on Affect and Rhetoric in Music: Part One', 55.

How does Mattheson's marked shift in opinion affect our understanding of the position of the *Choralvorspiele*? Theoretically, the *Choralvorspiele*, having emerged into this environment during the first half of the eighteenth century, contained compositional elements which would satisfy both traditionalists and progressives: the rhetorical expression of emotion in the melody *cantus firmus*, and its decoration with strict counterpoint.

Evidence of theory in practice: Daniel G. Türk

As theory and practice became more integrated in the discursive writing of the second half of the century, authors sought to engage directly with the role of the organist; treatises began to dictate the weekly duties of a player, arguing that the music, and the style in which it was played, should engage directly with the worshipper. There is also a marked continuity between the aesthetic theory of the first half of the eighteenth century and this discursive writing of the second half. For example, Mattheson's observations regarding the chorale are supported and developed by Daniel G. Türk; Türk's 1787 treatise *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten* categorises the role and duties of an organist. There are two reasons why Türk's treatise is of particular scholarly interest. First, he received tuition from both first and second-generation members of Bach's circle: having spent his childhood in Dresden, he was taught by Gottfried August Homilius and continued his musical education with Johann Wilhelm Hässler, a pupil of Kittel. Secondly, the year in which Türk published *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten* coincided with his appointment at the Marktkirche in Halle – the town that, Robin Leaver argues, 'had fostered two dissimilar movements that, as the century progressed, had a negative impact on the liturgical music of the Lutheran church as a whole: Pietism and Rationalism'.¹⁰

Whether or not Türk's treatise was a response to the musical standards he inherited in Halle is conjecture, but it remains a valuable window into the organist's role at the time. In addition to listing the duties of an organist, he describes in detail the liturgical roles that the organ is required to fulfil during the course of the service:

- (a) *das Vorspiele mit des eingewebten Choralmelodie;*
- (b) *ohne dieselbe;*
- (c) *das vor den Kirchenmusik; und*
- (d) *in das Nachspiel.*¹¹

Türk's treatise is also the first to document the relaxing of the strict rules governing the *Choralvorspiele* and, as such, is of great significance. Playing 'Vorspiele mit des eingewebten Choralmelodie' and '[das Vorspiele] ohne dieselbe' as part of an organist's duties represents a considerable departure from

¹⁰ See Robin A. Leaver, 'Series Editor's Preface', in *Daniel Gottlob Türk on the Role of the Organist in Worship (1787)*, trans. and ed. Margot Ann Greenlimb Woolard (London: The Scarecrow Press, 2000), p. vii.

¹¹ Daniel G. Türk, *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten, ein Beytrag zur Verbesserung der musikalischen Liturgie* (Halle, 1787), p. 100.

the genre's roots in the baroque, where the *cantus firmus* was the compositional backbone through which the *Affekt* was portrayed. The implication is that the *galant* demanded that the entire *Choralvorspiel* affect the listener's emotions, rather than just one element of the composition, the *cantus firmus*.

Towards a solution: Friedrich Guthmann and C. H. Fiedler

To what extent did this new thought become established in practice later in the century? In 1804, a substantial essay on the subject was published in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*. The author, Friedrich Guthmann, had established himself as a prolific contributor to the periodical since its inception: his forthright, often-controversial opinion-pieces addressed a variety of musical subjects, including pedagogy and the role of women.¹² Guthmann's article 'Aphorismen über Orgelspiel, Choralgesang und Kirchenmusik' criticises the role of organist at the beginning of the century and – in conclusion – suggests a way forward.

