

SITTING NEXT TO BACH: THE INFLUENCE OF J.S. BACH ON SVEN-DAVID  
SANDSTRÖM'S BACH MOTET PROJECT WITH A FOCUS ON THE  
MOTETS "DER GEIST HILFT" AND "SINGET DEM HERRN"

James Christopher Franklin, B.M.E., M.M.

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APPROVED:

Jerry McCoy, Major Professor

Stephen F. Austin, Minor Professor

Richard Sparks, Committee Member and Chair  
of the Division of Conducting and  
Ensembles

Benjamin Brand, Director of Graduate Studies  
in Music

James C. Scott, Dean of the College of Music

Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate  
School

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In many of his choral works, Swedish composer Sven-David Sandström has sought a connection with the musical masters of the past. The number of Sandström works that bear a strong connection to Bach's music is quite extensive and includes *High Mass* (1994), *Magnificat* (2005), the six motets (2003-2008) which constitute the Bach Motet Project under current discussion, and *St. Matthew Passion*, which recently premiered in Germany and Sweden in 2014.

This study explores the extent to which Sven-David Sandström emulated the motets of J.S. Bach in the composition of his own motets. Further, this paper investigates these motets as a collection and examines two individual works within the collection as case studies for in-depth analysis. Ultimately, through analysis and discussion of the text, the division of text, the scoring of the motets, points of imitation, and specific compositional devices, the discussion explains how Sandström pays homage to Bach in the Motet Project primarily through the use of similar structural elements while maintaining his unique compositional voice to forge his own expressive path.

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James Christopher Franklin

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

From the very birth of Western polyphony, composers drew on the music of their predecessors for their own compositional purposes, whether from a deep and abiding respect for all that had come before or for very utilitarian ends. While the extent of the influence of previous material on a composer can vary from simple inspiration to scaffolding, to parody of a work or to full-blown quotation, the trend is so pervasive that it can be found in every period of classical music.

In many of his choral works, Swedish composer Sven-David Sandström has sought a connection with the musical masters of the past. Examples include his use of the complete setting of Purcell's "Hear My Prayer" as the opening of his own composition by the same title and his borrowing of a musical quote by Buxtehude in "Es ist genug." J.S. Bach figures most prominently in Sandström's writing. The number of Sandström's works that bear a strong connection to Bach's music is quite extensive and includes *High Mass* (1994), *Magnificat* (2005), the six motets (2003-2008) which constitute the Bach Motet Project under current discussion, and *St. Matthew Passion*, which recently premiered in Germany and Sweden in 2014.

Spanning a compositional period of six years and comprising six individual works, the Bach Motet Project was born of Sandström's desire to connect with his musical heritage. This study explores the extent to which Sven-David Sandström emulated the motets of J.S. Bach in the composition of his own motets. Further, this paper investigates these motets as a collection and examines two individual works within the collection as case studies for in-depth analysis. Ultimately, through analysis and discussion of the text, the division of text, the scoring of the motets, points of imitation, and specific compositional devices, the discussion explains how

Sandström pays homage to Bach in the Motet Project primarily through the use of similar structural elements while maintaining his unique compositional voice to forge his own expressive path.

## 1.1 The Life and Work of Sven-David Sandström

Born in 1942, Sandström began his studies in musicology and art history at the Stockholm University in 1962.<sup>1</sup> Following the completion of his degree, he entered the Royal College of Music as a composition student of Ingvar Lidholm.<sup>2</sup> Sandström's love for the human voice was instilled in him as a child, and his interest in singing was something he continued to pursue, maintaining an active role as a singer in Ingemar Månsson's Hägersten Motet Choir well into his adulthood.<sup>3</sup> He enjoyed much success as a teacher, ultimately being promoted to Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (1985-1995) and subsequently, Professor of Composition at Indiana University (1999-2008).<sup>4</sup>

Sandström's potential as a composer of international stature came to public attention with two significant compositions in the 1970s. The first, a major orchestral work titled *Through and Through* (1972), was written during a period of Swedish composition Broman has labeled the "Second New Beginning," a descriptor referring to Swedish composers who were writing after World War II and departing from much of the radical experimentation of the previous generation of Swedish composition.<sup>5</sup> Broman notes that one of the compositional goals of Sandström's

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<sup>1</sup> See Joshua Bronfman, "Sven-David Sandström's *Five Pictures from the Bible*: Historical Precedents, Development, and Analysis" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2010), for a detailed account of Sandström's life.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sparks, *The Swedish Choral Miracle: Swedish A Cappella Music Since 1945* (Bynum: Blue Fire Productions, 2000), 72.

<sup>3</sup> Bronfman, 34-35.

