

On an unknown prelude and fugue by Gottfried Kirchhoff: Recovering some lost pages of his output¹

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Celebrating the 325th anniversary of Gottfried Kirchhoff's birth

Introduction

In 2010 J. S. Bach, G. F. Handel, and D. Scarlatti, who were born 325 years ago, once again were the main figures of the musical calendar. Once again thousands of performers and scholars strove to express their reverence for the genius of these artists. Once again millions of listeners and readers were eager to enjoy their great works.

How often, though, in celebrating these masters, we forget their contemporaries, possibly having no less sacrificially served their art. Alas, the names of these other musicians are frequently lost among the pages of history or altogether disappear without a trace. But it is precisely their activity that laid the solid foundation on which the masters constructed their monuments.

Until recent times, the name of Gottfried Kirchhoff (1685–1746) was known only to a small circle of specialists. Meanwhile his contemporaries highly valued his output and enthusiastically praised his skill on the clavier and organ. German organist and theoretician Martin Heinrich Fuhrmann (1669–1745), recalling Kirchhoff's playing, wrote: "I later heard the well-known Mr. Kirchhoff play the organ in Halle, and his fingers so mastered the charms of music that I cried out, 'What a shame that the hands of these two keyboard players in Leipzig and Halle must some day turn to dust!'"² And further: "In my time, when in 1692 I was studying in Halle, Zachow was flourishing there, whom I heard on Sundays with a true hunger and thirst; and if I had to travel there again, and there were no bridge over the [river] Saale, and I could not reach the city, then truly I would swim across the river like Leander for his Hero, even to hear renowned pupils of his such as Mr. Kirchhoff."³

The unexpected discovery of *L.A.B.C. Musical* in 2002 served as a new impulse for studying Kirchhoff's life and works.⁴ The first monograph on Kirchhoff was published in 2004, along with the new edition of *L.A.B.C. Musical*.⁵ In 2005 and 2006, *L.A.B.C. Musical* became the subject of two master's theses, which were defended at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and at the Kiev Conser-

vatory, respectively.⁶ In 2008 one more unknown prelude and fugue by Kirchhoff was discovered in the manuscript Mus. Ms. 11605, which is housed in the music department of the State Library in Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung).⁷ Additionally, in 2009 the composer was honored through the naming of a music school in Bitterfeld, not far from his birthplace.

This is not to say that researchers have answered all regarding the life and work of Kirchhoff; quite the opposite—many questions remain. The greatest mystery at present is the fate of the composer's *oeuvre*. Kirchhoff dedicated his entire life to music: from 1693 to 1709, he studied organ and composition in Halle under Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow (1663–1712); from 1709 to 1711, he was *Kapellmeister* at the court of the Duke of Holstein-Glücksburg; from 1711 to 1714, he served as organist at the church of St. Benedict in Quedlinburg; and, from 1714 to his death, Kirchhoff held the position of *Director Musices* and organist at Our Lady's Church in Halle. Even if Kirchhoff was not remarkable for the rate at which he produced works (such as, for example, Georg Philipp Telemann), his long period of professional activity must have produced an imposing quantity of works. Despite this, all Kirchhoff's compositions known at present can be counted on the fingers of one hand. What has happened to all the rest?

Possibly, the passage of time did not spare Kirchhoff's manuscripts, and a large portion was lost to natural calamities (fire, flooding, etc.). Possibly, the composer had little regard for his own creations and did not attempt to save them for later generations. Possibly, the fault for the loss of certain of these compositions falls on Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, who succeeded Kirchhoff as *Director Musices* and organist at Our Lady's Church in Halle.⁸

Nevertheless, hope remains for the restoration of at least some portion of Kirchhoff's *oeuvre*. This is confirmed by unexpected discoveries of recent years, one of which we shall discuss here.

