Musical Edition Comparison, or

Fun With German

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Music 662 Assignment 10

November 18, 2010; revised June, 2011

The work of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is one of the most copious in the canon of classical music, and is also one of the most completely cataloged of the pre-classical composers. The original edition of the standard thematic catalog, the *Thematische-systematisches Verzeichnis der musicalischen Werke von Johann Sebastian Bach: Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (Thematic-Systematic Catalog of Musical Works by Johann Sebastian Bach: Bach Composition Catalog), most often referred to as the Bach Werke Verzeichnis or BWV), was authored by Wolfgang Schmieder and published in 1950 by Breitkopf and Härtel. It was revised for a second edition in 1985 by the author and published in 1990. In this volume, Schmieder organizes and numbers all of Bach’s works in sections by genre, beginning with choral works. In each entry there is the full and complete title, incipits to all movements, information on the text, important dates, origins and locations of the manuscripts and early published editions, selected writings on the work, and selected modern editions published of each work.

For the cantata *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, cataloged as BWV140 in the Werke-Verzeichnis, there are primary sources in several locations. There is no extant autograph score, but there is at the Thomasschule in Leipzig a set of 15 manuscript parts supervised by Bach. The

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1 Permission is hereby granted to Professor Steven Gerber to reproduce for use in his music research classes; he also suggested some editorial changes.

oldest-known copyist score, now located at the Bodleian Library at Oxford, was made from these parts in 1755 (five years after Bach’s death) and was once owned by Felix Mendelssohn. Other manuscript copies are held in both private collections and university collections in Halle, Warsaw, Bonn, Paris, and Berlin. The first printed score appeared in 1847, published by Winterfeld; however the closing chorale portion only (Movement 7) was published separately in a hymn collection by Birnstiel in 1835. There are several modern editions listed and the specific location of the cantata is given for both the original 19th-century (Bach Gesellschaft) and modern collected works editions.\(^3\) One of these modern editions that the BWV lists, the Norton critical edition,\(^4\) not only contains the score but also does a chronological analysis of the Bach works that puts this cantata in historical context. The thematic catalogue entry also notes that the cantata was first performed on November 25, 1731 in Leipzig and incorporates a Lutheran text and hymn tune from a much earlier time.

In the *Grove Music Online* database\(^5\), Christoph Wolff compiles the works list by genre in the same manner as Schmieder, arranging within genre by BWV number, but also cross-references it with the entry in the *Bach Compendium: analytisch-bibliographisches Repertorium der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs*\(^6\), also written by Wolff. The *Grove* entry not only directs to the exact volume both in the Bach Gesellschaft edition and the *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke (Neue Bach-Ausgabe)*, but also tells you page numbers as well, directing the reader to volume

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\(^3\) Ibid., 227-228.


28, page 251 in the Gesellschaft Edition and series 1, volume 28, page 131 in the Neue Bach-Ausgabe. The lengthy biographical entry for Bach in Grove Online includes a chapter by Wolff on the cantatas, but BWV 140 is noted only briefly.

In the Neue Bach Ausgabe, Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme appears in series I, volume (Band) 27, beginning on page 151 and ending on page 191. My assigned passage is Movement 4, the Choral (hymn) for Tenor, which is found on page 181-183. It is discussed in the Kritische Bericht, which is series I, volume 27 supplemental, from pages 128-157. The volume is edited by Alfred Dürr who is one of the series editors in the NBA, and also compiled the Kritische Bericht. Both volumes were issued in 1968. The edition lists many of the same original sources that the BWV mentions, and seems to examine them exhaustively. The critical matter includes a stemma that diagrams the relationships of early manuscripts and printings.

Mystery Work #1


This work is an orchestral arrangement of the original Chorale movement from Wachet Auf. The title on the score seems to direct that it is a transcription of Bach’s organ chorale prelude, which is a derivative work discussed later in this paper, however, in comparing it to the original cantata movement from which the organ chorale was derived, the first sections of this arrangement are nearly identical to the original cantata movement. The tenor voice which originally sang the hymn tune as a cantus firmus is transferred into the horn and bassoon, and upper winds are gradually added to double the original string parts and thicken the texture. The string parts remain nearly untouched from the original, only being separated out and placed in modern clefs, where the original score shows all upper strings (violins and violas) in unison.

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Later in the work, Ormandy transfers the melody into the violas. In the second strain of the melody, however, Ormandy begins to create his own vision of the work, using implied harmonies from the chorale at the conclusion of the cantata and the figures in the original continuo part to create a four-part harmony in the horns first, then in full brass, in place of the original solo tenor voice. Ormandy also takes liberty with the conclusion, giving a crescendo to the end, where in the original context of an interior movement of an intimate nature, such a climax would be inappropriate.

**Mystery Work #2**


This work is a directly derivative work from the original cantata movement done by the composer as an organ solo; specifically, a literal transcription. For this chorale prelude, Bach transcribed the original three-part counterpoint directly to the organ, leaving out only the figures in the bass. The work appears in a Dover reprint of the Bach-Gesellschaft (BGA) edition of the complete works; in the BGA it was part of a set entitled “Six Schubler Chorales” in reference to the organist and music engraver who first published them for Bach in the 1740s. Again, although the Ormandy work title above suggests a direct transcription of this composition, it is more properly a creative arrangement that is closer to the arc of the original cantata than it is to this organ transcription, due to Ormandy’s liberal Romantic expansion of the original orchestration from the Cantata movement, and his incorporation of the triumphant harmonized chorus from the cantata’s finale.