

Bach Again



A LIFE Institute Course
Session Four - Spring 2018
Bob Fabian – LIFECourses.ca

Session Plan

- What did Bach intend?
- Cello Suite No. 1 BWV 1007
 - Interpretative options
 - Original (Casals) version
 - Other instruments
 - Really by Mrs. Bach?
- Keyboard Concerto No. 4 BWV 1055
 - Interpretative options
 - Original (Leonhardt) version
 - Real original version ... for oboe

Really Should Have Heard

Partita No. 1 in B-flat major, BWV 825



Johann Sebastian Bach

1685-1750

1. Praeludium
2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Menuet I/II
6. Gigue



Glenn Herbert Gould

1932-1982

Rec. May & September 1959

Bach: Partita No. 1, Gould (1959)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pj5r8anMdc>

Gould's Creative Combination

- Gould got a beautiful sound from his piano
 - His “touch”, ... and “his” piano
- Gould was focused on the patterns
 - Beauty came from well played patterns
- Really was a “new” way to realized Bach
 - Set a high bar for all succeeding pianists

Bach's Intentions

- Relatively few original Bach manuscripts survived
 - We have only two of the five Passions Bach was known to have written – John & Matthew
- We often only have copies made by others, sometimes years after the original
- Bach often reworked and reused his original work (known and “discovered”)
 - Is the 4th concerto really *for* a keyboard instrument or *for* an oboe, but transcribed by Bach for the keyboard?

Acceptable?

- Almost all the notes should be present
 - Exception: impossible chords on chosen instrument
- Almost no new notes should be added
 - Exception: ornaments at performer's discretion
- “Real” Bach if both conditions met
 - But may not be rewarding or satisfying
- Transcriptions and adaptations next week
 - 19th century concert pianists, modern jazz musicians

Cello Suite No. 1



16:30 Min - Interpretation Class: Bach - Cello Suite No.1 in G Major
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2S-OjTb4nU>

First Modern Version

**Pablo Casals (1876-1973)
Abbaye Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa
near Prades, France
in August 1954**

**Suite Nr.1 for Cello Solo
J.S. Bach**

15 min - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX1YtvFZOj0>

Another Great Cellist



16:39 min - Mstislav Rostropovich Bach Cello Suite 1
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA0gAdPYVEE>

Impossible in Bach's Day



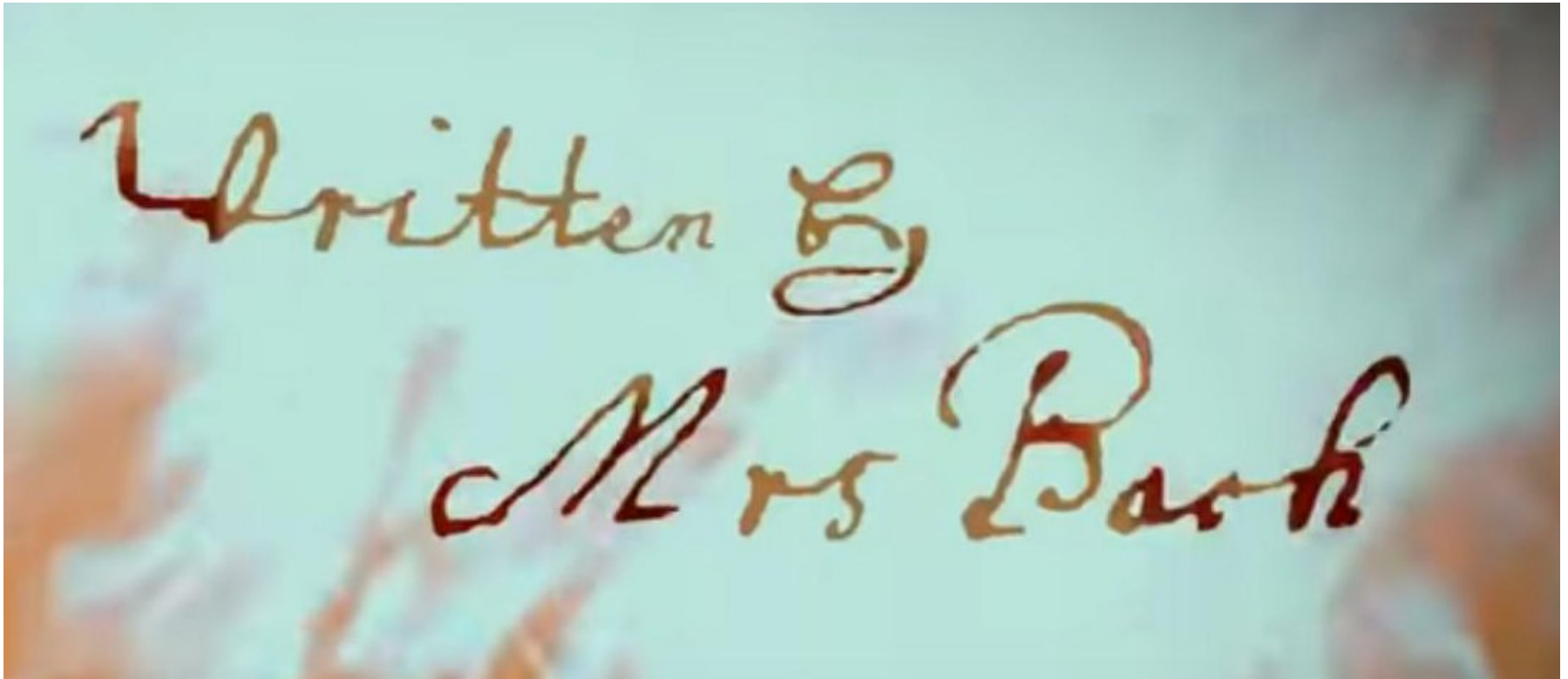
16 min - Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007 - J.S. Bach
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3L-8DhxpM4>

Almost Possible, back then



20 min - John Feeley - Cello suite no.1 in D by J.S. Bach
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGipFrts650>

Was it by J.S.Bach?



1:30 min - Written by Mrs. Bach Trailer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcrsHxGX0vg>

Regardless

It's great music!

Interpreting Bach



1:37:40 min - Swing, Sing & Think: David Fray – Bach's Keyboard Concertos
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV_L7kh08cE

Studio Performance



15 min - Bach Piano Concerto BWV 1055 A major David Fray
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRyLYtBLIOE>

Early Post-War



14 min - Gustav Leonhardt plays Bach: Harpsichord Concerto, A major BWV 1055
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmx6LrW2hYc>

Was that a Bach transcription?

- Bach needed keyboard concertos for his Friday evening concerts at Zimmerman's cafe
- 3rd & 7th keyboard concertos are known Bach transcriptions of violin concertos
- Sir Donald Tovey argued that the 4th concerto was derived from a now lost concerto for oboe d'amore (oboe predecessor)
- A modern reconstruction was made ...

The Original?

*Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)*

*Concerto in A-dur for Oboe d`amore,
Strings and Basso Continuo BWV 1055*

15:20 min - J. S. Bach - Concerto in A-dur for Oboe d`amore BWV 1055
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBS4q9WdatU>

No Definitive Bach!

- Bach was quite happy to reuse and repurpose his music to meet immediate needs
- For me, if the patterns are preserved, then I welcome alternative performances
- I may not agree that the performer has found the best way to show those patterns, ...
 - but I welcome hearing alternatives

Next Week

- Hollywood (Stokowski) famously reused Bach
- Many great 19th century pianists reused Bach
- Many composers have drawn upon Bach
- And there are many affinities between Bach and modern jazz musicians

- How was his music used, what can we learn?