

*SYMBOLIC HISTORY*  
*Through Sight and Sound*

**24. Bach: Fort of Post-Baroque**

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## SYMBOLIC HISTORY Through Sight and Sound

### 24. Bach: Fort of Post-Baroque

Music: Bach, 1723-50, Cantata 34, *O ewiges Feuer*, opening, MHS 1574

- 1) *J.B. Neumann, 1743 ff., Vierzehnheiligen over fields, near Bamberg (slide copy, nearer, from slide 80+1, CGB '52); then a video preview of 8a, below*
- 2) *Same, still nearer, from the entrance path (CGB '52); video: detail only*
- 3) *Same, interior (CGB '52)*
- 4) *Same, central space with High Altar (CGB '52)*
- V4a) *Same, High Altar in center (CGB '52)*
- 4b) *Same, ceiling fresco (CGB '52)*
- 5) *G.A. Viscardi, Asam Brothers, and others, 1718-41, Fürstenfeld, Nave through ironwork (CGB '59)*
- a6) *Fr. X. Schmädfl, c. 1740, Chancel detail, Rottenbuch, Bavaria (CGB '59)*
- V66) *Same, from Choirscreen, detail of David and angels, from the side (CGB '59)*
- 6) *Same, David detail, against the vault (CGB '59)*
- a7) *J. Dietrich, 1738, Top of High Altar, Diessen am Ammersee (CGB '59)*
- 67) *Marx Kriner, 1739, View of Nave ceiling through gate of ironwork, Diessen am Ammersee (CGB '59)*
- 7) *J. Dietrich, 1738, Augustine, etc., High Altar, Diessen am Ammersee (CGB '59)*
- 8) *Asam Brothers, 1732-36, Archangel Michael, fresco detail, Maria-Viktoria Hall, Ingolstadt (CGB '59) (cut "O Ewiges Feuer")*
- 8a) *Another view of Vierzehnheiligen, entrance path (CGB '52)*
- 8b) *Again 8, Michael, a wider view (CGB '59)*

With the opening of Bach's Cantata 34, "O ewiges Feuer" — "Eternal fire, fountain of love" — we have gone from the pilgrimage church of Vierzehnheiligen, through Fürstenfeld, Rottenbuch, and Diessen, to an Asam fresco detail of Michael's old victory over the dark, but endowed, like the Bach brook of love with all the timpani of concerted power.

- a9) *French Gothic, 1190-1220, Apse exterior, Chartres Cathedral (CGB '59)*
- 69) *Same, Choir interior, Chartres Cathedral (CGB '59)Vc9)*

*Vc9) Same, Clerestory of Apse, Chartres Cathedral (CGB '59)*

The West has many summits, from the flame-leap of Gothic, the thrilling century around 1200 (in music the bare-fifth mystery of Perotin, yet a mystery so severely organized that this triplum on two syllables, "*Virgo*," builds entirely over tenor F, but for one rise to G, a heaven-smile at climax, with the return, under B-flat tension, again to F, the chord of the fifth, then unison — a "modulation" in which the whole claim of time beckons through timelessness) —

Music: Perotin le Grand, c. 1200, Organum Virgo, (Cape) EMS 201

- 9) *Same, Pier of the Crossing, Chartres Cathedral (CGB '59)*
- a10) *Same, Ambulatory, Chartres Cathedral (copy of CGB '59, Gothic I, 68)*
- 610) *Same, 1200-25, Glass, Madonna and St. James, Chartres*
- 10) *Again, Chartres, windows of Ambulatory Chapel (CGB '59), which video replaces with V10, French Gothic, 1160-1212, Nave and Choir, Soissons (CGB '59)*
- 11) *French Gothic, 12th-13th cent., St. Pierre, Chartres, interior (CGB '59)*
- 12) *Same, St. Pierre, Chartres, buttressed Apse (CGB '59)*
- 13) *Swiss French Gothic 1160-1250, Death of the Virgin, detail, South Portal, Lausanne Cathedral*
- 14) *Mosan, c. 1200, oak and polychrome Madonna (Sedes Sapientiae), Diocesan Museum, Liège*
- V14a) *French Gothic, c. 1200, Head of Mary from Virgin and Child, polychrome and gilt oak, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

(close Perotin)

from that skyward yielding, the Lady of the soul's romance,

- 15) *Kandinsky, 1914, Composition, Guggenheim Museum, New York City; + V detail*
- a16) *Kandinsky, 1913, sketch for "Orient," detail, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam*
- 16) *Kandinsky, 1913, Composition: Storm, Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.*
- 16a) *Kandinsky, 1914, Picture with 3 Spots, Guggenheim Museum, New York City.*
- 17) *Kandinsky, 1912, Autumn, Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; first, V detail*

to the parabolic outbreak of force in our century (a venture of spirit too costly ever to be paralleled: Rilke's *"Überzähliges Dasein entspringt mir im Herzen"* — "Existence past number wells up in my heart" — Kandinsky and Bartok) —

Music: Bartok, 1927, close of the 3rd String Quartet, Concert CS 501  
(close Bartok)

against that beginning or that end, the spire of Gothic descent or storm of Symbolist return,

- 18) *Asam Brothers, 1732-36, Maria-Viktoria, Altar Wall, Ingolstadt (CGB '59)*
- 18a) *Same, High Altar (CGB '59); + V details*
- 19) *Same, Maria-Viktoria, Altar with ceiling fresco (CGB '59); first, video lower detail*
- 19a) *Same, expanse of ceiling fresco (repeated for V24, below)*
- 20) *Same, the group of Mary and Angels; + V details*
- 20a) *Same, God the Father group; first, V detail*
- 21) *Same, Christ, Dove and Angels (video: details only, left and right)*
- a22) *Same, Abraham and Isaac*
- 22) *Same, David, Pegasus, Europe, etc. (video: details only, above and below)*
- 22a) *Same, Africa, elephant, snakes, etc.*
- 23) *Same, Fountain of Grace, hunting pearls; + V detail*
- V24) *Same, again 19a, Mary group with Fountain below*
- 25) *Same, widest view, altar with Fountain, Mary, etc.*

how rooted in the harmony of God's best of all possible worlds are the grandeurs between — from the 1730's, Asam's Maria-Viktoria, with a patchwork from the Gloria of the B Minor Mass.

