

The Greatest Commandment in Cantata 77

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[0 : 0 0] Our Lord Jesus Christ said, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And on these two commandments hangs all the laws and the prophets. And our response should be, Lord, have mercy upon us, and write both these thy laws, and our hearts we beseech thee. We should have it memorized and trained, and it should be a well-oiled machine. Why?

Because we're Anglicans. Reading of the commandments is ordinary, and it's the start of an ordinary Sunday. But yet it's so extraordinary and so significant, and that's why we should have communion every week. The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes it as such. Jesus summed up man's duty towards God in this saying, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This immediately echoes the solemn call, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. God has loved us first. The love of the one God is recalled in the first of the ten words, the ten commandments. The commandment then makes explicit the response of love that man is called to give to his God. That's the Roman Catholic Catechism. And this apostle Saint Paul reminds us of this. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. And any other commandments are summed up in this sentence. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Saint Paul says that. I believe it's in Romans, is it? Dr. Packer? Is it in Romans that's from? I think so. I don't remember. I should have had the, I should have the, see the one thing I got sloppy about is citations. And I don't have footnotes here, so whoever is in, a professor here can chastise me for it, for plagiarism.

Your chest just went on Sunday. All right. Box Cantata 77 was composed for the 13th Sunday after Trinity, which coincides with the midpoint of the Trinity season in this year 1723. The lectionary for that Sunday is on the Good Samaritan passage in Luke's Gospel. So before jumping into the music discussion, let us just do a quick Bible study to ensure that we're all on the same page. And I don't need to go into too much detail since we had, have had a sermon series on Luke several years back, and I'm expecting everyone to remember the details. And hear the sarcasm there. All right. So in Luke's Gospel, the Good Samaritan passage must, should be studied together with the rich young ruler passage. In both these two passages, the most dangerous thing and most common mistake is to read the text superficially and forget a context. Now that sounds like for every single biblical text, right?

[3 : 3 9] I remember back in my youth, our Sunday school teacher uses a kind of methodology in which we start by summarizing each verse, then arrive at the summary of each paragraph based on the summary of each verse, and then arrive at the conclusion of the passage based on the summary of each paragraph.

And I see some look here, go, oh my. Because at the end of the day, we arrive at something that looks like this. Good Samaritan passage says, love your neighbor to obtain eternal life.

Rich young ruler passage says, sell all your possessions to obtain eternal life. These turns out to be a kind of work faith teaching that I'm afraid even the Roman church would not subscribe to. You see, the problem here is context. Why did Jesus tell the parable in the first place?

And I'm going to be the preacher for a little bit here. So let us look at the Good Samaritan passage here in Luke chapter 10, 25 to 35. The dialogue here starts with the question, teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And the red flag, it's marked in red, is in the word, what shall I do? As in eternal life can be obtained by his venerable effort.

Well, what the answer is? The two commandments that hangs all the laws and prophets. You see, from the teacher of the law's point of view, there's a big problem with the first law, and the little word, all. Why? Because all is limitless. All is ceilingless. You can always love God more. There's always more you can do. So recognizing the real impossibility of keeping the first commandment, he went to the second commandment, asking Jesus, who is my neighbor?

[5 : 44] Really with the intention of having a boundary drawn for what the neighbor is, so that if I love this group of people, I would have fulfilled and kept the second commandment. And Jesus went on to tell the parable that we all know so well. So really, the purpose of the Good Samaritan parable is not so much as to tell us how to be a good neighbor. It's really telling the teacher of the law, and us by extension, that while the commandment to love God is infinitely deep, the commandment to love other human, created in the image of God, is infinitely wide. Both of which are equally as unobtainable. Now, scripture is not explicit about what happened to the teacher of the law, but it's likely he just walked away. Alright? So let's skip ahead. Rich young ruler. Luke 18, 1827. The motif here is the same as the previous passage. The question is on, what must I do?

Now this time, instead of pointing out the theological infinite depth and width of God's commandment, Jesus reached out to what is the dearest in the young man's heart and commands the impossible from there to sell all his wealth. Hearing that, he became very sad and probably just walked away.