<sup>4</sup> Sparks, 72-73.

<sup>5</sup> Per Broman, "New Music of Sweden," in *New Music of the Nordic Countries*, ed. John White (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2002), 458. Broman gives a description of "The First New Beginning" earlier in *New Music of*

earlier works was “to go from one state to another through a mechanical elaboration of the musical material.”<sup>6</sup> These earliest works would be known for their denseness and use of serialism.<sup>7</sup> The second work, *Requiem: Mute the Bereaved Memories Speak* (1979), written for soloists, choir, and a huge orchestra, was highly controversial because of its explicit lyrics that unabashedly exposed the ravages of war.<sup>8</sup>

For the next three decades, Sandström created major contributions in choral repertoire, and his style evinced steady development. Notable evolution in his style began to take root during the 1980s in two very obvious ways: 1) movement towards a simpler and more direct style,<sup>9</sup> and 2) use of Romantic gestures in his writing. Sandström addressed this change: “The 1980s were a turning point when I discovered an approach to composition that combined some of my earlier methods but also allowed me to achieve the joy of composing using a less modernist tonal language.”<sup>10</sup> Two quintessential choral works from this period are the “Agnus Dei” (1980) and “En ny himmel” (1980). These works underscore some of Sandström’s compositional devices from this time: long melodic lines, relatively slow rhythms, and sonorities built of stacked thirds. A second shift occurred in the mid-1980s when, after he collaborated with the choreographer Per Jonsson on several ballets, Sandström’s music became more “immediate and quickly changing, since the ballets required a feeling of movement and drama.”<sup>11</sup> This gesture is exemplified in many of the motets when Sandström composes changes in the texture during short periods of time. For example, in just the opening fifteen measures of

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*Nordic Countries* and characterizes it as the period in Swedish composition following World War II, distinguished first by anti-romanticism, then modernism, then anti-modernism, and finally the avant-garde (457).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 485.

<sup>7</sup> Bronfman, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Broman, 485-486.

<sup>9</sup> Sparks, 87.

<sup>10</sup> Sven-David Sandström, “Statement of Artistic and Pedagogical Vision,” Indiana University, <http://php.indiana.edu/~ssandstr/vision.htm> (accessed September 3, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Sparks, 100-101.

“Der Geist Hilft,” Sandström presents four different musical ideas. Finally, it was during this period that he began to write works that had a direct connection with works by older composers he wished to emulate.

Sandström had an epiphany in the 1990s that would ultimately have a profound impact on his philosophy of music. He wanted his music to be simpler, so that it might “speak directly to the ordinary listener.”<sup>12</sup> In a 1998 interview prior to the release of his opera *Staden*, Sandström further elaborated this position: “Previously I wanted to disrupt order, now I want to create order and in this way create a feeling of pleasure—out of pain, out of happiness, out of the positive.”<sup>13</sup> As a result, many of his compositions from the mid- to late-90s, especially those after 1998, are characterized by a less dense texture than works from the 1980s, thereby making them more accessible to a wider audience.

Not only were the 1990s a time of revelation for Sandström but also one of extreme productivity, resulting in numerous choral works, including “Laudamus te” (1993), “Ave Maria” (1994), and *High Mass* (1994). Characteristic of these works is a predilection for minimalistic repetition and faster tempi in general. An additional technique Sandström began to employ frequently in the 1990s, notable for its use in “Ave Maria,” was setting each new line of text with a new musical gesture, like points of imitation from the Renaissance.<sup>14</sup> This technique was used heavily in his Bach Motet Project.

At the age of seventy-two, Sven-David Sandström is recognized as one of the most active and important contemporary choral composers of our time. Table 1 presents a representative sample of extended choral works by Sandström composed within the last ten years.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>13</sup> Erik Wallrup, “Key to a Room – Interviewing Sven-David Sandström about the opera *Staden*,” *Nutida Musik*, no. 2 (1998), <http://www.mic.stim.se/C12569E30058A306/V5artikelAZeng/DB52E752D50743BEC1256A690034AC1D> (accessed August 18, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Sparks, 134-135.

Table 1. A sample of Sandström’s 21<sup>st</sup> century extended choral works

<b>Work</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Scoring</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<i>Magnificat</i>	2005	Soli, Choir, Orchestra	25’
<i>Five Pictures from the Bible</i>	2006	Bar, Choir	30’
<i>Messiah</i>	2008	Solo Quartet, Choir, Orchestra	120’
<i>St. Matthew Passion</i>	2011	9 Soli, Choir, Large Orchestra	135’
<i>Requiem</i>	2012	Solo Quartet, Choir, Orchestra	60’

Per Broman (2002), in his chapter of *New Music of the Nordic Countries*, refers to Sandström as “the most performed living composer in Sweden.”<sup>15</sup> Recently, his choral works have been recorded by leading ensembles and conductors around the world, including the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (2002), Paul Hillier, conductor; the Festivalensemble Stuttgart (2009), led by Helmut Rilling; and the Swedish Radio Choir (2011), Peter Dijkstra, director.