Man sollte den Choralgesang und die Kirchenmusik beym Gottesdienst nicht blos als unmittelbares Beförderungsmittel der Andacht, sondern auch als allgemeines Bildungsmittel für Musik betrachten. Der gemeine Mann bekommt meistens weiter keine musikalische Bildung (hier ist nur von Erweckung des Sinnes für Musik die Rede,) als die ihm in der Kirche zu Theil wird. In dieser Hinsicht ist uns vielleicht noch mehr zu thun übrig, als wir glauben. Popularität – eine der Fassungskraft der Zuhörer anpassende Musik – wird hier meistens vermisst. Wie oft werden nicht Kirchenmusiken aufgeführt, von denen gewiss ein grosser Theil der Zuhörer nichts versteht und bey denen er nichts fühlt. Vorzüglich möchte dies bey mehrern ältern im strengen Style gearbeiteten Sachen der Fall seyn. – So spielt der Organist öfters blos um seine Kunst zu zeigen recht gelehrt, aber auch in Hinsicht auf seinen Zweck recht verkehrt. Der gemeine Mann hört seine gesuchten und verzierten Harmonien, seine sich durchkreuzenden, unmelodischen Zwischenspiele etc. an, und dankt Gott, wenn er nur nicht aus der Melodie kommt. In dem Vorspiele bringt der Organist wohl eine künstliche Fuge an, welcher der Musiker von Profession nur mit grosser Aufmerksamkeit und Mühe folgen kann, dem grossen Haufen der Zuhörer nützt sie aber gewiss nichts.¹³

Guthmann observes that music in the context of worship was the average churchgoer's only exposure to the arts; he argues for a greater emphasis on pedagogy, with respect to the performance of chorale-based organ music in worship. The *Choralvorspiele* must fulfil two functions: (1) performance for the glory of God, and (2) for the sake of the congregation's musical enrichment. The 'strict style', he insists, does not fulfil this function, therefore an 'artful fugue' is of no use to the congregation. Giving way to practical considerations, Guthmann paints a chaotic scene.¹⁴ He calls for the abolition of amateur bands in worship,

¹² See David Gramit, *Cultivating Music: the Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770–1848* (California: University of California Press, 2002), p. 115.

¹³ Friedrich Guthmann, 'Aphorismen über Orgelspiel, Choralgesang und Kirchenmusik', *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 6/27 (4 April 1804), col. 437–41.

¹⁴ A similar scene is described in Charles Burney's account of his visit to Bremen: 'In my way from Hamburg to Amsterdam, I stopt [sic] only a few hours in this city, as it contained no

claiming that provincial string players lack the necessary dexterity. He prefers choral and organ music to instrumental, arguing that unity is found in the blend of human voices. He urges restraint in choice of registration to the organist, warning that an excessively loud registration will not help to portray the *Affekt*; the exception, Guthmann says, is in the last verse of each chorale. Above all, he argues, the text of these chorales should have a 'moral tendency' while being geared towards the intellectual 'capacity of the listener':

An vielen kleinen Orten, wo sehr oft äusserst wenige und noch dazu höchst elende Spieler und Sänger sind, möchte es von grossem Nutzen seyn, wenn die jetzigen Kirchenmusiken mit vieler Instrumentalbegleitung ganz abgeschafft und dafür drey- oder vierstimmige Motetten, Duetten mit und ohne Orgelbegleitung gesungen würden. Die meisten Beschäftigungen der Personen in solchen kleinen Städten, welche das Personal des Orchesters ausmachen, sind dem Spiel von Saiteninstrumenten, wo eine gewisse mechanische Fertigkeit der Finger erfordert wird, wenig günstig. Die Ausbildung und Konservation der Stimme ist hingegen für die angegebenen Zwecke und Verhältnisse weit leichter. Der Geschmack würde gewiss hierdurch beträchtlich gewinnen. Wie widrig und lächerlich ist es nicht, wenn bey einem Chor, allegro maestoso, Violino primo zwey Mann, Violino secondo ein Mann stark, ihre Stimmen herziger. Nicht so bey der Vokalmusik. Die menschliche Stimme vereinigt weit mehr in sich. Ein dreissig vierstimmiger ganz schmuckloser Satz befriedigt uns weit mehr. – Diese Motetten sollten aus dem Kirchen-Aerario angeschafft und vermehrt werden. Dem armen und mit Arbeit überhäuften Schulmann ist es nicht zuzumuthen sie abzuschreiben oder anzukaufen. Die Texte müssten natürlich moralische Tendenz haben, und – nach dem Fassungsvermögen der Zuhörer – nicht ganz ohne dichterischen Werth seyn. Eine Parthie derselben könnte zusammengebunden um ein Billiges verkauft – auch selbst an die Gesangbücher gebunden werden.¹⁵

musical incitements sufficiently powerful to encourage a longer residence. However, I visited the *Thurmkirche* or cathedral, belonging to the Lutherans, where I found the congregation singing a dismal melody, without the organ. When this was ended, the organist gave out a hymn tune, in the true dragging style of Sternhold and Hopkins. The instrument is large, and has a noble and well-toned chorus, but the playing was more old-fashioned, I believe, than any thing that could have been heard in our country towns, during the last century. The interludes between each line of the hymn were always the same, and of the following kind:



After hearing this tune, and these interludes, repeated ten or twelve times, I went to see the town, and returning to the cathedral, two hours after, I still found the people singing all in unison, and as loud as they could, the same tune, to the same accompaniment'. See Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces: Or, the journal of a tour through those countries, undertaken to collect materials for a general history of music 2* (London: T. Becket; J. Robson; and G. Robinson, 1775), 2nd ed., pp. 279–80. Burney is referring to *The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter*, a sixteenth-century collection of metrical psalms.

¹⁵ Friedrich Guthmann, 'Aphorismen über Orgelspiel, Choralgesang und Kirchenmusik', cols. 438–39.

Organ design developed during the eighteenth century to allow the player to introduce gradual expression. Sudden changes of dynamics, for example, could only be achieved previously by adding or removing stops from the chorus.¹⁶ Guthmann recognises the potential of new technology in promoting the desired *Affekt* by drawing the listener to a higher sphere of understanding through more subtle dynamic changes in accompaniment, as dictated by the chorale. Above all, he stresses that the functions of rhythm and melody are central components. The organist is regarded as pedagogue (*Schulmann*), entrusted with teaching the melody, in its correct form, to the assembled congregation. In warning against the gradual distortion of melody over a period of time, Guthmann also warns of the need to choose a suitable speed. Interludes between stanzas, in his view, should be brief and not interrupt the overall flow of the chorale. Finally, he emphasises the role of melody, and the unfavourable results of distorting melody by harmonic changes:

Eine Hauptursache, warum manche Choräle in Absicht auf den Gang der Melodie so falsch gesungen werden, liegt unstreitig darinn, dass viele Schullehrer und Kantoren so wenig eigentliche Melodie, sondern mehr Bass etc. singen. Dadurch wird die Gemeinde sehr leicht irre und gewöhnt sich an Fehler. Es kann Orte geben, wo dies nicht der Fall ist. . . Auch bey der Jugend wird es hierin verdorben. Der Fehler ist schwer auszurotten, wenn er einmal eingerissen ist. Eine Melodie kann in mehrern Jahren so verstümmelt werden, dass sie an manchen Stellen kaum mehr kennbar ist. – Nur wenn die Gemeinde die Melodie ganz richtig inne hat, und sie auch so singt, darf der Kantor Bass oder eine Mittelstimme singen.

Jeder Musik, also auch dem einfachsten Choralgesange muss ein gewisser Takt zum Grunde liegen. Mehrentheils verfallt man hier auf Extreme. Entweder der Choral wird allzugeschwinde oder allzuträge gesungen; vielleicht auch, was das schlimmste ist, beydes abwechselnd. Jeder Choral muss in einem sehr gemässigten Tempo gesungen und gespielt werden. Auch der freudigste darf nicht zu geschwinde, auch der traurigste nicht schleppend gesungen werden. Medium tenuere beati! – Bey den Zwischenspielen darf sich der Organist nicht zu lange aufhalten; sie sollen nur, während der Sänger gleichsam Athem holt, einem kurzen Uebergang bilden. Er muss sich hier in Absicht auf die Zeit immer gleich bleiben. – Man muss merken, dass eine Zeile aus ist, aber die Orgel darf nicht lange hintennach brummen oder zu lange aushalten. Bey jeder einzelnen Zeile ist ein musikalisches Komma, bey dem Ende eines Verses ein Punkt.

