

J. S. Bach's Chorale-Based Pedagogy: Origins and Continuity¹

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Bach's chorales, as collected and edited by C. P. E. Bach and Johann Philipp Kirnberger (and frequently in the edition of Albert Riemenschneider) have for generations been used for teaching keyboard harmony and counterpoint. And yet they were not composed for the keyboard but are mostly superlative examples of vocal part-writing that do not comfortably fall under the fingers on a keyboard and are therefore not ideal exercises for performers. They are, however, considered perfect examples for the beginning composer to study and to play. They exhibit exemplary voice leading and the intertwining of their inner voices weaves astonishing harmonic progressions. The unspoken assumption appears to be that by using Bach's chorales in this way we are somehow following the example of his pedagogy. After all, isn't this how his sons and his star pupils learned their keyboard harmony and compositional skills? Perhaps so with regard to his private pupils, but what about the many largely anonymous pupils of the *Thomasschule* to whom Bach taught basic music theory and practice during his twenty-seven years of teaching, pupils who later became effective organists and cantors of churches in Saxony and beyond? Michael Maul's summary of the criteria of the Döbeln town councilors in 1751 in their search for a new cantor would apply equally well to most of the *Thomaners* under Bach who went on to become cantors and organists:

The councillors were not looking for a "Wunderkind" who was skilled enough to hold the office of *Thomascantor* in Leipzig. They sought a God-fearing teacher who possessed good

¹ This article grew out of the preparatory work of the authors for an edition of a manuscript *Choralbuch* that seems to have originated among Bach's pupils in Dresden between 1730 and 1740. See Robin A. Leaver, "Bach's Choral-Buch? The Significance of a Manuscript in the Sibley Library," in *Bach and the Organ*, Bach Perspectives 10, ed. Matthew Dirst (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 16–38. The introductory material will include a complete translation of David Kellner's *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Baß*, originally issued in Hamburg in 1732, and is forthcoming with Wayne Leupold Editions. The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Donald W. Krummel and Daniel Zager in verifying elusive details.

pedagogical skills, solid musical knowledge and performing experience, who could direct the music at the church and serve as the main—and at times the only—vocalist, and who could fill in the gaps of the church orchestra if necessary.²

So how did Bach teach the regular pupils in the *Thomasschule* and how did they learn? The primary document is the much-quoted letter written to Johann Nikolaus Forkel, dated 13 January 1775, in which C. P. E. Bach described his father's approach to teaching:

In composition he started his pupils right in with what was practical, and omitted all the dry species of counterpoint that are given in Fux and others. His pupils had to begin their studies by learning pure four-part thorough bass. From this he went to chorales; first he added the basses to them himself, and they had to invent the alto and tenor. Then he taught them to devise the basses themselves.³

The pedagogical practice of using chorales to teach music fundamentals was passed from father to son, as C. P. E. Bach made clear in the preface he wrote ten years earlier for Friedrich Wilhelm Birnstiel's edition of J. S. Bach's four-part chorales, issued in 1765: "and who today denies the advantage of instruction in the art of composition, by virtue of which,

² Michael Maul, "Having to Perform and Direct Music in the Capellmeister's Stead for Two Whole Years': Observations on How Bach Understood His Post during the 1740s," *Understanding Bach* 12 (2017): 41. This is a translation of Michael Maul, "zwey ganzer Jahr die Music an Statt des Capellmeisters aufführen, und dirigiren müssen"—Überlegungen zu Bachs Amtsverständnis in den 1740er Jahren," *Bach Jahrbuch* 101 (2015): 75–97. The recently deceased cantor, Gottfried Fleckeisen, cantor in Döbeln since 1704, had been a Leipzig *Thomaner* under Johann Schelle at the end of the seventeenth century. One of the candidates for the vacant position was his son, Gottfried Benjamin Fleckeisen (1719–1789), a *Thomaner* who also served as a prefect in the 1730s and 1740s.

³ *The New Bach Reader*, ed. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, revised and expanded by Christoph Wolff (New York: Norton, 1998), 399. "Den Anfang musten seinen Schüler mit der Erlernung des reinen 4stimmigen Generalbaßes machen. Hernach gieng er mit ihnen an die Choräle; setzte erstlich selbst den Baß dazu, u. den Alt u. den Tenor musten sie selbst erfinden. Alsdenn lehrte er sie selbst Bäße machen." *Bach-Dokumente, Supplement zu Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, ed. Bach-Archiv Leipzig (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963–2017), 3:289. See also the passage in Forkel's biography based on this letter: Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Johann Sebastian Bach, Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke: für patriotische Verehrer echter musikalischer Kunst* (Leipzig: Hoffmeister & Kühnel, 1802; facsimile, Frankfurt: Grahl, 1950), 39–40. *New Bach Reader*, 454. See also *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:289.

instead of stiff and pedantic counterpoint, one begins with chorales?”⁴ The thesis of this article is that Bach’s compositional pedagogy—as gleaned from statements by C. P. E. Bach, the teaching of his pupils and grand-pupils, and significant manuscripts and publications—was more flexible, keyboard- and thoroughbass-centered than is generally supposed and included multiple-bass chorale harmonizations.

Witnessing the Tradition: Bach’s Pupils, Marpurg, Kirnberger, and Kittel

It was not only Bach’s son but also his other pupils and acquaintances who adopted a chorale-based pedagogical approach in their teaching of music fundamentals. Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718–1795), composer, theorist, quarrelsome critic, but an enthusiast for Bach’s music, claimed to have discussed composition with “old Bach” in Leipzig in the late 1740s.⁵ After a brief visit to Paris in 1746 he settled in Berlin, where he came into contact with both C. P. E. Bach and Kirnberger, who were then respectively *Kammermusikus* and violinist at the court of Frederick the Great. Decades later Marpurg produced two collections of chorale-based settings: *Versuch in Figurirten Chorälen sowohl für die Orgel, als für das Clavichord* (Berlin and Amsterdam, [ca. 1789]) and *Zweyte Versuch in figurirten Chorälen und fugen sowohl für die Orgel, als für das Clavichord* (Berlin and Amsterdam, [ca. 1793]). The main title of each collection might be translated as “Attempt at figural chorale settings.” The first volume has twenty-one chorale preludes, the melodies being treated in a variety of ways, such as appearing in different voices or treated canonically. The second volume is a mixture of non-chorale pieces (five fugues and a capriccio) with five chorale preludes, three of which are followed by simple, “*alio modo*,” four-part accompaniment settings. The experimental and pedagogical nature of the chorale preludes in these two volumes suggests that these pieces were exercises in composition and were intended for the progressing organist rather than the absolute beginner.⁶ Earlier, closer in time to his visit to Bach in Leipzig, Marpurg

⁴ “und wer läugnet wohl heut zu Tage den Vorzug der Unterweisung in der Setzkunst, vermöge welcher man, statt der stiefen und pedantischen Contrapuncte, den Anfang mit Chorälen machet?” *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:180; for an alternative translation, see *New Bach Reader*, 380.

⁵ See *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:144 and *New Bach Reader*, 363.

⁶ At the end of the first volume there is a *Nachbericht* which, after dealing with practical issues when the pieces are played on the clavichord, and the directive that the tempo should be slower than slow, ends with the following sentence: “Ich empfehle meine Arbeit der geneigten Beurtheilung vernünftiger Kenner” (I commend my work

gave an example of how chorale melodies should be used both in terms of composition and keyboard practice by learning how to harmonize a given chorale melody in a variety of ways. Thus, in the third volume of his *Handbuch bey dem Generalbasse und der Composition* (1757–1762), he gives eight alternative basses and figures for the first line of the chorale melody *Nun laßt uns den Leib begraben* (Zahn 352).⁷

Johann Philipp Kirnberger, who first studied with Johann Peter Kellner and Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber (both Bach's pupils), and then likely with Bach between 1739 and 1741, was, like Marpurg, one of the most important music theorists of the second half of the eighteenth century. Beginning in 1769 he worked with C. P. E. Bach on the four-volume collected edition of J. S. Bach's four-part chorales, published between 1784 and 1787 by Breitkopf in Leipzig.⁸ At the same time he was editing the four-part chorales, Kirnberger was also working on his study of composition, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*, published between 1771 and 1779.⁹ Some years later he referred to this treatise when writing about Bach's method of teaching composition:

I hold the method of Johann Sebastian Bach to be the best and only one. It is to be regretted that this great man never wrote anything theoretical about music and that his teachings have reached posterity only through his pupils. I have sought to reduce the method of the late Joh. Seb. Bach to principles, and to lay his teachings before the world to the best of my ability in my *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*.¹⁰

to the kindly disposed judgment of knowledgeable connoisseurs); Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Versuch in Figurirten Chorälen sowohl für die Orgel, als für das Clavichord* (Berlin and Amsterdam: Hummel, [ca. 1789]), 21.

⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Handbuch bey dem Generalbasse und der Composition* (Berlin: Lange, 1755–1762; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1974), 3: Tab. 1, Fig. 20, Nos. 1–8, and the discussion, 3:229–31; David A. Sheldon, *F. W. Marpurg's Thoroughbass and Composition Handbook: A Narrative Translation and Critical Study* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1989), 185–87, 284–91. See also Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 238. Chorale melodies are here identified by the numbers in Johannes Zahn, *Die Melodien der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenlieder*, 6 vols. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1889–1893; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1963).

⁸ *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:203, 315–20, 340, 377, 404, and *New Bach Reader*, 380–84.

⁹ Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik, aus sicheren Grundsätzen hergeleitet und mit deutlichen Beyspielen erläutert*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Voss, Decker, & Hartung, 1771–1779; facsimile, Hildesheim: Olms, 1968).

¹⁰ *New Bach Reader*, 320, Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Gedanken über die verschiedenen*

In the second volume of *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (1779) Kirnberger demonstrates chorale-based pedagogy—as Marpurg had done nearly twenty years earlier in his *Handbuch bey dem Generalbasse und der Composition* (see above)—by providing no less than twenty-six alternative figured basses for the *Stollen* of the chorale melody *Ach Gott und Herr, wie groß und schwer* (Zahn 2050).¹¹ Furthermore, there is a Kirnberger manuscript *Choralbuch*, now in the Städtische Bibliotheken, Musikbibliothek, Leipzig.¹² It comprises 240 chorale melodies with multiple figured basses, between three and eleven alternatives for each melody.¹³ These settings are quite different from the four-part chorales of J. S. Bach in the collected edition that Kirnberger edited with C. P. E. Bach, which were mostly extracted from his vocal works. Kirnberger’s pupil, Johann Christoph Kühnau, recognized this difference between the two approaches to setting chorale melodies in the preface to his

Lehrarten in der Composition . . . (Berlin: Decker, 1782), 4–5, and *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:362: “Aus diesem Grunde halte ich die Johann Sebastian Bachesche Methode für die einzige und beste. Es ist zu bedauern, daß dieser große Mann über die Musik nie etwas theoretisches geschrieben hat, und seine Lehren nur durch seine Schüler auf die Nachwelt gekommen sind. Ich habe die Methode des sel. Joh. Seb. Bach auf Grundsätze zurück zu führen und seine Lehren nach dem Maaße meiner Kräfte der Welt, in meiner Kunst des reinen Satzes, vor Augen zu legen gesucht.” While there were similarities in their understanding of Bach’s pedagogy, Marpurg and Kirnberger disagreed on some of the fundamentals; for their disputes, see the discussion in Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879–1880; repr., Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1962), 2:597–99; Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany 1685–1750*, trans. Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (London: Novello, 1884–1885; repr., New York: Dover, 1962), 3:117–18; and Lester, *Compositional Theory*, 246–57.

