

REPORT ON THE ORGAN OF THE PAULINER- KIRCHE AT LEIPZIG ²²

Since at the request of his Most Noble Worship Dr. Rechenberg, at this time *Rector Magnificus* of the Most Worshipful Academy [University] at Leipzig, I undertook the examination of the organ in the Pauliner-Kirche, which has been in part newly built and in part repaired, I have accomplished the same to the best of my ability, taken note of any defects, and have wished in general to make the following observations concerning the whole organ, to wit:

(1) As regards the whole structure of the organ, it is on the one hand not

²² Bach was dismissed from Weimar on December 2. The item next following seems to indicate that the first rehearsal of the Cöthen Capelle in his house took place on December 10. Accordingly he must already have moved to Cöthen before making this report. The organ under consideration possessed three manuals and pedal, with 53 sounding stops. The disposition appears in a contemporary manuscript, which has been published as *Dresdener Handschrift, Orgeldispositionen* (ed. P. Smets, Kassel, 1934).

to be denied that this structure is very closely confined, and thus it will be hard to get at every part, in case there should in time be something to repair, but on the other hand Mr. [Johann] Scheibe,²⁸ as the contractor for the said organ, excuses this on the grounds that in the first place the organ case was not built by him, and so he had to get on as best he could within the given space, and in the second place he was not granted the additional space he requested in order to arrange the structure more conveniently.

(2) The usual principal parts of an organ, namely the wind chests, bellows, pipes, roller boards, and other items are well and carefully made, and there is nothing further to be said about them except that the wind must be made equal throughout, to forestall occasional sudden blasts of wind. The roller boards should, indeed, be enclosed in frames, so as to avoid any howling in bad weather, but since Mr. Scheibe, as is his custom, has made them with [specially prepared] tables, and gives assurance that the latter will achieve what would otherwise have to be achieved by frames, this has been allowed to pass.

(3) The items listed in the Disposition as well as in all the contracts are present in both number and kind, except for two reeds, namely, *Schallmeyer* 4 foot and *Cornet* 2 foot, which, pursuant to the instructions of the Honorable *Collegium*, have had to be omitted, and in their place the *Octava* 2 foot has been placed in the *Brustwerck* and the *Hohlflöte* 2 foot in the *Hinterwerck*.

(4) The existing defects that have shown themselves in respect to inequality of voicing must and can be remedied at once by the organ builder, so that, in particular, the lowest pipes of the Trombone and Trumpet Bass[es] shall not speak so coarsely and noisily, but rather produce and maintain a clear and firm tone, and the other pipes that are unequal shall be carefully corrected and made even, which can perfectly well be done when the whole organ is once more thoroughly tuned, and this in better weather than we have been having.

(5) The touch of the organ should indeed be somewhat lighter, and the keys not go down so far, but since, on account of the too close construction, this condition could not be changed, it must be accepted as it is—however, it can still be played so that one does not have to fear that one will stick fast in the middle of playing.

(6) Since the organ builder has also had to make a new wind chest for the *Brustwerck*, above and beyond what was called for in the contract, because the old wind chest, which was to have served instead of the new one, has in the first place a [one-piece] soundboard (*Fundament-Brett*), and is thus wrong and unacceptable; and in the second place it contains, according to the old custom, a short octave, and the remaining keys, which are missing, could not be installed so that all three manuals might be made equal, but would instead have caused a *déformité*—accordingly it was highly necessary that a new

²⁸ Scheibe, the father of J. A. Scheibe, also built the organs in the *Johannis-Kirche*, which Bach examined in 1744 (the report is lost), and in *Zschortau*, on which he reported on August 7, 1746.

wind chest should be made, the defects avoided which would otherwise have been troublesome, and a fine *conformité* maintained. Therefore, and without my reminder, the organ builder should be reimbursed and held harmless for the parts he has constructed over and above the contract specifications.

Whilst, furthermore, the organ builder has asked me to point out to the Honorable Council that there has been a desire to count as covered by his payment items not covered in his agreement, such as the sculptural work, the gilding, also the fees received by Mr. Vetter for the inspection, and possibly other similar items, and that he was in fact not obliged to provide for the same, nor had such treatment ever been customary (else he would have made a better estimate)—thus he very humbly prays that he be not put to any losses on this account.

Now finally it cannot remain unmentioned that (1) The window, i.e., that part of it which extends behind the organ, should be shielded on the inside by a little wall, or by a heavy piece of sheet iron, to avoid further threatened damage from the weather.

(2) It is customary and most important that the organ builder should guarantee his work for one year, so as to remove completely any further defects that may show themselves, and this he would be most ready to do, if only he be granted the promptest and fullest compensation for the expenses he has incurred over and above those provided for in the contract.

This, then, would be what I have found it necessary to report in examining the organ, having the honor of being ever at the service of Your Honorable Magnificence Dr. Rechenberg and the whole Honorable *Collegium*, and remain

Your Honor's most obedient and devoted

JOH. SEB. BACH

*Capellmeister to the Prince of Anhalt-
Cöthen*

Leipzig, December 17, Anno 1717