

S E C O N D E D I T I O N

MUSIC IN THE WESTERN WORLD

A History in Documents

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Here, finally, is a brief but vivid description of a Handel performance taken from a letter of a French visitor, Madame Fiquet, to her sister. Handel was sixty-five years old now.

London, April 15, 1750

The Oratorio, or pious concert, pleases us highly. HANDEL is the soul of it: when he makes his appearance, two wax lights are carried before him, which are laid upon his organ. Amidst a loud clapping of hands he seats himself, and the whole band of music strikes up exactly at the same moment. At the interludes he plays concertos of his own composition, either alone or accompanied by the orchestra. These are equally admirable for the harmony and the execution. The *Italian* opera, in three acts, gives us much less pleasure.

Otto Eric Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London: A. & C. Black, 1955), 288–89, 465–66, 472, 481–83, 561, 544–45, 546, 686.

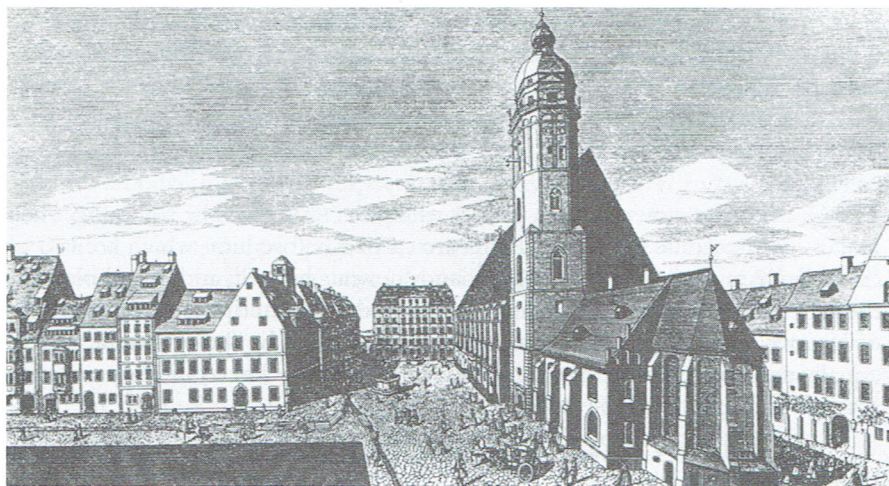
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Bach's Duties and Obligations at Leipzig

Before taking over the position he was to occupy for the last twenty-seven years of his life, Bach had to sign an agreement that itemized his various duties and obligations. The document is of interest not only because it concerns a very great composer, but also for the light it sheds on the relationship between composer and patron (in this instance the Town Council of Leipzig) in the pre-Revolutionary era.

Their worships, the Council of this town of Leipzig, having accepted me to be Cantor of the School of St. Thomas, they have required of me an agreement as to certain points, namely:

1. That I should set a bright and good example to the boys by a sober and secluded life, attend school, diligently and faithfully instruct the boys.
2. And bring the music in the two chief churches of this town into good repute to the best of my ability.
3. Show all respect and obedience to their worships the Council, and defend and promote their honor and reputation to the utmost, and in all places; also, if a member of the Council requires the boys for a musical performance, unhesitatingly to obey, and besides this, never allow them to travel into the country for funerals or weddings without the fore-knowledge and consent of the burgomaster in office, and the governors of the school.
4. Give due obedience to the inspectors and governors of the school in all they command in the name of the Worshipful Council.
5. Admit no boys into the school who have not already the elements of music or who have no aptitude for being instructed therein, nor without the knowledge and leave of the inspectors and governors.



St. Thomas's, Leipzig, c. 1735. The School, where Bach taught and lived with his family, may be seen at the end of the square, at right angle to the church. (Engraving by J. G. Schreiber.)

6. To the end that the churches may not be at unnecessary expense I should diligently instruct the boys not merely in vocal but in instrumental music.

7. To the end that good order may prevail in those churches I should so arrange the music that it may not last too long, and also in such wise as that it may not be operatic, but incite the hearers to devotion.

8. Supply good scholars to the New Church.

9. Treat the boys kindly and considerately, or, if they will not obey, punish such in moderation or report them to the authority.

10. Faithfully carry out instruction in the school and whatever else it is my duty to do.

11. And what I am unable to teach myself I am to cause to be taught by some other competent person without cost or help from their worships the Council, or from the school.

12. That I should not quit the town without leave from the burgomaster in office.

13. Should follow the funeral processions with the boys, as is customary, as often as possible.

14. And take no office under the University without the consent of their worships.

And to all this I hereby pledge myself, and faithfully to fulfill all this as is here set down, under pain of losing my place if I act against it, in witness of which I have signed this duplicate bond, and sealed it with my seal.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Given in Leipzig, May 5, 1723

Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, trans. C. Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland, III (London, 1885), 301–302.

Bach Re

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach contributed much valuable information written by J. N. Forkel. The f

He understood the whole but terrified when he sat down to manner, for they thought that then they heard an effect that as first thing he would do in trying must know whether the organ every speaking stop, and play in builders would often grow quiet as well as of the whole orchestra his harpsichords to please him. he understood perfectly. He properties of any place at first following: He came to Berlin perceived at once its virtues and showed him the great dining investigation made the statement feat, without intending to do so if someone went to one corner very softly upwards against the site, with his face to the wall, with them, and in the other parts architecture hitherto very rare the arches in the vaulted ceiling note even in the largest combination liked best to play the viola, with

In his youth, and until the penetratingly, and thus kept the the harpsichord [a reference to the advent of conductors]. When he soon say; after the first entries possible to apply, and which of the occasions, when I was standing would joyfully nudge me when the ing voice of wide range and a good one was as happy as he in all kind

Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel (eds), *Documents*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Co