The Mylau Tablature Book

In 1910, Georg Schünemann (1884–1945), German musicologist and mem-

ber of the commission for the revelation and studying of *Monuments of German Musical Art* (*Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst*), uncovered in the Mylau church archives a rich collection of organ works composed by the old German masters. The value of this find was difficult to overestimate: the manuscript contained not only works of composers to that time unknown, but also unknown works by well-known composers.⁹

Today this collection is still housed in the Mylau church archives, listed as MS H 3a. The manuscript is a book of considerable thickness (101 leaves) in upright format (c. 21 × 33 cm) and hard cardboard binding, covered with colored paper. The front cover of the binding carries the inscription "TABLATUR | Book | 1750" ("TABULATUR | Buch | 1750"), which is at the very least a misleading identifier. In fact, the *Mylau Tablature Book* does not contain a single example of tablature notation. The date "1750" also does not correspond to the real time of the manuscript's creation.

In 1984 the *Mylau Tablature Book* was sent for expert appraisal to the German Book and Writing Museum (Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum, Leipzig), where museum staff member Gertraude Spoer determined that in the eighteenth century the manuscript had undergone restoration, during which the original binding was replaced by the current one. Subsequently, the inscription "TABULATUR | Buch | 1750" belongs to a later time than the manuscript itself. More than likely, this misleading title was added shortly following the change of binding. Furthermore, based on study of the paper's watermarks, Spoer concluded that manuscript MS H 3a was made around the year 1725.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the copyist has never been identified.

The contents of the *Mylau Tablature Book* are truly impressive with respect to volume: the manuscript contains 176 pieces, dominated by preludes and fugues. The composers include such names as Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706), Johann Krieger (1652–1735), Johann Kuhnau (1660–1722), Andreas Kniller (1649–1724), Nikolaus Vetter (1666–1734), Andreas Werckmeister (1645–1706), Christian Friedrich Witt (1660–1717), and Gottfried Pestel (1654–1732). It is, however, these names alone that are noted in the manuscript. Many pieces were written anonymously, and the majority of these remain unattributed.¹¹ Furthermore, those attributions that are given in the manuscript are not always credible.

Praelud: ex. C. dis à Monsieur Bach.

As has been mentioned, the *Mylau Tablature Book* was a valuable contribution to Baroque literature for organ. To date, this manuscript remains the single known source for many of the pieces that it contains. Among these is the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor*, recorded on pages 40–41. (See Example 1.)

According to the *Mylau Tablature Book*, Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706) is the author of this work. The name of the composer is indicated in the heading of the composition: "Praelud: ex. C. dis à Monsieur Bach."¹² At that time, "Bach." and "J. Bach." were common abbreviations for Pachelbel's name, which was said and written in some South German dialects as "Bachelbel". The period at the end of "Bach." is a sign of abbrevia-

tion, enabling us to distinguish Pachelbel's name from the names of members of Bach family.

The *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* was first published in 1977 in the 39th volume of *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*—the series founded by the American Institute of Musicology.¹³ Since then the pieces have been reproduced multiple times in other editions.¹⁴ Thanks to these publications, the cycle became accessible not only to musicians worldwide, but also strengthened its position as being a work by Pachelbel.

Recently, however, Pachelbel's authorship of this polyphonic cycle has come under growing suspicion, given how strongly the style of writing in the pieces differs from that of other preludes and fugues by the composer. Thus, in the 2004 publication of *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Pachelbel*, these two pieces received the cautionary note "Ascription Questioned," and in the new edition of the composer's *Complete Works for Keyboard Instruments* they are shifted to the appendix as "dubious."¹⁵

As it turns out, the doubts of the researchers were not without basis. In March 2008 we discovered a forcible argument in F. W. Marpur's *Treatise on Fugue* (1753–1754), which disclaims Pachelbel's authorship of the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* located in MS H 3a.

