

## **Music at the Lutheran court chapel in Dresden in the time of Bach**

Until the end of the seventeenth century the Evangelical court chapel in Dresden was one of the most musically impressive centres of Lutheranism in Saxony, particularly at the time when its chapel master was Heinrich Schütz. This situation changed in 1697 when the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus I, converted to Catholicism in order to take the throne of Poland and Dresden became a residence of a Catholic king. When, for this reason, the court's opera theatre was converted to a Catholic court chapel in 1708, the activities of the royal *Hof-Kapelle* came to be directed exclusively towards the Catholic rite, and the musical setting of Lutheran services was limited so severely that its earlier splendour was greatly diminished. Moreover, in 1737 the Evangelical palace chapel was closed and Lutheran services were taken outside the court to St Sophia's church (Sophienkirche), transforming it into the Evangelische Hof-Kirche.

Our knowledge about the music which could be heard at the Evangelical court chapel after 1708, and at the Dresden church of St Sophia's is surprisingly meagre, even concerning the time when the organist there was Bach's oldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann. This paper aims to describe the organisation of the musical settings for court Lutheran services in Dresden during that time, and to expand our knowledge about this subject on the basis of previously unreported documentation which I recently investigated in the archives of the city of Dresden.

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