

**"Johann Friedrich Fasch und sein Wirkin für Zerbst,"
International Scholarly Conference on the Occasion of the Fifth
International Fasch Festival, Zerbst, Germany, 18 and 19 April
1997**

Barbara Reul

Volume 17, numéro 2, 1997

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1014800ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014800ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian University Music Society / Société de musique des universités
canadiennes

ISSN

0710-0353 (imprimé)

2291-2436 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Reul, B. (1997). Compte rendu de ["Johann Friedrich Fasch und sein Wirkin für Zerbst," International Scholarly Conference on the Occasion of the Fifth International Fasch Festival, Zerbst, Germany, 18 and 19 April 1997]. *Canadian University Music Review / Revue de musique des universités canadiennes*, 17(2), 136–139. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1014800ar>

Criticism of English Pantomime during the 1720s." Other papers, particularly those in the area of theatre, often proved to be relevant to the study of music.

The conference delegates were further treated to the Canadian premiere of *L'impresario delle canarie*, two comic intermezzi with music by Domenico Sarri set to a libretto by Pietro Metastasio. These intermezzi were originally performed between the acts of Sarri's serious opera, *La Didone abbandonata*, in 1724. The performance, staged in the recital hall of the School of Music (University of Victoria), was sung by Meghan Atchison (soprano) and Brian Arens (baritone), accompanied by a student orchestra and all led from the harpsichord by Dr. Erich Schwandt. The text satirizes operatic conventions of the day, but is cloaked in music of great interest and melodic beauty. In addition to extended and informative programme notes written by Dr. Gordana Lazarevich, a full text and translation was given to the audience. Bravo to Drs. Lazarevich and Schwandt for providing this rare and fascinating operatic experience, also to the enthusiastic and talented student cast and orchestra!

I am pleased to announce that the twenty-third meeting of the society will be hosted by the University of Western Ontario from 16 to 19 October 1997. The conference theme will be "Le temps et ses représentations au XVIII^e siècle/Representations of Time in the Eighteenth Century." The conference organizer will be Dr. Thierry Belleguic.

Paul F. Rice

"Johann Friedrich Fasch und sein Wirkin für Zerbst," International Scholarly Conference on the Occasion of the Fifth International Fasch Festival, Zerbst, Germany, 18 and 19 April 1997.

Twenty scholars from Germany, Canada, the United States of America, Great Britain, Russia, and South Africa met on the occasion of the Fifth International Fasch Festival in Zerbst to present their research results on the life and works of Zerbst Court Kapellmeister Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758). In contrast to two previous international conferences in 1993 and 1995 which have done little to advance our knowledge regarding Fasch's musical environment and his compositional process,¹ the International Fasch Society headed by president Konstanze Musketa had lined up a number of Fasch "specialists" and paired them with experts on music of his contemporaries.

Wolfgang Ruf (Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg) opened the conference with the provoking "Johann Friedrich Fasch – Meister zwischen den Epochen." His thesis is that Fasch's position is determined not by the

¹ The conferences which took place in 1993 and 1995 were organized by the former president and vice president of the International Fasch Society, Rüdiger Pfeiffer and Guido Bimberg, respectively. Conference proceedings were published in 1995 — *Fasch und die Musik im Europa des 18. Jahrhunderts, Bericht zu den 3. Internationalen Fasch-Festtagen in Zerbst 1993*, ed. Guido Bimberg and Rüdiger Pfeiffer (Köln: Böhlau, 1995) — and in 1997 — *Nationalstile und Europäisches Denken in der Musik von Fasch und seinen Zeitgenossen*, ed. Internationale Fasch-Gesellschaft e.V. (Dessau: Anhaitische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997). These contain relatively few papers dealing directly with Fasch's life and works.

technical innovations that are anticipated in his oeuvre, but by the crafted quality of his instrumental works and by the perfect fulfillment of his stylistic and generic norms of his time, i.e., by the late Baroque, provided a kind of “leitmotif” which resurfaced several times throughout the conference, particularly in the — at times animated — discussions after papers. Michael Saffle (Virginia Tech) examined “Kapellmeisters and Musical Life in Eighteenth-Century Germany,” giving special attention to J.F. Fasch, G. P. Telemann, and J. S. Bach. Daniël G. Geldenhuys (University of South Africa) considered “Johann Friedrich and Catharine: A Russian-French and German Relationship” and drew parallels between the courtly musical activities in St. Petersburg and Zerbst.

“Die höfische Musik am Zerbster Hof vor Johann Friedrich Fasch” was the main focus of the presentation by Hans-George Hofmann (Halle); he reconstructed a chronological overview of the various types of musical performances which were offered at the Zerbst court prior to the year 1722 when Fasch assumed the position of Court Kapellmeister. Barbara Reul (University of Victoria) had examined a relatively unknown primary source held at the Landesarchiv Oranienbaum, the *Konsistorium Zerbst 15a IXa* chronicle which enabled her to provide dates for Fasch’s largest collection of sacred cantatas at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz: the majority dates from 1735–36. Moreover, she pointed out that Fasch had repeated both his own cantata cycles and those written by other composers such as Telemann, G. H. Stölzel, and F. W. Zachau up to six times throughout his tenure. Ute Poetzsch (Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und -Forschung, Magdeburg) attempted to identify works by Telemann which Fasch had listed in a Zerbst music inventory in 1743, the *Concert-Stude des Zerbster Schloßes*; in addition, she determined the extent to which Fasch provided a modern and appealing repertoire for his audience.