¹¹ Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes*, 2/1: 22–29; for ten of these figured basses, see Robin A. Leaver and Daniel Zager, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Germany*, vol. 2 of *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song: Historical Documents and Settings*, ed. Robin A. Leaver (Colfax: Leupold, 2017), 113.

¹² Musikbibliothek Leipzig. Ms. III/6/82^a; Carl Ferdinand Becker, *Die Choralsammlungen der verschiedenen christlichen Kirchen. Chronologisch geordnet* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1845), 206.

¹³ Becker, *Die Choralsammlungen*, 206: “Dieses Choralbuch, das sich darin von andern wesentlich unterscheidet, dass einer jeder Melodie drei, vier, fünf bis zehn bezifferte Bässe untergelegt sind, soll von Ph. Kirnberger in Berlin ausgearbeitet sein” (This chorale book, which is quite unlike the others in that each chorale has three, four, five, and up to ten basses below it, was apparently worked out by Kirnberger in Berlin). For Kirnberger’s settings of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, with eleven figured basses, and *Vom Himmel hoch*, with ten figured basses, see Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 114–22.

Vierstimmige alte und neue Choralgesänge (Berlin, 1784), published shortly after the appearance of the first volume of the Kirnberger/C. P. E. Bach edition of four-part chorales. Kühnau was concerned about the practical difficulties of using Bach's four-part chorales to accompany congregational singing.¹⁴ A few years later, a review of Kühnau's 1786 edition of his *Choralbuch* appeared in Johann Friedrich Reichardt's Berlin music journal, which states succinctly: "H[err]. K[ühnau]. rightfully values the recently published four-voice vocal chorales of the late Herr Johann Sebastian Bach as masterpieces of harmony and models of composition, but not as usable in churches or for non-connoisseurs."¹⁵

In the organ chorale settings of Kirnberger's manuscript *Choralbuch* the outer voices create a basic two-voice framework with subordinate middle voices indicated merely by figured bass. In Bach's vocal settings, by contrast, the harmony is created by the combined linear interweaving of four independent voices. The different approach was conditioned by the different function: the latter one vocal, with a small group of singers in mind, and the former one instrumental, intended for the organ accompaniment of a congregation, which could involve a large number of singers in unison. But whether the goal was to develop compositional competence or to encourage keyboard accompanying skills, the same understanding of music theory through figured bass undergirded both approaches.

Johann Christian Kittel first studied with Jakob Adlung (then the organist of the *Predigerkirche*, Erfurt, successor to Johann Heinrich Buttstedt) before becoming Bach's pupil in Leipzig from 1748 until Bach's death in 1750.¹⁶ In 1756 he returned to his native Erfurt to become the organist of the *Barfüßerkirche*, and then from 1762 organist of the *Predigerkirche*, a position he held for the rest of his life. In 2007 an hitherto unknown manuscript *Choralbuch* of settings composed by Kittel was discovered.¹⁷ The document is similar to the Kirnberger

¹⁴ *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:405; see also 3:448, 516.

¹⁵ "H. K. würdigt die nicht längst herausgekommenen vierstimmigen Choralgesänge des seel: Herrn Johann Sebastian Bach ganz richtig als harmonische Meisterstücke und Muster in Composition, aber nicht anwendbar in Kirchen und für Nichtkenner." *Musikalisches Kunstmagazin* 2 (1791): 34.

¹⁶ The basic work on Kittel remains Albert Dreetz, *Johann Christian Kittel der letzte Bach-Schüler* (Leipzig: Kistner and Siegel, 1932), a brief work that needs to be replaced by a more substantial study. For example, Dreetz did not have access to the manuscripts of the Rinck collection at Yale University. See also Gustav Fock, "Zur Biographie des Bach-Schülers Johann Christian Kittel," *Bach Jahrbuch* 49 (1962): 97–104.

¹⁷ See Susan McCormick, "The Significance of the Newly Rediscovered Kittel *Choralbuch*," *Understanding Bach* 8 (2013): 61–85.

Chorallbuch discussed above: 189 chorale melodies with multiple figured basses and usually between three and five alternatives for each melody.¹⁸ Other Kittel sources with multiple basses were previously known, such as the manuscript collection of twenty-five chorale melodies, each given with no less than eight different figured basses, that is in Eastman's Sibley Library, and the related published collection of twenty-four chorale melodies (which are not always the same as in the Sibley manuscript), each supplied with eight alternative basses and figures, edited by Kittel's pupil, Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck.¹⁹ These sources were created for use with his pupils, as becomes clear when compared to the organ textbook Kittel created near the end of his life: *Der angehende praktische Organist* (Erfurt, 1801-1808), which is full of examples based on chorale melodies.²⁰ For instance, at the beginning of the first volume Kittel makes extensive use of the chorale melody *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* (Zahn 4430) and presents different approaches to creating preludes and accompaniments for the melody. In the process he provides examples of how a beginner and an experienced organist might accompany this melody, as well as giving twenty-three alternative harmonizations of the repeated notes of the opening phrase.²¹ Like Marpurg and Kirnberger, Kittel's teaching was based on creating multiple basses and figures for individual chorale melodies.

In the *Vorrede* to *Der angehende praktische Organist*, Kittel states that the method he follows in his book is completely founded upon that of his teacher Bach, a method he had employed for more than fifty

¹⁸ For facsimiles of Kittel's settings of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, each with five figured basses, see Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 123–24.

¹⁹ *25 Chorale, mit achterley General Baessen*, Eastman Sibley Music Library, Accession No. 150596, dated "1791." *24 Choräle mit acht verschiedenen Bässen über eine Melodie von J. Ch. Kittel* (Offenbach/Main: André, [1811]). Susan McCormick, "Johann Christian Kittel and the Long Overlooked Multiple Bass Chorale Tradition" (PhD diss., Queen's University Belfast, 2015), 19 and *passim*, has identified five Kittel manuscripts with multiple figured basses, dated between ca. 1780 and ca. 1800, together with two later prints.

²⁰ *Der angehende praktische Organist, oder Anweisung zum zweckmässigen Gebrauch der Orgel bei Gottesverehrungen in Beispielen*, 3 vols. (Erfurt: Beyer & Maring, 1801–1808; facsimile, Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag, 1986).

²¹ Kittel, *Der angehende praktische Organist* [music supplement], 6–7. The settings for the beginner and the more accomplished organist are given in Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 114–22.

years.²² Since Kittel was writing around 1800, the reference to “more than fifty years” looks back to his time as a pupil of Bach between 1748 and 1750 and underscores his assertion that he continued teaching the way that he had learned from Bach in Leipzig. It seems that Kittel, who was then Bach’s only surviving pupil and approaching his seventieth year, may have thought of *Der angehende praktische Organist* as the way to pass on Bach’s organ pedagogy—grounded in the art of harmonizing chorale melodies—to future generations.²³

Continuing the Tradition: Kittel’s Pupils Häßler, Umbreit, and Rinck

The continuity of chorale-based pedagogy progressed with the second generation of the Bach circle, such as pupils who studied with Kittel. Johann Wilhelm Häßler, Kittel’s nephew, studied with his uncle from 1756 when he was just nine years old, as he described in his brief autobiography included in the second part of his *Leichten Sonaten*, dated Erfurt October 1786.²⁴ Häßler reports that he spent half a year learning the rudiments of figured bass, after which a further three months were spent almost exclusively with chorales.²⁵ He writes: “After about three months I had to play chorales. Here I had opportunity enough to bring into use all previous thoroughbass exercises. Furthermore, I had to set

²² Kittel, *Der angehende praktische Organist*, 1:iii-iv: “Ueber die Methode, auf welche sich die Bearbeitung dieses Buches gründet . . . Ich schweige also darüber und setze nur nach das hinzu, daß die Methode, welcher ich mich beim Unterrichte zu bedienen pflege, ganz nach Bachischen Grundsätzen geformt ist und daß ich ihre Güte durch eine mehre als funfzigjährige Erfahrung im Unterrichte erprobt habe” (I will say nothing regarding the method upon which the approach in this book is based except to add that the method which I am accustomed to using in lessons is formed completely according to Bachian principles and that I have tested its worth in more than fifty years’ experience in teaching).

²³ On Kittel’s pedagogy, see Dreetz, *Johann Christian Kittel*, 28–60.

²⁴ *Sechs leichte Sonaten: fürs Clavier oder Piano-forte* (Erfurt: Author, 1786–1790), unpaginated.

²⁵ “Nach einem halben Jahre wurde der Generalbaß angefangen. Wie sehr kam mir hierbei die bereits erlangte Kenntnis der Intervallen zu statten. Ich brauchte die Terzen, Septimen, u.s.w. nicht erst mühsam von ihren Grundtönen abzuzählen; ich grif sie gleich. Indessen machte mir doch anfänglich die Vermeidung der Oktaven und Quinten,—und mehr noch: die strenge Forderung meines Lehrmeisters, mit der Hauptstimme jedesmal eine Art von Melodie zu führen, genug zu schaffen” (After half a year thoroughbass was begun. How useful the already-acquired knowledge of intervals was to me in this. I had no need to first count tediously the thirds and sevenths, etc. from their bass notes; I grabbed them immediately. The initial avoidance of [parallel] octaves and fifths, and yet more, the strict demand of my teacher to create a kind of melody every time against the main voice [the chorale], was enough to occupy me).

chorales in four voices, whereby at first the cadential clausulae unique to each voice represented an imposing task.”²⁶ Such personal accounts, though somewhat rare, underscore the fundamental importance of the chorale-based pedagogy in the second generation of Bach pupils.