This is what I used to say a lot, and you can see the remnant of the Baptist in me at the deeper level. If the pastor asked during the baptism, would you sell all your possessions to follow Jesus?

What would you do? I'll be the first one to jump right out of the baptismal tank. Yes, the implication is in there you have to have enough water.

No, right to the milliliter. You see, our salvation does not depend on how much charity and social work we do.

[8 : 04] What's important in this passage is actually what happens next. Most people just stopped on, it is difficult for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.

What's important is actually what happens next. When the bystander asks, who then can be saved? See, from the perspective of the disciples and followers, they must have noticed it twice, and twice that Jesus is really commanding the impossible and saying, no one can be saved.

And the answer that Jesus gave in response is the key. What is impossible with man is possible with God. Our covenant with God is not dependent on charity and good works.

Rather, our justification depends on our faith, on the faithfulness of Israel's Messiah to complete God's faithful work on the redemption on the cross. And yes, I throw that up because I was, I just started reading that big book.

Tom Wright. Did I get it right, Dr. Peck? More or less. Not quite.

- [9 : 23] Uh-oh. I dug myself a hole in here. All right. So, let us shift gears, okay?
- Um, so on both occasions, Jesus was expecting a response of humility. A confession that God's standard is unachievable by man.
- He was expecting both individuals to be on their knees and say, Lord, have mercy. These passages are really about how we are in dire need of God's mercy and redemptive grace.
- Not what we need to do, nor how we need to behave. Okay, so now let's shift gears to talk about music. Um, enough preaching here. I'm not a theologian.
- This is my two cents. But I think it fits very well here. Talk about music, but before we do that, we need to take a couple of music detours, i.e. music theory crash courses.
- [10 : 24] And, um, said it's almost like an annual event, and every year sort of go run through the same set of concepts and ideas, and I hope that it won't be too hard to grab, um, after, um, an excellent number of times, but I will go over all this.
- Okay? Um, okay, so what we have right here is a keyboard. Okay? And on the keyboard, everyone knows that there are white keys. And there are black keys. Okay?
- That's fundamental, right? White keys and black keys. Now you may ask, why would they have white and black keys, and black keys placed in such a strange place? Why don't you have all white keys and make it simpler?
- Well, it's because white keys, we can call it your base note, your fundamental thing, your basic thing, and black keys are alternations, or tweaking of your basic thing.
- And what I mean is, for example, you have right here a D. Okay? Um, I have here's a D. Now, if I want to put it up a notch, pitch-wise, a notch, put it up a notch, I would play the adjacent black note to its right.
- [11 : 39] B sharp. D natural. Same thing, if I want to knock, um, put it down a notch, I would be going to the adjacent black note to its left.
- D flat. So, B, B sharp, B, B flat. Sounds like something. Okay? Now, why is this important? Well, let's move on, and say, we start on C, and we play every single consecutive white note, from C, to C.
- And we all recognize that sound, because we all watch the sound of music. Though the dear, the female, the ray, the female from the sun, me, the name that I call myself, fought a long way to run. This sound is the sound of a major scale.
- And the major scale, that starts and ends with C, is called C major scale. And if you construct a tune, using this collection of pitch, and centered on the note C, the tune is said to be in the key of C major.
- Alright? That's easy, right? Okay. So, now, not all music is in the key of C major, right? That would be very boring, because you can have different keys. So, let's say, if you start an end with G.
- [13 : 11] Doesn't sound quite right, huh? It's not that though the dear, the female, dear sound, because we need to tweak a note. F sharp.
- So, I use a black note. Okay? So, anything we play, using this collection of notes, will sound as though it's centered in G.
- And this is what G major scale, by the way. Right here.
- Okay? So, that's G major. Requires one sharp. Alright? It's time to bring this up, actually. Late in clicking.
- So, the same thing, if we want to start and end with F. F. Doesn't sound quite right as well, because you need to do a tweaking.
- [14 : 14] B flat. Right? And anything built on this set of collection, is said to be in the key of F major.

