

**Religious Studies/General Honors 239**  
**Music in the History of Christianity: Johann Sebastian Bach**

**E. Ann Matter**  
**224 Logan Hall**  
**898-8614**  
**amatter@ccat.sas.upenn.edu**

**Fall, 2001**  
**Monday 2-5**  
**Jaffe 201**

This course will explore the intersection of Christian theology, liturgy and in the work of Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was one of the most prolific, and most profound, of church musicians of any age; his legacy is vast beyond the scope of a one-semester class. We will focus on Bach's choral works (cantatas, passions, motets and the "Mass") relating them to traditions of piety and prayer, the hymnody of medieval and early modern Europe, and Bach's particular situations of patronage at various stages of his career. Some of the issues to be considered are the transition from "Catholic" to "Protestant" forms of worship, the influence of German Pietism on established religion, and the portrayal of Jews and Judaism in Bach's works.

Each class will include a short background lecture, listening, and discussion. Students are expected to come to class prepared by having done the assigned reading and listening in advance. Texts will be provided a week in advance. Each student will write two 5-7 page papers, due on the dates indicated below. The papers will be discussed in class.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**September 10** Introduction to the course. The early cantatas of Bach and their background, Life and Death in Lutheran Theology:  
Cantata #106, "Gottes Zeit is die allerbeste Zeit" ("Actus Tragicus")  
In Eleven Great Cantatas pp. 279-308. (English texts at end of the book)

**Part 1: Bach Before Leipzig**

(When available, read Wolff, prologue and chapters 1-7)

**September 17** Cantata #4 "Christ lag in Todesbanden" Eleven Great Cantatas pp. 2-28  
Reading: 1. (RR) Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Four Seasons of J. S. Bach," "The Musical Heritage of the Reformation," in Bach Among the Theologians, pp. 2-28.  
2. C. Wolff, "Bach's Pre-Leipzig Cantatas," in Wolff and Koopman (W&K) pp. 3-17.  
3. Martin Petzoldt, "Liturgical and Theological Aspects" in W&K, pp. 109-123.  
4. Christoph Wolff, "Choir and Instruments," In W&K pp. 143-153.  
5. (RR) Gerhard Herz, Bach Cantata No. 4: "Christ lag in Todesbanden", all.

**September 24** Cantata #182 "Himmelskönig sei willkommen" (translations provided)  
Reading: 1. (RR) Pelikan, "Rationalism and Aufklärung in Bach's Career," pp. 29-41.  
2. Peter Wollny, "Genres and Styles of Sacred Music," in W&K, pp. 19-33.  
3. Claus Oefner, "Musical Life in the Towns and Courts," in W&K, pp. 35-47.

4. George B. Stauffer, "Bach the Organist," in W&K pp. 77-91.
5. Hans-Joachim Schulze, "Bach the Composer," in W&K pp. 93-97.

## **Part 2: The Leipzig Bach**

(Wolff, chapter 8 – end)

**October 1** Cantata #80 "Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott" Eleven Great Cantatas pp. 195-254.

- Reading: 1. (RR) Pelikan, "Confessional Orthodoxy in Bach's Religion," pp. 42-55.
2. Andreas Glöckner, "Stages in Bach's Life and Activities," in W&K, pp. 49-75.
  3. Martin Petzoldt, "Bible, Hymnbook and Worship service," in W&K pp. 125-141.
  4. (RR) Christoph Wolff, "The Reformation Cantata "Ein feste Burg," in Bach, Essays on His Life and Music, pp. 152-161.
  5. (RR) Robin A. Leaver, "Music and Lutheranism," in The Cambridge Companion to Bach, ed. John Butt, pp. 35-45.

**October 8** Cantata # 140 "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" in Eleven Great Cantatas, pp. 309-342

- Reading: 1. Gerhard Herz, Bach, Cantata No. 140: "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme", all.
2. Daniel R. Melamed, "Choruses and Chorales," in W&K pp. 155-169.
  3. Peter Wollny, "Arias and Recitatives," in W&K pp. 171-183.
  4. (RR) Pelikan, "Pietism, Piety, and Devotion in Bach's Cantatas," pp. 56-71.
  5. (RR) E. Ann Matter, "The Love Between the Bride and the Bridegroom in Cantata 140: 'Wachet auf!' from the Twelfth Century to Bach's Day," in Die Quellen Johann Sebastian Bachs: Bachs Musik im Gottesdienst ed. Renate Steiger, pp. 107-118.