Music: Bach, c. 1733, B Minor Mass: Gloria opening; *Domine Deus*, opening; *Cum Sancto Spiritu*, close; (Scherchen) Mus. Guild S630  
(close Gloria)

From such Leibnizian pomp of heaven and earth, the four Continents, arts and collegiate learning imbued with humanizing grace,

- 26) *Roman Mosaic, 9th cent., Madonna, St. Zeno's Chapel, St. Praxed's, Rome; + V detail*

26a) *French Gothic, 13th cent., Interior, Nave looking west, Rheims Cathedral (CGB '74)*

Music: Gregorian (Solesmes), *Spiritus Domini replevit*, Pentecost, French Decca 7543

how strange, how secret, the descent into the crypt that underlies the West, the Dark Age Mary of St. Praxed's in Rome, where symbol has almost shed the assertions of earth, even while the Gregorian text acclaims: "The Spirit of the Lord fills the orb of the world". (fade Gregorian) — A retreat as far prior to the anagogical upsurge of Gothic as its vaulting of soul-force had been

a27) *Roman early Baroque, 1591-1628 ff., Maderna with frescoes by Domenichino, Sant' Andrea della Valle, Rome (CGB '86)*

27) *Baciccio, 1674-9, Ceiling of Il Gesu, Rome (video: three details only)*

27a) *Same, detail (CGB '86); video: lower section only*

from the proclaimed opulence of Baroque. It is the stretching of that incarnate antithesis, as in Baciccio's Victory of the Holy Name and Satanic overspill, which would knock the props from great church art; and it had seemed, as 1700 approached, that the crisis neared — the mummery of sacrificial aggrandizement, as when Monteverdi whoops it up in the anchoritic words: "*Fugge, fugge,*"

"Flee, my soul, from the world" —

Music: Monteverdi, 1620, *Fugge anima mea* (close), Vanguard VCS-10022

a strange parade of withdrawal.

a28) *Raitenhaslach, Bavarian Romanesque, then 17th cent., painted and stuccoed under Zick, Zimmermann, et al., 1735-43, view from entrance (CGB '59)*

628) *Same, organ loft (CGB '59)*

28) *Zick, et al., c. 1739, St. Bernard ceiling, Raitenhaslach, Bavaria (CGB '59); with video details*

Bach is full of such swellings, where the depraved singer today squeals like a pig under a gate: "the chains of Hell and Jesus' Blood"

Music: Bach, 1723-50, Cantata #74, Alto aria, a phrase, MHS 1574

and "throw yourself in his arms".

Music: Bach 1723-50, Cantata #155, Soprano aria, opening, MHS 1388  
(fade)

Does not the flesh-loading of the old mystical content produce such curiosities as this Raitenhaslach Visions of St. Bernard — the saint on his knees (right) to lap Christ's fountain of blood, and again (left) for the milk stream from Mary's breast — South German, six style-centuries from Bernard's ascetic dreams?

a29) *Bernini, 1657-66, Cathedra Petri, or High Altar, St. Peter's, Rome; + V detail*

29) *Double: [A] Bernini 1657-66, St. Augustine, High Altar, St. Peter's Rome; and [B] E.Q. Asam c. 1735, Augustine, Weltenburg*

Yet who can deny, over the paradox of assertive abnegation, the seriousness of high Baroque, even in the grandiloquence Bernini lends Peter's Chair, or the young poet Pope, Virgil's "Messiah" (1712):

The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay,  
Rocks fall to dust. and mountains melt away;  
But fix'd his word, his saving power remains:  
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own MESSIAH reigns!

And it is just the gift of the Germans to extend the art of sacred heroics beyond the mocking debacle of French Regency and English Pope, which is our theme and inquiry — the gift of E.Q. Asam to carry Bernini into the 18th century on his own ground, and with more worship;

30) *Again, Asam, Augustine, B of 29 (video: detail only)*

Bach's related genius, but beyond the Asams, beyond all his contemporaries, writers, artists, other composers, Vivaldi, Telemann, Handel, to make that stronghold of belated Baroque an eternal Passion center of Christian and human truth.

a31) *Zurbaran, 1635-40, detail of Christ, from Crucifixion, with the painter, Prado, Madrid*

- V631) *Rembrandt, 1632, Descent from the Cross, Alte Pinakothek, Munich*  
 31) *The whole of a31, Zurbaran, Crucifixion with the painter*

Music: J.S. Bach, 1729, St. Matthew Passion, "Und um die neunte Stunde" etc., ARC-2712001

The deeply pietistic sharing in the Passion, which would culminate in Bach's settings, as in these last words according to St. Matthew, with the following Chorale, was not merely Protestant, but Counter-Reformation as well: so with Zurbaran's 17th-century Crucifixion and the Painter;

