CHRISTOPH WOLFF & MARKUS ZEPF

The organs of J.S. Bach

A HANDBOOK

translated by Lynn Edwards Butler
the organs of *J.S. Bach*
Foreword ix
Preface to the English Edition xi
Bach—Organist, Composer, Organ Expert: An Introductory Sketch xv
Timeline of Organ-Related Dates in Bach’s Life xxii
Maps xxvi

PART ONE The Organs of J. S. Bach

Preliminary Remarks 1

SECTION A Organs with a Proven Connection to Bach 5

Altenburg 5
Ammern 8
Arnstadt 8
Berka (Bad Berka) 13
Dörna 14
Dresden 15
Eisenach 19
Erfurt 22
Gera 23
Görlitz 26
Gotha 27
Halle (Saale) 30
Hamburg 33
Hohnstein 39
Kassel 39
Köthen 40
Langewiesen 45
Leipzig 46
Lübeck 58
Lüneburg 62
Mühlhausen 68
Naumburg 74
Ohrdruf 78
Potsdam 80
Sangerhausen 83
Stöntzsch 86
Stórmthal 88
Taubach 90
Weimar 91
Weißenfels 95
Weißensee 98
Zschortau 98

SECTION B Reference Organs from Bach’s World 101

Berlin 101
Buttstädt 102
Erfurt 105
Frankfurt (Oder) 107
Freiberg 108
Gotha 113
Gräfenroda 114
Lahm (Itzgrund) 116
Liebertwolkwitz 117
Lübeck 119
Merseburg 121
Potsdam 124
Rötha 125
Waltershausen 128

SECTION C Overview
An Inventory of the Organs and Their Parts,
Including Their State of Preservation 133
PART TWO  Organ Tests and Examinations  137

SECTION A  Johann Sebastian Bach’s Organ Reports  139

1. St. Blasius’s Church, Mühlhausen, 1708  141
2. St. Ursula’s Church, Taubach, 1711  142
3. Market Church of Our Lady, Halle, 1716  143
4. St. Augustine’s Church, Erfurt, 1716  145
5. St. Paul’s Church, Leipzig, 1717  145
6. St. Nicholas’s Church, Zschortau, 1746  147
7. St. Wenceslas’s Church, Naumburg, 1746  148

SECTION B  Instructions for Examining Organs  149

PART THREE  Organ Builders  155

SECTION A  Organ Builders with a Personal Connection to Bach  157

SECTION B  Organ Builders from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries Associated with Bach’s Organs  165

SECTION C  Other Organ Builders and Organ-Building Firms  174

Sources and Literature Cited  179
Abbreviations  179
Archival Sources  180
Reference List  180
Photograph Credits  193
Translator’s Note  195
Index  197
[blank page viii]
It is with pride and delight that the American Bach Society, in conjunction with the University of Illinois Press, issues this English translation of *Die Orgeln J. S. Bachs: Ein Handbuch* by Christoph Wolff and Markus Zepf. For some time now the society has wanted to expand its printing ventures beyond its well-established hardcover series *Bach Perspectives*. The present volume, which addresses one of the most important aspects of Bach’s musical life in a comprehensive yet accessible manner, offers a perfect opportunity to place a German publication of great interest before a new, English-speaking audience.

In compiling their new handbook, Wolff and Zepf have been able to set the record straight on many aspects of the organs under consideration, with regard to both their historical evolution and their present state. The opening of Thuringia and Saxony through the fall of the Socialist government, the reunification of Germany in 1990, and the recent enlightened restorations of many surviving instruments have resulted in a wealth of new information on the churches, organs, and organ makers of Bach’s world. In a number of instances, the degree of preservation—and loss—of buildings and instruments can be addressed in a forthright way for the first time since World War II. Wolff and Zepf have been able to document what’s old and what’s new. They have also drawn on the flood of new research that has taken place as many once-inaccessible archives have opened their doors to outside scholars.

One cannot imagine a better constellation of scholar-performers for the present project. Christoph Wolff, preeminent Bach expert and author of the monumental biography *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, and Markus Zepf, organ specialist and diligent researcher, form a formidable team of authors. Lynn Edwards Butler, organ scholar and former longtime director of the Westfield Center, is a skilled translator with a broad knowledge of historical organ practices and terminology. All three are experienced organists, familiar with early instruments through performance and examination.
Indeed, they have played most of the extant organs described here and are familiar with their features firsthand.