F. W. Marpur's Treatise on Fugue as a key to ascription

F. W. Marpur's two-part *Treatise on Fugue* was, in its time, truly an extraordinary theoretical work. It was the first paper to be dedicated entirely to fugue. At the same time, it was the most fundamental work on fugue, which generalized and summed up all the knowledge of fugue acquired by musical theory and practice to the middle of the eighteenth century. Lastly, it was the richest treatise with respect to the amount and breadth of musical material ever collected into one resource. The quantity of music examples used by Marpur to illustrate his theses is so great that they constituted the whole two-volume appendices for each part of the treatise. Marpur's erudition defies imagination even today: the appended musical examples include, beyond those samples composed by Marpur himself, close to 500 excerpts from the works of more than 50 composers.¹⁶

In the score appendix for the second part of the treatise (Tab. III, Fig. 1), Marpur several times quotes a theme, which is surprisingly similar to the theme of the C-minor fugue from the Mylau manuscript. The ascription here, however, is not to Pachelbel, but to his younger contemporary, Kirchhoff. The name of this once-celebrated German organist and composer, fellow student of G. F. Handel and a good acquaintance of J. S. Bach, is indicated at the beginning of the example: "1st theme of Kirchhoff" ("1. th[ema] Kirchoffii").¹⁷ (See Example 2.)

One cannot, of course, fully rule out the possibility that Pachelbel and Kirchhoff, each independently of the other, composed practically identical subjects. Formularity was one of the most characteristic features of Baroque music. The study of fugue assumed, in part, the mastery of an entire series of stereotypical, standard subjects and possible devices for their treatment. For this reason, correspondences were unavoidable (espe-

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Example 1. Mylau Tablature Book (c.1725), Prelude and Fugue in C Minor



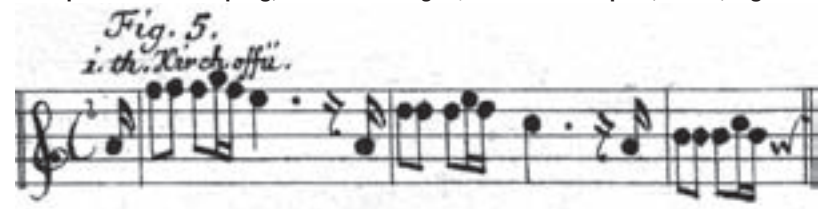
Example 2. F. W. Marpurg, Treatise on Fugue. Musical examples, Tab. III, Fig. 1



Example 3. F. X. Murschhauser, Prototypen longo-breve organicum (1703), the Fugue from the 2nd mode



Example 4a. F. W. Marpurg, Treatise on Fugue, Musical examples, Tab. II, Fig. 5.



Example 4b. G. Kirchhoff, L'A.B.C. Musical (c.1734), Fugue in A minor



cially when one considers how in church practice, fugue subjects were often based on the initial phrases of plainchant melodies). Yet, despite a single intonational vocabulary, exact correspondence was rare, even for music of that time. Working from one and the same intonation formula, each musician materialized it in his own way. By way of example, we offer a fugue subject from the 2nd mode of *Prototypen longo-breve organicum* (1703) by Franz Xaver Murschhauser. (See Example 3.)

In comparing the three subjects, it is clear that they share a single intonational impulse: a descending minor triad, intensified by a leap to the leading tone. Although in Murschhauser's subject this formula holds to a different rhythmic pattern and melodic continuation, it, most importantly, does not stand apart as an independent syntactic unit.

In light of this example, the similarity of the "Pachelbel" and "Kirchhoff" subjects to each other is made all the more clear. It is undoubtedly worth considering them variants of a single idea thought up by a single author. Indeed, there is undeniable correspondence between those elements and parameters of the subject that secure its individuality, specifically: motivic head, syntactic structure, melodic skeleton, rhythmic pattern, and harmonic plan. The primary divergences, excluding tonality, come down to figuration of the harmonies and to cadencing of the theme.

