

**Eric Chafe.** *Analyzing Bach Cantatas.* Oxford University Press, 2000. xvii, 286 pp.

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In his article "The Question of Purpose in Music Theory: Description, Suggestion, and Explanation," David Temperley (1999) posits two main purposes that a music theory can have: it can either describe (and, usually, try to explain) hearings that are actual and prevalent among experienced listeners, or else it can suggest hearings that are novel to experienced listeners.

Though Temperley does not raise the issue, we can also observe that theories with these two purposes have opposite initial goals: theories that are descriptive and explanatory seek primarily to eliminate possible hearings, while theories that are suggestive attempt to create possible hearings. A clear example of the former is Lerdahl and Jackendoff's *Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983). In dealing with the structure of meter, for example, it is implicit that at a given metrical level any beat might be a strong beat. It is the job of the Metrical Well-Formedness Rules and Metrical Preference Rules to eliminate many of these candidates for strong beat status, leaving a manageable number of possible hearings. An example of the attempt to create possible hearings is Schenkerian theory, at least in its treatment of deeper levels of structure. Leaving aside Schenker's belief that his theories represented a lost art and also connected deeply with nature, it is clear that Schenker introduced the possibility of hearing an *Ursatz* to twentieth-century listeners.

Once the initial work of introducing new ways of hearing has been done, however, the user of a suggestive theory finds herself in a position much like that of the user of a descriptive/explanatory theory; possession of the concept of the *Ursatz* raises the possibility of a great many potential *Ursätze* in a given piece of music, and it is necessary to eliminate those that are untenable. Suggestive theories do not often give precise guidelines for this task of winnowing the possible ways of hearing they have raised. Indeed, criteria for the elimination of possible hearings produced by theories like Schenker's will never be as precise as those offered by Lerdahl and Jackendoff, much less as exact as the algorithms found in their work's intellectual descendant, Temperley's *The Cognition of Basic Musical Structures* (2001). It is perfectly natural that Schenker spawned an analytical literature rather than a line of increasingly formal theories.

Indeed, the typical way that suggestive theories help the user to bring the range of possible hearings back under control is by offering heuristic

guidelines that are illustrated in analytical practice. This purpose is often not stated explicitly, but the process is open to being viewed in those terms. After all, every *why this* is, at least by implication, also a *why not that*. This second job of suggestive theory, that of restricting the range of the possible hearings it has raised, is central to a theory's success. Ethan Haimo's critique of Allen Forte's practice of segmentation within pitch-class set theory, for example, deals primarily with Forte's performance on this second job (Haimo 1996).

This analysis of the two tasks of suggestive theory help in making a precise assessment of Eric Chafe's 2000 book, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas*. With *Analyzing Bach Cantatas*, Chafe continues to develop his theory of the allegorical use of tonal centers in Bach's vocal music, also the subject of his 1991 book *Tonal Allegory in the Vocal Music of J. S. Bach* (henceforth *Tonal Allegory*). These works advance, defend, and illustrate the hypothesis that Bach used relationships among tonal centers in the allegorical representation of the theological contents of the vocal works. *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* is an extremely ambitious work in that it attempts three simultaneous advances over *Tonal Allegory*: it seeks to broaden the audience for Chafe's ideas; it deepens the historical contextualization of the cantatas; and it uses the concept of tonal allegory with greater flexibility. While a fuller picture of Chafe's success in reaching these goals will emerge over the course of this review, an initial assessment is offered here.

Chafe begins his introduction by stating that his "chief purpose in writing this book was to stimulate as wide as possible a range of scholars, professional musicians, students, and other Bach lovers to become deeply involved with the Bach cantatas" (ix). Given his coordination of historical theology and historical music theory in subtle analyses, speaking intelligibly to such a broad audience is a tall order. Despite some reservations, however, it must be stated that *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* makes extremely conspicuous advances in readability over *Tonal Allegory*. The prose is consistently clear and straightforward, and the mystifying statements that appeared occasionally in the earlier work have disappeared. (This is probably connected to the removal of the earlier book's emphasis on Walter Benjamin's perspectives on seventeenth-century allegory. Though certainly of some interest, this philosophical approach made *Tonal Allegory* rather challenging to read in places, and seemed to contribute relatively little to the overall argument.) In general the language has been simplified, most significantly by replacing his jargon for sharpward and flatward tonal motion—"anabasis" and "catabasis," respectively—with the more straightforward "ascent" and "descent." Translations have been provided for the texts discussed, and the copyediting is more consistent. For a

reader unfamiliar with Chafe's work on Bach's vocal music, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* is a far better starting point than *Tonal Allegory*. The earlier book contains many interesting discussions, but these will be more readily digested if the later book is read first.

