

UMass Amherst Department of Music and Dance

Bach Festival & Symposium, April 22, 2023

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Abstract

Timbre in Bach: No Compromise

A long tradition has accustomed us to thinking of “performance practice” as something distinct from what we might call musical essences. Especially if, however, we may now feel ready to consider timbre as a dimension of more than incidental significance in Bach’s music, I would argue that we should consider matters such as performing forces, pitch, instruments, and the like as integral to Bach’s compositional vision – and as elements that we disregard to the detriment of that vision.