



## Hermeneutik zu Johann Sebastian Bach



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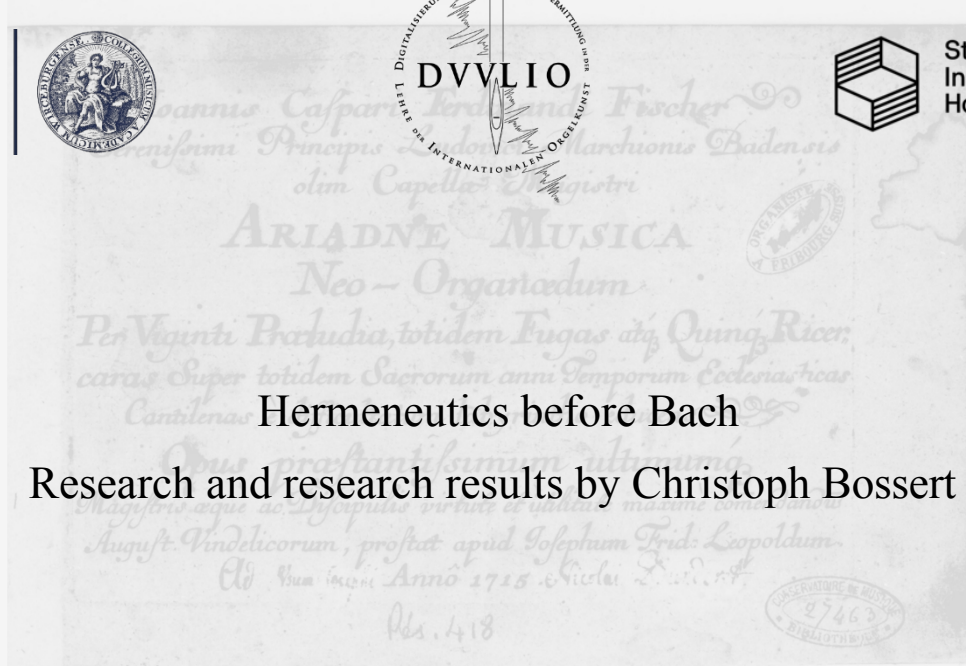
Sollten Ihnen Fehler auffallen, so sind wir für Hinweise dankbar.

Kontakt: [dvvlio@innovation-orgellehre.digital](mailto:dvvlio@innovation-orgellehre.digital)

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Contact: [dvvlio@innovation-orgellehre.digital](mailto:dvvlio@innovation-orgellehre.digital)



## Hermeneutics before Bach

Research and research results by Christoph Bossert

### Feature 9

#### The "Fischer paradox"

#### 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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### Sheet music used

Johann Sebastian BACH, *The Art of Fugue*. In: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke (NBA) VIII/2* ed. by Klaus Hofmann, Bärenreiter [BA05082-01], Kassel et al. 1996.

Johann Caspar Ferdinand FISCHER, *Ariadne Musica*, edited by Gayk Aboyan via Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike 3.0 [tag/del/mrg], part of the Werner Icking Music Collection.

URL: < [https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/22/IMSLP284770-PMLP45354-Fischer,\\_J.C.\\_Preludes\\_and\\_Fugues\\_-\\_Ariadne\\_Musica\\_organaedum-.pdf](https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/22/IMSLP284770-PMLP45354-Fischer,_J.C._Preludes_and_Fugues_-_Ariadne_Musica_organaedum-.pdf) > Retrieved: 22/07/2023.


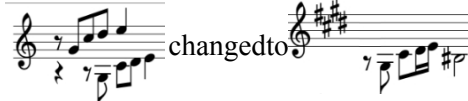

## Feature 9

### The 'Fischer paradox'

I now come to the topic of the 'Fischer paradox'. This is an invention [neologism] of mine, but it is actually an invention of Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer. What do I mean by that? This becomes clear from the analogous beginnings in Fischer's *Ariadne Musica* in the comparison between Praeludium in C major and Praeludium in C sharp minor. The Praeludium in C major opens as follows:



Fig. 1: Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, *Ariadne Musica*, Praeludium in C major.

The Praeludium in C sharp minor opens like this:  //:  changed to .

Now I hold on to these notes. They are the notes *g sharp - c sharp' - d sharp' - e' - his* and correspond to a good third [KB], as they are composed in the prelude in C major [KB]. So what is what I would like to call the 'Fischer paradox'?

It is the paradoxical equals sign between *c-e* and *e-his*. The equal sign is created, because the same keys mean either *c-e* or *e-sharp*. And yet the difference is striking: one is a perfect third or a perfect *tertia maior* and the other is a deficient fourth, i.e. a diminished fourth. What can this mean in the mental space?

First of all: this equation, which is not an equation, can only succeed if I compare C major and C sharp minor in this way - or G major and G sharp minor, etc. This means - as it seems to me - that Fischer even proves here why he needs the key of C sharp minor. He cannot create this equation, which is not an equation after all, with the keys of C major and D minor. It is therefore, as it were, a justification for the key of C sharp minor and its use - but what does this mean in the intellectual space?