- a32) *Rembrandt, 1633, Raising Christ on the Cross, centerspread with self-portrait of the artist, Alte Pinakothek, Munich*  
 32) *Same, detail of artist (with video detail of Christ from whole and a closer detail of the artist; then, video returns to V631, Rembrandt, Descent, upper detail; while slide show introduces 32a, Rembrandt, c. 1637-41, Deposition, National Gallery, London)*

Music: Same, opening of Chorale, *Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden*  
 (fade)

though the example which most anticipates Bach is perhaps that Munich raising of the Cross, into which Rembrandt has introduced his own sorrowing face. As so often, it is as if Bach had endowed the soul of Rembrandt with the musical emotions of the last and richest Baroque. Thus the closing modulations to which he subjects the Passion Chorale, "*Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden*" (**close of Chorale**) — building on the intensity and tenderness of the German past: Albert, nephew of Schütz:

Music: H. Albert, c. 1640, from *Kirchenkantate: Bekehrung zum Herren*  
*"Kommst du";* (Tinayre) Col. M-431 (fade)

- 33) *M.B. Braun, 1712, St. Jude the Apostle, upper detail, National Gallery, Prague*  
 33a) *Same, detail of face*

By the time of Bach, the more-than-Racine rhetoric of passion, like all the energies of earth, has been magnified; this Apostle Jude by Braun in Bohemia, might be Bach's St. Peter, or the tenor soul of man, at the cockcrow of denial.

Music: Bach, 1723-7, St. John Passion, from #18: "*und ging hinaus und weinete bitterlich*," Odeon ST E 80668-70

34) *M.B. Braun, 1726, St. Jerome before his Cave, near Kuks, Bohemia; first, V detail*

Music: Bach, same, cont., close of #19, "*Meine Missetat*"

(end)

Braun's 1726 Jerome before his cave so crying the penitence of his "Missetat" has almost the terror of Blake's Nebuchadnezzar, imbruted specter of man. To entrain in sacred participation all divisive powers of post-Renaissance self and world, without being daunted by the gulf between,

35) *Rembrandt, 1668, Return of the Prodigal, Hermitage, Leningrad; + V details*

is the victory of the religious Baroque — as certain in Bach's Passions as in this ultimate Prodigal by Rembrandt. How the Matthew-Passion pours on Peter's denial not the rancor of the St. John "Misdeed" but the balm of a comfort aria: "*Erbarme dich*."

Music: Bach, 1729, St. Matthew Passion, from 46-7, "*weinete*" and "*erbarme*" ARC-2712001

(fade)

2nd 34) *Again, St. Jerome, another detail*

2nd 34a) *Maulbertsch, c. 1760(?), Raising of the Cross, place unspecified*

Though both Passions are formed in the Baroque antinomy of actual wrong and reasoned vindication, that of John heightens the negative, as in the fierce Bass aria and chorus: "*Eilt!*" — Hasten! — Where? — To Golgotha":

Music: Bach, St. John, from 48, "*Nach Golgotha*" Od. ST E 80668-70

(fade)

2nd 35) *Again, Rembrandt, Prodigal's Return, detail*

Which the Matthew Passion as determinedly parallels with assuagement: "Come ! Stay! — Where? — In Jesus' arms."

Music: St. Matthew Passion, continued, from 70: "*Sehet, kommt*," (Scherchen) West. Gold WGM 8318-4, side 7

(fade)



But must we always go back before Bach's birth for an art suggestion of his deep and shadowed containment?

- 36) *E.Q. Asam, 1733-35, Resurrection of Sinners, St.-Johann-Nepomuk Kirche, Munich; + V details*  
 36a) *Same, Resurrection of the Just*

The earthquake resurrection of the dead from the Matthew Passion —

Music: Bach, St. Matthew Passion, cont. (73) Earthquake, ARC-2712001  
 (fade)

that cry which stretches creed — has startling parallels in this E.Q Asam.

- 37) *Rembrandt, 1638, The Risen Christ appearing to the Magdalen, Buckingham Palace, London; + V detail*  
 37a) *Rembrandt, c. 1650-55, Landscape with Ruins, Gemäldegalerie, Cassel*

But for the evening peace and nature-love which follows (though the German soul has always leaned that way) we are pressed again to Rembrandt — Christ as gardener to the Magdalen.

Music: Bach, Matthew Passion, cont. (74), Bass, "Am Abend" ARC-2712001

- 38) *C.D. Friedrich, 1817, In Memory of John E. Brewer, Charlottenburg; + V detail*  
 (fade "Am Abend")

Or forward to Friedrich's landscape symbols, this memorial to a lost friend, the Gothic city through the gate of death, beyond estranging water.

- a39) *Zimmermann, 1746-54, Die Wieskirche, against snowy mountains, Southern Bavaria (CGB '86; copy of 18th Century a39)*  
 Vb39) *Same, detail of West front, sun and shadows (CGB '86; copy of 18th Century 39)*  
 39) *German Baroque, 1746-58, Birnau am Bodensee, in landscape (CGB '66)*  
 39a) *Abbey of Our Lady, 18th cent., Zwiefalten, Germany*

Yet the German Baroque, above all styles, breathes harmony with the flowering earth, as in the poems of Bach's contemporary, Brockes (his lyrics included in the St. John Passion), a poet at his best in nature: on The Nightingale:

Die aus so enger Brust und mit so kleiner Kehlen  
Die grössten Wälder füllt durch ihren Wunderschall —

that song-wonder Blake would compare with the scent of flowers: "how from so small a center comes such sweets,/ Forgetting that within... Eternity expands/ Its ever-during doors."