Sound okay? Okay. So, you see this circle chart here, it looks like a clock, and I'm not racing against it. And I will be in there for shortly, but this is not a clock that I race against. This is what we call a circle of fifth, for all the keys.

The bottom part is cut off, so there's more in the bottom here. It tells you that, the key of C major, right on the top, requires no accidental signage, no black keys, no sharp, no flat.

If you move to, clockwise, one click, it is the key of G major, and it requires one sharp. That would be the F sharp. Move one more to, move one more click, you arrive at D major, and it requires two sharps.

F sharp and C sharp. And you put A major, is the key that requires three sharps. Okay? And so on and so forth.

[15 : 22] And moving the other side, it's the same thing. Counterclockwise, one notch, F major, F major, one flat. Two notches, B flat major, two flats. So the more you move to counterclockwise, the more flat notes it requires.

The more you move to the left side, the more sharp notes you require, in order to construct a key. Okay? So that's not hard too. Now why am I saying, oh, this, what is significant right here?

What's significant here is, it's a big, it's a big mystery, it's a big revelation, it may shock everyone, is that this keyboard, that we're so used to hearing, it's actually all out of tune.

Every single note is out of tune. Really. If we tune every single note perfectly, the keyboard can only play one key. Really.

I have to tune the keyboard in key of C, in order to play every single note perfectly in tune. I have to tune the keyboard in the key of D, in order to play every single note in tune.

[16 : 23] Okay? So that's called just temperament, and of course, convenience over complete beauty. Let's tune every single note out of tune, so that we have one convenient keyboard.

Now the byproduct, of course, is every single note out of tune, and also, if you really think about it, D, this is B sharp. D, this is B flat.

Now what do you notice about D sharp and E flat? They're the same note. It's the same key, the same black key on your keyboard. Well, if you are to tune everything perfectly in tune, D sharp and E flat sound different.

They're really two different sounding notes. Now, for that reason, sharp notes and flat notes do sound different, and sharp keys and flat keys, the left side versus the right side of this clock, do have a different affect.

Okay? They do have a different affect. It's why some keys sounds more uplifting, and some keys sounds more subdued. One of the reasons why. There are countless of other things to consider, but this is one of the many reasons why.

[17 : 38] Okay? So, that's what's important right here. Now, talk about the outer ring, not the inner ring. Inner ring is simple. Inner ring is a counterpart, it's a minor counterpart. Major key is your happy key. Minor key is your sad key.

Okay? Okay. Love to play that to my kids.

Give them horror dreams. But sad star up there. Same principle. A minor is like C major.

No sharps or flats. Moving one click counterclockwise, is a minor key with one flat. Moving one click clockwise, is a minor key with one sharp.

That requires one sharp. Alright? Okay. Here's, okay, so we're okay here. We're going to the next little detour. It's called cadence. Like, like literally sentences, literally sentences, we need punctuations.

[18 : 46] Most fundamental ones are commas and periods, right? One to demarcate the end of a clause, and the other demarcate the end of the complete sentence. And there is this kind of parallel in music in which there are cadences.

Half cadence to demarcate a half of a phrase, and the authentic cadence to demarcate the complete phrase. Okay?

It's like the parallel to the period and the comma, you've got the authentic and half cadence. Okay? So, here is a phrase that ends with a half cadence. Of course, we've heard this before.

Small start. Doesn't sound like the end, right?

Does sound like you're in somewhere in the middle. Of course, it's somewhere in the middle. That's a half cadence. Okay? This is an authentic cadence. Here is the end of a phrase, right?

[20 : 00] Sounds like the end of a phrase. Sounds like it's the end. You can put a period on it, and you won't be marked down for fragments. Is that what you call it? Yeah, I think it's a threatening sentence.

Okay, so I will stop here. Just take a moment for questions. Take a moment for questions, and now just take a moment instead of the entire evening, in case there are something that we need to...

Yes? Can you play the harpsichord as well as the piano? I can't play the harpsichord. I'm not a player. I'm an analyst. Just take a moment.