While many of his monumental choral works have received scholarly attention, surprisingly, the significance of the Bach Motet Project has yet to be chronicled or explored at length. An examination of this material is important for at least two reasons: 1) while other contemporary composers have grounded works in various Bach compositions, Sandström’s setting of all six of these particular motets as a group is a unique undertaking; 2) these works shed light on Sandström’s compositional practices during the height of his career.

## 1.2 Genesis of the Bach Motet Project

The story behind the dawn of the Motet Project is quite fascinating. Whereas I had imagined the project springing from the composer’s mind as homage to the great master, J.S. Bach, in reality, the story is much simpler. Stefan Parkman, a leading Swedish choral conductor, recounts the beginning in an introductory note to Sandström’s “Lobet den Herrn” (2003):

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<sup>15</sup> Broman, 485.



It is constantly being discussed whether, when performing the motets of J.S. Bach, one should be using instruments for the accompaniment of the choral parts.... This is the background of the idea of commissioning a new work to the same text [“Lobet den Herrn”], that Bach once used, but this time the motet doubtlessly should be conceived for choir *a cappella*. When during early spring 2003 Sven-David Sandström was asked to do this, he immediately accepted, and already a few weeks later the complete score was at hand.<sup>16</sup>

In my interview with him (March 2014), Sandström relates his first conversation with Parkman, the one in which Parkman commissioned the piece, and speaks rather plainly to Sandström’s initial hesitation with such an undertaking:

It really started with Stefan Parkman, the rather famous Swedish choral conductor. He wanted me to do “Lobet den Herrn.” I remember that I was out drinking coffee somewhere in Sweden, and he called me. He said, “Use the same text as Bach. I will [conduct your] ‘Lobet, den Herrn’ the same concept, with Bach.”

[Sandström replied:] “Oh, I can’t do that, that’s stupid.”<sup>17</sup>

Despite feeling hesitant about the project, Sandström agreed to write the piece. From that other commissions followed. Another prominent Swedish conductor, Ingemar Månsson, friend and colleague to Sandström, quickly followed Parkman’s path:

In the spring of 2003 I suggested to my friend Sven-David Sandström that he compose a work with this Bach motet [“Singet dem Herrn”] as a model and dedicate it to the Lund Vocal Ensemble and myself. I quickly received a positive response from him.<sup>18</sup>

And so within a span of a few months and from something as simple as Sandström’s friends commissioning new pieces from him, this unique undertaking was born. Eventually, all six of the motets in the standard Bach motet canon would be commissioned from various friends and colleagues in Sweden and Western Europe. Table 2 presents a complete list of the pieces of the Bach Motet project.

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<sup>16</sup> In Sven-David Sandström, *Lobet dem Herrn* (Stockholm, Sweden: Gehrmans Musikförlag, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Sven-David Sandström in discussion with the author, March 2014.

<sup>18</sup> In Sven-David Sandström, *Singet dem Herrn* (Stockholm, Sweden: Gehrmans Musikförlag, 2003).

Table 2. Contents of the Bach Motet Project

	<b>Motet</b>	<b>Comp.</b>	<b>Dedicatee</b>	<b>Voicing</b>	<b>Duration</b>
No. 1	Lobet den Herrn	2003	Stefan Parkman	satb/satb	6'
No. 2	Singet dem Herrn	2003	Ingemar Månsson	satb/satb	11'
No. 3	Komm, Jesu, komm	2005	Gary Graden	satb/satb	8'
No. 4	Fürchte dich nicht	2007	Parkman	ssatbb	8'
No. 5	Jesu, meine Freude	2007	Fredrik Malmberg	ssatbb	15'
No. 6	Der Geist hilft	2008	Månsson & Graden	satb/satb	8'

## CHAPTER 2

### SITTING NEXT TO BACH

#### 2.1 Bach's and Sandström's Motets: A Macroscopic Comparison

Because the term motet has been applied to many different types of works during the course of music history, it is important to narrow the scope of this discussion to the particular type of motet Bach was writing at the time. Daniel Melamed, a leading Bach scholar at Indiana University, cites the definition of the motet by eighteenth-century composer and theorist Johann Gottfried Walther as “a good starting-point because it raises most of the issues that eighteenth-century writers apparently found most important.”<sup>19</sup> Walther defined the motet as “a musical composition written on a biblical *Spruch*, just to be sung without instruments (basso continuo excepted), richly ornamented with *Fugen* and *Imitationibus*. But the vocal parts can be taken by and strengthened with diverse instruments.”<sup>20</sup> (*Spruch* denotes “a passage of Scripture occurring as a part of the text of a cantata or motet.”<sup>21</sup>) In modern parlance, Walther's description would translate as a polyphonic composition for a cappella choir or for choir and continuo, written using a sacred text.