Karl Gottlieb Umbreit studied with Kittel for around four years beginning in either 1778 or 1779.²⁷ Later in life he produced two editions of twelve chorale melodies with at least eight alternative figured basses for each melody: *Zwölf Choralmelodien mit mehreren Bässen* (Gotha: Becker, 1817) and *Fortsetzung von Zwölf Choralmelodien: mit mehreren Bässen* (Gotha: Becker, 1818).²⁸ These clearly grew out of his pedagogical experience with Kittel in Erfurt since they are similar to some of the Kittel manuscripts.

Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck studied in Erfurt with Kittel between 1786 and 1789. In the years before moving to Erfurt, Rinck reports in his autobiography that, with little or no knowledge of the rules of part-writing, he had nevertheless made his first attempts at composition.²⁹ This included *Sechs Choräle mit verschiedenen Bässen*, a manuscript that was still in his possession in 1833 but is no longer traceable.³⁰ Thus the practice of composing alternative figured basses for chorale melodies was already known to Rinck before his studies with Kittel, even though his attempts by his own admission were rudimentary; significantly, this indicates that the practice was also known outside the Bach circle. These chorales with alternative basses were almost certainly

²⁶ “Nach ungefähr drei Monaten musste ich Koral spielen. Hier bekam ich Gelegenheit genug, alle vorigen Generalbaßexempel in Anwendung zu bringen. Weiterhin musste ich Koräle in vier Stimmen aussetzen, wo mir anfänglich die, einer jeden Stimme eigentümlichen, Schlußfälle nicht wenig zu schaffen machten.” *Sechs leichte Sonaten*, facsimile in Willi Kahl, ed., *Selbstbiographien deutscher Musiker des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Köhl: Staufen, 1948), 54.

²⁷ Salomon Kümmerle, *Encyklopädie der evangelischen Kirchenmusik* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1888–1895; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1974), 3:693. Umbreit wrote the obituary of Kittel that appeared in the *Gothaische Nationalzeitung*, 22 June 1809; see Dreetz, *Johann Christian Kittel*, 21.

²⁸ In reference works these editions are variously dated from around twenty-five years before these dates to some years after. The dates given here reflect recent bibliographic databases. What is certain is that they post-date Kittel’s death.

²⁹ Rinck, *Selbstbiographie* (Breslau: Alderholz, 1833), 5; reprint in *Johann Christian Heinrich Rinck: Dokumente zu Leben und Werk*, ed. Christoph Dohr (Cologne: Dohr, 2003), 23: “In dieser Zeit machte ich auch die ersten Versuche in der Composition, obgleich ich von den Regeln der Satzkunst noch wenig oder gar nichts verstand. Sechs Choräle mit verschiedenen Bässen [etc.] . . . welche sich noch unter meinen Papieren befinden.”

³⁰ The document is not among the Rinck manuscripts at Yale.

exercises executed under the guidance of Rinck's earlier teacher, Johann Heinrich Kirchner (1765-1831).³¹ In his autobiography Rinck says that although Kirchner was not a very good organist he was a conscientious and diligent teacher.³² Rinck also says that he studied with Kirchner daily for a year.³³ This must have been between 1783 and 1784, since Kirchner matriculated as a student in theology at the University of Jena in 1784. In the Lowell Mason/Rinck collection at Yale there is a Kirchner manuscript that has the heading *Choräle mit verschiedenen Bässen von Cantor Kirchner in Büchlohe bey Ilmanau. Handschrift des Verfassers. Poss. Rinck.*³⁴ Therefore it seems most likely that these Kirchner settings served as models for Rinck's early attempts at alternative harmonizations of chorale melodies, when he was around the age of fifteen.

What was begun in a rudimentary way was intensified under Kittel in Erfurt. Rinck wrote the following in his autobiography, which reads like an expansion of C. P. E. Bach's account of his father's teaching:

At last, in the year 1786, [I] came to Erfurt and there furthered my [musical] instruction by frequent lessons with the celebrated Kittel, who at that time was the only living pupil of our immortal S. Bach of Leipzig.

I little understood thorough-bass, as the following demonstrates. When I visited Kittel for the first time, in order to test how far I had come [in musical studies] he wrote for me the three bass notes c, d, e, which I had to set in four parts. After I had completed the task, Kittel looked it over and said: "The chords are, of course, individually correctly worked out, but not in their relationship to each other. You have made fifths and octaves in the middle voices. These errors you must avoid and double only one or the other interval." I heard these words but did not understand them; I had not heard about these forbidden progressions . . .

The first exercises in four-part writing comprised numerous settings of chorales and thorough-bass examples. Then I had to learn how to create many basses for a given

³¹ Kirchner was born in the small town of Büchlohe, near Arnstadt, in Thuringia, and from 1790 followed his father as Cantor in Rudolstadt. See Eduard Bernsdorf, *Neues Universal-Lexikon der Tonkunst* (Dresden: Offenbach, 1856–1865) 2:606.

³² "Kirchner war zwar kien fertiger Clavier- und Orgelspieler, aber ein gewissenhafter und fleißiger Lehrer." Rinck, *Selbstbiographie*, 22.

³³ Rinck, *Selbstbiographie*, 23.

³⁴ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, LM 3982.

chorale melody . . . For many chorales I had to create as many as twenty to thirty different settings.³⁵

In the Lowell Mason/Rinck Collection at Yale there are several manuscripts of exercises that Rinck undertook while studying with Kittel.³⁶ One manuscript has the following heading: *Sam[m]lung von Chorälen von C. H. Rinck. Dieses sind zum Theil im Jahr 1788 und 1789 unter der Leitung meines seel. Lehrers [Kittel] gearbeitet worden* (Collection of Chorales by C. H. Rinck. These were in part completed in the years 1788 and 1789 under the guidance of my late teacher).³⁷ Kittel's corrections can be detected in some of Rinck's harmonizations of chorale melodies in this manuscript. For example, Rinck had set the melody *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* (Zahn 6543) in a simple, *nota-contra-notam*,

³⁵ Rinck, *Selbstbiographie*, 23-24: "ich . . . endlich im Jahr 1786 nach Erfurt, um dort den weiteren Unterricht des berühmten Kittel, des damals noch einzigen lebenden Schülers unsers unsterblichen S. Bach zu Leipzig, zu frequenten.

Wie wenig ich damals noch Generalbasse verstand, beweist Folgendes. Als ich Kittel zum ersten Male besuchte, schreibe mir deselbe, um mich zu prüfen, wie weit ich gekommen sei, die drei Bassnoten c, d, e auf, welche ich vierstimmig aussetzen sollte. Nachdem ich diese Aufgabe beendet, sah Kittel dieselbe durch und sagte: 'Die Akkorde sind zwar, einzeln betrachtet, richtig ausgesetzt, allein nicht in ihrer Verbindung mit einander; du hast Quinten u. Octaven in den Mittelstimmen gemacht; um diese Fehler zu vermeiden, muss man das eine oder das andere Intervall verdoppeln.' Ich hörte diese Worte, verstand sie aber nicht; denn ich hatte noch nichts von unerlaubten Fortschreitungen gehört . . .

Die ersten Uebungen im vierstimmigen Satze bestanden im Aussetzen von Chorälen und Generalbaß-Exempleln. Hierauf musste ich mehrere Bässe zu einer gegebenen Choralmelodie erfinden lernen . . . Viele Choräle habe ich wohl 20 bis 30 Mal auf verschiedene Weise variiren müssen."

³⁶ Rinck's extensive collection of manuscripts and printed sources was purchased by Lowell Mason in 1852 and later given to Yale University; see Lowell Mason, *Musical Letters from Abroad: Including Detailed Accounts of the Birmingham, Norwich, and Dusseldorf Music Festivals of 1852* (New York: Mason, 1854), 143-44; Eva J. O'Meara, "The Lowell Mason Library," *Notes* 28 (December 1971): 197-208; Henry Cutler Fall, "A Critical-Bibliographical Study of the Rinck Manuscripts" (master's thesis, Yale University, 1958). On reviewing the collection as a whole, Fall wrote: "we must conclude that the Rinck library was compiled and utilized primarily for didactic purposes, and only secondarily as practical performing material," Fall, "A Critical-Bibliographical Study," 90. See Bernd Genz, "Christian-Heinrich-Rinck—die Erfurter Zeit," in *Rinckiana: Festschrift aus Anlass des zehnjährigen Bestehens der Christian-Heinrich-Rinck-Gesellschaft*, ed. Christoph Dohr (Cologne: Dohr, 2006), 115-48.

³⁷ Beinecke LM 4613; see also the similar undated manuscript in Rinck's hand, *Diese Choräle sind in Erfurt von C. H. Rin[c]k unter die Leitung Kittel gearbeitet worden*, Beinecke LM 4014.

cantional style that Kittel later amended so that the inner parts were made more fluid, with greater individual integrity, by the introduction of passing notes and suspensions.³⁸

Potential Origins: Three Early Multiple-Bass Chorale Sources

The post-Bach tradition of teaching basic music theory by harmonizing chorale melodies can thus be traced in some detail from Bach to his pupils, and from his pupils to their pupils, but how and when Bach himself was introduced to the pedagogy is not so obvious. There is an anonymous manuscript in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky, titled Hamburg ND VI 2366, containing fourteen chorale settings, eight of which have multiple basses.³⁹ Example 1 gives the first two phrases of the first chorale in the manuscript, *Nun komm der Heyden Heyland*, which includes five figured bass lines.⁴⁰ As a whole, the harmonizations in the Hamburg manuscript are contrapuntally sophisticated and exhibit daring chromaticism, often filling in the span of a perfect fourth or fifth chromatically. For instance, see mm. 7–9 of Bass 3 in example 1. Of the three chorales in the manuscript that contain “running” bass lines, as in Bass 2 of example 1, none of them contain figures. This suggests such a bass may have been played by a cello or bassoon, perhaps at the same time as another one of the figured basses, which are presumably for keyboard. But even if one is willing to accept a certain number of “clashes” between the diminished “instrumental” bass and the figured bass, it is not clear that simultaneous performance was necessarily the goal. Perhaps the absence of figures indicates that no inner voices are to be played, or, alternatively, that every chord is a $\frac{3}{2}$ chord.

Regarding the provenance of Hamburg ND VI 2366, RISM dates the source between 1690 and 1699, which would make it the earliest known multiple-bass chorale manuscript. Siegbert Rampe concurs with this dating and proposes that the source originated from the *Nikolaikirche* in Hamburg, where Vincent Lübeck Senior was organist beginning in

³⁸ See the facsimile and comparative examples of the last two lines of *Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele* in Genz, “Christian-Heinrich-Rinck,” 130–31.

³⁹ For a reproduction of the entire manuscript, see Siegbert Rampe, ed., *Vincent Lübeck, Senior & Junior: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Orgel- und Clavierwerke* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2003–2004), 2:72–84.

