

Title of presentation: Bach and Musical “Forms”

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Abstract

Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, the notions of musical form have been so deeply embedded in our musical consciousness that it often seems to require a willful effort to think about earlier music outside that conceptual framework. This perspective affects many aspects of the ways we categorize and analyze Bach’s works, define the genres he composed in, and place his music in historical context. Performers, analysts, and listeners could benefit from thinking about this music in terms of the interaction between Bach’s compositional principles and genre-specific norms.