## **October 15 FIRST PAPER DUE**

Motets "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied" (BWV 225), "Jesu, meine Freude" (BWV 227) (texts will be provided)

- Reading: 1. Ulrich Letsinger, "Affections, Rhetoric, and Musical Expression," in W&K pp. 185-197.

**October 22** Magnificat in D (BWV 243) (texts will be provided)

- Reading: 1. (RR) Robin A. Leaver, "The Mature Vocal Works and their Theological and Liturgical Context," in The Cambridge Companion to Bach, ed. John Butt, pp. 86-122.

**October 29** Mass in B minor (BWV 232) (texts will be provided)

- Reading: 1. Ton Koopman, "Aspects of Performance Practice," in W&K pp. 199-212.
2. (RR) Christoph Wolff, "Origins of the Kyrie of the B Minor Mass," in Bach, Essays on His Life and Music, pp. 141-151.
  3. (RR) Christoph Wolff, "The Agnus Dei of the B Minor Mass: Parody and New Composition Reconciled," in Bach, Essays on His Life and Music, pp. 332-339.
  4. (RR) Pelikan, "Aesthetics and Evangelical Catholicity in the B Minor Mass pp. 116-127.

**November 5** Saint Matthew Passion (BWV 244) (texts will be provided)

Reading: 1. (RR) Pelikan, "Themes and Variations in the Bach Passions," pp. 74-88.  
2. (RR) Eric Chafe, "Key Structure and Tonal Allegory in the Passions of J.S. Bach: An Introduction," Current Musicology 31 (1981) 39-54.

**November 12** Saint Matthew Passion, continued

Reading: 1. (RR) Pelikan, "Meditation on Human Redemption in the Saint Matthew Passion," pp. 89-101.  
2. (RR) Michael Marissen, "Religious Aims in Mendelssohn's 1829 Berlin-Singakademie Performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion," The Musical Quarterly 77 (1993) pp. 718-726.

**November 19 NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!**

**November 26** Saint John Passion (BWV 245), in Saint John Passion in Full Score.

Reading: 1. Michael Marissen, Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism and Bach's St. John Passion.  
2. (RR) Pelikan, "'Christus Victor' in the Saint John Passion," pp. 102-115.

**December 3** Saint John Passion, continued

Reading (all provided) 1. Marie McCullough, "Bach Work Disputed as Anti-Semitic," The Philadelphia Inquirer February 17, 1995.  
2. Christopher Shea, "The Passion at Swarthmore," The Chronicle of Higher Education March 3, 1995.  
3. Martin E. Marty, "Art that offends," Christian Century March 22, 1995.  
4. Barbara Haddad Ryan, "Passionate About Bach," Swarthmore College bulletin May, 1995, pp. 12-17, 69.  
5. Daniel Steptner, "One Man's Passion," Program Insert, Boston, June, 1985.

**December 10** Final Class discussion and listening.

Copies of Robin A. Leaver, Bach's Theological Library (1983) available.

**FINAL PAPER DUE BY NOON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

**BOOK LIST (Books are available at the Penn Book Center at 34<sup>th</sup> and Sansom and are on reserve in Rosengarten Reserve Room of Van Pelt Library. Xeroxed readings are on reserve at Rosengarten and may be copied for individual use).**

1. Christoph Wolff, Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician (W.W. Norton & Company, 2001) (This item will be published in paper in September 2001) = Wolff
2. Christoph Wolff and Ton Koopman, editors, The World of the Bach Cantatas : Early Sacred Cantatas - Volume I (W. W. Norton & Company, 1995) = W&K
3. Johann Sebastian Bach, Cantata No. 140, Gerhard Herz, editor (W.W. Norton & Company, 1972)
4. Johann Sebastian Bach, Eleven Great Cantatas (Dover Publications, 1976)
5. Michael Marissen, Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion (Oxford University Press, 1998)
6. Johann Sebastian Bach, St. John Passion in Full Score (Dover Publications, 1993)