Favorable for this undertaking, too, is the long-standing connection between the American Bach Society and the University of Illinois Press, publisher of *Bach Perspectives*. The opportunity to work with the seasoned and supportive UIP team of Willis Regier, director, and Laurie Matheson, senior acquisitions editor, allowed the project to move forward in a smooth and fruitful way.

It is the hope of the American Bach Society that *The Organs of J. S. Bach* will serve as a useful reference book for organists, Bach scholars and devotees, and general music enthusiasts. Containing a great deal of information in a portable form, it is envisioned not only as a *vade mecum* for the personal library, but as a travel companion for the suitcase, as well—a guidebook whose stop lists and color photographs, especially, whet one’s appetite to observe, hear, and play the extant instruments described therein.

Bach was first and foremost an organist. He won youthful fame through his virtuoso performances and extensive knowledge of organ building. The earliest extant examples of his handwriting are tablature copies of organ music by Buxtehude and Reinken, and his final years show him publishing and revising organ chorales. From the beginning to the end of his life, he was engaged with organ music and the examination, inauguration, and design of new instruments. May the present survey, set forth in English for the first time, serve as a friendly and informative guide to the instrument whose playing, as Quantz put it, “was brought to its greatest perfection” by Johann Sebastian Bach.

George B. Stauffer
General Editor, American Bach Society
Preface to the English Edition

It is almost sixty years since the appearance of Werner David’s excellent book Johann Sebastian Bach’s Orgeln (Berlin, 1951). Out of print since the 1960s and not available in many music libraries, David’s study was the first to offer a conveniently referenced overview of the instruments that were important to the organist and organ expert Johann Sebastian Bach. In the decades since then, however, the state of our knowledge has changed considerably. Not only have additional instruments been identified with which Bach had direct or indirect contact, but also very detailed information regarding the organs themselves is now available. For these reasons, a reworking of the material presented in such exemplary fashion by David has long been overdue, especially since no study has replaced it. Finally, and not least, the numerous tours now being undertaken to historical Bach organs in what used to be a region largely cut off by the Iron Curtain of the Cold War period make the need for such an updated, expanded, and reliable guide all the more obvious.

Like David’s book in its time, the present handbook attempts to present the current state of knowledge. To this end, additional new materials have been gathered, assessed, and organized into a comprehensive handbook. The format has been expanded to include not only the instruments played by Bach, presented alphabetically by location with appropriate biographical and organological material, but also the so-called reference organs. The latter, whose selection is limited to instruments from Bach’s narrowest circle, have a significance that should not be underestimated, both with respect to rounding out the theme of the book and to generally broadening our understanding of Bach’s organ world. Like David, we have included Bach’s examination reports and testimonials, since only these afford a concrete look at what was, for Bach, an essential activity as organ expert and examiner. In addition, emphasis has been placed on the contributions and significance of individual organ builders, especially those with whom Bach had close contact—an aspect not treated by David.
I first made plans to write this book in the 1960s in connection with my organ study at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. I was first encouraged by discussions with Michael Schneider, my organ teacher and fatherly friend. Since then my understanding of historical organs has been significantly enlarged by, above all, Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, Gustav Leonhardt, Ton Koopman, the late Ewald Kooiman, Harald Vogel, the late Charles Fisk, and John Brombaugh—although this list represents only a small number of my organist and organologist friends. As it turns out, the old plan for a handbook of Bach’s organs could be realized only after various crucial requirements were met.

Especially important have been the recent proper restoration of the most important instruments, access to the central German organs that has been possible only since the demise of the communist-run German Democratic Republic in 1989–90, and, finally, the realization that a handbook of historical Bach organs should be a task for the Bach-Archive Leipzig, whose directorship I assumed in 2001. The crucial turning point came, though, when I was able to win over my former doctoral student Markus Zepf, a colleague just as interested in, and knowledgeable and enthusiastic about, the project as I. Without him this project would again have come to nothing. His preparation of the basic material—especially of the organological information in Part I and the information regarding the organ builders in Part III—is an essential and central contribution.

