



Hermeneutik zu Johann Sebastian Bach



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Hermeneutics of Bach

Research and research results by Christoph Bossert

Feature 7

The path of hermeneutics as a path of enlightenment -
10 examples of the "*step beyond*"

Hermeneutics
instructional video in 12
features
with
Prof. Dr h. c. Christoph Bossert
on the Klais organ (2016) in the Great Hall of the
Würzburg University of Music

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The path of hermeneutics as a path of enlightenment - 10 examples of the "step beyond"

Within the sequence "*Hermeneutics on Bach*", I come to Feature 7. The path of hermeneutics is a way to bring light into the darkness, hermeneutics wants to enlighten. In our short feature 5, we talked about the number 1335. Enlightenment was given with a view to the end of the book of Daniel, where it says: "*Blessed is he who waits and reaches one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days! And now Daniel, go and rest until the end comes, until you rise to your inheritance at the end of days* (chapter 12, verses 12/13). The reference piece was the fourth-last piece from the 36 chorales, No. 33 *Do it with me, God, according to your goodness*, combined with the symmetrical counterpart No. 4 *Lord God, now open the heavens*.

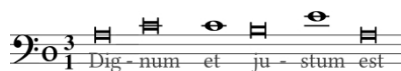
In the previous feature 6, the linking of the numbers 118 and 22 was the key through which the sequence of observations was finally given a biblical meaning by locating the rule break in the 118th half-note of the Fuga in A minor from WK I in the course of the 22nd theme appearance. The inference to Psalm 118, verse 22 was plausible in terms of clarification.

In both Feature 5 and Feature 6, we came across an externally significant phenomenon that I call the "step beyond". I think that the history of music is full of the step beyond. In the Baroque period, the discipline for the 'step beyond' is often the 'musical riddle'. I would like to give a total of ten examples of this. With regard to such

My first example of "*steps beyond*" - as I call it in my parlance - refers to Girolamo Frescobaldi. This was mentioned in the previous feature.

(1) In his riddle-ricercar from the *Fiori musicali* and there in the third and last organ mass, the *Messa della Madonna*, Frescobaldi calls for a search for suitable places where the six notes of the riddle can be sung; he poses the question as to which rhythm one should sing in, as the six notes are notated in triple metre, but the riddle-ricercar itself sounds in quadruple or duple metre. The question of rhythm is also part of the riddle. And Frescobaldi poses the riddle question of the words that are to be sung.

Within the sequence "*Hermeneutics before Bach*", Martin Sturm has his say in Feature 7 with his solution to this riddle. His solution leads to the watchword "*Dignum et justum est*":




(2) Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, who wrote the predecessor work to the *Well-Tempered Clavier* entitled *Ariadne Musica*, quotes Frescobaldi's Riddle Ricercar in the Fuga in C sharp minor of his work, which I briefly played in the previous Feature 6. Fischer also uses the synopsis of the beginnings of Praeludium in C major and Praeludium in C sharp minor to prove why he absolutely needed the key of C sharp minor and could not simply write his piece in D minor. I would like to explain this briefly.


(a) We first hear the beginning of the Fuga in C sharp minor as a reference to Frescobaldi's enigmatic Ricercar. Fischer takes up the beginning of this ricercar by Frescobaldi and swaps Dux and Comes:

NB 1, Fischer:  opposite the Ricercar by Frescobaldi:

NB 2, Frescobaldi 

(b) Now I am talking about a synopsis between Praeludium in C major and C sharp minor. By that I mean the following:

NB 3:  This is the beginning of Praeludium in C major.

NB 4:  the beginning of Praeludium in C sharp minor.

Now I say: here Fischer proves why he needs the key of C sharp minor. What do I mean by that?

Let's compare the two examples:  (Pr C) and  (Pr C sharp).

At the end of this small musical statement in Praeludium in C sharp minor is a diminished fourth *e'-h sharp*, but in synopsis with the Praeludium in C major, this diminished fourth is also the major third *c'-e'*. Thus *c'-e'* and *his-e'* coincide in one. The fact that the two consecutive preludes in C major and C sharp minor touch the same keys and yet mean completely different things - a diminished fourth compared to the *tertia maior* - means that Fischer assigns the key of C sharp minor the place of the *Passio Jesu*. The key of C sharp minor proves to be a necessity in the symbol of *C sharp* vs. *E sharp*: *C sharp* and *E sharp* are diametrically different in essence and yet they play the same keys. Now I say: Fischer can only achieve this playing through the key of C major in comparison to C sharp minor; if he were to set C major and D minor opposite each other, this identity of the same keys and yet as a major third versus the diminished fourth would not be

possible.

possible. The hermeneutical-theological statement is that this refers to a theological symbol of *perfectio* and *imperfectio* in the sense of Jesus' resurrection and his death on the cross. To demand the key of C sharp minor at all is then the "*step beyond*", linked to the idea of the death and resurrection of Jesus as the theological-existential *step beyond*.