It is difficult to say today with certainty from whom these differences have arisen. Possibly, Marpurg himself made the changes in order to make the sample more relevant to his didactic intentions. It is more than likely, however, that he simply had a different version of the

fugue at his disposal, one that today remains unknown or has been lost.

In any case, this question remains: who is the true author of the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* found in the Mylau manuscript—Pachelbel or Kirchhoff? We believe that testimony from the treatise of an authoritative theorist and well-informed musician deserves more confidence than testimony from a manuscript completed by an unknown copyist using unknown sources. Furthermore, the stylistic attributes of the music do much on their own to confirm that this work conforms to Kirchhoff's creative signature.

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L'A.B.C. Musical as one more argument in favor of Kirchhoff's authorship

Kirchhoff's name appears not only in the score appendix, but also in the body of the text of Marpurg's treatise:

If the late Musikdirektor Kirchhof of Halle denoted the counterparts of his well-known fugues in all twenty-four keys with figures alone, he did this because he wanted to instruct his students in the various possibilities of thematic entrances and in the technique of figured bass at the same time.¹⁵

Marpurg quotes six various Kirchhoff themes in total. Although he never gives the title of those pieces that he quotes as musical examples (rather noting only the author of each piece!), it is natural to suggest that those themes he indicates as Kirchhoff's come from those very same fugues he refers to in the text.

Earlier we stated the hypothesis that by "well-known fugues in all twenty-four keys" Marpurg meant the unpublished version of *L'A.B.C. Musical* (c. 1734) by Kirchhoff.¹⁹ First, this is the only known composition by Kirchhoff to contain,

as the title page asserts, "preludes and fugues in all keys." Second, one of the themes cited by Marpurg in the treatise's appendix is identical to the theme of the A-minor fugue from *L'A.B.C. Musical* (Examples 4a, 4b). Third, the texture of every piece in the collection, including the fugues, is notated as thoroughbass, i.e., on one staff using various clefs and thoroughbass signatures.

Within a comment in his own edition of the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* from the *Mylau Tablature Book*, Michael Belotti rightly notes that the texture of the pieces is nothing other than a realized thoroughbass.²⁰ Indeed, for the style of Pachelbel, who was trained in the contrapuntal tradition, this type of texture is atypical. However, for the style of Kirchhoff, whose emergence as a professional coincides with the blossoming of thoroughbass technique in Germany, this manner of writing is completely natural and consistent. All the known clavier and organ fugues by Kirchhoff can be included in the genre of the so-called *thoroughbass fugue*.²¹ It is highly likely that the original version of the C-minor Prelude and Fugue from MS H 3a was also recorded in codified form, and the variant that has reached us is someone's realization. In any case, the texture of both pieces can be easily expressed in thoroughbass notation with no damage done to the musical material (see Appendix: Version 1).

Conclusion

These arguments clearly point to Kirchhoff's authorship of the C-minor Prelude and Fugue from manuscript MS H 3a. In identifying the true author of these pieces, we not only restore historical justice, we also reveal one more previously lost page of Kirchhoff's oeuvre. It would be wonderful if this page were not the last to be revealed, if there were new finds ahead, which allow us to expand our understanding of the creative output of one of the forgotten composers from J. S. Bach's circle and to objectively evaluate his role in the compositional style of his epoch. ■

Notes

1. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Prof. David Ledbetter (Royal Northern College of Music), Prof. Rudolf Rasch (Utrecht University), and Prof. Glen Wilson (Hochschule für Musik Würzburg), who kindly provided me with helpful comments and critical remarks concerning the early version of this article.

2. "Ich habe <...> zu Halle den wohl renommierten Herrn Kirchhof auf der Orgel gehört, dessen Finger die Gratien also regierten, daß ich ausrief: Schade, daß dieser 2. Clavier-Spieler zu Leipzig und zu Halle, ihre Hände dermaleinst verfaulen sollen!" (Martin Heinrich Fuhrmann, *Die an der Kirchen*

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Gottes gebauete Satans-Capelle [Köln, 1729], S. 32). The clavierist from Leipzig should be understood as J. S. Bach.