In keeping with Chafe's coordination of theological and musicological analysis, the deepening of the historical perspective takes place in two ways, one drawn from each discipline. On the theological side, Chafe discusses the liturgical calendar and the significance of the cantatas' placement within it. The liturgical year, which provides a contextual frame for the cantatas, is constructed to draw the believer through a dynamic interaction with the latter part of the history of God's relationship with humanity ("salvation history"), from Israel awaiting the Messiah through to the final judgment. Chafe's analyses often gain depth by considering the place of individual cantatas within this larger drama. He broadens his scope musicologically by considering the influence of modal chorale melodies on harmonic and tonal structure on a variety of levels. Though stating very explicitly that this cannot be seen as a ubiquitous practice, Chafe demonstrates illuminating connections between the harmonic and tonal implications of modal chorale melodies and the textual and musical design in a number of cantatas. In general, these added perspectives yield results that are both historically plausible and aesthetically engaging.

*Analyzing Bach Cantatas* uses Chafe's concept of tonal allegory more flexibly than its predecessor in a number of ways; one of the most important is due to its defending the basic premise in different terms. *Tonal Allegory* included a somewhat unfortunate line of argumentation, an implicitly statistical one that surveyed numerous cantatas that could be seen as supporting Chafe's basic hypothesis. While this approach may have been appropriate to the first book-length exposition of his theories, the cursory treatment that some cantatas received in these analytical surveys probably fostered some readers' impressions of Chafe as inflexible and reductionistic. *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* deals with only a few cantatas, and those cantatas that are analyzed receive consistently detailed attention. As Chafe's hypothesis about tonal allegory seems most convincing when it is shown to work in conjunction with other aspects of musical structure, these few careful analyses are probably a better *apologia* than the surveys of *Tonal Allegory*.

Increased flexibility is also seen in the way his basic concept is used. Stated most simply, Chafe sees tonal centers as being allegorized primarily in terms of their relative sharpness or flatness. Most typically, sharper tonal centers are associated with things that have more positive affective associations. Other associations are possible, though, such as sharper with harder and flatter with softer, via the terms *durus* and *mollis*. In *Tonal*

*Allegory*, Chafe seemed to view the former association as normative; he appeared open to the charge of taking "major is happy and minor is sad" and turning it into "sharper is happier and flatter is sadder" via developments in the meanings of *durus* and *mollis*. In *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* Chafe takes a more flexible stance with regard to the possible associations of sharper and flatter tonal centers. (In fairness to Chafe, it should be pointed out that *Tonal Allegory* probably contains more analyses in which sharp/flat shifts are read in ways other than positive/negative than the work at hand; what makes *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* seem more flexible is that Chafe does not seem surprised when these cases arise.)

As a result of the deepening of the historical perspective and the increase in (at least apparent) flexibility, Chafe's theories as expressed in *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* become even more successful at raising possible new hearings than they had been in *Tonal Allegory*. But as a direct result of doing the first job of suggestive theory better, it becomes necessary to do the second job even better as well; a richer domain of potential hearings demands a larger set of methodological controls with which to separate the gold from the dross. It is in this area that *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* is disappointing at times. As with most suggestive theories, these interpretive controls are not made explicit; they make their absence felt when analyses report seemingly contradictory results. To cite a few examples: in a movement from Cantata 18, cadencing in C minor supposedly represents both human weakness and the believers' holding onto God's word (a form of human strength) (110); the reading of Cantata 77 makes a strange juxtaposition of theological messages, claiming that the cantata is about human inability to fulfill God's demands in general, but also about the importance of fulfilling God's demand to love one's neighbor (206-19); and in Cantata 60, small-scale sharpward motion represents fear and anguish very consistently throughout the cantata, and yet the setting of the final chorale in a sharper key than the preceding movements represents peace and a vision of the life to come (238).

These examples do not characterize the majority of Chafe's interpretations; in general his readings are coherent, and frequently they engage with the works in very deep ways. But lack of interpretive consistency and control do occur frequently enough to warrant comment. In most cases it appears that Chafe has simply failed to exercise sufficient discipline in rejecting intriguing but ultimately untenable interpretations. It is possible, however, that Chafe is attempting to deal with readings that are too complex for his methodology to handle. Theological texts feature many potentially allegorizable dualities, and Christian theology abounds with apparent contradictions. Regarded by the faithful as mysteries rather than as contradictions, these include God being simultaneously both three and

one, and Jesus being both fully human and fully divine (in the Western church). Theologians have developed methods for dealing coherently with mysteries; it will be fascinating to see if Chafe is able to develop a sufficiently refined interpretive method to allow him to reconcile some of his apparent contradictions.