The title of Brockes book is the very key to Baroque: Earthly Delight in God — Irdisches Vergnügen im Gott:

In the cool of night, in pensive mood,  
I walked, and saw of late where a cherry stood,  
Blossoming in the light of the moon,  
That nothing whiter could be seen or known.  
It was as if a great snowfall  
Had heaped the branches and each bough  
Down to the smallest twigs with snow  
Clustered in rounds of pure white balls.

Surely — I said — it would be sought in vain,  
Over all the earth, to find a whiter thing.  
But as I shifted here and there,  
My sight still lifted to the tree,  
I caught by chance, in a space of sky,  
A single clear and shining star,  
Far brighter than the blossoms were.

I thought: how the beauty of earth, all God has given,  
Dwindles in the brightness of his heaven. (CGB)

- a40) *E.Q. Asam, 1731-32, St. Anne, Joseph and the infant Mary, Osterhofen, near the Danube (CGB '59); video: detail only: angels with a huge crown*
- 40) *E.Q. Asam, 1733-35, Trinity, detail, from St.-Johann-Nepomuk Kirche, München*
- 40a) *E.Q. Asam, Same, wider view, from which video takes only a close detail, then previews 46: pan-detail of Apse and Trinity*

It is not canvases that hold the German art of Bach's time, but churches and palaces, entire. The greatest artist, E.Q. Asam, like his brothers, is architect, sculptor, painter. It is significant that our search for a Passion parallel of the right depth and humanity led us back to Protestant Holland and Rembrandt.

Music: Bach, Johannes-Passion continued (58), "*Es ist vollbracht*"

But against even Bach's greatest moments — that lonely "*consummatum est*" ("*Es ist vollbracht*") from the Passion according to John — E.Q. Asam, Catholic Bavarian, marvellously holds his own — most of all in the brooding Nepomuk Church he and his brothers designed and built at their own cost beside their house in Munich, with an apse-lighted Trinity which gives the florid Baroque its darkest glory. To have preserved that solemnity into the generation after Watteau and Couperin, Swift and Pope, is not Bach's triumph only, since Asam shared in it too.

41) *Dürer, 1511, The Trinity, Woodcut; + V detail*

As the resemblance (less in form than spirit) to Dürer's 1511 Throne of Grace might suggest, it is the heritage which made Machiavelli praise Republican Germany above all Europe for probity and religion; though of course what we are in search of is deeper than morality, a God-immediacy by which that rapt people so miscarried in our century.

42) *South German, c. 1340, Christ and St. John, Staatliche Museen, Berlin; + V detail (cf. V42)*

Back and back in time the intimacy sustains itself — South German, early 14th century, and the loving union of Christ and John, both wrapped in the blood-lined robe of flesh, has a spirit paralleled nowhere else, tied to the soul-soaring of Meister Eckhardt:

God is all things; all things are God. The Father begets me, his son, without cessation. I say more: he begets in me himself and in himself me. The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me. My eye and God's eye are one eye.

43) *Master of Naumburg, c. 1270, Head of Christ on the Cross, Dom, Naumburg*

And it is in Naumburg, from a century earlier — the 13th — that the dying saviour first receives the human reality of each and all. How is Bach thinkable without that consummation?

44) *German, 10th or 11th cent., Head of St. Metronus, Abbey, Gernrode*

We pursue it further, into the Dark Ages. This battered Metronus head from Gernrode, illuminates the 10th or 11th century with a testimonial inwardness unique in that Europe — the sacred accomplishing itself in subjectivity: "Es ist vollbracht." (close)

45) *Roman Christian, 3rd cent., Orant, detail, Catacombs of Priscilla, Rome; video having picked up more of the figure from Va45*

No doubt the deepest origin is in the Christ-man himself, incarnate mediator for the West; but if we trace that Logos to its third century art-beginnings, we feel, as in Gregorian, the passions of flesh dissolve in mystery; we can hardly distinguish the hollow hush of "Crucifixus" from a "Resurrexit" attested as by the empty tomb..

Music: Gregorian, Crucifixus and Resurrexit, Credo I 4th mode, Solesmes, London 5632 (fade)

46) *E.Q. Asam, 1733-35, St.-Johann-Nepomuk Kirche, interior from entrance, München (CGB '59)*

46a) *Same, Apse with Trinity; first, video detail of Christ*

By the time of Asam and Bach, Incarnation has mounted creed in other body and robes on quite another stage. The outraged cry of "Let him be crucified"

Music: Bach, St. Mathew Passion, continued (from 54) "Lass ihn kreuzigen" (cut)

demands a Leibnitzian calculus of containment: "*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*":

Music: Bach, St. Mathew Passion, continued (63) from "*O Haupt voll Blut...*" (cut)

1st 47) *Same, Apse and Trinity (detail taken from Mozart 53, CGB '59); while video pans to an angel, upper left*

The great organ fugues — as for the Passacaglia — go as far as assertion can in empowering the dissonant antithesis:

Music: Bach, 1708-17, Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor, close, (Biggs)  
Col-MS 6261

*1st 48) E.Q. Asam, 1723, Assumption of Mary, High Altar (from church aisle),  
Rohr, Bavaria (CGB '59)*

Thus in the B Minor Mass, where the Gregorian Creed is to be set, the tympanic Resurrexit seems to pile the Asam altar at Rohr, of Mary's Assumption from the grave,

*For 2nd 47 and 2nd 46)*

*Again, Asam Nepomuk Trinity: slide show has a wider view of 46a; while  
video returns to the frontal view of slide 40 (plus a Christ detail)*

*For 3rd 47)*

*Here the slide show repeats the frontal view of 40; while the video details  
Mary's tomb from the Assumption (see V3rd 47 in the video file)*

on the chromatic grief of the Nepomuk "Cruxifixus."