3. “Zu meiner Zeit, als ich 1692. zu Hall studirte, florirte daselbst Zachau, den ich Sonntags mit einem rechten Hunger und Durst zuhörete; und wenn ich itzo dort noch hinreisen solte, und ware keine Brücke über die Saal, und ich könnte sonst nicht in die Stadt kommen, so schwimme ich über den Fluß wie Leander nach seiner Hero, seinen berühmten Nachfolger Hr. Kirchhoffen auch zu hören” (ibid., p. 55).

4. This collection, containing preludes and fugues for harpsichord or organ, was considered irretrievably lost for many years. The sole copy currently known to exist of *L.A.B.C. Musical* is in the library of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, given in 1870 as a gift by the noted musical enthusiast and passionate bibliophile Mikhail Pavlovich Azanchevsky (1839–1881). This “lost” composition by Kirchhoff was rediscovered by Professor Anatoly Pavlovich Milka, who in March 2002 brought attention to the uniqueness of the surviving copy. For more details on *L.A.B.C. Musical* and how it came to the St. Petersburg Conservatory library, see Maxim Serebrennikov, “*L.A.B.C. Musical* by Gottfried Kirchhoff: A Work Thought to be Lost,” *The Organ*, no. 350 (2009), pp. 21–27.

5. See Gernot Maria Grohs and Klaus Kretz Grohs, *Gottfried Kirchhoff: 1685–1746. Komponist und Organist; ein Mühlbecker kreuzt die Wege von Georg Friedrich Händel und Johann Sebastian Bach* (Dessau u. a., 2004); Gottfried Kirchhoff, *L.A.B.C. Musical*, hrsg., kommentiert und Generalbaß realisiert von Anatoly Milka (St. Petersburg: Musikverlag “Compozitor” 2004) [in Russian and German].

6. See Maxim Serebrennikov, “*L.A.B.C. Musical* by Gottfried Kirchhoff: On Student Manuals of the Baroque Epoch” (master’s thesis, St. Petersburg State Conservatory, 2005) [in Russian]; Olena Khimenko, “*L.A.B.C. Musical* by Gottfried Kirchhoff: Genre Peculiarities and Problems in Realization of Figured Bass” (master’s thesis, The Ukrainian National Academy of Music in Kiev, 2006) [in Russian]. Olena Khimenko has continued to research the works of Kirchhoff, the results of which will be included in her dissertation “Gottfried Kirchhoff’s Oeuvre in the Context of the Development of German Musical Culture in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century.”

7. For more details see Gottfried Kirchhoff, *Prelude and Fugue for Organ, First Edition*, edited by Maxim Serebrennikov (St. Petersburg: Polytechnic University Publishing House, 2009).

8. It is well known that Friedemann was inclined to adventures. For example, he claimed his father’s works as his own and vice versa he ascribed works of his own to his father. His prodigal way of life and drinking habit forced Friedemann to sell off not only his own estate, but also the greater part of his father’s manuscripts that he had inherited.

9. In 1918 Max Seiffert published the first scholarly description of the manuscript along with a complete thematic index of it. See Max Seiffert, *Das Mylauer Tabulaturbuch von 1750*, in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 1/4 (1919), S. 607–632.

10. For more details see Gertraude Sporer, *Untersuchung des Tabulaturbuches der Kirche zu Mylau 1750 im April / Mai 1984 im Staatsarchiv Leipzig* (Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek Leipzig, Kultur- und Papierhistorische Sammlungen). I wish to express my deep gratitude to Andrea Lothe, museum staff member, for permitting me to examine the copy of the expert report, as well as for the valuable information regarding the dating of the Mylau manuscript.