⁴⁰ Example 1 is also given in Siegbert Rampe, “Abendmusik oder Gottesdienst?: zur Funktion norddeutscher Orgelkompositionen des 17. und frühen 18. Jahrhunderts,” *Schütz Jahrbuch* 25 (2003): 65.

Example 1. *Nun komm der Heyden Heyland*, mm. 1–9, Anonymous, *Choralbuch* (Source: Hamburg ND VI 2366)

The image displays a musical score for the chorale "Nun komm der Heyden Heyland" from the Hamburg ND VI 2366. The score consists of six staves: Choral (treble clef), Bass 1 (bass clef), Bass 2 (bass clef), Bass 3 (bass clef), Bass 4 (bass clef), and Bass 5 (bass clef). The Choral part begins with a whole note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a whole note B4. The Bass parts are figured bass lines. Bass 1 has figures: 6, 7, 8, 6, 6, 5, 4, #, 6, 5b, 9, 8, 7, 6, 8, 6. Bass 2 has figures: 6, 5b, 5, 6, 6, 5, 4, #, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6. Bass 3 has figures: 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6. Bass 4 has figures: 7, 6, 7, 6, 6, 5b, 6, 5, 4, #, 6, 5, 4, 3, 5, 6, 5b, 6. The score concludes with a fermata on the final note of each staff, followed by the text "[etc.]".

1702.⁴¹ As Susan McCormick points out, the idea that the multiple-bass chorale tradition originated with Lübeck is supported by the fact that Lübeck's student Michael Wiedeburg emphasized multiple basses in *Der sich selbst informierende Clavierspieler* (1765-1775).⁴² McCormick discovered, however, that nearly all bass lines in Hamburg ND VI 2366 can be found in the Kirnberger manuscript discussed above, leading her to propose that the Hamburg source "may have originated within the Bach circle in the second quarter of the eighteenth century and that Kirnberger acquired the manuscript during his time with Bach between the years 1739 and 1741."⁴³ This hypothesis, however intriguing, is by no means conclusive, since it depends on a long series of hypothetical circumstances. We will return to the provenance of Hamburg ND VI 2366 shortly.

The earliest collection of chorale melodies with multiple basses discussed in McCormick's dissertation that can be dated with certainty is Georg Bronner's *Musicalische-Choral-Buch*, published in Hamburg in 1715 (reprinted in 1721) for use with the then recently issued *Hamburgischen Kirchen-Gesang-Buch*: 147 chorale melodies, each with two alternate figured basses, one fundamental and the other more animated.⁴⁴ Bronner describes his strategy thus:

Therefore, in God's name I resolved to collect each and every unadulterated melody and supply it with a fundamental chorale-bass, which can also be sung and is very useful for beginners of the noble art of organ playing in accurately accompanying the congregation on the organ, and is very useful for music connoisseurs in their domestic devotions, and whose bass is figured with care and set very simply Likewise, I set another obbligato bass to every chorale, which gives instruction to connoisseurs and especially to apprentices of the art of the organ (who will not have much trouble with it), how they can set a chorale without copious information or great cost.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Rampe, "Abendmusik oder Gottesdienst?," 55.

⁴² McCormick, "Johann Christian Kittel," 246.

⁴³ McCormick, "Johann Christian Kittel," 250.

⁴⁴ See McCormick, "Johann Christian Kittel," 149–51; six Bronner settings with their alternate basses are given in Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 47–52.

⁴⁵ "Dahero dann in Gottes Namen mich resolviret, alle und jede *Melodien* unverfälscht zu colligiren, und selbige mit einem fundamentalen Choral-Bass zu versehen,

Thus, it seems that the first bass is intended to accompany the congregation, while the second presumably may serve this same function or be used as a prelude.

After the setting with two basses there follows an additional trio setting transposed upward in *Kammerton* for singing, for playing in home devotion “without the keyboard on the bassoon, viola da gamba, violoncello, lute, etc.,” or for doubling the previous organ setting.⁴⁶ Example 2a shows the first two phrases of Bronner’s setting of *Nun freut euch lieben Christen Gmein*, while example 2b gives the transposed trio setting. As is common in the manuscript, the bass of the trio setting strongly resembles the first bass in the organ setting, which supports the assertion that the first unornamented setting was primarily intended for organ accompaniment, with or without additional instruments. Bronner says in the *Vorrede* that the third bass line in example 2a is given in order to show how a bass can be elaborated even further. Like the Hamburg ND VI 2366 manuscript, this “running” bass does not include figures, again implying that it is intended either for cello, bassoon, or left-hand keyboard without middle voices. The similar diminution strategies used between the two sources, covering 1:1, 2:1, and 4:1 counterpoint with the chorale, suggest Rampe was correct in positing that the Hamburg manuscript originated from Vincent Lübeck Senior. The reason is that from 1696 to 1701, Bronner substituted at the *Nikolaikirche* for Conrad Möhlmann, assuming full responsibility in 1701; but with Möhlmann’s death in 1702, the position went to Lübeck.⁴⁷ Thus, one can assume that Bronner and Lübeck knew of each other. This suggests that the practice of

welcher auch dazu gesungen werden kan, denen Anfängern der Edlen Organisten-Kunst sehr nützlich zum accuraten Einspielen mit der Orgel, in der Gemeine des Herrn, und denen Liebhabern der Music dienlich in ihrer Hauß-Andacht, welcher Bass auch mit Fleiß bezieffert, und sehr leicht gesezet ist Ingleichen habe annoch, einen andern *obligaten Bass* zu jedem Gesang gesezet, welcher sowol denen Liebhabern, in specie aber denen Lehrlingen der Organisten-Kunst, so eben nicht viel daran zu wenden haben, Anleitung giebet, wie sie ohne weitläufftige Information und grosse Kosten einen Choral vorher tractiren können.” *Musicalische-Choral-Buch* (Hamburg: Greffinger, 1715), eighth unnumbered page of the *Vorrede*.

⁴⁶ “Denen Liebhabern wird es seine schöne Auffmunterung und Begierde zum Lobe und Dienste GOTTes erwecken, in specie, wann sich im Hause mehrere finden, die ohne dem Clavier vom Basson, Viola di Gamba, Violoncello, Lout, &c. plaisir machen, und also den obligaten Bass, doppelt oder stärker besetzen können.” Bronner, *Musicalische-Choral-Buch*, thirteenth unnumbered page of the *Vorrede*.

⁴⁷ *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, 2nd ed., *Personenteil* (2000), s.v. “Bronner, Georg” by Friedhelm Krummacher.

Example 2a. *Nun freut euch lieben Christen G'mein*, mm. 1–5, Bronner (1721)
 Pitches from page p.”c2”; figures for basses 1–2 from pp. 251–52.

Example 2a shows a musical score for the chorale *Nun freut euch lieben Christen G'mein*. It consists of four staves: Choral (treble clef), Bass 1 (bass clef), Bass 2 (bass clef), and Bass 3 (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The Choral part begins with a whole note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4 with a fermata, and finally a quarter note G4. The Bass 1 part has figured bass notation: 6, 6, 5/4 #, 7, 6b, 7. The Bass 2 part has figured bass notation: 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5/4 #, 6, 6, 5, 6, 6, 7. The Bass 3 part features a continuous eighth-note accompaniment pattern. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots, and the word "[etc.]" is written above the final measure.

Example 2b. Trio on *Nun freut euch lieben Christen G'mein*, mm. 1–5, Bronner (1721, 252)

Example 2b shows a musical score for a Trio on the chorale *Nun freut euch lieben Christen G'mein*. It consists of three staves: Choral (treble clef), Middle Voice (treble clef), and Bass (bass clef). The key signature is two flats (Bb, Eb) and the time signature is common time (C). The Choral part begins with a whole note G3, followed by quarter notes A3, B3, and C4, then a half note G3 with a fermata, and finally a quarter note G3. The Middle Voice part has quarter notes G3, A3, B3, and C4, followed by a half note G3 with a fermata, and finally a quarter note G3. The Bass part has figured bass notation: 6, 6, 5/4 #, 6, 6. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

multiple bass chorales was part of the organ accompaniment practice in the *Nikolaikirche* in Hamburg ca. 1700, if not before. There are at least three occasions on which Bach could have encountered the multiple-bass chorale tradition in Hamburg. First, the obituary says that while at Lüneburg (1700–1703) Bach occasionally traveled to Hamburg to hear Johann Adam Reincken.⁴⁸ Second, it is plausible that Bach stopped in Hamburg in late 1705 on the way from Arnstadt to the city of Lübeck or in early 1706 on the return trip. Third, Bach visited Hamburg and played for Reincken in 1720. It is conceivable that Bach also visited the *Nikolaikirche* to hear the famous Arp Schnitger organ on any of these occasions, thus bringing him in contact with the Hamburg tradition epitomized by Vincent Lübeck Senior.

There is another source from around this time that uses chorale melodies to teach basic music theory and practice and that may have served as Bach's introduction to the topic, an idiosyncratic manual published anonymously in Jena in 1704:

The Accurate Organist in Thorough-Bass, that is: a new, clear, and Complete Guide to Thorough-Bass, namely of those Chorales: *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*, and *Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten*, are carried through all keys and chords in such a way that, in those two examples, all the chords, and consequently the signatures of all the notes, and, incidentally, the most convenient devices for the hand, are shown. [alternatively: “pedagogical methods are made available”] Published at Jena by Caspar Junghans, copper engraver. 1704. Printed at Arnstadt by Nicolaus Bachmann.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Bach-Dokumente*, 3:82.

⁴⁹ Johann Philipp Treiber, *Der accurate Organist Im General-Baß. Das ist: Neue, deutliche und vollständige Anweisung Zum General-Baß, Worinne, statt der Exempel, Nur zweene Geistliche General-Bäße, nemlich die von denen Choralen: Was Gott thut, das ist wohlgethan, u. Wer nur den lieben Gott läst walten, u. durch alle Tone und Accorde dergestalt durchgeführt sind, daß in denenselben zweyen Exampeln alle Griffe, mithin die Signaturen aller Clavium, anbey die bequemsten Vorthel zur Faust, gewiesen werden.* Jena, in Verlegung Caspar Junghansens, Kupferstechers. MDCCIV. Arnstadt, druckts Nicolaus Bachmann. Translation from Frank Thomas Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment from Thorough-Bass as Practiced in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (1931; repr., New York: Dover, 1965), 1:243. There is only one locatable copy of the first edition, in the British Library, Shelfmark D-7896.g.33. For this study the authors have used the second edition (Jena, Junghansen, and Arnstadt: Bachmann, 1713), which has an identical collation to the first edition and the University of Michigan copy is accessible digitally at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=genpub;idno=1980665.0001.001>.