(3) The reflection of a musical text is also a "*step beyond*". Buxtehude's linking of *Contrapunctus* and *Evolutio* in his composition about the song *Mit Fried und Freud fahr ich dahin*, discussed in Feature 12 of "*Hermeneutics before Bach*", is a good example of this¹

(4) In the only authentic Bach portrait, namely the one painted by Elias Haußmann in 1747, Bach presents the viewer with the *Canon triplex a sei voci*, i.e. for six voices.



Visually, however, the other three sound in inversion, but these are not part of the painting. The caption *a sei voci* refers to *rectus* and *inversus*, but only the *rectus* is visible and is also a metaphor for '*beyond*'.



(5) In German culture at least, everyone will know the verse from Matthias Claudius' beautiful evening song *Der Mond ist aufgegangen* (*The moon has risen*), which I would now like to quote:

*See the moon standing there, it
is only half visible
and yet it is round and
beautiful! There are many
things that we can laugh at
with confidence,
because our eyes do not see them.*

¹ See Bach's mirror fugues Cp 12 a, b and 13 a, b of the *Art of Fugue* as well as Bossert's statements on "Piece 14 Contrap."

(6) The suite, i.e. a dance sequence, is usually concluded by the gigue. In Pachelbel or Bach, for example, we sometimes find a movement *beyond this*. In his *Partia* in D minor for violin solo, for example, Bach adds the famous *Ciaccona*; or the last French Suite in E major has a *Petit Menuet* after the Gigue; or the French Overture in B minor of *ClavierÜbung* II ends with the piece *Echo*. The fact that this can have very profound significance is not the place to discuss it now, but it will certainly be discussed later.



(7) The "*step beyond*" in Bach's music can also be characterised by concise root note sequences, such as the root note sequence of Partitas 1-6 as the content of *Piano Exercise I*:

. If we now want to see a song-like sequence  of these six fundamental tones, we must recognise that this sequence stops, as it were, on the leading tone. It is therefore an absolutely essential part of the calculation that the leading tone *is* only continued in the next *piano exercise*, namely in *piano exercise II*. In fact, the note *f* is answered by the Italian *Concerto in F major*:

NB 5:



I would like to take this further by analysing this fundamental tone sequence in its scissor-shaped extension

 now to a certain extent varied *in meaning*:  (see above). That would be the signature *Auferwecken* that I mentioned, as Bach composes it in his cantata *Komm, du süße Todesstunde* BWV 161 to this word *auferwecken* in no. 4 *Recitativo*:

NB 6:



Accordingly, I take

the step




from






and answer it with *ClavierÜbung* II as a "*step*

beyond": then the *Concerto* in F major would be nothing other than a metaphor for the crown of resurrection from death - the *step beyond* becomes the crown.

[Note:] That the linking of leading tone and fundamental tone here becomes a symbol of resurrection is also indicated by the following:

The 'step beyond' now continues in the conception of the *ClavierÜbung*: *ClavierÜbung* II is also designed in such a way that it sets a tritone parallel to *ClavierÜbung* I: ; as heard, the resolution is F major. The sequence of keys in *ClavierÜbung* II is F major with second movement in D minor and the French Overture in B minor.

Now we come to an extreme of the "step beyond". We would actually expect  and then C major. But *ClavierÜbung* III does not begin in C major, but in E flat major. This episode  is followed by .

Looking back from the perspective of the key of E flat major, with which *ClavierÜbung* III begins as a glorification of the divine Trinity, the former root note *b*, as long as it has now extended over 1062 bars in Bach's longest piano work, is reinterpreted as *c sharp*. From the perspective of E flat major, *b* becomes *c sharp*. Based on its form, the French Overture in B minor is actually a glorification of the courtly splendour of Versailles and Louis XIV as an absolutist ruler (*l'état c'est moi*). Now, however, the one who is enthroned there is put in his place, as it were, by turning the key note of the French Overture, B minor, into a *c sharp* in retrospect and in relation to the triad *E flat-G flat: C sharp* has the numerical value 26 and corresponds to the Hebrew numerical value for YHWH. Nowhere else in *ClavierÜbung* III does this 'ces' sound more clearly than where the suffering of Jesus is expressed, namely in bars 123 - 128 of the Praeludium in E flat major BWV 552. It is heard a second time with the word 'eleison' at the end of section 4.²