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The chapters of *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* can be divided into two groups. In the first, which consists of chapters 1 through 4, Chafe lays out his analytical approach. Chapters 1 and 2 discuss basic issues in theology and music theory, and the interpretive approach is illustrated by an extended treatment of Cantata 21 in chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents his perspective on modal chorale melodies and their potential implications for tonal design. Chapters 5 through 9, which form the second group, are entirely analytical. They apply Chafe's theories from chapter 4 in increasingly extensive and in-depth analyses, which culminate in the treatment of Cantata 77 in chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 9 deals with Cantata 60, which is presented as a foil to Cantata 77.

Chapter 1, "The Hermeneutic Matrix," begins with Chafe's account of Lutheran pre-enlightenment hermeneutics. He describes the belief in the fundamental unity of the books of the Bible, as well as the view of the Bible as having both historiographic and salvific purposes. Thus scripture was subject to both historical and spiritual readings, with a primary goal of Lutheran hermeneutics being movement from the former to the latter. Frequently this movement would correspond to a progression through the three eras into which Lutherans divided salvation history: the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the era of the church. Chafe exemplifies such a progression with the text of Cantata 9, "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her," which quotes and paraphrases several verses of the eponymous chorale. The second part of chapter 1 deals with the liturgical year. After explaining its construction in some detail, Chafe explains ways in which placement within the liturgical year could be reflected in cantata design by discussing several Leipzig cantatas from the turn of the liturgical year 1723-24.

Chapter 2, "The Lutheran 'Metaphysical' Tradition in Music and Music Theory," fleshes out Chafe's concept of tonal allegory more fully and provides a plausibility argument for it. The chapter opens with a discussion of Andreas Werckmeister's views on music and theology. While they demonstrate thinking about music in theologically allegorical terms, they do so for the most part by making connections between theological concepts and the basic materials of music. They thus support a theological view of music in general much more strongly than they support a program for

interpreting individual works theologically. The main purpose of their discussion is to establish the existence of detailed musico-theological allegorical thinking in a writer near to Bach.

The meat of the chapter is the exposition of Chafe's central notion of the allegorizing of sharp/flat shifts. His argument is essentially that in the midst of the new system of twenty-four circularly arranged major and minor keys, there were remnants in theory (and in practice, in the case of modal chorales) of the older modal system. In particular, sharpward and flatward tonal motions continued to be associated with the sharp/flat relationship between the *cantus durus* and *cantus mollis* hexachords, and this association allowed affective and allegorical connotations of the old hexachords to accrue to sharpward and flatward tonal motions in general. In addition to the literal associations of *durus* and *mollis* with hard and soft, Chafe posits a relationship of higher and lower, citing clear evidence that Werckmeister thought in those terms. Chafe is then equipped, via the hard/soft and higher/lower associations, to map relationships such as divine/human, perfect/imperfect, and hope/despair onto sharp/flat key relationships. Stated in such a bald summary, Chafe's interpretive premises sound suspiciously crude, but he is careful to stress that Bach did not compose "according to a designative 'system' that was invariable" (41). Chafe's analyses have subtlety and nuance which my summary lacks, and, as discussed above, his conception of tonal allegory can function in entirely different terms; an example is his analysis of Cantata 109 in chapter 5.

The *durus* and *mollis* hexachords are introduced via their relation to the German terms for major and minor, *dur* and *moll*. Throughout the book Chafe juxtaposes major/minor and sharp/flat, seeming to make much of the terminological connection. Frequently he reads a shift from a minor key to its parallel major as a sharpward shift. While he gives a clear sense of two systems coexisting, he does not indicate exactly what relationship he perceives between the two dualities of sharp/flat and major/minor. Some more detail on this point would be welcome, as the position in the present volume seems to soften the view expressed in *Tonal Allegory*, which argued against assigning significance to parallel major/minor relationships as such in Bach's music. Readers who wish to delve more thoroughly into issues of history of theory will find a much more thorough discussion on this and related topics in the third chapter of *Tonal Allegory*, but they may emerge unclear as to the extent to which Chafe retains certain aspects of his earlier views.

After the relatively brief exposition of the core of Chafe's theory, the chapter resumes its plausibility argument, comparing Kuhnau's discussion of his own music with the music itself and pointing out the allegorical use of tonal centers. Many of the issues in this discussion are featured in chap-

ter 1 of *Tonal Allegory*, and readers will find that Chafe's arguments here are clearer, more modest always in their tone and sometimes in their scope. In particular, Chafe seems to amend his arguments in response to criticism that *Tonal Allegory* made unwarranted claims in its treatment of these sources (Butt 1993:291).