Okay, so we look good. Okay, so, just in case we're all lost in this midst of... in the midst of this crash course, because it's important to know this so that they understand what I'm going to talk into instead of being lost in the wilderness of what he's talking about.

Flacky, sharky, and all that stuff. That happened once, so I better make sure everyone knows it. I have an understanding of what's going on here. So, so here is the Bach's Cantata 77, a bird-eye view word.

[21 : 14] So we're going to look, start from the high level first. It's a six-movement piece, 13 to 15 minutes worth of performance time. Not too long.

It has an opening chorus. There's two recitative and aria couplets. And there's a final chorale. So they're spaced out for you so that it's easier to see it visually, the structure there.

The opening chorus is the pronouncement of the commandments. The two couplets serve as the seeker prayer and reflection. And the congregation or the collective seeker's response expressed in our final chorale.

Okay? So it's pronouncement, playing reflect, playing reflect, and that's my, and then my final response for it. Okay?

So we're going to look at these one at a time. Some were more interesting than others. Some were spent more time than others. Okay? But we'll look through them one at a time. Hopefully I don't have to beat the clock too much.

[22 : 23] Okay, so here's the text for our opening chorus. Okay? The choir sings the two greatest commandments. It's not that in Bach there's no heart.

It's because there's only so much stuff you can fit into our title here. So the chorus, so the choir sings this, and there's also an instrumental chorale, which we will come back to in just a bit.

Okay? When discussing about this movement, there are two things that we can look at. Actually, there's a third thing. There's a lot of research going into numbers and number of measures and all that stuff.

I never believed in it. I never believed that Bach did all the addition, subtraction, make sure his music fits in so many bars. I just don't. There are people who do. I just don't.

So I'll just forget about it. So, we'll just look at the thematic material first, the melodic aspect, and then we'll look into the structure and how tonality, how different keys and things fit together.

[23 : 31] So, in terms of thematic material, the chorale is predominantly based on the Lutheran chorale, which translates to, these are the Holy Ten Commandments.

Not a German speaker, I'm not going to attempt it. perhaps, can you hear? The hyaluronic singable. Okay.

So, these are the Holy Ten Commandments. That's the chorale tune in which this chorus is based on. And how is it based on?

Well, the first thing is, actually, I'll just play this tune first, okay? Box harmonization of this tune.

Let's get a taste of what it's like. So, this is the chorale tune that Bach used to arrive at the, to make the melody and the material for this chorus.

[25 : 09] he did it in two ways. One, the fugal subject, i.e. the line, the stuff that the choir sings, is the derivative of the chorale tune.

Now, you may not know, you may not be able to hear how it's similar because it sounds different. But trust me, if you really tease it out, it's actually a derivative of that.

And those who are mathematicians, if you take a derivative of something, it doesn't really necessarily look like where you started, right? Professor Barlow's not here. Otherwise, he would say yes.

That's right. And integral is always harder than derivatives, so you won't be able to find out what was it before unless you do a lot of work on it. Okay?

So let's see if you can pick it out. I doubt it, but let's see if you can pick it out. not really obvious, right?

[26 : 11] But trust me, it is. Now, the next thing is actually obvious. It's actually the chorale, the original chorale tune in its original form being played in the upper part by the trumpets and lower part by the bass.

See if you can hear this. You can hear this, right?

Very obvious. And now here is the bass part. Can you hear it?

Okay. Yes, and I rigged the recording so that it brings out that part. You won't be able to hear that interface in the proper performance of it all.

So what you really have here is the audience hearing the text the greatest commandments being sung by the choir used in a tune that is a derivative of this Ten Commandments chorale and also the Ten Commandments chorale remember those are cradle Lutherans these are chorales that they sung since they are they're they're little kids and they will recognize that chorale tune and and associate the text with the Ten Commandments.

[27 : 42] So you have really a two-layer narrative going on here being intricately worked in here. Okay. It's amazing all this artwork, right?