NB 7:




2 Bach once again locates the note *c sharp* very clearly in *Variatio* 25 (movement 26) of *Clavier-Übung* IV (Goldberg Variations). This occurs in section 2 of this variation. In 29 of the 32 parts of the Goldberg Variations, Bach has E minor sounded in this section; in *Variation* 15 and 21, E flat major is heard here and in *Variation* 25 as movement 26, E flat minor with the note *C flat* as the *Exclamatio*.

So much for the "step beyond" in the sense of a methodology that always seeks to elevate and transform the statement made at the moment by taking the next *step beyond*.

(8) The root note sequence of Bach's Six English Suites BWV 806-811 is as follows:




(A major, A minor, G minor, F major, E minor, D minor). And it is


certainly a legitimate association to recognise the melody to  in this. If we

Je - su mei - ne Freu - de


think of the English and French suites together, then the English should form the beginning and the French a second part, because the French

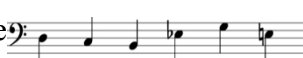
Suites begin with the root note *D* in the key of D minor, followed by C minor and B minor. Now the "step beyond" becomes clear:

This formulation  , which fills the fifth space, is continued downwards

through  ; this results in a descending line of enormous dimensions, as it contains a

catabasis totalling $6 + 3 = 9$ suites. But now comes the actual "step beyond": it is astonishing that the following suites have the root notes *E flat*, *G* and *E*, or the keys E flat major, G major and E major. So the sequence, which is associated with the song *Jesu, meine Freude*, is initially a

Prolongation of the catabasis through *d*, *c* and *b* in order to then be continued through 

. The analogy to the process of *piano exercise* I to II and *piano exercise* II to III mentioned in the last example now becomes apparent, as the tone sequence  is comparable as a step from B minor to E flat major.

If we then look further in the *ClavierÜbung* - as a level of comparison to the process of the English and French Suites - and look beyond the Praeludium in E flat major, the Kyrie ends in its major arrangements in G major and in its manualiter arrangements

in E major. The tone sequence  from *ClavierÜbung* II and III takes the following path:



- Slow movement of the Italian Concerto from *ClavierÜbung* II in D minor
- French Overture from *ClavierÜbung* II in B minor
- Beginning of *Piano Exercise* III in E flat major
- Endings of pieces 1-7 of *ClavierÜbung* III in E flat major, G major and E major.

One more thing is striking. The *ClavierÜbung* I-IV always places overture pieces at the beginning of something second. If we look at the keys of these six overtures in total, the result is

The first level is based on *ClavierÜbung* I, Partita 2 and its Sinfonia in C minor in overture style. Then each second half of *ClavierÜbung* I, II, III and IV opens with an overture as the beginning of the second half:

- Overture in D major in *ClavierÜbung* I
- Overture in B minor in *ClavierÜbung* II
- *We all believe in one God* in E minor in *ClavierÜbung* III
- then *ClavierÜbung* IV (Goldberg Variations) in G major.

We now have the following keys in front of us: C minor, D major, B minor, E minor and G major: The largest of all overtures is level III, based on the Praeludium in E flat major of *ClavierÜbung* III. After *ClavierÜbung* I and II, *ClavierÜbung* III and IV follow as the opening of the second major part of *ClavierÜbung* I-IV. The opening is Praeludium in E flat major in the style of the French overture ductus. We have thus, on the basis of the six overture pieces

 the keys of C minor, D major, B minor, E minor, G major, E flat major and, in a different order, we experience the sequence of keys in the French Suites . All six overture pieces in *ClavierÜbung* I-IV are identical in their key signatures to the key signatures of the Six French Suites. Overture means 'French overture' and Bach calls his suites 'French Suites'.

(9) The "step beyond" - a ninth level. In theology, the "step beyond" means everything, because HE, and only HE, is able to lead the human spirit beyond the visible and purely factual. This is precisely where the idea of the distinction between heaven and earth or God and man comes in.

(10) I take up the French Overture in B minor, which in retrospect, from the perspective of the subsequent Praeludium in E flat major, presents itself as a French Overture in *C flat minor*, as it were, and I observe that in this very work the *Passepied II* is in the key of B major.