Auch selbst Organisten, die nicht unter die schlechtern gehören, haben den Fehler an sich, dass sie die Harmonie auf Kosten und mit Unterbrechung der Melodie verändern. Dies darf nicht seyn. In der Melodie dürfen keine Lücken seyn; sie darf nie – Athem holen oder pausiren.¹⁷

Above all, Guthmann argues for the promotion of competent organ playing which allows the *Affekt* of the chorale and the *Choralvorspiel* to be brought to the fore. He achieves this by demonstrating common pitfalls in organ

¹⁶ See Eleanor Marx, 'An Account of Abbé Vogler', in *Browning Society Papers* (1881), 339–44.

¹⁷ Friedrich Guthmann, 'Aphorismen über Orgelspiel, Choralgesang und Kirchenmusik', cols. 440–41.

accompaniment, including distortion of harmony, rhythm and registration. These, he argues, shift attention away from the chorale and its supposed position within the liturgy. For example, an article by C. H. Fiedler, published in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1812, argues, in no uncertain terms, for urgent reconsideration of some questionable practices that have become engrained in the technique of some players.¹⁸ These malpractices were so widespread that Fiedler saw only one solution: that organists should abandon these extemporisations and turn to newly-printed editions of *Choralvorspiel* and *Choralbücher* for inspiration. He argues that these contain true specimens of the art, free from the distortions that have crept into practice. The problem, according to Fiedler, is twofold. First he takes issue with the improvised interludes that join stanzas of the chorale. These improvisations, he insists, have become distorted to such an extent that they now distract from the true *Affekt* of the chorale; such extemporisations often borrow – tastelessly, Fiedler insists – from secular forms, because the organists lack proficiency. It was also not uncommon for fragments of dance and folk songs to be integrated into these short passages. All this lacked the solemnity demanded by the chorale, and Fiedler's advice to organists was to seek inspiration from printed *Choralvorspiele* such as those by Tag, Hässler and Kittel.¹⁹

Ueber die Zwischen- und Vorspiele bei den Chorälen in der Kirche, und über das Choralspielen selbst. Sollte es nicht der Würde des Gegenstandes angemessener seyn, wenn die Organisten bey den Choral-Melodien die Zwischenspiele zur folgenden Zeile oder Strophe ganz wegliessen? ... Den Ton der folgenden Zeile oder Strophe ganz simpel und ohne alle Verzierung auf der Orgel vorher anzugeben, und mit der dazu gehörigen Harmonie als dann einzufallen, wann die Gemeinde zu singen anfängt, so wie ich es oft von dem berühmten Organisten Rauschelbach in Bremen gehört habe, scheint mir am feyerlichsten und zweckmässigsten zu seyn; denn es befördert die Einheit des Ganzen. Dass Land Organisten, die zum Theil wenig oder gar nichts vom Generalbasse verstehen, ihre auswendig gelernten, springenden, laufenden, oft aus Gassinliedern, Tänzen, n. a. w. entlehnten und mit geschmacklosen Trillern und Verzierungen durchflochtenen Zwischenspiele immer wiederholt anbringen, es mag nun ein Buss – oder Danklied seyn, ist Barbarey, baarer (sic) Unsinn, – wahre Entheiligung des Gottesdienstes! – Und es bedarf keiner langen Untersuchung, ob dieser Unfug zu dulden sey, oder nicht. Organisten, die weder Kenntnisse, noch Geschmack besitzen, sollten durchaus keine Zwischenspiele machen. Weniger ausgemacht ist es aber, ob überhaupt die Zwischenspiele wegzulassen, oder unter gewisser Voraussetzung zulässig sind?²⁰

¹⁸ C. H. Fiedler, 'Ueber die Zwischen- und Vorspiele bey den Chorälen in der Kirche, und über das Choralspielen selbst' in *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 14/34 (19 August 1812), cols. 45-46.

¹⁹ C. G. Tag (1735-1811), J. W. Hässler (1747-1822) and J. C. Kittel (1732-1809). The editions by Tag and Hässler are: C. G. Tag, *Sechs Choralvorspiele nebst einem Trio und Allabreve für die Orgel, etc.* (Leipzig and Dessau: Auf Kosten des Verfassers, 1783); J. W. Hässler, *48 kleine Orgelstücke* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1789). Kittel was a more prolific composer of the genre, and the following editions of chorale-based organ music are extant: J. C. Kittel, *Vierundzwanzig Kurze Choralvorspiele für die Orgel* (Offenbach: Johann Andre, 1814); *Variationen über 2 Choräle* (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister, 1811); *XXIV Leichte Choral-Vorspiele* (Bonn and Cologne: N. Simrock, 1821) *Vierstimmige Choräle mit Vorspielen* (Altona: J. F. Hammerich, 1803).