Music: Bach, close of Crucifixus, B Minor Mass, from Angel 3500 C  
(end Crucifixus)

*2nd 48) Again, Asam, Assumption of Mary, from nearer (CGB '59); first, video  
previews 49, Mary and Angels ascending*

*49) Same, Assumption of Mary, nearer and above (CGB '59); video: details  
only: Mary, then angels; also from 2nd 48, tomb with apostles*

*50) Same, below, closer: tomb with Apostles (CGB '59)*

*51) Same, nearer, Apostles to the left (CGB '59)*

*52) Same, above, Heaven, with Mary rising (CGB '59)*

*52a) Same, Mary, a side view (slide copy of 1700 #20, CGB '59); then video  
returns to detail from 52, Heaven*

Music: Bach, opening of Resurrexit, B Minor Mass, Angel 3500 C  
(fade Resurrexit)

In the Baroque engrossment of Gothic heaven, mystical rapture lifts a weight of Cartesian bulk, which, as in Leibnitz, it has entrained in its cosmic surge:

Souls act in accordance with the laws of final causes through their desires, ends and means. Bodies act in accordance with the laws of efficient causes or of motion. The two realms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, are in harmony, each with the other... According to this system, bodies act as if (to suppose the impossible) there were no souls at all,

53) *Asam Brothers, c. 1735, Assumption above High Altar, Kloster Weltenburg, Bavaria (CGB '59)*

V53a) *Same, a nearer view of figures against the vault (CGB '59)*

and souls act as if there were no bodies; yet both body and soul act as if the one were influencing the other...

The totality of spirits must compose the city of God... a moral world within the natural world... Another harmony between the physical realm of nature and the moral realm of grace... brings it about that things progress of themselves toward grace along natural lines... Under this perfect government... everything must turn out for the well-being of the good... not only for all in general, but also for each one of us in particular...

As Leibnitz kindles formal Descartes,

a54) *French-German, 1st half of the 14th cent., Stained Glass windows, Strasbourg Cathedral (CGB '59)*

54) *German, 14th cent., Gothic, Stained Glass window, Cathedral, Augsburg (CGB '59); + V detail (cf. V54a)*

Medieval German mystics had enflamed the Scholasticism of Paris. From Suso on his cross studded with nails, 1350, the "Sursum Corda" — "Lift up your hearts" — rises like the burning windows of Augsburg:

I set before my inner eyes myself in all my being, with body, soul, and all my faculties, and placed around me all the creatures God has created, in heaven, on earth, and in all the elements, birds of the air, beasts of the forests, fishes of the sea, and thereto all the little dustmotes which shine in the rays of the sun, and all the little water-drops which ever fell or fall from dew, snow, or rain — and wished that each and all of these things had a sweetly swelling sound of harps, well prepared from the innermost essence of my heart,

- 55) *Grünewald, c. 1511-15, Vision of God, upper detail from Madonna and Angels panel, Isenheim Altarpiece, Colmar*  
 55a) *Same, larger context, Heavenly Glory*

so that there would rise up from them a new and jubilant hymn of praise to the beloved, gentle God from evermore to evermore. And then the longing arms of my soul spread out toward the countless beings of all creation, exhorting and inciting them even as a zealous precentor incites his fellow-singers to sing joyfully and to offer up their hearts to God: *Sursum corda*.

So Grünewald incites the Renaissance to a fire-vision of glory spilling from and returning to the Father. Now that German continuity

- 1st 56) *E.Q. Asam, 1731-32, Glorification of the Lamb, Osterhofen (detail of CGB '59); first, video closer detail*

haloes the vaults of Asam with lighted angels, at Osterhofen, on wings around the Lamb. Again Leibnitz gives a clue to the German genius which could hold the mighty style of Christian Baroque into the Salon century, raising the rational and phenomenal to mythic ecstasy.

- 1st 57) *Bernini, 1657-66, Angel window (over Peter's Chair), St. Peter's, Rome (video: wider variant, V1st 57)*

Against the Asam, set Bernini's 1660 paradigm. This tangle of rays and angels is as calculatedly cool as the forces of a Newtonian wheel. And the World System, which in Newton, despite his ardent wish, becomes a clockwork of vectorial force,

- 2nd 56) *Again, Asam, Glorification of the Lamb (whole of 1st 56, CGB '59)*

is glowingly sustained in Leibniz by the vital antinomies of Energy. Indeed, the shift from a physics of force and momentum to one of energy (from  $MV$  to  $MV^2$ ) fills the universe with the ubiquitous ground of nature as fluctuant substance.

- 2nd 57) *Again, wider: Angel Window and Peter's Chair; while video narrows to a Window detail, V2nd 57*

The poles always mingle. Leibniz is rational too, but not with so Galilean a command of heaven as matter in motion. And how remote from outward Bernini,

- 58) *Münstermann, 1631, Head of Moses, Altar detail, Parish Church, Tossens, N. Germany*  
 58a) *Münstermann, 1637, Evangelist Matthew, upper detail, pulpit of the church in Holle*  
 V586) *Münstermann, 1631, from Head of John the Baptist, Altar, Parish Church, Tossens (CGB '57); video narrows to a close detail*

is this 1638 Moses by his North German contemporary Münstermann, steeped in the Hermetic mysticism then voicing itself in Jacob Böhme:

When the will resigns and surrenders to God's Ground, it sinks beyond itself, beyond all grounds and points of view, into the only place where God is revealed, where He works and wills. It has become a no-thing to its own ego-self... God lives within it... as fire reddens iron: so that it loses its darkness... and glows with the Love-will that rules and works in all. (CGB)

— Böhme, of whom Silesius would write later in the century:

As fish in water, as in earth the plant,  
 Bird in the air, sun to the firmament,  
 Or salamander to his fiery haunt,  
 God's heart is Jacob Böhme's element. (CGB)

— Silesius, to write the same of his own eternal I:

I also am God's son: I share his company.  
 His Spirit, Flesh and Blood are known to him in me. (CGB)

Ich auch bin Gottes Sohn, ich sitz' an seiner Hand:  
 Sein Geist, sein Fleisch und Blut ist ihm an mir bekannt.