In a spirit of friendly cooperation, three colleagues and friends carefully read major portions of the German original manuscript for this book: Winfried Schrammek, former director of the Museum of Musical Instruments, University of Leipzig, unmatched in his knowledge of the historical central German organ landscape; Jean-Claude Zehnder, who taught for decades at the Schola Cantorum in Basel and who, as organist, was entrusted with all of the still-existing organs that are described here; and Kristian Wegscheider, master organ builder and restorer in Dresden, whose substantial experience in the field of original instruments is difficult to surpass. All three provided valuable, constructive criticism, and their knowledge and suggestions were included in the final version. It must be expressly stated, however, that any errors that may remain are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

A special thank-you is due as well to my colleagues at the Bach-Archive Leipzig. Michael Maul undertook considerable archival research and completed the list of organists from Bach’s time. Marion Söhnel’s editorial assistance was of benefit to this book, and Miriam Wolf diplomatically coordinated the people involved and the necessary planning of the work. Not to be overlooked is the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt Leipzig, represented by Annegret Grimm, who—especially with the extensive undertaking of acquiring all the photographic materials—demonstrated active support for the “Edition Bach-Archiv Leipzig.”

Considerable interest in an American edition arose soon after the book was published in 2006, but it took several years for the plan to come to fruition. From the very beginning, however, I had envisioned as translator Lynn Edwards Butler. Our collaboration had begun in the mid-1970s when she was one of the two founding directors of the Westfield
Center. It culminated in a most memorable American organ tour through Thuringia and Saxony, organized by Lynn’s Westfield Center and covering much of the ground surveyed in this book. The tour took place in the early fall of 1989, the very time at which a political change seemed imminent, even though its direction was still unknown. A few months later, the German Democratic Republic was gone and the unparalleled riches of the central German organ landscape became freely accessible. I am most grateful to Lynn not only for her expert translation, but also for the many improvements to the updated original text of the second German edition of 2008—emendations based on her own organological knowledge and experience.

The American edition includes additional pictorial material and provides new color photographs for most of the historical instruments still in existence. It also presents a slightly revised “Introductory Sketch” with a brief new section on Bach and the liturgical use of the organ.

I wish to express my gratitude to George B. Stauffer, distinguished Bach scholar and general editor for the American Bach Society. Lynn’s involvement and George’s editorial oversight clearly made this a better book. Deep-felt thanks are also due to the American Bach Society and Mary Jewett Greer, its current president, for providing support without which this publication would not have been possible. Finally, I have to say that I am pleased and proud to be surrounded in this project by Markus Zepf, Lynn Butler, George Stauffer, and Mary Greer—a truly remarkable and congenial team of enthusiastic scholars and friends.

Christoph Wolff
It was hardly by chance that the obituary drafted only a few months after Johann Sebastian Bach’s death and later published in volume 4 of *Musikalische Bibliothek* (Leipzig, 1754) referred in its title to the "World-Famous Organist . . . Court Composer, and Music Director" (NBR, no. 306; BDOK III, no. 666). The author and publisher of the obituary no doubt took into account the fact that the extent of Bach’s fame and special renown as organ virtuoso was much greater during his lifetime than his limited recognition generally. And it was no exaggeration to use the term "world-famous." After all, in March 1750—before Bach’s death—Padre Giovanni Battista Martini of Bologna had written in a letter: "I consider it to be superfluous to describe the singular merit of Sig. Bach, for he is thoroughly known and admired not only in Germany but throughout our Italy" (NBR, no. 385; BDOK II, no. 600). This sounds like an exaggeration, and probably is. However, it cannot be forgotten that Padre Martini owned a number of Bach manuscripts and prints, including a copy of *Clavier-Übung* III (Leipzig, 1739), one of Bach’s most important organ works.

Bach’s historical position as organist was recognized soon after his death. The Prussian court musician Johann Joachim Quantz, discussing the development of the art of organ playing in his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), referred to such figures as Froberger, Reinken, Buxtehude, Pachelbel, and Bruhns, noting at the conclusion: "Finally the admirable Johann Sebastian Bach brought it to its greatest perfection in recent times" (NBR, no. 350; BDOK III, no. 651). In Quantz’s view, the "art of organ playing" included both performance and composition. As a flute virtuoso and composer for his instrument, Quantz understood only too well that one’s technical skill on an instrument affected one’s compositional concepts, and vice versa. This was also true for Bach. From childhood onward, his instrumental orientation and vocal background complemented each other, just as his keyboard skills were supplemented by his string
experience and augmented by a compositional focus that eventually included the widest possible spectrum of musical instruments and human voices. All of this was supported by a deep knowledge and keen awareness of technological and physiological details and balanced by intellectual discipline and temperamental sensitivity.