In chapter 3, Chafe exemplifies the theories set forth in the previous chapters with an extended analysis of the Weimar cantata "Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis," BWV 21. Chafe offers both a broad overview of the cantata and discussions of the individual movements, and his account touches on a number of different domains: he proposes a Biblical story as a source for recurrent imagery in the texts; he offers many insightful analytical readings (see in particular his account of conflicts between prominent Ds and Dbs in the recitative that opens Part Two of the cantata); and he interprets theories regarding the cantata's *Entstehungsgeschichte* in light of his analysis.

Chafe sees this cantata as one of Bach's most eschatologically oriented, as one in which the triumph of God's eventual restoration of all things is put in dramatic contrast with the difficulties of life in this world. The texts of Part One take a dark, even despairing tone, and they are set exclusively in minor keys, with flatter tonal centers for the recitative and aria, which contain the most tortured cries of anguish. The opening movements of Part Two, the first movements in major keys, initiate tonal motion toward sharper keys. This tonal motion is correlated with the increasingly positive tone of the texts, which climax with a declaration of joy in Jesus' comfort in an aria and an outpouring of praise in the following final chorus. For Chafe, the final aria and chorus have a particularly strong connection with the last aria and chorus of Part One. The gradually sharpening tonal motion—after c, f, and c in Part One, E $\flat$ , g, F, and C in Part Two—brings the final movements of Part Two into the parallel major keys with respect to the movements that closed Part One. The account of the relationship between the final choruses of the two parts is particularly convincing, as it draws his notions of tonal allegory together with phrase structure, numerology, orchestration, and motivic associations. Chafe makes the strongest case for his ideas about tonal allegory in passages like this one, in which his theory interacts harmoniously and profitably with other more standard methods of musical analysis.

In chapter 4, Chafe returns to theoretical issues, exploring shifts in views on modal harmony during Bach's lifetime and their implications for the analysis of Bach's harmonizations of modal chorales. Chafe is particularly concerned with those chorale settings that he hears as occupying a middle ground between pure modal and pure tonal styles, both of which Bach also employed. In order to analyze the remnants of the modal system in Bach's harmonic practice, Chafe calls on his

harmonic interpretation of the hexachords, which was developed at length in his 1992 book *Monteverdi's Tonal Language*. Chafe gives a very clear, but also very condensed, summary of this theory. Those familiar with the earlier work will find it a helpful refresher, but readers who are not may wish to consult Chafe (1992) for more detail.

In examining modal practice, Chafe focuses on the two systems, the natural and the transposed (or *cantus durus/naturalis* and *cantus mollis*), which correspond, respectively, to the key signature with no flats or sharps and to the key signature with one flat. Chafe believes that starting in the late sixteenth century, the hexachord came to function not only as a melodic concept, but also as a source of pitches with which to construct triads. Each system had two primary hexachords: the natural system had the F and the C hexachords, the transposed system the B $\flat$  and the F. Any pitch in either of a system's primary hexachords could be used as the root of a triad. The two hexachords associated primarily with each system had, when combined, the diatonic collection as their pitch-class content, and in the diatonic collection one triad is diminished. To correct for this, each system had the adjacent sharper hexachord associated with it (in the untransposed system, the G hexachord). This hexachord could be drawn on for fifths and thirds of triads, but never roots. Thus each system had three hexachords available as a collection of pitch classes with which to form triads: the untransposed system had the F, C, and G hexachords, the transposed system the B $\flat$ , F, and C. In each system, roots of triads had to be drawn from the two flatter hexachords. Chafe admits that this notion is foreign to the contemporary theoretical literature and defends it purely on the basis of its explanatory value. Building on the very substantial empirical support amassed in Chafe (1992), he reports that his theory perfectly accords with the chorale harmonizations in Lucas Osiander's 1586 collection.

Chafe's theory of the harmonic role of hexachords and systems serves as a guide to his discussion of the development of tonal theory and practice and of the remnants of earlier practice therein. Among other things, it opens the possibility of tracking tonal progressions in terms of Kircher's distinction between change of mode and change of system (82). Of particular importance for the following chapters is the issue of final chords in modal settings potentially sounding like dominants; Chafe points out that this tendency will be most pronounced in Phrygian modes employing Picardy thirds. He also discusses harmonizations in which Bach suggests other tonal possibilities altogether; for example, by ending an E Phrygian chorale with an A-major triad supporting the final in the soprano, Bach opens the possibility of hearing this as a dominant chord supporting the second scale degree in D Dorian. Chafe presents an interesting survey of

Phrygian and Hypophrygian chorale settings in which he shows that the final is treated as the fifth of a major triad frequently in settings of Hypophrygian melodies but not at all in settings of Phrygian melodies. He thus hypothesizes (based in part on remarks by Luther on the characters of modes) that the Hypophrygian was the weakest mode tonally for Bach, and thus the one that could most vividly depict human infirmity.

