

Fantasie C-moll
BWV 1121 (Formerly BWV Anh. 205)
The *Andreas-Bach-Buch* Nr. 33

Submitted by Thomas Braatz © November, 2012

I. Source:¹

An autograph organ tablature manuscript contained in the collection “Andreas-Bach-Buch” in the Music Library of the Leipzig City Library System; call number: III.8.4.

A facsimile of this work is found on p. XI of the NBA IV/11 and the version in modern notation on 2 staves is found on pp. 54-55.

The detailed provenance of this collection is described on pp. 122-131 of the NBA KB IV/5-6 (1978). The results of subsequent, additional research are found in the following:

1. Hans-Joachim Schulze: *Studien zur Bach-Überlieferung im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig/Dresden, 1984), pp. 30-56.
2. Robert Stephen Hill: *The Möller Manuscript and the Andreas Bach Book: Two Keyboard Anthologies from the Circle of the Young Johann Sebastian Bach*. [Dissertation] (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 376ff. and 428-431.

The manuscript is a clean copy by J. S. Bach on paper without any watermark and was written down before 1710. Its title is *Fantasia | ex C dis | adagio*.

II. Printed Editions:

1. **Organum** *Vierte Reihe [Series 4] Orgelmusik Nr. 10: Anonymi der Norddeutschen Schule 6 Praeludien und Fugen*, ed. Max Seiffert (Lippstadt, 1925), pp. 20-22. This is the first printed edition of this work. Seiffert used a 3-stave organ score which allocated the pedal to the lowest staff. Seiffert commented: “This piece must be by one of the very great masters whom we have to thank for this wonderful composition.”

¹ Information given is from the NBA IV/11 and NBA IV/11 KB (Bärenreiter, 2003-2004).

2. *Three Bach Works for Organ*, ed. Heinrich Fleischer (St. Louis, 1960).
3. Johann Sebastian Bach: *Sämtliche Orgelwerke, Volume 4: Various Individual Works*, ed. Tamás Zászkaliczky (Budapest, 1990) pp. 96ff.
4. *Keyboard Music from the Andreas Bach Buch and the Möller Manuscript*, (Harvard Publications in Music, 16), ed. Robert Hill (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA & London, 1991), pp. 59ff. This is the first critical edition of this work. It appears on two staves.
5. *NBA IV/11: Freie Orgelwerke, Choralpartiten*, ed. Ulrich Bartels (Bärenreiter, 2003) pp. 54-55. This edition is printed on two staves.

III. Some History:

Hermann Keller: *Die Orgelwerke Bachs* (Leipzig, 1948), p. 71, was the first person to connect this piece with J. S. Bach: “If you compare this Fantasia with the Canzone (BWV 588), then you cannot help thinking that both compositions have a close inner connection. This is particularly true based upon the chromatic counterpoint of the Fantasia, so that it is not entirely out of the question that we have a lost work from Bach’s Weimar period before us.”

At the beginning of the 1980s, both Dietrich Kilian and Hans-Joachim Schulze independently identified Bach’s handwriting for BWV 1121. Since then the prevalent opinion among Bach researchers has been that the music was also composed by J. S. Bach.

Dietrich Kilian: “Zu einem Bachschen Tabulaturautograph” in *Bachiana et alia musicologica, Festschrift Alfred Dürr zum 65. Geburtstag* (Kassel, 1983) pp. 161-167. “Since you can hardly assume that Bach would have included in the *Andreas Bach Buch* music by other composers without naming them, we apparently have before us here the only complete autograph Bach composition in organ tablature.”

Hans-Joachim Schulze on p. 49 of the work cited above compares Bach’s handwriting with receipts from Bach’s Arnstadt period and Bach’s recommendations for an organ reconstruction (February, 1708) and the handwritten titles from the autograph Mühlhausen cantatas, BWV 131 and BWV 71. There is a striking resemblance between them that is quite evident.

Robert Hill examined the stylistic elements in this composition and the one immediately preceding it, the C minor Prelude BWV 921. The two, he claims, are very closely connected. Hill states: “Bach’s handwriting continues directly from the end of BWV 921 into the Fantasia. Moreover, the final cadence of BWV 921, preceded by a plagal pedal-point, leaves the listener with a feeling of

incompleteness.” (p. 430 of his dissertation) “The two movements complement each other. Where half-step motion dominates in BWV 921, whole-step progressions are unusually significant in the fantasia.” (p. 431) However, David Schulenberg: *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach* (London, 1993), p. 61, and the author of the NBA IV/11 KB, Ulrich Bartels, doubt the connection between these two works.

According to some experts, Hans-Joachim Schulze and Yoshitake Kobayashi, there are clear correspondences between Bach’s handwriting for BWV 1121 and some autograph documents from 1706. This makes this assumption plausible unless further documentation from the years 1706 to 1709 or 1710 surfaces so that this issue must then be reconsidered.