Okay. So where am I? Right here. Yes. and also worthy to remark this technique of having the chorale tune being on the extreme high and extreme low instrumental parts have previously been employed by Bach and often viewed as his signature to represent the spears of God the high and the spears of men the low sort of like a separation between the holiness of God and sinfulness of men.

and again I haven't I haven't do my due diligence to cite this this is actually from a I got this from a Bach scholar a well-known Bach scholar so I'll just leave it there.

Okay. Now moving onward to the structure and tonal discussion now this one is a lot trickier okay and to make things easier I create a chart.

When I first started working on this I made audio clipping recording clippings on where all the tonal transitions are and then put them together and recorded and see if you can hear all the tonal changes but that's proved to be too hard so I'm just going to abandon that idea and just go by a chart and graph that everyone can read and just have to do my words for it.

[29 : 18] Okay. And Bach here is being very thoughtful about how the music is organized how the tonal center progresses and how the text interacts with the key.

We can see that there are five phrases in the chorus number them off one two three four five and just looking at the tonal progression the overall motion is from the major shifting to a minor and towards the flat key area you can see that in the general thing.

Now the two first sections states the first half of the first commandment while remaining very stable in the key of C major it doesn't really go anywhere it states the first commandment solid C major in the third section Bach strategically introduced the second part of the first commandment which reads and with all thy soul with all thy strength and with all thy mind at the point where the tonal center shifts to F major and what's important about F major is a click to the flat side okay and throughout section four the music continues to progress to the flat side and shifts actually down to the inner ring the minor the minor tonality until the completion of the first commandment okay um this motion towards the minor and subdued flat key implies the weakness and the hopelessness of human flesh and here we can see

Bach expression of disparity between the high ideal involved in the love of God and the emphasis on human weakness sort of like when the teacher of the law realizes the problem with the little word all right now the second commandment is introduced in this fifth and final phrase of the movement when the tonality suddenly moves from the key of C minor to the key of G major and you can hear even with a rigged tuning that this is a big contrast right so this and with everything tuned perfectly that was um really that contrast really brings out even more to the forefront um really this dark contrast can be viewed as bringing out the distance between God and man and by ending the movement in the major key

God uh Bach presents a silver lining for the seeker at the pronouncement of the second commandment just like the silver lining that the teacher of the law sees in the good Samaritan passage just a glimmer of hope I can probably make this okay it's that kind of image that Bach wants to paint here so uh we will listen to a complete movement alright it's not too too long but um see if we can uh we can uh at least feel the change so opening phrase Q of C major so begin of second phrase didn't really go anywhere it stayed in Q of C it's very stable see if you can also hear the trumpet and the bass line at the same time it's very tricky hearing actually and the second phrase reaching to a third phrase and starts to introduce the next key destabilizing moving to

[33 : 57] F major this time where second part of first commandment comes in phase four really unstable here really going to different places it's a completely different effect if you remember how it actually started and here's wrapping up the fifth phrase and gradually moving towards

G major don't know don't really know the major key yet it's a major key ending I don't know how many how many of us can actually hear at least how the music changes yeah yeah okay so that's quite interesting now let's move on to the first resusative aria couplets and I can see that we're sort of fighting time here okay first couplet here represents the seeker's response to the first commandment now there's nothing really much that happens the resusative I'm just going to breeze through it other than to say it confirms the key of C major now remember we ended the first movement in G and this resusative brings us back to where we started okay where the entire cantata started in the key of C and that is all I'm going to say about this there's not really much okay you can see that the text here hearkens back reference back to the first movement a bit and with reference to heart and soul and mind and also looks forward to the whole

Holy Spirit and grace and kindness other things fall there aria is when things get a little interesting it's organized in a special kind of tripartite form like three chunks okay three chunks in which the last two chunk is the same uses the same music now it's not necessary cut and paste because Bach is not into the business of singing the same chorus 50 times it's too creative for that okay so there are variations it's not exactly the same but it's based on the same set of materials so A B' and B and the tonality and the overall is more or less than the key of A minor and it moves in the middle section to key of B minor back to