Unfortunately, this theoretically central chapter is marred by a few uncharacteristically confusing and (in at least one case) confused passages. Chafe puts much weight on a discussion by Werckmeister of the Hypophrygian chorale "Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt" (90–91). The central issue is that Werckmeister classifies the melody as (transposed) Hypophrygian, while acknowledging that "one cadences very frequently on the Dorian, since the Dorian closes in D" (90). This passage is both pertinent and illuminating, but in his account of the chorale itself Chafe bizarrely interprets this passage as referring to the wrong melody. Werckmeister did not include musical examples, and Chafe discusses the passage as referring to a melody that, though not the standard melody for "Durch Adams Fall," was sometimes associated with that chorale. This melody, given as example 4.3, is in the untransposed system, and Chafe believes that Werckmeister was referring to a version in the transposed system. The reader is thus asked to coordinate the example, Chafe's discussion of it as transposed down a fifth, and the quotes from Werckmeister. This turns out to be impossible, as the melody in example 4.3 cannot have been the one Werckmeister referred to: there is no indication of either cadence to pitch-class D or the Dorian mode before the final phrase of Chafe's melody, either as printed or transposed down a fifth as discussed; and the suggested transposition would make the melody either too high or too low for congregational singing, significantly exceeding the usual boundaries for possible *ambiti* of  $c'$  and  $e''$ . Fortunately, the reader can still profit from the discussion of Werckmeister, provided that she applies it to the usual melody for "Durch Adams Fall," given by Chafe in example 4.4; if we assume that Werckmeister knew a version with some flats, this melody fits Werckmeister's remarks perfectly. (Chafe acknowledges this possibility in footnote 47 to page 92, making his error truly baffling.) This example is central to his discussion of the Hypophrygian mode, and while the choice of the wrong chorale melody does not affect the substance of his argument, it does place a mystifying puzzle at a point at which clarity would have been particularly valuable.

Chafe also creates confusion in this section by conflating senses of the word "dominant." In discussing Bach's Hypophrygian settings mentioned above (in which he supports the final note, which is the final of the mode, with the major triad a fifth below, thus allowing the final chord to be

heard as a dominant supporting scale degree two), Chafe claims that this situation is “very nearly exactly,” and later simply “exactly,” “the situation that Werckmeister objected to when he proclaimed that ‘Durch Adams Fall’ could not be Dorian since no mode ended on the dominant” (92). But in the context of discussing a modal melody, it certainly seems possible that Werckmeister’s objection could have been more to the melodic close on the fifth above the final than to the harmonic close on the harmony whose root is a fourth below the final. Werckmeister actually leaves both possibilities open, as he illustrates the *Clausula minus principali* (cadence to the dominant scale degree), together with the cadences to the root and third of what we could call the tonic triad, with two-voice progressions in which both upper and lower voice close on the scale degree in question (Werckmeister 1702:60). It is a fine point, and not one that interferes with the thrust of Chafe’s argument. It is unfortunate, though, that it adds a degree of confusion to the most theoretically challenging chapter of the book.

In chapters 5 and 6, which consist of several analyses, Chafe is generally concerned with examining how modal issues in chorales can be related to larger issues of tonal relationships among movements. Chapter 5 looks at five cantatas, each of which sets one of the chorale melodies discussed in the previous chapter. As two are Hypophrygian and receive the kind of setting discussed above, they make particularly rich material for this kind of study. Chafe’s analysis of Cantata 109, “Ich glaube, lieber Herr, hilf’ meinem Unglauben!” is particularly valuable for showing, as discussed above, that his theories of tonal allegory amount to more than a transformation of “major is happy and minor is sad” into “sharper is happier and flatter is sadder.” In this cantata, which has as its theme the conflict between faith and doubt, the arias subvert Chafe’s more common tonal associations by being sharper for doubt (E minor) than for faith (F major). Chafe does not try to shoehorn this cantata into one of his typical patterns, such as ascent-descent, but rather sees tonal allegory taking place on another level: the tonality of the final chorale settles uncertainty about the principal tonal center for the cantata, mirroring a pattern of ambiguity leading to clarity within the chorale setting itself. It also connects with the theological idea that events in human history will make complete sense only when that history is over via Luther’s statement, “*in fine videtur cujus toni.*”

Chapter 6 takes up two chorale cantatas, Cantata 121, “Christum wir sollen loben schon,” and Cantata 9, “Es ist das Heil uns kommen her.” A highlight of Chafe’s analysis of Cantata 121 is a thorough defense of his interpretive method as applied in this analysis (148–49): he details the

clear presence of ascent and descent in the theological contents of the text; he revisits his argument about paradigms of ascent being central to Lutheran hermeneutics; and he recaps his coordination of theological and musical ascent and descent within the cantata. This discussion may prove helpful to those trying to decide how plausible they find his theories.

