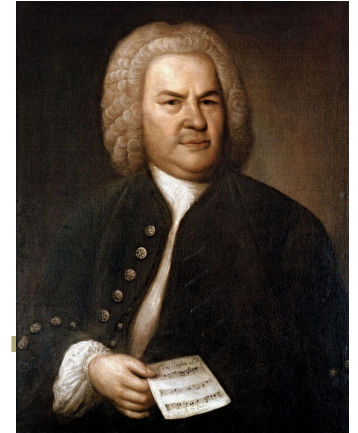


Valparaiso University SOURCE 2020



Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 Revival of Bach's St. Matthew Passion



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Research Question

How did Mendelssohn's Cuts in the St. Matthew Passion (1829 performance) Reflect a Bypassing of Anti-Semitic Themes? A Re-evaluation of an Old Argument.

Methods

Historical, socio-cultural, music-analytical

- First: Analyze and Summarize
 - Study the existing argument in the literature regarding whether or not the cuts were made in order to bypass Anti-Semitic text of the original Passion
- Second: Reconsider the Cuts
 - View the cuts from a purely musical standpoint by using music-analytical methods

Background

- Bach's St. Matthew Passion - 1727
- Mendelssohn's revival: a result of family tradition
- Mendelssohn received the manuscript as a 20-year-old from his grandmother

-The Scholarly Debate:

Did Mendelssohn make cuts in order to bypass Anti-Semitism in the original Passion?

OR

- Were cuts made due to:
- Romantic Aesthetics
 - Length (nearly 3 hours to 2 hours)
 - Texts being out-of-date/less relevant
 - Other?

Mendelssohn's Revival: What Was Cut?

Bach's Passion

Part 1: Chorus, E, Choral, E, Chori, E,
Chorus, E, Recit, Aria, E, Aria, E, Chorus,
E, E, Chorus, Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E,
Choral, E, Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E, Recit,
Aria, E, Choral, E, A, Chori, E, Choral

Part 2: Aria, E, Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E,
Chori, E, Chori, Choral, E, Chorus, E,
ARia, Choral, E, Chori, E, Aria, E, Choral,
E Chori, Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori, E,
Chori, E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori, E, Choral,
E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori, E, Chori, E, Reci,
Aria, E, Chorus, E, Chorus, E, Choral, E,
Chori, E, Reci, Aria, E, Chori, E, Recit,
Chorus

Mendelssohn's Revival

Part 1: Chorus, E, Choral, E, Chori, E,
Chorus, E, Recit, Aria, E, Aria, E, Chorus,
E, E, Chorus, Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E,
Choral, E, **Choral**, E, Recit, Aria, E, Recit,
Aria, E, Choral, E, Aria, Chori, E, Choral

Part 2: Aria, E, **Choral**, **E**, Recit, Aria, E,
Chori, E, Chori, **Choral**, E, Chorus, E,
Aria, **Choral**, E, Chori, E, Aria, **E**, **Choral**,
E Chori, **Choral**, E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori,
E, Chori, E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori, E,
Choral, E, Recit, Aria, E, Chori, E, Chori,
E, Reci, Aria, E, Chorus, E, Chorus, E,
Choral, E, Chori, E, Reci, Aria, E, Chori, E,
Recit, Chorus

Literature Review

L. Botstein, “Mendelssohn and the Jews,” *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 82, No. 1 (1998), p. 210-219

M. Marissen, “Religious Aims in Mendelssohn’s 1829 Berlin -Singakademie Performances of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion”, *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 77, No. 4 (1993) p. 718-726

R. Marshall, “Redeeming the St. John Passion...and J.S. Bach”, *Bach Notes* No. 17 (2012) p. 5-11

J. Sposato, “Creative Writing: The [Self-]Identification of Mendelssohn as Jew”, *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 82, No. 1 (1998), p. 190-209

J. Sposato, “Mendelssohn, ‘Paulus’, and the Jews: A Response to Leon Botstein and Michael Steinberg,” *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 83 No. 2 (1999), p. 280-291

J. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Mendelssohn and the Anti-Semitic Tradition*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

M.P. Steinberg, “Mendelssohn’s Music and German-Jewish Culture: An Intervention,” *The Musical Quarterly* Vol. 82 No. 1 (1998), p. 190-209

Specific Eliminated Chorales

No. 17 (Pt. I)

"Ich will hier bei Dir
stehen"
(I will stay here with you)

No. 54 (Pt. II)

"O Haupt voll Blut und
Wunden"
(Oh Head full of blood and
wounds)
(same melody as Chorale
#15, #17, and #62)

Specific Eliminated Chorales: No. 17

No. 15 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” melody)

No. 16 - Narration Ev., Jesus, Peter

No. 17 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” melody)

No. 18 - Narration Ev. & Jesus

No. 19 - Tenor recit with inserted choir lines (chorale-like)

No. 52 - Alto Aria

No. 53 - recit, chorus, recit

No. 54 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” melody)

No. 55 - Ev. narration

No. 56 - Bass recit

[No. 62] - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” melody)

Specific Eliminated Chorales: No. 54

No. 15 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale”
Melody)

No. 16 - Narration Ev., Jesus, Peter

No. 17 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale”
Melody)

No. 18 - Narration Ev. & Jesus

No. 19 - Tenor recit with inserted choir
lines (chorale-like)

No. 52 - Alto Aria

No. 53 - in 3 parts: recit., chorus, recit

No. 54 - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” Melody)

No. 55 - Ev. narration

No. 56 - Bass recit. (leading to 57, aria)

[No. 62] - Chorale (“Passion Chorale” Melody)

Conclusions

- There are still many unanswered questions:
 - ◆ Anti-Semitic vs. Aesthetics
 - ◆ Was the Passion just too long?
 - ◆ Mendelssohn/Fanny's Jewish upbringing
 - ◆ Was Bach himself, anti semitic?
 - ◆ Why the chorales?
 - ◆ Why so much in Part 2?