Third means three, fourth means four: between three and four.

We have now seen throughout the previous features that the starting point of great compositional processes is that it can be tied back to the structure of the *Lord's Prayer* and that this is the foundation of opposition, namely perfection [3] and imperfection [4]. Now the imperfection of the number four is intensified by its use in the understanding of the diminished fourth.

And this brings us to the spiritual level, namely the level of the perfection of the divine nature of Jesus and the imperfection of human nature, which has its ultimate expression in the *Crucified One*. Now, it is only the combination of the two natures, the perfect and the imperfect, in this *one person* that is the prerequisite for salvation in the Christian faith. To think of perfection and imperfection as one is something of a paradox. In this respect, the Christian faith is based on the paradox of glory in the sense of perfection and a completely different reality in the form of the *crucified* as an expression of imperfection. This paradox is the foundation of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup> And so it is Fischer's ingenious task to translate this paradox into a musical expression.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the catechetical textbook *Compendium locorum theologicorum* by Leonard HUTTER (1610), which was still dogmatically binding in central Germany in Bach's time. See in particular: Ulrich SIEGELE, *Bachs theologischer Formbegriff und das Duett F-Dur*, Hänssler 1978, pp. 20-21; see also: Der Begriff *Coincidentia oppositorum* als der *Visio Dei* bei Nicolaus von Kues (Cusanus).

The first pair is the Praeludium and Fugue in C major, followed by the Praeludium and Fugue in C sharp minor. So much for my thoughts on what I call the 'Fischer paradox'.

Let's see how the two fugues are worked. The Fuga in C major opens like this:



Fig. 2: Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, *Ariadne Musica*, Fuga in C major.

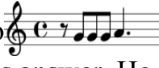
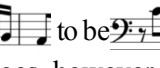




One would actually expect the tonal answer to  to be . As obvious as this is, Fischer does not use this absolutely obvious answer. He does, however, use it in reverse in the fuga in C sharp minor, in that the first interval  is not answered in real terms by the third , but tonally. Together:



Fig. 3: Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer, *Ariadne Musica*, Fuga in C sharp minor, beginning.

And now, in his Fuga in C sharp minor, Fischer opens the reference back to Frescobaldi and his 'Riddle Ricercar' from the *Messa della Madonna*. What does this mean in the intellectual and spiritual realm?


C major - C sharp minor in the form  in variation to  points to the two natures of Jesus in the one person of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>


The fugues - especially Fuga in C sharp minor - allude to Mary, the mother of Jesus, through the reference back to the *Messa della Madonna* by Frescobaldi.

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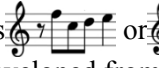
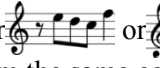


So much for this reaffirmation of a line that stretches between Frescobaldi and Fischer. How as we have also seen, there is Fischer's elementary reference to Frescobaldi with regard to the pair Praeludium and Fugue.


I would like to suggest the following thought - and encourage all viewers of this video to go in search of it - that all 40 pieces, namely the 20 preludes and fugues of *Ariadne Musica*, can be understood monothematically and develop musically from a single basic idea.

In my opinion, this basic idea can be seen at the beginning of this motif: 

- Incidentally, Bach used it in the *Et resurrexit* of the Mass in B minor: 

This motif  can be turned to  or  or  or .

If you now add the tonal answer by turning the fourth into a fifth, there are further possibilities  or  or  or . This would result in a total of eight motifs, each of which is developed from the same core of bar one of the *Fischer-Ariadne Musica* can.

Now a bridge to Johann Sebastian Bach. It could hardly be more prominent: The last, unfinished fugue of the *Art of Fugue* begins with the following Soggetto I: 

<sup>2</sup> Cf. SIEGELE, *ibid.* pp. 24-26.

It therefore contains the two mirror forms



. When the answer comes, the fifth

becomes a fourth:



followed again by the Dux form



Fig. 4: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Art of Fugue*, unfinished *Contrapunctus*, Rectus - Comes (mm. 6-11) and Dux (mm. 11-16).

As soon as all four parts have been performed, Bach introduces the inversion. This Comes form is then followed by the inversion of the Dux in Bach's music in the following manner:



etc.

Fig. 5: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Art of Fugue*, unfinished *Contrapunctus*, Inversus (mm. 21-29).

Eight forms that can be developed from a single motif, as well as the same manner of playing - exactly the same! - can be found in Bach's unfinished *Contrapunctus* of the *Art of Fugue* as *Soggetto* I. It could hardly be more important: The fact that Bach is also memorialising Fischer here.

So please take the trouble to search for the Ariadne thread - *Ariadne Musica*

is the name of Fischer's work - and look for a

Correlation to this four-note motif, which is pronounced like this at the beginning



You will always find a solution!

Concept

Prof. Dr h. c. Christoph Bossert

Coordination

Thilo Frank

Camera

Dr Jürgen Schöpf

Sound and

editing:

Alexander Hainz

Writing and music examples: Andrea

Dubrauszky

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