The analysis of Cantata 9 is rooted in an anomaly in the melody "Es ist das Heil uns kommen her." Though predominantly in a straightforward major mode, its opening phrase suggests the Mixolydian mode, and Chafe sees this as the impetus for another descent-ascent tonal design. In Chafe's view this tonal motion is initiated by the conflict between D $\sharp$  and D in the E-major chorale, so he traces this conflict throughout the cantata. This discussion is extremely strong, and though he is too glib in changing the associations of D in his reading of the second recitative (155), his analysis contains points which are among the most convincing for the reality of tonal allegorical devices in Bach's music (the treatment of the second half of the first recitative on page 152 being particularly noteworthy in this regard). The final setting of "Es ist das Heil" strongly supports the descent-ascent interpretation of the cantata, and Chafe treats this remarkable movement with subtlety. Readers familiar with Bach's settings of this chorale will be particularly struck by his argument regarding the harmonization of the first phrase of the chorale with a move to the subdominant of the subdominant. Bach usually responded to this phrase with a simple move to the subdominant, and the more dramatic setting creates an unusually conspicuous tonal descent and ascent within the final chorale.

Chapters 7 and 8 are devoted to an extensive analysis of Cantata 77, "Du sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben." This is in many ways the analytical centerpiece of the book. Despite its title ("Cantata 77: The Theological Background"), chapter 7 gives extensive attention not just to theology but also to textual background issues, both musical and verbal. The musical material for the first movement comes from the chorale "Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot." The chorale melody appears in instrumental parts, and it provides the head motive for the vocal parts, but the melody is never sung and its text is not used. In exploring the connotations of this melody, Chafe discusses the text of the chorale, focusing on its emphasis on Luther's doctrine that the purpose of the Law is to bring about awareness of sin and awareness of the need to rely in faith on the Gospel for salvation rather than on good works. In his discussion of the hymn tune itself, Chafe is particularly concerned with tracing the development of its modal shift: the melody starts in G Mixolydian but introduces B $\flat$ s near the end, suggesting a shift to G Dorian. Chafe offers a sensitive analysis of the chorale which indicates a progressive flattening: starting on G, initial

cadences are to C, followed by a cadence to F, after which Bbs are introduced. Chafe connects this with the hard (*durus*) demands of the Law and the inability of fallen human nature to fulfill them. The text sung in the first movement comes from the day's Gospel reading, which is the summary of the law in Luke chapter 10: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." This is known in Christian theology as the two greatest commandments. Chafe discusses the connection of this reading with an older cantata text, of which the text of Cantata 77 is a reworking.

Chafe's very thorough treatment of the first movement of Cantata 77 in chapter 8 is perhaps the strongest analysis in the book. Chafe builds on other analyses of the movement's numerological design (involving instances of the number ten, connected with the Ten Commandments referenced in the text of the chorale) by tracing a progressive motion in the movement from relatively sharp major keys to relatively flat minor keys, a motion which reaches a nadir at the minor subdominant shortly before the end of the movement. He connects this motion with the flattening tendency and the switch to minor of the chorale melody, and he demonstrates that Bach achieves this tonal motion by exploiting aspects of the head motive. Chafe's interpretation of these flattening minor tendencies as reflecting the inability of humans to fulfill God's commandments is quite convincing. Later texts within the cantata will address this inability extremely explicitly, and Bach's use of Luther's chorale about the ten commandments prefigures this emphasis.

In this regard, Chafe misses an opportunity to strengthen his case, in that he neglects to point out that the two greatest commandments were less frequently associated with inability to fulfill God's demands than were the ten commandments. The two greatest commandments more often appeared in texts of an aspirational character, expressing a hope, with God's help, to live a life pleasing to him. Bach's use of "Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot" thus serves as a reminder that the two greatest commandments are a summary of the law as a whole, and that the purpose of the law was to bring recognition of sin. Given this anticipation of the emphasis on human sin found later in the text, it is quite credible that Bach would also employ tonal means to underline this message. As stated above, I find Chafe most persuasive when he coordinates his tonal allegorical readings with analyses of other aspects of structure, in this case clear numerological design and the purposeful use of harmonic implications within the basic melodic material. In dealing with the first movement of Cantata 77, all of Chafe's main points can be readily heard, and his reading is both rich and compelling.