The foundation for Bach’s systematic approach to his musical undertakings was firmly established before he started his career. Nevertheless, the years in Arnstadt and Mühlhausen and the early years in Weimar, when easily managed duties coexisted with considerable personal freedom and economic security, offered this gifted, highly motivated, industrious, and ambitious musician ideal opportunities for extensive practicing, reflection, and composition. Above all, by a stroke of luck he had access in Arnstadt (where he held his first position) to a brand-new and perfectly functioning instrument constructed by one of the best and most advanced organ builders of his time. The instrument boasted a modern well-tempered tuning that offered no limits to his harmonic experiments and that did not require—as church organs then did of most organists—that he constantly repair it. For four critical years of his artistic life, from 1703 to 1707, he had an ideal—one might even say a more than perfect—performance laboratory at his disposal in which he could strengthen and expand his virtuosity and, as a composer, build and develop his harmonic fantasy and tonal ideas. In addition, Bach enjoyed early on the encouragement, recognition, and support of respected and influential older colleagues, among them in particular the organists Georg Böhm, Johann Adam Reinken, and Johann Effler, and the organ builder Johann Friedrich Wender.

Already as a young organist, and to no less an extent as a mature player, Bach was interested in the entire gamut of musical genres, whether chorale-based or not, contrapuntal or free, written in a few voices or many. By approximately 1714–15, he had investigated practically all of the various ways in which organ and keyboard music could be composed: from the various types of organ chorales (such as large-scale fantasias, chorale partitas or variations, and chorale fugues) to the wide spectrum of genres common to both the organ and harpsichord (such as canzona, passacaglia, toccata, prelude, fantasia, fugue, sonata, and concerto). Added to this was his never-ending interest in the compositional technique of others, from the earliest to the very latest repertoire. Bach’s library eventually contained collections as old as Elias Nicolaus Ammerbach’s Orgel oder Instrument Tabulatur (Leipzig, 1571), of which he owned no less than three copies, and Frescobaldì’s Fiori musicali (Rome, 1635), of which he prepared a handwritten copy in 1714, as well as works of German, French, and Italian masters of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He also assembled compositions not only of his contemporaries, but also of the generation of his students—all of which allowed him to grapple with the most diverse technical and stylistic challenges.

By no later than 1710, when he was twenty-five years old, Bach had mastered all the technical demands of organ and harpsichord playing. What remained was to set standards for the future. As a thoroughly conventional work written before 1710 reveals, moreover,
Bach already operated at the very pinnacle of compositional technique. This is seen in even a glance at the artistic demands of a piece such as the Passacaglia in C Minor, BWV 582, and quite apart from the technical demands that performing such a uniquely large-scaled work requires. The same can be said of the basically new aesthetic premise of his small-format compositions, as demonstrated in the motivically compact structure and formal symmetry of the chorale "Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottessohn," BWV 601, also written before 1710 and later included in the Orgel-Büchlein. In both works, the inclusion of obligato pedal parts demonstrates Bach's independent development of the pedal far beyond Buxtehude's basic approach. Bach also took new paths in organ playing and composition in other equally exemplary works, such as the large preludes and fugues of the Leipzig period, the trio sonatas, or the chorale repertoire of Clavier-Übung III. Over and over again, he explored new territory, in both performing technique and composition. The organist and organ composer Bach maintained these innovative tendencies in his art right until the end of his life, as can be seen in the Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel hoch," written in the late 1740s.

The repertory of Bach's organ works genuinely reflects the important role of the church instrument in the Lutheran worship service. The "Order of the Divine Service in Leipzig" that Bach entered in the score of Cantata BWV 61 for the First Sunday in Advent 1723 (NBR, no. 113) indicates three "preluding" functions of the organ within the service: playing preludes (1) at the beginning of the service, (2) for the chorales sung by the congregation, and (3) for the cantata. Chorale-based preludes served the purpose of introducing the melody of the hymn to the congregation, free preludes could be played at the opening of the service (and by implication at its conclusion), and the prelude for the cantata was supposed to provide cover for tuning the instruments and to establish the pitch for the ensemble performance.