11. Some of the pieces gained attributions through research by Max Seiffert and by John R. Shannon. See Max Seiffert, op. cit.; John R. Shannon, “The Mylauer Tabulaturbuch: A Study of the Preludial and Fugal Forms in the Hands of Bach’s Middle-German Precursors” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1961).

12. For more detail see *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Pachelbel*, compiled by Jean M. Perreault, edited by Donna K. Fitch (Lanham, MD [u.a.]: Scarecrow Press, 2004), p. 3.

13. *The Mylau Tabulaturbuch: Forty selected compositions*, edited by John R. Shannon, American Institute of Musicology (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hanssler-Verlag, 1977), pp. 4–7.

14. By far the most popular of these is the Peters Edition of Pachelbel’s organ works, prepared by Anne Marlene Gurgel: *Johann Pachelbel: Toccaten, Fantasien, Præludien, Fugen, Ricercare und Ciaconen für Orgel (Clavichord, Cembalo, Klavier)*. Bd. I, nach den Quellen hrsg. von Anne Marlene Gurgel (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1982), S. 42–44. Gurgel was obviously not familiar with the above-noted publication *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, since she regards herself as the first to publish this *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor*, S. 121.

Appendix 2
PRELUDE AND FUGUE
from the *Mylau Organ Book*

PRELUDE

FUGUE



Appendix 1
PRELUDE AND FUGUE
from the Mylau Organ Book



17. Marpurg composes two additional themes in counterpoint to this one, showing possibilities in triple counterpoint by way of changing their vertical placement with respect to each other. For this reason each theme in the set is given a number.

18. "Wenn der seel. Herr Musikdirectour Kirchhof aus Halle, in seinen bekannten Fugen über alle 24 Töne die gegenharmonien vermittelst der Ziffern beständig angezeigt hat: so ist dieses deswegen geschehen, dass er seinen Schülern zugleich den Generalbaß und die Art der verschiedenen Eintritte eines Fugensatzes bey brächte" (Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Abhandlung von der Fuge* [Berlin, 1753], S. 149–150).

19. See Serebrennikov, "L.A.B.C. Musical" by Gottfried Kirchoff, p. 23.

20. Pachelbel, *Complete Works for Keyboard Instruments*, p. 116.

21. The term *partimento fugue* is also used for identifying the given genre of fugue. For more details about the difference between these terms see Maxim Serebrennikov, "From Partimento Fugue to Thoroughbass Fugue: New Perspectives," in *BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute*, vol. XL, no. 2 (2009), pp. 22–44.

22. Since the original version of the *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor* from MS H 3a is widely available through various editions of the clavier and organ works of Pachelbel, in this appendix we wish to offer other possible versions of this composition. Version 1 is in traditional *partimento* notation, emphasizing the thoroughbass nature of these pieces and their visual similarity to the pieces of *L.A.B.C. Musical*. Version 2 is the realization in which the original texture of both pieces is completed in up to four parts, wherever possible. As is well known, four-part writing was a distinctive feature of J. S. Bach's method for study of thoroughbass.

Maxim Serebrennikov is a doctoral student at the St. Petersburg State Conservatory, where he is currently completing his thesis, "Solo Keyboard Thoroughbass Fugue of the Baroque Era." His research interests lie in the history and theory of Baroque music, in particular discovering, studying, and publishing unknown sources of keyboard and organ music. His recent articles in *Musica*, *The Organ*, and *Harpsichord & Fortepiano* focus on rarities of harpsichord and organ music of the 18th century. He is also active as a professional music typesetter and score and book designer, working with various publishing houses.

15. See Perreault, *Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Pachelbel*, p. 202; Johann Pachelbel, *Complete Works for Keyboard Instruments. Vol. II: Fugues*, edited by Michael Belotti (Colfax, NC: Wayne Leupold Editions, 2006), pp. 101–102.

16. To the best of our knowledge, Marpurg's treatise has never before been viewed as a possible source for attribution of works by his predecessors and contemporaries.

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