The treatment of the rest of the cantata has many keen insights, especially in the multifaceted discussion of Bach's exceptional setting of the Hypophrygian chorale "Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein" in the final movement. It is unfortunate, however, that after the brilliant discussion of the first movement, what follows is in some ways unclear as to its overall direction. Theological texts are often rich in dualities, and Cantata 77, in addition to the opposition of God's commands and human incapacity to fulfill them, also features a contrast between love of God and love of the human neighbor. Both of these could, at least in theory, be very plausibly connected with relatively sharp and flat key areas. After having dealt with the first movement primarily in terms of the theme of the commandments, Chafe seems to switch perspectives, stating that "on the largest scale the tonal design of the remainder of the cantata . . . clarifies Bach's intention of delineating a progression from love of God to love of humankind by means of the change from major to minor and sharp to flat tonal regions" (208). Chafe is not consistent in taking this viewpoint, however, and in the remainder of the chapter—and through to the summary of Cantata 77 that is found at the beginning of chapter 9—Chafe vacillates between perspectives, stressing at times each of the two main oppositions but never making sufficiently clear which is the more important or how exactly they relate. Chafe sometimes seems to be suggesting relationships, but, uncharacteristically for the book as a whole, he never manages to make clear exactly what claim he is making. In places he seems even to suggest a reading in which love of the neighbor is the solution to the problem of the human inability to fulfill the law. But in the context of Lutheran orthodoxy such a statement on Bach's part would seem to summon the specter of justification by works; having stressed human inability to fulfill God's commandments to the extent that this cantata does, the only orthodox Lutheran solution is Luther's famous dictum *sola fide*: justification by faith alone, apart from good works. In his treatment of the latter movements of Cantata 77, Chafe seems not entirely in control of his analytical approach. In particular, he falls short in fulfilling the second task of suggestive theory. When two seemingly contradictory readings are raised, they must either be coordinated in a precise and convincing way (e.g., in terms of mystery, or in terms of meaningful ambiguity) or else a choice must be made between them; unfortunately Chafe does neither of these with regard to the two oppositions he finds in Cantata 77.

Chafe closes the book in chapter 9 with a relatively compact account of Cantata 60, "O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort." This work may seen as a foil to Cantata 77: whereas Cantata 77 features strong flattening tendencies, which in at least one interpretation are connected with discouragement and helplessness, Cantata 60 features dramatic sharpening motions which

are connected (again not univocally) with affirmation and hope. It also features the same strengths and weaknesses as the previous analysis: many brilliant readings are offered, but the overall picture created is internally inconsistent (sharpening tendencies being connected both with fear's anguish and with arriving at faith-filled hope). One of the most striking aspects of this chapter is that the sharpward motions are in several cases connected with very clearly audible motivic transformations. Though aspects of the story of fear-related sharpenings go beyond what musical novices could hear, instructors of courses for undergraduate non-majors could raid this chapter with profit for a lesson about how musical meaning (transformation of consonant melodies into dissonant ones by raising pitches) is coordinated with theological meaning (a dialogue between fear and faith). The final chorale, the famous setting of "Es ist genug" used by Berg in his Violin Concerto, seems particularly promising in this regard, featuring motivic transformation seemingly in conflict with the text and a progression in style of harmonization that can be readily heard (and connected with the overall drama of the cantata). As discussed by Chafe, Cantata 60 seems to be very promising material for a lively discussion in a basic music course.

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Chafe mentions repeatedly that he has produced a body of Bach cantata studies which will appear in future volumes; issues explored will include interrelationships of cantatas within cycles and the use of alternate basso continuo instrumentation. One topic that I would like to see addressed is the conception of tonal center. Based both on intuition and on Chafe's wording throughout the book, Bach's allegorical use of tonal center would seem to have been at least in part a conscious process. It would therefore follow that this process relied on a conscious conception of what qualified as a tonal center. This was, of course, not a clear-cut issue during Bach's lifetime. Chafe stresses the existence of remnants of modal theory and practice, in which system it was possible to cadence to many degrees of the mode without implying any change of mode. It was also possible to change mode, and to change system. In looking for analogies with the tonal concept of key, we could potentially choose any of these three—cadence point, mode, or system. But if mode is chosen, then we will have a fairly robust sense of tonal stability, as cadences not on the modal final will often not disrupt our understanding of the mode. Early tonal theory, on the other hand, tended to be preoccupied with small-scale local issues, as the system of the circle of keys and methods of control of chromatic pitches were still developing. Concepts such as secondary dominant or tonicization would not be invented until the nineteenth century, and ap-

proaches to local key center had no minimum threshold below which a tonicization would not be considered modulatory. Joel Lester addresses this issue in his 1992 book *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*. In describing analytical notations in a foreign hand in the D-minor Prelude and the C-minor Fugue in the manuscript of the first volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Lester points out that all tonicizations are treated as full modulations, even though one of them lasts for only two eighth notes (Lester 1992:82–87). Though one of the annotations indicates that the keys were seen as scale steps in relation to the tonic, they are all treated equally.