Not mentioned in Bach's note is the organ's accompanimental function. While in Thuringian towns like Eisenach, Arnstadt, Mühlhausen, or Weimar the organ traditionally accompanied hymns, congregational singing in Leipzig and throughout Saxony remained unaccompanied until the later eighteenth century. On the other hand, the participation of the large, west-end organ in the continuo group of the cantata orchestra, although self-evident, is worth stressing. Bach's assigning the organ an obligato function for a series of cantatas in 1726–27 (e.g., BWV 49, 146, 169, 188), and thereby featuring the instrument within the orchestra in an unprecedented and particularly prominent way, undoubtedly grew out of this continuo practice.

It is important to understand that service playing by professional organists, the "Figural-Organisten," was always done ex tempore. Only the less accomplished or amateur players, the "Choral-Organisten," who often worked under the supervision of the main town organist, would ordinarily have read from music. Bach himself would have improvised any kind of free or chorale-based prelude. (For a reference to Bach accompanying the congregation, see the Altenburg entry.) Therefore, the majority of Bach's
extant organ works were written for his activities as a recitalist, which involved a great variety of preludes, toccatas, fantasias, and fugues, as well as a broad spectrum of organ chorales. The smaller, shorter, more functional, and technically less demanding pieces within the repertory appear to have been written for pedagogical reasons or for the use of “chorale organists” unable to improvise.

Organ and organ music, the critical area of experimentation for the young Bach, remained an absolutely essential point of orientation also for the middle-aged and older Bach. A special attribute in pieces like the Brandenburg concertos or the Weimar and Leipzig vocal works with their instrumental dimensions, is that over and over again, in comparison to similar compositions by his contemporaries, they allow Bach’s identity as organist to be recognized. Even in his compositions for orchestra and vocal ensemble, Bach understood how to “register,” often with the goal of creating new tonal experiences. This can be seen quite clearly in the scoring of four violins in the cantata “Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee,” BWV 18, the use of four different instruments (recorder, oboe, viols d’amore, and viol da gamba) in the cantata “Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn,” BWV 152, the scoring of two viols d’amore with lute in “Betrachte, meine Seel” in the St. John Passion, or the use of corno da caccia with two fagottos in “Quoniam” in the B-Minor Mass.

Bach’s interest throughout his entire life was not just in the sound, and sound combinations, of individual instruments, but also in the building and development of new musical instruments of all kinds. His name is connected with the improvement and sale of fortepianos built in the Silbermann style, with the lute–harpischord of his Jena relative Johann Nicolaus Bach, with the oboe da caccia and bassono grosso of the Leipzig instrument maker Johann Heinrich Eichentopf, and with the violoncello piccolo of the Leipzig court lute maker Johann Christian Hoffmann (who named Bach executor of his will). This hands-on, experimental side of the musical fraternity was not merely enjoyable for Bach—he must have found himself entirely in his métier. From his earliest school days, his primary interest had been the organ. The Ohrdruf organ–building workshop of Georg Christoph Stertzing may have provided Bach’s first insights into the practical side of organ building, for during the time that he was a student in the Ohrdruf Lyceum, Stertzing was making preparations for building the organ for Eisenach’s St. George’s Church. At that time it was Thuringia’s largest instrument, an organ whose disposition was devised by Bach’s relative Johann Christoph Bach. Bach remained in contact with the elder Stertzing; in 1716, only a few months before Stertzing’s death, he examined the instrument Stertzing had started in Erfurt’s St. Augustine’s Church.

Bach’s vast practical experience with the organ, his intense and wide-ranging self-education, his innate curiosity, and his active contact with skilled and experienced organ builders made him an organ expert of the first rank. His undisputed competence was recognized at an early point, and he exploited it all his life, both to his own advantage and to the advantage of others. That Bach was involved time and again, even into his later years, with proposals for a wide range of organs, rebuilds, and repairs is an aspect of his
professional life that should not be underestimated. His experience is highly unusual in 
the history of music and has clear implications for understanding important connections 
in his musical art.

At his first organ examination in 1703 at the New Church in Arnstadt, when Bach found 
himself at the age of eighteen judging the work of Johann Friedrich Wender, a master or-
gan builder some thirty years his senior, the result was not generational conflict but rather 
a lasting relationship based on reciprocal respect. This close relationship then extended 
to Wender’s son, whom Bach advised as late as 1735 in Mühlhausen. Well-established 
acquaintance with a large variety of instruments in Thuringia and north Germany, and 
also, no doubt, the reading of the writings of Andreas Werckmeister, formed the founda-
tion for Bach’s expertise. His technical knowledge was probably augmented through his 
close relationship with Wender, who enticed Bach from Arnstadt to Mühlhausen and at 
the same time dissuaded Bach’s distant cousin Johann Gottfried Walther from competing 
for the position (Wolff 2000, 102). A similar ongoing and productive relationship can be 
seen later in Bach’s dealings with the young Heinrich Nicolaus Trebs in Weimar or with 
Zacharias Hildebrandt in Leipzig.

