

Johann Sebastian Bach



“So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”

2 Thessalonians 2:15

“In Bach’s age, the early 1700’s, painters, sculptors, and also musicians thought of their art as being akin to oratory, to speaking; this is true both of Catholic and Protestant art and music. They thought that art existed for a moral purpose and that art could share timeless truths. It was there to convince and edify people.”

Dr. Richard Viladesau, Professor of Theology at Fordham University

“[I]nstead in a kind of creative rage Bach experimented with every aspect of musical forms, creating a benchmark of how music can serve as an eloquent meditation on the day’s Gospel reading and refusing to take the easy option of reworking older pieces...it amounted to an extraordinary scriptural exegesis/interpretation and social commentary.”

Music Writer Alex Ross

“One thing we learn through the music of Bach is that music and language can together do things which neither can do separately. Music sometimes surpasses language whether written or spoken in its capacity to penetrate the innermost recesses of our consciousness and to chip away at people’s prejudices and our sometimes toxic patterns of thinking. We can turn to Bach’s compositions for enlightenment about sin, redemption, evil, or repentance.”

Redeeming Transcendence in the Arts: Bearing Witness to the Triune God by Jeremy Begbie

Music examples from:

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 140

St. Matthew Passion BWV 244

Wir danken BWV 29

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 61

Violin Partita no. 2 in D minor BWV 1004

Books to check out:

Redeeming Transcendence in the Arts: Bearing Witness to the Triune God by Jeremy S. Begbie

Bach: Music in the Castle of Heaven by John Eliot Gardiner

The New Bach Reader: A life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents by Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel

J. S. Bach Volume 1 and 2 by Albert Schweitzer

Check out more information on the Holland Bach Society’s website.

<https://hollandbachsociety.org/>