²⁰ C. H. Fiedler, 'Ueber die Zwischen- und Vorspiele bey den Choräle in der Kirche, und über das Choralspielen selbst', col. 45.

It is worth observing that criticism of the distorted practice of *Orgelspiel* was not confined to discursive articles in periodicals. The same arguments surface in the 1827 edition of *Conversations-Lexikon: Allgemeine deutsche Real-encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände*, where the author highlights the concerns raised by Guthmann and Fiedler. First, he argues that the *Vorspiel* is the most adequate preparation for the liturgy that follows. Secondly, the organist is expected to function as pedagogue, teaching the *Affekt* to the congregation via *kunstreiche Fugen, Variationen und Phantasien*:

Um das Spiel zu verstärken oder zu schwächen, muß er auch die Manuale kennen, und sich die Fertigkeit, die Töne des Pedals richtig zu treffen, erwerben. – Was die Anwendung des Orgelspiels beim Gottesdienst betrifft, so kann der Organist seine Kunst am meisten zeigen bei der Einleitung, oder dem Ausgang des Gottesdienstes, oder in großen Zwischenspielen, welch Hauptabschnitte der Liturgie gestatten; hier kann und darf er kunstreiche Fugen, Variationen und Phantasien vortragen, nur müssen sie der Würde des Instruments angemessen sein; hier kann er seine Erfindung, seine harmonische Kunst und seine Fertigkeit in der höchsten Freiheit anwenden. Doch soll das Vorspiel immer eine angemessene Vorbereitung des Folgenden sein. Am einfachsten aber und ohne alle künstliche Verzierungen muß das Orgelspiel beim Choralgesang sein; es hat den Zweck, den Gesang der Gemeinde zu tragen, zu leiten und auszufüllen, und muß haben mit dem Gesang der Gemeinde weder in Hinsicht der Bewegung, noch in Hinsicht der Modulation in Zwiespalt stehen; es müßte denn dieser durch Schuld der Gemeinde und vornehmlich durch schlecht Gewohnheit derselben verursacht sein, welche der Organist auf einfache und natürliche Weise entgegenzuwirken verpflichtet ist. Auch die Zwischenspiel im Choral müssen vornehmlich dem Charakter des einfachen Choralgesang und der Stimmung, welch der Choral ausspricht, angemessen sein.²¹

The response to declining standards, and the printed *Choralvorspiele* of J. S. Bach

The opinions expressed in these writings contribute to our understanding of the history of the reception of chorale-based organ music in the late eighteenth century. If these opinions are representative, a picture emerges of printed editions of *Choralvorspiele* fulfilling an essential and pragmatic role in the liturgy. Based on the evidence in these accounts, the practice of improvised *Choralvorspiele* was producing questionable results: organists, provincial organists, in particular, according to Guthmann, simply did not possess the necessary skills to improvise in a convincing or liturgically appropriate way. Thus the increasing availability during the latter years of the eighteenth century of printed editions of *Choralvorspiele* contributed to a solution. The evidence suggests that, in many ways, the genre had come full-circle. Having been promoted, uniquely, by the changing aesthetic thought of the first half of the century, the *Choralvorspiele* held an elevated position in the second half, compared with other liturgical genres.

²¹ See 'Orgel, Orgelspiel' in *Conversations-Lexikon: Allgemeine deutsche Real-encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1831), 7th ed., viii, 96.

Although manuscript copies of J. S. Bach's chorale-based organ music continued to be distributed throughout the eighteenth century, editions did not become widely available until the early nineteenth. Fiedler's reference to *Choralvorspiele* by first and second-generation members of J. S. Bach's circle, in this instance Kittel, Tag and Hässler, not only indicates strongly the type of compositions he believed would work as appropriate models for organists, it also suggests that Bach's own repertoire awaited discovery.