Bach’s written examination reports impressively demonstrate thoroughness, a deep 
understanding of the material, and comprehensive knowledge of the construction and 
use of the organ. Not even the smallest detail escaped his attention. The Mühlhausen 
renovation project, for which Bach’s report has survived, demonstrates in particular how 
highly Bach valued the organization, specific character, and balancing of an organ’s stops. 
He paid special attention to the gravity of the instrument, which ideally would be provided 
by a new “Untersatz,” a 32’ register. But he also had the idea of strengthening the gravity 
further by enlarging the resonators and replacing the shallots of the existing Posaune 16’. 
He also recommended replacing the existing Gemshorn with a “Viol di Gamba 8’, which 
will blend admirably with the present Salicional 4’ in the Rückpositiv.” He specified a 
wide variety of materials for the pipes, demanding “good 14-worthy [87.5%] tin” for the 
three ”Principalia” in the facade of the ”new little Brustpositiv.” In addition, he requested 
that a ”Stillgedackt 8’, which is perfect for accompanying concerted vocal music,” be built 
from ”good wood” because then it would sound ”better than a metal Gedackt.”

In his report on the Hildebrandt organ in the St. Wenceslas’s Church in Naumburg, 
which he and Gottfried Silbermann examined in 1746, Bach wrote that in a proper examina-
tion ”every part specified and promised by the contract—namely, keyboards, bellows, wind 
chests, wind lines, pedal and keyboard actions along with their various parts, registers, and 
stops, both open and stopped, as well as reeds” needs to be inspected to see that everything 
is ”really there.” In the same report he remarked that the examiners have inspected whether 
“each and every part has been made with appropriate care” and whether ”the pipes have 
been properly built from the materials promised.” He recommended, however, that the 
organ builder ”go through the entire instrument once more, stop by stop, in order to achieve 
more evenness in the voicing as well as in the key and stop actions.”
The Scheibe organ in the University Church in Leipzig had similar problems, and Bach recommended taking appropriate precautions against the "occasional wind surges" and correcting the "uneven voicing" so that the "lowest pipes in the Posaunenbass 16' and Trompetenbass 8' do not speak so roughly and with such a rattle, but with a pure and firm tone." In addition, higher standards were to be met so that the organ's playing action is "somewhat lighter" and "the keyfall . . . not so deep." The report on the Scheibe organ also shows that Bach was in a position to delve into basic construction problems. He criticized the case of the organ and the fact that "it is difficult to reach each part," but showed sympathy for the organ builder, who "was not granted the additional space he had desired in order to arrange the layout more capiously." He also recommended that "as far as the window rises up behind it, the organ should be protected from further threats of weather damage by means of a small wall or a strong piece of sheet iron placed inside the window."

"Despite all of this knowledge of the organ," the obituary notes, "he never enjoyed the good fortune, as he used to point out frequently with regret, of having a really large and really beautiful organ at his constant disposal. This fact has robbed us of many beautiful and unknown inventions in organ playing that he would otherwise have written down and displayed in the form in which he had them in his head" (NBR, no. 366; BDOK III, no. 666). The instruments Bach had at his disposal in Arnstadt, Mühlhausen, and Weimar were comparatively medium-sized organs. It is therefore understandable that the organist position available in 1720 at St. Jacobi in Hamburg must have been tempting to Bach, even if there was an even better organ at Hamburg’s St. Catherine’s Church. In Leipzig, Bach certainly would have had unhindered access to the large Scheibe organ (III/48) in the St. Paul’s Church. But it is also true that it was not actually his instrument. If it had been, he most certainly would have written more organ works during the Leipzig years. On the other hand, the number of organ compositions by Bach that has been transmitted is astonishingly high. Beyond this, there remains the fact that Bach’s organ compositions were never conceived entirely for a specific instrument. Rather, from the beginning the composer took for granted that his works would be played on various organs. It is thus all the more instructive from the point of view of modern interpreters, listeners, and organ enthusiasts that the spectrum of historical organs in Bach’s world be considered in its full breadth, diversity, and beauty.