The author was Johann Philipp Treiber (1675–1727), who had studied philosophy and law at Jena University and music with Adam Drese, *Kapellmeister* to Anton Günther II, Count of Schwarzburg-Arnstadt.⁵⁰ Although the manual was published by Caspar Junghans, an engraver in Jena, it was actually printed in Arnstadt by Nicolaus Bachmann, who was the official book-printer to the Arnstadt court.⁵¹ The year of publication—1704—is particularly significant, because Bach was then the organist of the *Neue Kirche* in Arnstadt.

The author's father, Johann Friedrich Treiber (1642–1719), had been the rector of the Arnstadt Latin school, known as the Lyceum, since 1674.⁵² There were close interconnections among Arnstadt's court, churches, and school: the *Kapellmeister*, Paul Gleitsmann, Drese's successor, led the music in the principal church of St. Boniface when Anton Günther II was present; the court organist, Christoph Herthum (Heinrich Bach's son-in-law), was also the organist of St. Boniface; and the Lyceum supplied both the *chorus musicus* for the principal church, directed by the cantor Ernst Dietrich Heyndorff, and the student choir for the *Neue Kirche*, directed by Bach.⁵³ From time to time the Lyceum produced Singspielen, such as *Die Klugheit der Obrigkeit in Anordnung des Bierbrauens* (The Wisdom of the Authorities in the Management of Beer-brewing), produced by the Treibers in 1705—the father probably the author of the libretto and the son most likely the composer of the score.⁵⁴ Similarly, there were occasional musical performances at the

⁵⁰ Johann Friedrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* . . . (Halle: Zedler, 1732–1754; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 45:cols. 251–54.

⁵¹ Most eighteenth-century sources identify Arnstadt rather than Jena as the place of publication. See, for example, Jacob Adlung, *Anleitung zu der musikalischen Gelahrtheit* . . . (Erfurt: Jungnicol, 1758; repr., Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1953), 639. Bachmann printed and published, among other items, poetry of the court secretary, Salomon Franck's *Madrigalische Seelen-Lust* (1697), the deacon Johann Christoph Olearius' *Historia Arnstadiensis. Historie der alt-berühmten Schwartzburgischen Residenz Arnstadt* (1701), and the official hymnal of the principality, *Arnstädtisches Verbessertes Gesangbuch* (1701).

⁵² Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon*, 45:cols. 250–51; Johann Christoph Olearius's *Historia Arnstadiensis. Historie der alt-berühmten Schwartzburgischen Residenz Arnstadt* (Arnstadt: Bachmann, 1701; repr., Arnstadt: Donhof, 1998), 172.

⁵³ See Christoph Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (New York: Norton, 2013), 81–83; Klaus Hofmann, "Bach in Arnstadt," in *Der junge Bach: weil er nicht aufzubalten* . . . *Begleitbuch*, ed. Reimar Emans (Erfurt: Erste Thüringer Landesausstellung, 2000), 239–55.

⁵⁴ See Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 1:222–24 and Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work*, 1:226–28.

count's residence in Arnstadt, the *Neideck Schloss*, in which members of the Arnstadt Bach family, together with their pupils, had been prominent for at least a generation.⁵⁵ J. S. Bach apparently continued the tradition of members of the Bach family being involved in such performances, since the Geysersbach incident occurred when he was walking back from *Neideck Schloss*, where he had presumably performed in some way.⁵⁶ Given these interconnections it would seem that Bach must have known about Treiber's *Der accurate Organist*.

The work has received scholarly attention but usually in connection with the development of equal temperament, with only passing comment on its use of chorales.⁵⁷ This is not surprising since the manual is particularly concerned with transposition and the ability to play in all keys, major and minor.⁵⁸ Toward the end of the seventeenth century, notably in the writings of Andreas Werckmeister, there were proposals to temper mean-tone tunings of keyboard instruments, especially the organ. Mean-tone tunings favored common keys but created dissonant "wolfing" in remote keys (the "wolf" interval usually appearing between G# and E♭), so the aim was to reduce the harshness of keys with more than two flats or three sharps. Although it was not yet equal temperament, the modifications facilitated transpositions from the common keys. The new organ in the *Neue Kirche*, Arnstadt—which Bach tested and subsequently played when appointed the church's organist in 1703—was built by the Mühlhausen organ-builder Johann Friedrich Wender,

⁵⁵ See the lists of performers in the Arnstadt court account book for 1687–1688 given in Karl Müller, "Der Junge Bach," in *Arnstädter Bachbuch: Johann Sebastian Bach und seine Verwandten in Arnstadt*, ed. Karl Müller and Fritz Wiegand, 2nd ed. (Arnstadt: Stolzenberg, 1957), 71–74.

⁵⁶ See *New Bach Reader*, 43–45 and *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:16–17.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Joel Lester, *Between Modes and Keys: German Theory 1592–1802* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1989), 85; Wolfgang Horn, "Unorthodoxe Musiktheorie: Einleitung zum Dokument 'Sonderbare Invention: Eine Arie in einer einzigen Melodey aus allen Tönen und Accorden, auch jederley Tacten, zu componiren' von Johann Philipp Treiber (Jena 1702)," *Musiktheorie: Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 22 (2007): 49–56; and Peter Williams, *Bach: A Musical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 237. The transition from modes to keys created problems for the harmonization of modal chorale melodies, as acknowledged by Johann Gottfried Walther and demonstrated by J. S. Bach. See Walther, "Modus Musicus," in *Musicalische Lexicon* (Leipzig: Deer, 1732; facsimile, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1953), 409–15, trans. Lester, *Between Modes and Keys*, 211–33; and Lori Burns, *Bach's Modal Chorales* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon, 1995).

⁵⁸ Although the title page of Treiber's manual claims to cover all twenty-four keys, only twenty are represented.

who was a proponent of modified temperament.⁵⁹ Thus Bach as the organist of the new instrument surely had more than a passing interest in the possibilities of transposition when accompanying congregational singing, a facility he is known to have relished later in life.⁶⁰ Therefore the appearance of the Treiber manual in Arnstadt in 1704 would have interested him on at least two counts: first by the implication of being able to compose and perform in all major and minor keys, something he was to explore systematically in the preludes and fugues of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*; and second, by the use of chorale melodies to teach music theory.

The notation of the two chorale melodies is never given, since they were regarded as so well-known that it was unnecessary to notate them. Thus, only the figured basses are given. The major and minor melodies are alternated: thirteen for *Was Gott thut, das ist wohlgetan* (major) (Zahn 5629): Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24; and eleven for *Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten* (minor) (Zahn 2778): 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22.⁶¹ Example 3 shows the first and last two basses for *Was Gott thut*. The last two (Nos. 23 and 24) were originally in G major but have been transposed to C major here for easier comparison with Bass 1. Treiber gives the remaining basses for *Was Gott thut* in major keys progressing through the circle of fifths (first in G major, then D, A, E, B; F, B \flat , E \flat , A \flat , D \flat). These have almost exactly the same harmonization as No. 1 in example 1, with only slight differences (hence their omission here). Since Treiber does not comment on these differences, they seem to be peripheral to the main purpose of the text, which is to explain the basics of figured bass realization with an emphasis on transposition. While this topic may seem unusual, Treiber's was only one of dozens of

⁵⁹ *New Bach Reader*, 40–41, *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:10–12, and Wieland Meinhold, "Der Mühlhäuser Orgelbauer Johann Friedrich Wender und sein Wirken im Bereich des mitteldeutschen barocken Orgelbaus," *Mühlhäuser Beiträge zu Geschichte, Kulturgeschichte, Natur und Umwelt* 10 (1987): 41, cited in Markus Rathey, "Die Temperierung der Divi Blasii-Orgel in Mühlhausen," *Bach Jahrbuch* 87 (2001): 166.

⁶⁰ In 1739 Bach tested the new Trost organ in the *Schlosskirche*, Altenburg, when, as part of the worship, the hymn *Wir glauben all an einen Gott* was sung. Bach began in D minor but at the end of the first stanza raised it to E-flat minor for the second stanza, and then again to E minor for the third stanza. The ear-witness hinted at the tuning by saying that this was only possible because of Bach playing this rare instrument; see *Bach-Dokumente*, 5:213.

⁶¹ No. 19 of the former is given as Ex. 1, Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment*, 1:246. No. 12 of the latter is given as Ex. 2, Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment*, 1:246–47.

transposition manuals that appeared at the beginning of the century.⁶² Whereas the older, vocally centered modal system could only be transposed down a fifth (from *cantus durus* to *cantus mollis*), the newer, keyboard-centered model of major-minor keys could be transposed to fourteen different pitch levels (if one distinguishes between enharmonic keys such as D \flat /C \sharp). The dozens of transposition treatises published in the first quarter of the eighteenth century indicate that this was a novel skill that required explanation.

Returning to example 3, we see that the last two basses for *Was Gott thut*, Nos. 23 and 24, are diminished in quarters and eighths. These are intended to illustrate the notion of a passing note with explanatory passages such as: “When three notes, either in duple or triple meter, move stepwise ascending or descending whose first two are of the same value—for example both of equal value or both quarter notes in a fast tempo—then one remains still on the second note and holds the chord that one had at the first note.”⁶³

Example 4 shows three of Treiber’s basses for *Wer nur den lieben Gott*. Unlike *Was Gott thut*, this chorale does not receive diminished treatment. Like the basses omitted from example 3, those excluded from example 4 are largely transpositions of each other through the minor-key circle of fifths (beginning in A minor, then e, b, f \sharp , c \sharp , g \sharp ; d, g, c, f, b \flat). The three basses included in example 4 (Nos. 6, 8, and 10) were chosen because they represent the maximum variation across all the settings, though they are still quite similar. Arrows above the first staff indicate where differences do occur. Like example 3, these basses have been transposed to A minor (the key of Bass 1) for easier comparison. The original accidentals have not been altered; editorial additions occur in parentheses. Note, for example, Treiber’s use of a “courtesy” accidental in m. 2 of Bass 6, which in modern practice would be a natural instead of a flat. Similarly, Arnold notes that Treiber’s figuring adheres to an earlier practice that attempted to show interval size through alterations to figures, even when these intervals were diatonic to the key signature.⁶⁴ For Treiber, b \flat indicates a

⁶² Thomas Christensen, *Rameau and Musical Thought in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 170.

⁶³ “Wenn drey Noten, entweder im ganzen oder in Tripel-Tact hinauff oder herunter gerade nach einander gehen, deren die ersten beyden gleiches Valeurs, zum Exempel beyde gleich geschwänzt, oder beyde ganze Viertel im geschindnen Tacte, sind, so liegt man in der andern Noten stille, und behält den Griff, den man zur ersten gehabt hat,” Treiber, *Der accurate Organist*, 15.

