

Bach exploits the humorous potential of the polonaise and mazur in his 'Peasant Cantata', *Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet*, BWV 212. Paczkowski appropriately quotes Scheibe on the Polish style's suitability for expressing satirical sentiments, and observes that this notion appears to derive from Telemann – though without citing relevant material, such as the song *Sanfter Schlaf*, TVWV 25:63, characterized by the composer himself as an embodiment of the 'comic Polish seriousness' ('die lustige polnische Ernsthaftigkeit'). As has long been recognized, several arias in Bach's cantata are indeed in the Polish style. Paczkowski identifies *Ach, es schmeckt doch gar zu gut* and *Gib, Schöne, viel Söhne* as mazurs, while *Das ist galant, es sprich niemand von den caducken Schocken* and *Fünffzig Taler bares Geld* are both polonaises. But the earthy *Ach, Herr Schösser* does not impress me as having 'a characteristic mazur rhythm' (p. 279).

Given the rustic-canonic/low-high style of this last aria, one wonders: Are the two sides of the Polish style – symbolizing power and majesty on the one hand, and facilitating humorous or satirical sentiments on the other – mutually exclusive? That is, might Bach have intentionally played with the style's serious and comic associations, as Telemann did? Should we be on the

lookout for an element of satire among the polonaise-powered invocations of royal might in panegyric secular cantatas? And does the Peasant Cantata conspire to send up the sense of magnificence associated with the polonaise? Or if Telemann saw Polish music as 'comic-serious', did Bach instead regard it as 'comic *and* serious'? Finally, to what extent might Bach have regarded the Polish style as an expression of the Other – as an exotic embodiment of 'barbaric beauty' (to once again quote Telemann) from an untamed land that is capable of disrupting the order of things? These are some of the questions I believe worth asking of a musical style that can strike very different expressions, and of a composer who was apparently comfortable wearing these masks. If such questions go unasked by Paczkowski, he nevertheless offers a fresh perspective on Bach's music, especially the occasional vocal works. Investigations of the Polish style as a theoretical construct, source of entertainment, and potential bearer of political and satirical associations all invite us to reconsider Bach's motivations as a composer and, not incidentally, the ways in which we choose to view him.

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SZYMON PACZKOWSKI'S COMMENTS ON STEVEN ZOHNS REVIEW

I am grateful to the *Muzyka* quarterly for turning to one of the world's leading experts on Telemann for a review of my book, and to Steven Zohn for what is certainly a close and thorough reading from his own perspective. I appreciate this detailed review, and I accept its polemical nature, the occasional causticity notwithstanding. I believe the review offers a good starting point for a broader debate on the Polish style in Baroque music.

Without going into the details of Zohn's critique, by which I find myself honestly unable to be persuaded (in particular when it comes to the interpretation of theoretical sources, statistical patterns relating to polonaise rhythms, or some of Zohn's summaries of my ideas, like my supposed contention that music in the Polish style was 'essentially monolithic' in eighteenth-century theory and practice, a claim I never actually make), I also think it is necessary

to point out an important difference in our perspectives, which I consider to be valuable, even though it has led to certain misunderstandings in Zohn's review.

The review casts doubt on some of my identifications of polonaises in Bach's music. The criticisms are offered from the perspective of an unmoved skeptic who 'tries as he might but cannot hear' the genre in question, and who finds some of my examples to be 'unconvincing as Polish dances' and dismisses my identifications of 'supposed' polonaise rhythms.

I certainly do not resent this skepticism, to which he is entitled as a polemicist. What I am less sure about is whether our different perspectives are duly taken into account. Among other things, Steven Zohn wonders whether Bach may have been relying on the Polish style as an instrument of 'Othering'. Now, I personally happen to be a product of that supposed 'Other'. As someone immersed in Polish culture and history since birth, and therefore well-versed in the cultural codes of the country and region, I hope I can also lay claim to a certain intuitive grasp of the polonaise genre

on top of the theoretical, historical and archival evidence I marshal in discussing the adoption of the polonaise in Saxony.

My book (which focuses on Bach rather than Telemann) crucially regards the Polish style not so much as a musical embodiment or representation of the Other, but rather as an object lesson in inculturation (defined as gradual acquisition of the norms and characteristics of one culture by another). Bach offers an insight into the processes of adaptation and assimilation whereby Polish patterns were adopted and embraced in Saxony as part of its own music and culture, going as far back as the reign of August II (particularly at the *royal*-electoral court in Dresden).

To restate, I welcome Steven Zohn's engagement with my book and the questions he has raised. It offers an excellent point of departure for further debate, and I look forward to many friendly polemics on the nature of the Polish style in eighteenth-century music.

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