This includes the observation that the entire *ClavierÜbung* I-IV regulates the use of keys very strictly, as nothing goes beyond the number of three accidentals as three sharps or three flats. Only this *Passepied II* of the French Overture in B minor goes *beyond this* through the key of B major. And it is precisely this movement that links to Bach's motets, namely the trio *So aber Christus in euch ist* from the motet *Jesu meine Freude* BWV 227.

NB 9, trio:

The image shows a musical score for a trio in 12/8 time. It consists of three staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "So a - ber Chri - stus in — euch ist,". The melody is simple and repetitive, with a focus on the rhythm of the 12/8 time signature.

The five accidentals of the cross in *Passepied II* in B major would then again symbolise a *step beyond the number three*. Using the text *So aber Christus in euch ist*, I arrive at the symbol of the *five wounds of Jesus* in synopsis with the singular setting of five accidentals of the cross. In this way, the tercet *So aber Christus in euch ist* is part of the French Overture in B minor, as it were, although in reality the key of the French Overture in B minor becomes the key of *C flat minor* in the context of the Praeludium in E flat major.

What does this mean for the "*step beyond*"?

My answer is: here there is a semantic charge in the sense of a testimony that Christ is the true King. And this statement about the true kingship then becomes the "*Step beyond*".

Now I would like to follow these 10 examples with a point 11 for methodological reasons:

(11) Please consider the question of how a person could succeed in composing the word *invisibilium* - invisibility.

See Christoph Bossert's article "*Invisibilium - The step beyond*" under the "Principles" button on the homepage.

Summary of the 11 points on the "step beyond":

1. Solution to the riddle of the *Messa della Madonna* from the *Fiori musicali* given to the world of organists by Frescobaldi
2. The mental judgement of the paradox c - e vs. e - his in J. C. F. Fischer
3. Mirroring [*Evolutio*] of an entire piece
4. Bach's *Canon triplex* with notated 3 parts and the designation "*a sei voci*"
5. The statement "Do you see the moon standing there? It's only half visible"
6. The Gigue and a movement after the Gigue
7. The root note sequence of *ClavierÜbung* I needs to be continued with *ClavierÜbung* II ; signature *awakening* as B-c-a-D-G-e // F; from this:
The analogy Bb - e to F - b in *ClavierÜbung* I and II, followed by the confrontation e - F non h - C sed h - E flat = ces - E flat in *ClavierÜbung* III
8. The sequence of fundamental tones / keys in the English [Angelic] and French suites is A g F e d // d c h E flat G E as the path 'from d' to E;
The sequence a-g-f-e-d then stands for 'd', and d-Es-E stands for the path to E as d-'Dis'-E. For comparison:
 - a) In Bach's WK II, the fugues in D major, D sharp minor and E major each show comparable characteristics in bar 43 - 43 is the numerical value of the word Credo.
The symmetrical counterparts Praeludium in G minor, A flat major and A minor refer to aspects of the overture.
 - b) Bach's *Art of Fugue* is in D minor. At $2135 + 239 = 2374$ bars, the exact numerical centre falls on Cp 11, bars 146 - 149, where we find the only appearance of the main obbligato, which is in E minor. This is where the enharmonic transposition of the note E flat to the leading note D sharp leads.
9. The "step beyond" from a theological perspective
10. In *ClavierÜbung* I to IV, of the $41 + 14 + 27 + 31 = 113$ pieces, only the piece *Passepied II* exceeds the maximum of 3 accidentals in the key of B major. From this: $113 = 112 + 1$; 112 is the numerical value for the name CHRIST.
11. How can you compose the word *Invisibilium*?

Sheet music examples (last retrieval: 04.12.2023)

J. S. Bach: ClavierÜbungIII, Praeludium in E flat major BWV 552, NBA, *Series IV, vol. 4* (pp.1-15), ed. by Manfred Tessler, Kassel: Bärenreiter Verlag, 1969. plate BA 5033. URL: <<https://imslp.eu/files/imglnks/euimg/d/d3/IMSLP865101-PMLP153042-bachNBAIV,4praeludiumproorganoplenoBWV552No.1.pdf>>

J. S. Bach: High Mass in B minor BWV 232
URL: <<https://tobis-notenarchiv.de/wp/bach-archiv/vokalwerke/messen/>>

Elias Gottlob Haußmann (1685-1774): Bach portrait with canon: via Wikimedia Commons
URL: <https://www.jsbach.net/bass/elements/bach-hausmann.jpg>
Detail with enlargement of the *Canon triplex* BWV 1076 on the portrait of Haussmann. URL via Wikimedia Commons:
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Canon_BWV_1076.jpg>

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