A minor so the beginning of the section A section B prime section B and section B prime it's almost like an arc that you can see that Bach is trying to paint right here and of course it's all tonal okay it's an arc so it really sounds something like something like that and the trick here whenever we're listening to tonal changes listen to the bass note okay hear how it's being performed that's section A end of section A section B okay end of section B beginning of section B prime you can hear that arc arc like structure okay now within the first section we can also hear a local tonal ascent going from

A to C major to E minor so it's almost like Bach illustrating a kind of illustrating this seeker looking up to God and it's said over the text of my God I love thee with all my heart my life clings to thee it's almost like illustrating within a sending motion that the seeker is looking up to the high ideals of God God I can't really do this in response to the first commandment here okay the music would hear something like um won't be able to hear this form because it's going to be voiced differently things will be placed in different octaves key again is listen to the bass notes somewhat like this bass note moving and of course this is always a long range hearing so it's a little bit tricky if you just if you listen to the piece itself in this entirety um it's the academic musicians that are really trained to hear things like this and which makes us so abnormal alright so um let's hear how it's being played in the middle of the section

[40 : 53] C major and then end of the section E minor okay so main thing here is to get the seeker looking up to the high ideals of God that's the main thing I think Baca wants to paint here okay now onwards and forwards to the second seeker's couplet which is the seeker's response to the second commandment now with the understanding of the misunderstanding of the second commandment can be fulfilled with a Samaritan's heart the secret beseecheth the Lord to bestow unto him the heart of the good Samaritan now reflecting on this misconceived silver lining the music moves actually starts in the key of E minor and moves and ends in G major so starts in something darker and ends with a again like silver lining yes there's hope I just pray that God gave me give me a Samaritan's heart and I will be able to fulfill this commandment okay we can hear this change right here minor sad end so sounds happy in this end because there's a glimmer of hope that yes probably I can probably keep this one just like the teacher of the law here right so Bach really trying to illustrate how he understood the lectionary of that day remember it's the context here the lectionary is on the good

Samaritan passage all right now if the resusatif is the seeker's response to the second commandment the aria is then his meditation and realization of the truth pure incompleteness the power lacking in me the music is organized is almost a capo aria form if you're interested in that almost like a sandwich with which the first and last section are identical and there's this middle section that is contrasting more or less in the key of D minor which pretty much is picking up from where we left off in the first commandment in terms of the cantata overall motion okay we can just listen to the opening so back to minor key sounding stuff okay hence the aria really portrays the listener's realization of the impossibility of even fulfilling the second commandment alright so let's move to the last final chorale right here perhaps the most imperfect final chorale in all of

Bach's cantata and I know there are like 300 over 300 of them and I literally have not listened to all of it and a lack of citation I got this from a Bach scholar again and good that there's no chastising on Sunday I'll be so dinged for plagiarizing right here okay the chorale again is the collective seeker or the congregation's response to commandments and the response is a humble supplication unto the Lord for strength to be fruitful to do good works and to love see the imperfection here is in the music mainly as a product of tonal ambiguity i.e.

not knowing really really not clear about what key you're in hence it really portrays the imperfection of how the flesh and how we only have the option to be humble before God part of this tonal ambiguity is really due to how the chorale tune doesn't fit nicely into our major and minor system it doesn't because chorale tunes are composed mostly by Martin Luther which is before all this tonality kind of thing this kind of thing really gets solidified cemented in common practice so Bach is pretty much working with things that are a couple centuries old and those who know about the modal system this chorale is actually an

[46 : 22] A Phrygian which resembles more of the D minor key so conventionally composers will work this tune this chorale in the key of D minor and it's really a test for creativity because it's like D minor but it's not really so you have to play around with things a little Bach is certainly conscious of this more intuitive and common approach he even marks the key signature here this B this little B sign there's only one B so there's only one flat minor key is key of D minor he even marks it in the key of D minor so he's actually very conscious of this and we can actually find a D minor setting for this exact tune in his chorale collection so he has done it in D before probably for another occasion but for this cantata guess what he does not set it in