⁶⁴ Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment*, 245.

minor sixth, whereas δ indicates a major sixth. The same applies to the other intervals, regardless of the key signature. Thus, the flat-signature in m. 9 in all three bass lines indicates a minor third above the bass (C), not a chromatically altered third (C \flat). This means that the figure “ $\flat 3$ ” in m. 15 in Basses 6 and 8 likely indicates a minor third (D \sharp to F \sharp).

The uniqueness of the manual must have piqued the young Bach's interest and there is therefore a strong possibility that Treiber's 1704 publication may well have been Bach's introduction to the use of chorale melodies in teaching and learning music theory. There are signs that the young organist was particularly interested in various aspects of the chorale while he was in Arnstadt. First, there was the Superintendent's son, Johann Christoph Olearius, deacon in Arnstadt, who was a leading hymnologist of the time, the editor of the *Arnstädtisches Verbessertes Gesangbuch* (1701 and later reprints), and other hymnological studies.⁶⁵ Second, on his return from the extended visit to the city of Lübeck, Bach's harmonic explorations of chorale melodies caused some problems for his congregation; the consistory had to reprove him “for having hitherto made many curious variations in the chorale, and mingled many strange tones in it, and for the fact that the congregation has been confused by it.”⁶⁶ Finally, in his third appearance before the consistory over the Geyersbach affair he made a passing comment that turned out to be incorrect but that reveals his mindset as the organist of the *Neue Kirche*. He asserted that his primary function as organist was with chorales: “he was engaged only for chorales.”⁶⁷

New Evidence of Continuity: C. P. E. Bach Chorales Published with David Kellner's Treatise

Whether J. S. Bach was introduced to chorale-based teaching of music fundamentals by the Treiber manual, his visit to Lübeck, or from some other source, its methodology became significant in teaching his pupils, who in turn taught in much the same way. At the same time that Kirnberger was teaching in Berlin and Kittel was teaching in Erfurt, C. P. E.

⁶⁵ On Bach's connections with Johann Christoph Olearius, see Robin A. Leaver, “The Organist Encounters the Hymnologist: J. S. Bach and J. C. Olearius in Arnstadt,” *Understanding Bach* 7 (2012): 21–28; and Robin A. Leaver, “Churches,” in *The Routledge Research Companion to Johann Sebastian Bach*, ed. Robin A. Leaver (London: Routledge, 2017), 154–157.

⁶⁶ Consistory minute, 21 Feb, 1706. *New Bach Reader*, 46 and *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:20.

⁶⁷ “er sey nur auff Choral . . . bestelltet.” Consistory minute, 19 Aug, 1705. *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:17. *New Bach Reader*, 45 translates it slightly differently.

Bach, now elderly and in his final year, was in Hamburg contributing to the chorale repertory of the city churches. Worship in the Hamburg churches was about to undergo significant changes. New services were being devised but they would not be implemented until after C. P. E. Bach's death: *Ordnung des Gottesdienst in der Hamburgischen Kirchen . . .* (Hamburg: Meyn, 1788).⁶⁸ In preparation for these changes a new hymnal had been published, the *Neues Hamburgisches Gesangbuch zum öffentlichen Gottesdienste und zur häuslichen Andacht ausgefertigt von dem Hamburgischen Ministerio* (Hamburg: Meyn, 1787), together with a new *Choralbuch* containing 104 melodies with figured bass: *Choral-Buch für das neue Hamburgische Gesangbuch* (Hamburg: Schniebes, 1787), edited by Diederich Christian Aumann, organist of the *Heilige Dreieinigkeits-Kirche*. The settings are in the restrained, chorale accompanying style in which sixth-chords predominate.⁶⁹ Later the same year, in the same format as the *Choralbuch*, a small supplement of fourteen melodies with figured bass was published: *Neue Melodien zu einigen Liedern des neuen Hamburgischen Gesangbuchs nebst einigen Berichtigungen von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach des Hamburgischen Musick Director* (Hamburg: Herold, 1787).⁷⁰ Most of the melodies are compositions by C. P. E. Bach (see Table 1). At first glance the small collection appears to be a supplement of “new” melodies, that is, additional to those found in the *Choralbuch* edited by Aumann.⁷¹ However, that is not the case; all fourteen melodies are to be found in the *Choralbuch* and therefore C. P. E. Bach's fourteen *Melodien* are only “new” in the sense that they are revisions. Some of the revisions are essentially transpositions, with the melodies appearing in different keys from those in the *Choralbuch*. The most common alterations involve different note values and the introduction (or elimination) of rests, especially at cadences, and the correction of a few wrong notes. The basses and figures remain essentially unchanged, though infrequently a set of chordal figures are expanded or some other slight modification occurs. Otherwise the style and most of the details of these fourteen chorale settings remain the same as those found in the *Choralbuch*.

⁶⁸ See Reginald L. Sanders, “Die Hamburger Kirchenmusikreform vom 1789 zwischen Tradition und Aufklärung,” *Bach Jahrbuch* 100 (2014): 75–95.

⁶⁹ Six settings are given in Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 136–39.

⁷⁰ Gottlieb Friedrich Schniebes printed and published the 1787 *Choralbuch* and printed the 1787 *Neue Melodien*, which was published by Johann Heinrich Herold.

⁷¹ See, for example Joachim Kremer, *Das norddeutsche Kantorat im 18. Jahrhundert* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1995), 221–22.

Table 1. C. P. E. Bach's *Neue Melodien*.¹

| | | Zahn |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| [1] | No. 23. Wie groß ist des Allmächt'gen Güte | CB No. 98 6025 |
| [2] | No. 37. Die Himmel rühmen des ewigen Ehre | CB No. 17 1550 |
| [3] | No. 60. Gedanke der uns Leben giebt | CB No. 31 718 |
| [4] | No. 120. Jauchzt ihr Erlösten dem Herrn | CB No. 45 4070 |
| [5] | No. 189. Wer ist wohl wie du | CB No. 95 3255 ² |
| [6] | No. 264. Gott ist mein Lied | CB No. 35 86 |
| [7] | No. 290. Was ist mein Stand mein Glück | CB No. 87 1080 |
| [8] | No. 296. Besitz ich nur ein ruhiges Gewissen | CB No. 11 71 ³ |
| [9] | No. 308. Wohl dem, der beßre Schätze liebe | CB No. 103 2424 |
| [10] | No. 312. Du klagst und fühlst die Beschwerden | CB No. 19 760 ⁴ |
| [11] | No. 411. Was sorgst du ängstlich für dein Leben | CB No. 90 3028 ⁵ |
| [12] | No. 435. Auferstehn, ja auferstehn wirst du | CB No. 8 1991 |
| [13] | No. 437. Bald oder spät des Todes Raub | CB No. 9 2427 |
| [14] | No. 4 & 9. Erhabner Gott/ Das walte Gott | CB No. 16 — ⁶ |

¹ The numbers in brackets are those of the 1787 Hamburg *Gesangbuch*; CB = the 1787 *Choralbuch*. Nos. [2], [3], [5] and [6] are given in Leaver and Zager, *Organ Accompaniment of Congregational Song*, 140–42 (Nos. B144–B147). The melodies were new because their texts had not been included in the official Hamburg *Gesangbuch* until the revision of 1787.

² Melody, *Seelenbräutigam, Jesu, Gottes Lamm* (1698), by Adam Drese, Johann Philipp Treiber's teacher in Arnstadt

³ Melody (1760) by Johann Joachim Quantz.

⁴ Early in the eighteenth century, melodies Nos. [10] and [11] were claimed as being composed by a composer other than C. P. E. Bach; see the notes on Zahn 760 and 3280, and Zahn, *Die Melodien*, 6:368–69.

⁵ See previous note.

⁶ The text is in the same meter as the Genevan Psalm 8 (11.11.10.10.) and the melody is a variant of the Genevan tune for the Psalm (Zahn 923).

Nine of the fourteen melodies were composed for texts written by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715–1769), foremost poet of the German Enlightenment, and originally published in his *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1757).⁷² The following year C. P. E. Bach issued his *Herrn Professor Gellerts Geistliche Oden und Lieder mit Melodien . . .* (Leipzig: Winter, 1758). C. P. E. Bach sets the texts as “Geistliche Oden,” expressive strophic arias for solo voice, but the melodies for the same texts in his *Neue Melodien* are of a different character, much more reserved and appropriate for corporate congregational singing. This difference is in effect acknowledged in his brief *Anmerkung*, which appears on the reverse of the title page of the *Neue Melodien*:

So that congregations can learn to sing the new melodies together freely and easily, the organists will do well, when, from the beginning, they support these melodies with moderate intervals, playing the prescribed and straightforward harmonies firmly and without affectation.
Hamburg, 30th July, 1787. C. P. E. Bach.⁷³

Since the fourteen melodies with their figured basses are revised replacements for the versions that appear in the *Chorallbuch*, the words of C. P. E. Bach’s *Anmerkung* are not only applicable to his corrected melodies and their settings, but also to all the melodies in the *Chorallbuch* that are treated in the same way with regard to their figured basses.

C. P. E. Bach’s figured basses of the 1787 *Neue Melodien* are thus different from the accompaniments he created for the melodies of his 1758 settings of the same Gellert texts, settings that comprise fully written-out accompaniments. This is something that the composer draws attention to in the preface to his settings of the *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* of Gellert, dated Berlin 1 February 1758: “I have applied the appropriate harmony and style to my melodies. In this way I have not left you to the willfulness of a rigid Generalbass player.”⁷⁴

⁷² Table 1. Nos. [1]-[4], [6]-[7], [9]-[11].

⁷³ “Damit die Gemeinen die neuen Melodien leicht und bald mitaingen lernen, werden die Herrn Organisten wohl thun, wenn sie im Anfange diese aus leichten Intervallen gesetzte Melodien mit der Vorgescriebenen und untergelegten leichten Harmonie stark und ungeküstelt mitspielen.

Hamburg, den 30^{sten} Julius, 1787.