- a59) *Martin and Michael Zürn, 1634, The Rose Garland Altar, Münster, Überlingen; + V detail*  
 59) *Justus Glesker, c. 1650(?), John the Baptist, detail, National Gallery, Munich; + V detail*

Music: Buxtehude, 1680-87, from *Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron*, ARC-3096



Before Bach's birth, the art of German Baroque (this Glesker John) shares in Silesius' rapture:

The rose is without purpose, asks neither how nor why;  
It blooms because it blooms, selfless as earth and sky. (CGB)

Such the leaven Buxtehude caught up from Schütz, Albert, Hammerschmidt. And it was Buxtehude's evening concerts ("I am the rose of Sharon") which Bach, in 1705, walked 200 miles to hear.

(fade Buxtehude)

60) *Glesker, 1648-53, Grieving Mary from a Crucifixion, Dom, Bamberg*

60a) *Same, another lighting (video: upper detail only)*

Where immediate person pours into the sacred, the romantic is foreshadowed. So with Glesker's grieving Mary, or the haunting oboe unison as watchman's horn in Buxtehude's "I sought by night... him whom my soul loves":

Music: Buxtehude, 1680-87, from "Ich suchte des Nachts," ARC 3096

(fade)

61) *M. Willmann, 1666, Miracle of St. Bernard, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Breslau*

61a) *Same, detail of carriage, with a video return to the whole*

61b) *Same, detail of landscape*

62) *Same, another detail of landscape*

And in this rare German landscape of the time, by Willmann — the devil charmed into piecing out, with his own body, St. Bernard's broken coach wheel — we are startled by an earth and sky webbed with the lightning of Grünewald, as energized as the viola da gamba line from Buxtehude's "Jubilate":

Music: Buxtehude, 1680-7, Gamba introduction from Cantata II, Lumen 32050

(end viola da gamba)

63) *E.Q. Asam, c. 1735, High Altar with St. George, Weltenburg Cloister Church, Bavaria (CGB '59); video uses wider variant, V63*

- 63a) *Same, from the oval Nave (CGB '59); video starts with a wider variant, V63a, then goes to a detail from 63a*
- V63b) *C.D. and E.Q. Asam, 1717-35, View across the Danube of the same Cloister*
- 63c) *Late Roman Baroque, 1685, Andrea Pozzo, detail of ceiling fresco, San Ignazio, Rome (CGB '86)*
- 63d) *Again, Asam Brothers, Weltenburg Cloister Church, detail of ceiling stucco (copy of CGB '59, see 18th Century, 42)*
- 63e) *Again, the St. George Altar (horizontal detail of 63, CGB '59); video: closer details only*

Music: Bach, c. 1735(?), Cantata #50, *Nun ist das Heil*, BG 555

Both Bach and Asam cling to that chain of life-marvel, which reaches from Gothic and Altdorfer all the way to Wagner and beyond. The charged adventure of George, the Lady, and Dragon, flanked by Bernini columns and saints, with every feature of the cloister church of Weltenburg, wrought by the Asam brothers as if from one precious stone, is full of such pictorial exuberance as Schweitzer has stressed in Bach.

(skip in Cantata to near close)

Incredible, that 1735 continuance and heightening of expressive powers, the Great-Chain-of-Being faith of the century before, from Galileo and Descartes to Newton, Leibnitz, the vast constructions of Bernini and Boromini, Pozzo and Bacciaccia, or of the France of Louis XIV, brought to a grandeur unmatched before. and at a time when Baroque assertion might seem to have spent itself,

(end *Nun ist das Heil*)

- 64) *Fr. Mansart, 1643-50, Hall of Mirrors, Chateau Maisons-Lafitte*
- V64a) *Mansart, Le Brun, Coysevox, 1678 ff., Salon de la Guerre, Versailles*
- 64b) *Le Vau and Le Brun, 1671 ff, Escalier des Ambassadeurs, Versailles*

In France we have seen the rational heroics of the Sun-King, this first Mansart hall of mirrors in the Maisons-Lafitte, swell to the methodic sublimity of Versailles, the overreach of Lully's Overtures:

Music: Lully, 1686, Overture to *Armide*, opening, HSL-2072

(fade)

a65) *Fr. de Cuvillies, 1734-39, from Hall of Mirrors, Allegory of Water and Fishing, Amalienburg, Nymphenburg, Munich (copy of CGB '59, see 18th Century 41)*

V665) *Same, whole wall (then video details from a65)*

65) *Same, another stucco detail (cf. 18th Century, Va41)*

Music: J.S.Bach, c. 1627, Partita #2, Courant, close, Landowska, VIC  
1594 (fade in)

We have seen, we have heard it break, with the 18th century, to the playful arabesques of rococo asymmetry, which spread over Europe and in all the arts: we pick it up here from Munich, 1735, the hall of mirrors in the Amalienburg. Bach absorbed it as he did every style, grafting the fragilities of Couperin and Rameau onto the earlier base.