D he actually set it in G minor so it's almost like Bach intentionally putting up a sign that says D minor but gives you G minor what does it sound like it sounds like a very good politician okay now if you know the chorale tune as well as the cradle Lutheran singing this since their birth and as sensitive to key centers as the educated listener back in the 18th century you would notice that the cantata will end in a very interesting way once you identify the Bach set this final chorale in the key of G minor why because the chorale ends the note and in the key of G minor you can never ever ever get a good perfect authentic cadence the period from music that ends with the note

A that can never happen that will just never happen and I can probably demonstrate this okay I probably demonstrate this I will cheat here so illustrate what I actually mean so I going to bang in your head to t D minor since two i did do but that's Sounds like an okay ending, right?

Sort of closes itself off. Right? Now, this is how Bach did it, that we found in the chorale collection, and what other composers would likely do.

This kind of thing. But in this cantata, Bach does this. . .

[50 : 17] I'm going to test what's going to happen, you're very good.
 . . Um... It's because you want this. Right?

So, by setting this in the key of G minor, Bach has to know that it will leave this cliffhanger incomplete. It just doesn't end the right feeling.

And that's intentional. That's why he said it all in the key of G minor. He wants that feeling. Okay? And we can hear the recording, first of all, a midi recording of how Bach did it in D minor, like a conventional way.

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the audience to capture everything that the poet wants to put in poetry. Now, Shakespeare, I don't think, ever expects his audience to capture every single allegory he puts in his play.

Our best guess is, Bob, want you to hear how the center shifts and downspirals in terms of key. But if you can hear this good momentum and then the slowing down and then the final chorale being so open-ended, so bizarre, still is telling you that it is impossible to do, that is a good reading as well.

That is a good reading. I mean, at the same time, we also understand that almost like a research theorist, this is our best guess at what Bach wants to hold into his music based on the evidence we have.

Right? But we play these things nowadays, because of the Bach's repeat, you know, when you do a contact, well, but Bach didn't do it that way. No, definitely not.

[58:20] It was integrated into the whole service. Yeah, definitely. The reading was the Good Samaritan. Yeah. These kids all knew the tune. Yeah. You know? Yeah. So it would have, I would think, a lot of impact there.

Yeah, definitely. It's, yeah, definitely. These are music composed for Sunday service, for regular Sunday service, actually. It's not really meant to be a concert piece.

Bach actually never had a full choir when performing these cantatas, and there's been arguments saying cantatas are written for one fourth per part because he knows he will not have the full force week by week.

It's only on the passions and, like the passion oratorios and stuff that he would expect to have full forces basically on a feast day. On regular Sundays, one fourth per part is the argument.

Yeah? Well, in absence of hands popping up, I'm going to put a question that I hope is not too murky.

[59 : 26] It's a little complicated, and it's sort of philosophical. I think you're starting from what I would call a phenomenology, a structure of the physics of human perception that is common to every human organism in terms of perceiving these sounds and how they act.

That's one element of it. Another element is the kind of education that you have more of than most of us in this audience in terms of the tradition, the conventions that are made use of, the expectations, the history, a kind of a context for understanding any particular piece of music.

and then someone who, like me, has almost no musical training could come into this and with a personality and a subjectivity which bypasses all of this convention and maybe even overturns the normal human perception and just introduces a kind of subjectivity that would upset the apple cart.

So, where I'm going with this question is in what you're presenting, how much weight do you put on this natural human perception and how much weight do you put on this acquaintance with how music works?

Because my sense is that you are leaning, you're somewhere in between the two and I'm not sure how much you're allowing for naive, untrained subjectivity.

[61 : 47] Well, that's a hard one. I know. Well, I mean, that's a hard one. That's why I wanted to take advantage because there were no hands up.

That's a hard one in terms of it's a hard one to pinpoint. Actually, it's at so many levels. Even at the pure academic level, I mean, we're talking about how we hear things, how we used to hear things two centuries ago versus how we hear things now.