Given these very different possible conceptions of tonal center and tonal stability in the eighteenth century, we cannot assume that Bach's conception of when tonal centers changed in his compositions is the same as ours. Within a movement, which of the many modulations, tonicizations, and tonal shadings should be considered a tonal change (and thus have the potential to be treated allegorically) and which not? What do we do if one detail seems pregnant with allegorical meaning but many others on the same structural scale do not? I am certainly not suggesting that we need to establish one absolute threshold for tonal allegory, with everything above that threshold needing to be treated allegorically and nothing below being allowed to be. I *am* suggesting that increased clarity of method would be desirable.

To be fair, this issue is pertinent in relatively few of Chafe's analyses. Certainly those that deal with relationships between keys of movements are on solid ground. In recitatives, where textual action takes place most rapidly, Chafe does often follow every potential key center, and indeed these are often correlated with a conceptual progression in the text. There are also many analyses in which Chafe traces general motions between flats and sharps, more concerned with lower and higher versions of scale degrees than with particular tonal centers as such.

*Analyzing Bach Cantatas* does also offer a few clues as to how Chafe might respond to these questions. On page 96, in the context of discussing seventeenth-century compositional development, he states that "circles of fifths and secondary dominants furthered the distinction between what we distinguish as 'structural' and 'nonstructural' dominant arrivals." In general, Chafe seems comfortable inferring intention from design, as in the case of his theory about the harmonic function of the hexachords which forms the basis of his study of Monteverdi (1992). Of course, it is possible for composers to follow theories of which they are unaware; the proper resolution of the second inversion dominant seventh chord, which was the embarrassment of figured bass theory until Rameau's explanation, is the classic example. But intuitive allegory seems

at least to approach the boundaries of the believable functioning of unconscious intuition. A fuller statement on this topic would be welcome, if for no other purpose than as a guide to those who wish to use Chafe's theories in their own analyses.

Returning finally to Chafe's desire that his book be of service to "scholars, professional musicians, students, and other Bach lovers" (ix) and be "readable in sequence by advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and musicians generally" (xvii), it is true that a fairly broad range of readers could understand this book. Some knowledge of music theory is required, but a single college-level harmony course should suffice; an understanding of tonic, dominant, and subdominant harmonies, and the ability to recognize them in highly modulatory music, are most of what is required. Some knowledge of modal theory will be needed, but a basic understanding of the modes will be sufficient to get the gist of Chafe's discussions. Readers will be aided by some very basic knowledge of Christianity, as those with some familiarity with traditional Christian doctrine and practice will certainly feel more oriented. In general, though, Chafe uses simple language in his theological discussions, and he defines basic concepts repeatedly to help those not familiar with the Lutheran thought world.

The biggest obstacle to a more general readership, one which would also slow down many undergraduate readers, is the engagement with German texts. Chafe is extremely conscientious in supplying translations for the texts he discusses, but, unavoidably in a detailed examination of a German text, he sometimes quotes single words in the midst of English sentences. Though the words have almost always appeared in translated texts above, it will try the patience of non-German-speaking readers to deal with phrases such as "the . . . passage . . . unobtrusively conveys the above/below quality involved in the 'Bund und Treu' between God and the believer" (53), or "Bach . . . adds the word 'zugleich' to Knauer's text . . . thereby contradicting the 'zuförderst . . . und dann' of Knauer's text . . ." (177).

In its ability to "stimulate [readers] to become more deeply involved with the Bach cantatas" (ix), I consider this book tremendously successful. Chafe performs the first task of suggestive theory brilliantly, having come up with an interpretive method that consistently yields insightful and convincing readings. He is, to be sure, less uniformly successful at the second task, as he sometimes fails to handle contradictory readings well, neither reconciling them nor choosing among them. But it would be ungrateful to complain too loudly about this shortcoming—though his method could benefit from further refinement, Chafe offers powerful interpretive tools to his readers. That this book provides a more accessible entry into his

theories than was previously available while simultaneously expanding the scope of those theories is truly remarkable. Though I would mention my reservations, to anyone with the requisite background who wished to enrich her engagement with this repertoire I would recommend *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* without hesitation.

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