(close Courant)

Most of all it frills the chamber-play of Telemann

Music: Telemann, Mus. de Table, from E Minor Overture, ARC 73234-35  
(fade)

66) *J.B. Zimmermann, 1727-36, Steinhausen, piers and ceiling (CGB '59) (with video detail of Eve, etc.)*

V66a) *Same, another portion of the ceiling (CGB '59)*

66b) *Same, Die Wieskirche, upper detail of Choir (CGB '86); while V66b copies 18th Century V640: same, wider spread (CGB '59)*

66c) *Same, Die Wieskirche, columned height of the Choir*

Music: Telemann, c. 1640(?), Magnificat in C, close, PHM 500-104

And against the Roman weight of the Asams, the Zimmermanns lace and embroider Steinhausen (as here) and finally Die Wies' with a Tiepolo and Louis Quinze brilliance as of porcelain, though with an Eden simplicity of the pastoral. The result is an ecclesiastical delight unparalleled, unless in those always more operative masses and Magnificats — as from Telemann (close Magnificat) to Mozart almost at the century's end:

Music: Mozart, 1779, "Coronation" Mass in C, Gloria, Amen, Nonesuch H-1041  
(close)

Religious display in Bavaria has not struck so desperately

67) *H. Rigaud, c. 1700, Cardinal de Bouillon, Musée des Beaux Arts, Perpignan*

on the clarity which had etched the final pomps of 1700 France, high Church and high state, Versailles, tax-farming, the Wars of the Spanish Succession, with mockery. The skeptic wit of Voltaire, Holbach, the Encyclopediasts, already peeps through the play-acting of Rigaud's Cardinal de Bouillon, angel kiddies and all — as if to voice

a68) *Watteau, 1708-09, Decorative panel, with monkeys, Private Collection*

V668) *Zimmermann, 1746-54, Die Wieskirche, video pan on detail of slide 66b, above (CGB '86); video then returns to a68, decorative panel*

68) *Watteau, 1717, Gathering Under an Arcade, Dulwich College, London (cf. 1700 67); + V detail*

68a) *Same, detail of dancers and fountain*

what Watteau might share with Congreve: "No more of that nauseous cant." Watteau's training under Audran as a painter of arabesques — those wave, shell, and flower forms with which Zimmermann would pendulate whole churches — must have shielded him from the heavy hangover of Le Brun. But he goes beyond decorative buoyancy.

Music: Fr. Couperin, 1713, from La Favorite, Landowska, Soc. Album

The break with the heroic uncovers a frail poignance of ennui and lonely heart, which Verlaine had only to romanticize: (Symonds)

Your soul is a sealed garden, and there go  
With masque and bergamasque fair companies  
Playing on lutes and dancing and as though  
Sad under their fantastic fripperies...

As in Couperin, so in the tearful light of the Dulwich College "Gathering" (detail), the very fountains seem to sob:

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,  
Qui fait rever les oiseaux dans les arbres  
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,  
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les marbres.

(fade Couperin)

- Va69) *Magnasco, c. 1740(?)*, *Gathering in a Garden, Palazzo Bianco, Genoa*  
 69) *Magnasco, detail from the far right of the same picture*

Music: Domenico Scarlatti, c. 1740(?), Sonata in F Minor, K 184 (L. 189)  
 close, Nonesuch H-1094

By 1735 — Bach and Asam then at their height — French languor and precious  
 ridicule show in Italy through the dark and chromatic passions of Magnasco and  
 Domenico Scarlatti.

(end Scarlatti)

- 70) *Norbert Grund, c. 1760, Minuet in a Park, National Gallery, Prague (video:  
 details only)*

In that Germany, where Norbert Grund was already prettying his teacup gardens  
 with minuets in the plaintive mode, the old Bach held the great fugal fortress almost  
 alone. What had happened in France forty years before. now stretched the generation-gap  
 of his own musical family. Those brilliant sons, from Wilhelm Friedemann through  
 Philipp Emanuel to Christian, all courted the modish amours of the *style galant*:

Music: Johann Christian Bach, c. 1770(?), Sinfonia in B flat Major, Op.18,  
 #2, plucked string section from the Andante, Chamber Music  
 Society, CM-6 (fade)

- 1st 71) *G.L. Bernini, 1658-70, Glory-dome over altar, Sant' Andrea al Quirinale,  
 Rome (CGB '86); + V detail*

While the outmoded father, Johann Sebastian, brought his last enormous powers  
 to bear on the fugue. Nothing but the Newtonian and Leibnizian synthesis of the world  
 had expressed Baroque command as completely as formulated fugal polyphony. As the  
 daring cupola of the last Bernini

- Va1st 72) *C.D. and E.Q. Asam, 1717-35, whole ceiling, stucco and fresco,  
 Weltenburg Kloster/Danube (video: central spread only)*  
 1st 72) *Same, the lower half of the fresco (CGB '59); + V detail: Asam leaning in  
 (from V1st 72a)*

reads itself over into the light-hung ceiling of that George-and-the-Dragon church of Weltenburg, where clouds and carved angels, with an ecstatic Asam (top right) overflow the rim — so Bach, for the final work of a God-affirming lifetime.

*1st 73) Bernini, 1655-67, Piazza of St. Peter's (from the Colonnade roof), Rome*

set himself to systematize, in constructions of every complexity, simple, augmented, diminished, mirrored, and with added subjects, the whole Art of the Fugue, culminating what had swept from 17th century Italy — the spatial conquest of Bernini's Piazza of St. Peter's

*1st 74) J. Prandtauer, 1702-18 ff., Kloster Melk, Austria (detail of 3rd 74, CGB 59)*

— north over the Danube: in music Fux' Gradus ad Parnassum, in architecture the supreme Monastery of Melk, after 1702 — as if synthesizing power would proclaim itself to the world.