C. P. E. Bach.”

⁷⁴ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Herrn Professor Gellerts Geistliche Oden und Lieder mit Melodien, nebst einem Anhang zwölf geistlicher Oden und Lieder . . .* Fünfte Auflage (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1784), sig. *2^r: “Ich habe meinen Melodien die nöthigen

What remains unclear about the appearance of the *Neue Melodien* are the conditions that made them necessary. Did Aumann misread the manuscript copies that C. P. E. Bach presumably submitted to him for inclusion in the *Choralbuch*? Or did C. P. E. Bach have second thoughts about some of the details of what he had composed? Whatever the reasons, it seems likely that the publishers were somewhat embarrassed at having to issue these corrected melodies, since they were not only published as an independent publication that could be bound with the original imprint of the *Choralbuch*, but they were also issued appended to another Herold publication: David Kellner, *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Baß . . . Siebente, mit vierzehn Melodien von C. P. E. Bach vermehrte. Hamburg bey J. G. Herold* [undated]. Like the *Neue Melodien*, there is an *Anmerkung* on the reverse of the title page, which in this case is neither dated nor signed:

Through the present work the author [Kellner] has rendered an outstanding service to young people, for here the most important musical truths are presented in such absolute brevity and in such a clear manner that he who studies this work diligently can, without oral instruction, become an accomplished player of thoroughbass. Since it is the opinion of experts that chorales represent the best practice pieces for beginners of thoroughbass, the publisher of this seventh edition [of Kellner's treatise] has appended the 14 Melodien zu einigen Liedern des neuen Hamburgischen Gesangbuchs by the late Capellmeister C. P. E. Bach without raising the price [of this Kellner edition].⁷⁵

In the absence of the year of publication on the title page of this Kellner edition it is usually assigned to the year 1787, the year that the

Harmonie und Manieren beyfügt. Auf diese Art habe ich sie der Willführ eines steifen Generalbaßspielers nicht überlassen dürfen."

⁷⁵ "Der Herr Verfasser gegenärtigen Werks hat sich durch dasselbe um die Jugend, die nach demselben unterrichtet sehr verdient gemacht, denn hier sind die wichtigsten musikalischen Wahrheiten in einer so vollständigen Kürze, und einer so deutlichen Schreibart vorgetragen, daß derjenige, der dieses werk gründlich studirt, ohne einen mündlichen Unterricht, ein vollkommner Generalbaßspieler werden kann. Da nach dem Urtheil der Kenner Chorale die besten Uebungsstücke für die Anänger im General-Baß-Spielen sind, so hat der Verleger diese 7ten Auflage die vom seel. Capellmeister C. P. E. Bach verfertigten 14 Melodien zu einigen Liedern des neuen Hamburgischen Gesangbuchs hinzugefügt, ohne dieserhalb den Preis zu erhöhen."

appended *Neue Melodien* were published. But this cannot be correct because the *Anmerkung* refers to the “seel. Capellmeister,” the “late Capellmeister” C. P. E. Bach, who had died on 14 December 1788. Thus the seventh edition of the Kellner treatise could not have been published, at the earliest, before early 1789.

The unnamed publisher who wrote the note on the reverse of the title page was most likely Johann Heinrich Herold (1742–1810), who had close connections with C. P. E. Bach, acted as his agent, and published some of his music. Herold was frequently the intermediary between the composer and the Leipzig publisher, Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf.⁷⁶ On at least one occasion Herold personally took a manuscript of C. P. E. Bach’s music from Hamburg to Breitkopf in Leipzig.⁷⁷ That the two imprints, Bach’s *Neue Melodien* and Kellner’s *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Baß*, were issued together after C. P. E. Bach’s death would seem to imply that the decision was that of the publisher. However, given that Herold had worked closely with C. P. E. Bach for fifteen years or more, he was in a position to have known personally the composer’s thinking about various aspects of music, both theoretical and practical. Certainly the statement in the *Anmerkung*, that it is “the opinion of experts that chorales represent the best practice pieces for beginners of thoroughbass,” strongly echoes C. P. E. Bach’s 1775 letter to Forkel, as well as his words in the preface to Birnstiel’s 1765 collection of his father’s four-part chorales, both quoted earlier. Similarly, Herold must have known of C. P. E. Bach’s aversion to “the willfulness of a rigid Generalbass player,” which could only be eliminated by the effective teaching and learning of the fundamentals of thorough-bass. Hence the joining together of Kellner’s brief treatise with the examples in C. P. E. Bach’s *Neue Melodien*.

David Kellner (1670–1748), born near Leipzig, had a colorful life, combining a military career in the army of King Charles XII of Sweden with the role of organist.⁷⁸ In 1711 he settled in Stockholm where he

⁷⁶ See the extant letters between C. P. E. Bach and Breitkopf between June 1773 and September 1787; Stephen L. Clark, *The Letters of C. P. E. Bach* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), *passim*.

⁷⁷ The information is an appended note to the letter C. P. E. Bach sent to Breitkopf, dated 14 September 1785; Clark, *The Letters of C. P. E. Bach*, 230.

⁷⁸ See Kenneth Sparr, *David Kellner—A Biographical Survey* (Stockholm, 2012), <http://www.tabulatura.com/davidkellner.pdf>. The study, the fullest accessible account of Kellner, is a compilation of previously published articles. However, it is not always accurate in its citations. Bach’s elder brother, Johann Jacob (1682–1722), also served in the Swedish army and was a chamber musician at the royal court in Stockholm, where he and Kellner performed together from time to time. See Sparr, *David Kellner*, 28.

became the carillonneur of the German church (where his brother was organist) and also organist of St. Jacob's church in the city. Sometime in the 1720s he began writing his *Treulicher Unterricht*, which grew from his teaching. It was first published as:

A true method of thoroughbass in which all long-windedness is avoided, and nevertheless quite clear, detailed, and newly invented strategies are made available, by means of which anyone can in a short time fully master everything that pertains to this science, for the profit not only of those who practice thoroughbass, but also all other instrumentalists and vocalists who take pains to acquire a proper foundation in music, edited by D. K. [David Kellner]. Hamburg: Kissner, 1732.⁷⁹

The preface is dated 2 May 1732 but an advance notice of the publication appeared the month before in the *Nieder-Sächsische Nachrichten von Gelehrten neuen Sachen*.⁸⁰ Around two months later the same journal carried a lengthy review.⁸¹ It was unsigned but it soon became clear that the author was Johann Mattheson (1681–1764), the Hamburg music theorist and critic. The review is a blow-by-blow account of the seven chapters of Kellner's brief treatise, each one subjected to Mattheson's trenchant, sarcastic criticisms. He takes particular aim at the publisher's use of the term "*Rarität*" (rarity) to describe Kellner's treatise. Mattheson scoffs at the idea, drawing attention to the fact that there had been many such treatises published, even in Scandinavia, let alone Germany. But Mattheson seems to have missed the point. Kellner's treatise was not rare per se but its brevity and conciseness certainly were.

Mattheson greatly respected the treatise of Johann David Heinichen, as indeed did Kellner, since the latter modeled a good deal of his treatise on Heinichen's significant work: *Der General-Bass in der Composition, Oder:*

⁷⁹ *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Bass, worinne alle Weitläufftigkeit vermieden, und dennoch gantz deutlich und umständlich allerhand sothane neu-erfundene Vortheile an die Hand gegeben werden, vermöge welcher einer in kurtzer Zeit alles, was zu dieser Wissenschaft gehöret, sattsam begreifen kan. Zum Nutzen, Nicht allein derer, so sich im General-Bass üben, sondern auch aller andern Instrumentisten und Vocalisten welche einen rechten Grund in der Music zu legen sich befeissigen, herausgegeben von D. K. (Hamburg: Kissner, 1732).*

⁸⁰ *Nieder-Sächsische Nachrichten von Gelehrten neuen Sachen Auf das Jahr 1732. den 10. April (No. 29), 257–58.*

⁸¹ *Nieder-Sächsische Nachrichten von Gelehrten neuen Sachen Auf das Jahr 1732. den 26. Junii (No. 51), 441–47.*

Neue und gründliche Anweisung Wie Ein Music-Liebender mit besonderm Vortheil, durch die Principia der Composition . . . (Dresden: Autore, 1728). Compared with Heinichen's treatise, Mattheson faults Kellner's as being too short, not giving enough examples, omitting discussion of some harmonic intervals, and having either missing or inadequate coverage of other important areas. But as significant as Heinichen's comprehensive treatise is, it was issued only once in 1728, whereas Kellner's was issued in at least eight editions between 1732 and 1796, all, apart from the first edition, published by Herold in Hamburg, as well as being issued in Swedish (Stockholm, 1739), Dutch (Amsterdam, 1741 and 1751), and Russian (Moscow, 1791). The second edition of 1737 reveals that the print-run of the first edition was 2,000 and that all were sold within a year. If the print-run of each of the subsequent editions was only half that of the first edition the total number of copies produced would have been around 10,000, and possibly more. This says much about the effectiveness, usefulness, and impact of Kellner's treatise, which was still being used in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Obviously not everyone agreed with Mattheson's dismissive review of Kellner's *Treulicher Unterricht*. The second edition of the treatise was issued with a preface by Georg Philipp Telemann—C. P. E. Bach's godfather—dated 26 April 1737. Telemann acknowledges that some of the criticisms are indeed valid and he lists a number of examples. Nevertheless he concludes:

But all this could not undermine the fact that in the space of one year, 2,000 copies [of the first edition] were sold, and one is now convinced that the many good aspects, here expressed in such succinct arrangement, far exceed the minor things that might be improved. The current new and expanded edition, which has already been eagerly sought after for some time, will hopefully, through a renewed and favorable public reception, bring to light a new examination of the worth of this work.⁸²

⁸² David Kellner, *Treulicher Unterricht im General-Bass . . . Zweyte und vermehrte Auflage. Nebst einer Vorrede Hn. G. P. Telemanns* (Hamburg: Herold, 1737), sig.)*(2^v). "Aber alles diß hat nicht verhindern können, daß in Jahres-Zeit nicht 2000 Exemplarien sind vergriffen worden, und man ist nunmehr überführet, daß das viele Gute, so hier in bündiger Ordnung vorgetragen wird, das wenige zu verbessernde weit übertrifft. Gegenwärtige andere und vermehrte Auflage, die schon von geraumer Zeit her begierig gesucht worden, wird hoffentlich, durch eine abermalige günstige Aufnahme, neue Proben von der Würde dieses Werkes an den Tag legen."

Telemann was not alone in valuing Kellner's treatise. In Leipzig, J. S. Bach's pupil Lorenz Christoph Mizler founded his musical journal in 1736. In the first issue he included a favorable notice and summary of the first edition of Kellner's treatise that in passing refers to Mattheson's review. Mizler concludes that Kellner's treatise is "useful to be put in front of a beginner. Then afterwards Herr Mattheson's *Organisten-Probe* [1719], whose *General-Bass-Schule* [1731], and Heinichen's *General Bass* [1728] can be used to great advantage."⁸³ Mizler thus endorses the value of Kellner's treatise for introducing beginning pupils to the intricacies of music theory, after which they could progress to the treatises of Mattheson and Heinichen.