And the one thing that I point out to, this is out of tune. And we don't feel it. We don't feel the keyboard being out of tune. We'll never feel that.

We're so used to being things tuned this way. That immediately is something different from how we perceive music, how we naturally perceive music, and from how they naturally perceive music at that context two centuries ago.

And then there's always context. If you move to Italy, actually, it's even this. Even moving to Italy, we stay saying in continental Europe, it's a different convention.

[62 : 54] It's a different set of traditions, a set of conventions, a separate set of how people perceive music, even the untrained. because, I mean, you can be untrained, but you have heard music, right?

Right? We have heard music. We have sung some tunes. We have heard the radio. Back in the day, they must have attended Sunday service. They hear music every Sunday. Every Sunday. And what we hear shapes our perception at the same time.

So, it's really almost like catch-22. So, is it even possible to go in and say, I'm untrained and I have a fresh perception? I doubt it because your perception is shaped by where you are.

If you are in that 18th century German, in that, in St. Thomas Church, St. Thomas Church, you'll be so attuned to how Bach does things.

And that would be an extremely different perception from us. I mean, I myself, I mean, I'm trained and yet, I have to really force myself to hear the changes I was talking about in order to pick it up from the recording.

[64 : 13] Okay? I won't be able to pick it up on the keyboard because it's out of tune. So, if I had raised my child on nothing but heavy metal, they might not be able to hear any of what you're talking about.

Heavy metal is a branch of Western music. Right? Heavy metal is a branch of Western music. It's based on Western meter, rhythm, rhythm, rhythmic meter.

Okay. I mean, it's expressed in a different way, different instrument, different acoustic arena. but it's still based on these 12 notes that we established in the Western system.

Okay, so I would have given them a good basis. Right? Now, but... This is a thought experiment, by the way. this is like... Okay, but they only have that understanding that heavy metal music that we give.

that we only have that context that we establish. Now, to pick up more, more in depth as to what Bach was doing, that is a completely different context at all.

[65 : 25] Yes, the kid, a child, on heavy metal music, will know the difference between this and this. Definitely. Right? But, will they be able to understand the change the stark change from here, or will they be able to pick up, oh, it moved a notch to the flat side, therefore it has that effect?

No. I doubt it. This is our first question, and then we'll come to you first.

I just wanted to say thank you so much, because I know how much reading, and study this takes, and you've given us an excellent presentation, so thank you. Thank you.

Kurt? Well, this is very rich, Jason. Welcome back. If the rich young ruler we live in today, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

I would suggest I'll help Jason out so he can finish his university education and be going to confess him. I would much rather him say, Kyrie Eleison and Christe Eleison.

[66 : 39] I was a cradle Lutheran and I was lazy and naive as a music student. This is just wonderful.

Actually, I want to hear from Dr. Packer if I get right right. I just started. I have little to contribute, I'm afraid.

I'm very grateful for what you presented. But to me, I must confess, a lot of it was new thinking. Because the world of, how do we see it, the world of musical language, which I inhabit, really started with Haydn.

I don't know how technically to describe it, but Haydn and Mozart and Beethoven and Brahms, they are all talking a language, which I think I understand a bit, but it's different from Bach's language.

I've only gone a little way into Bach. I've listened to the B minor mass and I expect all the rest of us have. And the B minor mass, to my mind, this is just a picture, it's not an academic statement, but it operates as a bridge between what I know that Bach was doing, but find it hard actually to discern when I listen to his notes.

[68 : 32] And what I know that Haydn and the rest of those guys were doing were not only can I follow the notes, but I can recognize a language with moods and sequence of moods achieved by different tonal devices in the, I'm not the language for this, so I said in the work.

way. And, well, that's where I am. You asked me to say something.

Something if I get Tom right. Say where I am. It may be that others are in places similar to where I am, and it may be that I'm out on my own.

Jason, Dr. Pecker speaks jazz. Maybe I'll do that next time. Maybe I'll be novice. Maybe on that note, we'll declare it into the questions, and once again, thank Jason for a very thought-provoking presentation.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.