*1st 75) English landscape gardening, 1741 ff., Stourhead Park, Wiltshire (CGB '59)*

Almost no work of Genius is harder to parallel than the Art of Fugue. It seems the apotheosis of the great organizing will of Europe's most formal centuries — what in England by 1740 had shaped whole countrysides of forest, lake and park: Stourhead, where nature receives the idyllic touch of art.

*1st 76) N. Poussin, c. 1644-45, Landscape with St. John on Patmos, Art Institute, Chicago*

A perfection devised a hundred years before, when Poussin accorded heroic landscape to the geometry of planes, a fugal abstraction to inspire Cezanne.

*1st 77) Rembrandt, 1653, Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City*

All the greatest art of the 17th century has that canonic eternity, working through the richest matter of sense and world — Rembrandt's Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer.

*1st 78) Zuccali, 1701-04, and Effner, 1720-26, Lower Hall, Neues Schloss Schleissheim (CGB '59)*

In Bach's Germany such panel painting seems to disappear; the Parnassian nobility shifts to architecture, bearer of the ritual dream.

*For 1st 79) Double: J.S. Chardin, [A] left, 1734, Philosopher Reading, Louvre, Paris; and, [B] right, 1733, The Water Urn, Museum, Stockholm*

Of course the whole rococo is imbued with formal design; but in France only Chardin holds the seriousness of the old Baroque, its sense of space as metaphysical — what composes this Philosopher to a still-life. or a still-life to philosophy.

*For 1st 80) Double: [A] Rembrandt, 1669, Last Self-Portrait, Mauritshuis, the Hague; and [B] Goya 1815, Self-Portrait, Prado, Madrid*

Finally it is in Goya that the grand manner of the Western centuries of confidence breaks through Revolution to an ultimatum of Baroque self in fugal plasticity.

*For 2nd 79 and 2nd 78)*

*Jan Vermeer, c. 1660, The Girl with a Red Hat, Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (CGB '62)*

We have no choice, for Art of the Fugue cognates, but to invoke so extended a span. Since it is to the outpost of the century before that Bach mounts,

*For 2nd 77) H. Matisse, 1905, Portrait with the Green Stripe, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Copenhagen*

most of all at the end of his life, and to such solitary eminence, that he belongs simultaneously to the past, and to the abstract search of the future, even down to today.

*For 2nd 76) Asam Brothers, 1717-35, Stucco from Forehall, Kloster Weltenburg, N. Bavaria (CGB '59)*

The Art of Fugue is another of those life-studies we have to hint at in the closing minutes of a show. Best to focus on

*For 2nd 75 and 2nd 74)*

*Borromini, 1650-59, St. Ivo, upper part, Rome (copy of Blake, 43, CGB '86)*

the last great quadruple fugue, intended for three new invertible subjects combined with the leading theme; though unfinished, it is still the longest fugue Bach wrote;

*2nd 73) F. von Erlach, 1717 ff., Church of San Carlo, Vienna*

so even with this fragment of a vast work, we must start part way through with the second and faster theme, hear it combine with the first. Then yield to the four-note grandeur of the chromatic

*For 2nd 72) E.G. Haussmann, 1746, Portrait of J.S. Bach, place unspecified;  
+ V detail*

signature, Bach: B - A - C - H (H the designation of B natural), with the beginning of its unbelievable measuring against the other themes. So the fugue breaks off, in a trailing voice, as if Bach had dropped it on his death-bed.

Music: Bach, 1750, Art of Fugue, close of the last, (Münchinger), London CSA 2215

- a2nd 71) Another CGB '86 variant of Bernini, Sant' Andrea al Quirinale [at present, slide show only, but to be revised into the video]*
- 2nd 71) Again, Bernini, Sant' Andrea al Quirinale, spread opening of Heavenly Glory (video: details only, right, then left)*
- 3rd 72) Again, Weltenburg, ceiling fresco (CGB '59); video returns, for details only, to 1st 72 [add to video Va3rd 72, whole fresco]*
- For 3rd 73) Again, St. Peter's Piazza, the sweep of the curved colonnade*
- 3rd 73a) Same, the triple colonnade, from within*
- 3rd 74) Again, Melk, at evening (here, original slide CGB '59)*
- V3rd 74a) Same, another view, from the Danube*
- 3rd 75) Stourhead, another view, twilight (CGB '84); video: two details only*
- 3rd 76) Poussin, 1643, St. Matthew and the Angel, Staatliche Museen, Berlin*
- 3rd 77) Again, Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer, detail*
- For 3rd 78) Schleissheim Hall, another angle (CGB '59)*
- 3rd 79) Again, Chardin, Philosopher Reading*
- a2nd 80) Again, Rembrandt, last Self Portrait, detail*
- 2nd 80) Again, Goya, 1815 Self Portrait, detail*



(here Art of Fugue trails off)

*2nd 80a) Francisco Goya, 1820, Goya and his Doctor, Minneapolis Institute of Art (video: detail only)*

Yet Bach, like the 70-year-old Goya, did not die then and there. Though it was not long after, as he lay in a darkened room, too blind to write, that he dictated a fugal prelude for the Chorale "*Wenn wir in Höchsten Nöten sein*" — a pilgrim, in his death need, calling on God.

*80+1) Again, Vierzehnheiligen over fields; with video detail and return to whole (CGB '52, original of slide 1)*

Like Vierzehnheiligen over fields and woods, that last polyphony of faith, printed with The Art of Fugue, has the serenity of an Eden-earth recovered by love.

Music: Bach, 1750, *Wenn wir in Höchsten Nöten sein*, close, (Münchinger)  
London CSA 2215