In 1738 Mizler founded the *Correspondierende Societät der Musicalischen Wissenschaften* and various members are known to have appreciated Kellner's treatise. Bach, who became a member in 1747, may have shared their opinion. Two of the early members, Mizler himself and Telemann, had commended Kellner's work before the Society was founded, and a third member, Christoph Gottlieb Schröter (1699–1782), did so after the Society was disbanded in 1754. In the preface to his thoroughbass treatise Schröter wrote:

The well-known Swedish captain, Herr David Kell[n]er's *Unterricht im Generalbasse*, which, because of its low price, has been in great demand, and consequently has been reprinted several times, contains much that is good, in spite of its brevity. People have complained that this honorable author neither observed order, nor gave adequate examples; whereupon others answered: This martial spirit has done more than one might have suspected.⁸⁴

⁸³ Lorenz Mizler, *Musicalische Bibliothek oder Gründliche Nachricht, nebst unpartheyischen Urtheil von Musikalischen Schriften und Büchern, Erster Theil . . .* (Leipzig: Mizler, 1736), 27: "so daß es vor einen Anfänger wohl zu gebrauchen ist. Nach diesen, können Herrn Matthesons Organisten-Probe, dessen General-Bass-Schule, und Heinichens General-Bass mit vielen Nutzen gebraucht werden."

⁸⁴ Christoph Gottlieb Schröter, *Deutliche Anweisung zum General-Bass . . .* (Halberstadt: Groß, 1772), ix: "Die bekannten schwedischen Capitans, Herrn David Kell[n]ers Unterricht im Generalbasse, welcher wegen seines geringen Preißes stark aufgekauft, folglich etlichemal aufgeleget worden enthält seiner Kürze ohngeachtet viel gutes. Man hat sich beschweret, daß dieser belobte Verfasser weder Ordnung beobachtet, och zulängliche Exempel gegeben; worauf andere geantwortet: Dieser kriegerische Geist hat mehr geleistet, als man von ihm vermuthen konnte." Later in the preface (lvi) he acknowledges that while Kellner is good for the beginner, it will need to be augmented if the pupil is to progress. Schröter's treatise was completed by the end of 1754; the prefatory material is dated 20 December 1769.

Schröter, organist in Nordhausen and, like Marpurg, an “associative” pupil of Bach, was a strong supporter of *Kapellmeister* Bach with regard to the Scheibe controversy in 1746; his account was published by Mizler in his *Musikalische Bibliothek*.⁸⁵ And when the rector of the *Freiberg Gymnasium*, Johann Gottlieb Biedermann (1705–1772), published his *De vita musica* (Freiberg: Matthae, 1749), which undermined music in school and church, Bach personally requested that Schröter refute the document.⁸⁶ Schröter did so, but his draft was drastically revised, by whom it is not entirely clear, blame was exchanged, and no conclusion was reached because Bach’s death intervened.⁸⁷ Until things fell apart over the response to Biedermann, however, Bach and Schröter seem to have had a close relationship.

Thus, among at least three members of Mizler’s *Societät* (Mizler, Telemann, and Schröter), Kellner’s brief treatise was regarded as a useful introduction to basic music theory and practice. A common theme that runs through their various evaluations of the brief treatise is that it is particularly suited for the beginning pupil. This raises the question of whether J. S. Bach, in the last decade of his life, may have also used Kellner’s *Treulicher Unterricht* for his beginning pupils at the *Thomasschule*. Of course, with star pupils such as Johann Friedrich Agricola, Johann Christoph Altnickol, Johann Friedrich Doles, Kirnberger, Kittel, et al., Kellner would not be enough and Bach would want to move them on to study Heinichen’s *Der General-Bass in der Composition*—for which he was the agent in Leipzig—as soon as they had grasped the basics.⁸⁸

But where did Bach begin with his pupils, especially the boys who went through the *Thomasschule* who may not have been as gifted as those mentioned above, who nevertheless went on to become competent organists in Saxony and beyond?⁸⁹ There is the single manuscript of *Joh. Seb. Bach Generalbass regeln abschrift 1738 Leipzig*, partly extracted from Friedrich Erhardt Niedt’s *Musicalische Handleitung oder Gründlicher*

⁸⁵ See Thomas Christiansen, “Bach Among the Theorists,” in *Creative Responses to Bach from Mozart to Hindemith*, *Bach Perspectives* 3, ed. Michael Marissen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 23. *New Bach Reader*, 352–53 and *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:432–34.

⁸⁶ *New Bach Reader*, 241–43 and *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:461–64.

⁸⁷ For a summary of the unfortunate affair, see Heinz Gärtner, *John Christian Bach: Mozart’s Friend and Mentor*, trans. Reinhard G. Pauly (Portland: Amadeus, 1994), 47–51.

⁸⁸ See *New Bach Reader*, 139 and *Bach-Dokumente*, 2:191.

⁸⁹ See the partial listing in *New Bach Reader*, 316–17.

Unterricht . . . Erster Theil (Hamburg: Schiller, 1710).⁹⁰ The origins of this document remain uncertain and one would have expected more than a single copy to have survived if it was part of Bach's regular practice to have his beginning pupils copy out this basic information.⁹¹ But it was necessary for the pupils to assimilate the details of such fundamentals before they could put it all together in creating basses and harmonies for chorale melodies. Kellner's treatise was accessible and affordable and the evidence is that it was used widely, a usage that seems to have included Bach's pupils and their pupils. For example, Rinck, the pupil of Bach's pupil Kittel, owned a copy of the second edition, and Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750–1813), the pupil of Bach's pupil Gottfried August Homilius (1714–1785), had copies of the first two editions.⁹² And was C. P. E. Bach in Hamburg in the habit of using later editions in his teaching, which in turn encouraged the publisher Herold to issue the *Neue Melodien* with Kellner's *Treulichher Unterricht* after C. P. E. Bach's death? If so, was C. P. E. Bach encouraged to do so by his father's chorale-based pedagogy or by his godfather's endorsement of the Kellner treatise, or both?

Conclusion

The evidence put forth in this article—C. P. E. Bach's and Kirnberger's description of J. S. Bach's teaching; the publications of Bach's students Marpurg, Kirnberger, and Kittel; the activities of his grand-pupils Häßler, Umbreit, and Rinck; and new links between C. P. E. Bach and Kellner—all bears witness to the centrality of figured-bass chorale harmonization in J. S. Bach's pedagogy. As these documents imply, Bach's pedagogy probably did not usually involve use of his four-part vocal chorales, for these only took on a pedagogical role after Bach's death through the editions of C. P. E. Bach and Kirnberger. Instead, Bach very likely focused his teaching around the harmonization of chorales at the keyboard, often with multiple basslines. Indeed, numerous chorale

⁹⁰ See *Beiträge zur Generalbass- und Satzlehre, Kontrapunktstudien, Skizzen und Entwürfe*, ed. Peter Wollny, supplement to Johann Sebastian Bach, *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2011): 2–36; English translation in *J. S. Bach's Precepts and Principles for Playing the Thorough-Bass or Accompanying in Four Parts, Leipzig, 1738*, trans. and ed. Pamela L. Poulin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994). There is also the brief *Regeln vom General Basso* Bach prepared for Anna Magdalena in the early 1740s; *Bach-Dokumente*, 1:252–54.

⁹¹ The specific identity of the scribe, once thought certain, is now called in question. See Leaver, "Bach's Choral-Buch?," 19.

⁹² Beinecke, LM 3929. Sparr, *David Kellner*, 68.

manuscripts with multiple basslines survive from Bach's pupils and grand-pupils, indicating the effectiveness and longevity of this pedagogical tradition. It thus becomes clear that multiple-bass harmonization played a central role in Bach's pedagogy, a fact practically unacknowledged until recently. This tradition may have originated around Vincent Lübeck Senior and the *Nikolaikirche* in Hamburg, ca. 1700, as evidenced by the similarities between the anonymous Hamburg ND VI 2366 and Bronner's 1715 chorale book. Treiber's *Der accurate Organist* (1704) is an important addition to this origin story, for, although multiple-basses is not its primary goal, it predates Bronner's *Choral-Buch* and has probable connections to Bach. It is therefore possible that Bach learned of multiple-bass chorale harmonization either from Treiber's 1704 publication or from his possible visits to Hamburg. The findings presented here begin to correct a long-standing misconception that Bach's chorale-based pedagogy was historically anomalous because the complexity of his vocal chorales transcends contemporaneous stylistic norms. Rather, this article portrays Bach's teaching as a practical, hands-on approach that was founded in the most widespread theoretical paradigm of his day—thoroughbass at the keyboard.

Abstract

Recently discovered chorale books from J. S. Bach's circle of pupils have prompted a re-evaluation of long-held assumptions regarding the function of the chorale in Bach's pedagogy. These sources, together with documents from Bach's pupils and grand-pupils, show that the keyboard chorale, not the vocal chorale, played the central role. This keyboard chorale tradition, which often included multiple basslines for each chorale melody, is witnessed by Bach's pupils, Marpurg, Kirnberger, and Kittel, and was carried into the nineteenth century by Kittel's students Häßler, Umbreit, and Rinck.

Potentially the earliest known source with multiple-bass chorales is Hamburg 2366, but its provenance is uncertain. Analysis of the basses in this source reveals similarities with Georg Bronner's *Musicalische-Choral-Buch* (Hamburg, 1715). This suggests Siegert Rampe was correct in tracing Hamburg 2366 to Vincent Lübeck and the *Nikolaikirche* in Hamburg c.1700, because Lübeck became organist there in 1702, replacing Bronner. Thus, Bach may have been introduced to multiple-bass keyboard chorale pedagogy on visits to Hamburg between 1700 and

1705. The earliest firmly datable source with multiple basses is Johann Philipp Treiber's *Der accurate Organist* (Arnstadt, 1704). Bach became organist at Arnstadt in 1704, meaning Treiber is another possible origin for Bach's introduction to keyboard chorale pedagogy.

New evidence implies that C. P. E. Bach continued this teaching tradition. His publisher, Johann Heinrich Herold, appended C. P. E. Bach's *Neue Melodien* (Hamburg, 1787) to David Kellner's *Treulicher Unterricht* around 1789. Herold's preface says that "experts" (likely C. P. E. Bach) hold chorales to be the best practice pieces for beginners of thoroughbass. Kellner's enormously popular figured bass treatise, originally published in Hamburg in 1732, is shown to have multiple connections with both J. S. and C. P. E. Bach, and may well have influenced Herold's decision to link the treatise with C. P. E. Bach's *Neue Melodien*.

The longevity of this century-long keyboard chorale tradition indicates its effectiveness and suggests that historically informed teaching today should align itself more closely with Bach's actual pedagogy.