Elena Sawtschenko (Irkutsk, University of Leipzig) reflected on “Das Schaffen von J. S. Fasch im Lichte der pietistischen Frömmigkeit – Pietismus und Musik”, comparing the theological structure of cantata texts authored by Fasch with those of contemporary poets and identified a connection to pietist devoutness in Fasch’s cantata libretti. Nigel Springthorpe (University of Surrey) examined “The Zerbst Passion Tradition,” specifically the Passion works performed by Court Chapel between 1720 and 1767, making provisional suggestions as to their composers. The chorale settings of J.F. Fasch’s *Passio Jesu Christi* — their placement within the overall structure, the poetic choices and harmonic language compressed to some of the other settings of the well-known text by Brockes — were discussed in detail by Mary Térey-Smith (University of Western Washington). Brian Clark (Dundee, Scotland), the recipient of the 1997 Fasch Award of the City of Zerbst, focused on Fasch’s reworking of masses for Zerbst (“When *brevis* just isn’t short enough”) and discerned a number of time-saving compositional devices that Fasch employed to shorten the available time for special music during the service as requested by the Zerbst court authorities.

Gregory Johnston (University of Toronto) shed light on Fasch's compositional process in his presentation on "Self-Borrowing in J.F. Fasch's Cantatas *Die Starcken bedürfen des Arztes nicht* and *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele*," specifically with regard to a cantata aria dating from the 1720s that Fasch had reworked in 1736. Michael Märker (University of Leipzig) analyzed the various structures of arias in the cantatas of J.F. Fasch, concluding that Fasch had no formal structural model in mind but that he imbued them with an individual musical quality and thus gave them aesthetic relevance. The final paper of the first conference day was presented by Bert Siegmund (Kultur- und Forschungsstätte Michaelstein.) He explored Fasch's handling of cantata texts written by Johann Oswald Knauer, as well as the censorship on Fasch's output during the first few years of his tenure in Zerbst.

The second day of the conference was reserved for analysis papers on Fasch's instrumental compositions. Bo Alphonse (McGill University) investigated paradigm shifts in phrase structure and linear designs as evident in Fasch's instrumental works, tracing the subtle changes in the interaction of phrase components with formal function and linear patterns with motivic embellishment. Stephen Blaut (Leipzig) drew attention to an orchestral suite in G minor by Fasch held at the University Library of Uppsala and investigated the opening movement which displays Fasch's employment of a non-fugal design. Kathrin Eberl (Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg) dealt with the position of J.F. Fasch's symphonic output, in particular with the recurring thesis that has contributions to this genre point beyond his times and already display compositional devices characteristic of the Classic period.

"Fasch und die kanonische Sonate" was the title of the paper by Gregory Butler (University of British Columbia). In addition to tracing the roots of canonic sonata, Butler assessed the importance of this little-known sub-genre for such important developments as the sonata "nach Concerten-Art" and, paradoxically, the style *galant*; he also offered his thoughts on a possible influence on a specific composition from J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering*. Steven D. Zohn (Waltham College) asked "When is a quartet not a quartet?" and discussed relationships between scoring and genre in the North German *quadro*; specifically, he examined the generic boundaries between trio and quartet not only in Fasch's ten quartets with obbligato bass parts, but in over forty similarly scored works written during the period 1710–ca. 1740. Sandra Mangsen (University of Western Ontario) continued Zohn's train of thought in her presentation on the quartet sonatas of J.F. Fasch. She pointed out that Fasch had frequently relied on a predictable alternation between recognizable "solo" and "tutti" gestures to structure even movements in which there is no actual *ritornello*.

The final paper of the conference was given by the president of the International Fasch Society, Konstanze Musketa (Halle). She had examined two collections of documents dating from 1752 to 1757 held at the St. Bartholomäi archive, Zerbst, which concern Kapellmeister Fasch, i.e., loans from the foundation for which he had applied. These records shed light on the personality of the supplicant and provide a distressing testimony of Fasch's depress-

ing financial and physical circumstances. Finally, Musketa drew attention to the existence of a hitherto unknown daughter of J.F. Fasch, Johanna Friedericka, a child born of Fasch's second marriage and thus a sister of his famous son, Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch.

The friendly, relaxed atmosphere, the high quality of the papers, and the animated discussions after presentations — frequently initiated by session chairs Konstanze Musketa, Wolfgang Ruf, Manfred Fechner (Hochschule für Musik Dresden), and Wolf Hobohm (Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und -Forschung) — made this conference an unequivocal success. The International Fasch Society and the city of Zerbst that co-shared organizational duties look forward to housing the Sixth International Fasch Festival that will take place in Zerbst from 15 to 18 April 1999, with the scholarly conference focusing on Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch and Berlin musical life of his times.²

Barbara Reul

²Those interested in presenting a paper in either English or German should submit an abstract of no more than 150 words to the Internationale Fasch-Gesellschaft e.V., Wiekhaus, c/o Bäckerstr. 11, 39261 Zerbst, Germany.