A cursory glance at the Sandström motets reveals that Sandström chose to emulate Bach in some very fundamental ways at the macroscopic level. Similarities include voicing, performing forces, text and division of the text, and the use of imitation and counterpoint. In terms of voicing, Sandström follows Bach by scoring the majority of the motets for double

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel R. Melamed, *J.S. Bach and the German Motet* (New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1995), 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Malcolm Boyd and John Butt, ed., *Oxford Composer Companions: J. S. Bach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 468.

mixed choir.<sup>22</sup> Melamed comments that this eight voice scoring was particularly pleasing to eighteenth century composers due to its being “satisfying to the ear.”<sup>23</sup>

Regarding performing forces, eighteenth-century writers, including Walther and Johann Mattheson, agreed that instruments (basso continuo excepted) should accompany the vocal parts only to the extent that they play exactly the same musical material, i.e., *colla parte* playing. In fact, Mattheson argues “the players play not a single note more than, different from, or less than the singers, which is an essential condition of motets.”<sup>24</sup> While the Sandström motets call for no instruments of any kind, neither continuo nor *colla parte*, they do maintain a connection with Bach’s in that the German motet is primarily a vocal genre.<sup>25</sup>

The two options for eighteenth century German motet texts, biblical *Sprüche* or a chorale, were popular because of the inherent musical qualities of each: prosodic qualities of the first and meter and poetic rhyme in the second.<sup>26</sup> The selection of the text of a motet was of primary importance to a Baroque composer, so it is important to underscore Sandström’s desire to set all of Bach’s texts. Sandström speaks to his affinity for these texts:

The form in the piece you can’t do so much about, because it is what it is. It is already written in the text. That is the good thing with these texts, they are very good texts, so they grow out a good piece with a good form.<sup>27</sup>

Not only does Sandström use the same texts as Bach, but typically he uses the same division of the text as well. For example, in “Der Geist hilft,” Sandström took Bach’s lead in setting the

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<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that both composers set two motets each for combinations other than double mixed choir. Bach’s “Jesu, meine Freude” is scored variously for 3, 4, or 5 voices and “Lobet den Herrn” is scored for four voices. Sandström’s motets “Jesu, meine Freude” and “Fürchte dich nicht” are each set for six voices.

<sup>23</sup> Melamed, 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Readers should note that the distinction of instruments was a defining characteristic of a German motet. However, the term motet had different meanings in other countries, for example, Italy and France.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Sven-David Sandström in discussion with the author, March 2014.

same German text (Romans 8:26-27), setting the text in three movements, and dividing each movement at the same point in the text. When approaching the text, Sandström says:

It has very much to do with the text. I try to read the text myself and take away the way Bach read it, because he read it a special way, of course, when he composed it. He read the text and tried to find the gospel of the text. And I did it my way.<sup>28</sup>

For composers in the Baroque, the term motet was not only a genre-defining term but also a comment on the style of writing. Many notable German writers of the time commented on the ubiquitous appearance of counterpoint, imitation, and fugue in motet compositions.<sup>29</sup> Sandström's motet writing is rife with counterpoint and imitation as well. One prime example of his imitative writing occurs in movement two of "Singet dem Herrn" which will be discussed at length in section 2.2.

## 2.2 Bach's and Sandström's Motets: A Microscopic Comparison

Both composers' settings of these motets share many similarities on the macroscopic level, including the use of sacred German text, the motets functioning as primarily a vocal genre, the use of counterpoint and imitation, the scoring for double choir, and very similar text divisions, and close comparison of the microscopic detail reveals further similarities.<sup>30</sup> For example, a comparison of "Der Geist hilft" settings reveals commonalities such as similar point-by-point text setting and similar treatment of choral textures.

In "Der Geist hilft," Sandström often divides the point of text at precisely the same point as did Bach. For example, each composer sets new music for each of the following points of text: "Der Geist hilft," "unser Schwachheit auf," and "sondern der Geist hilft." Second, the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Melamed, 14-16.

<sup>30</sup> While there are six motets in the Bach Motet Project, the parameters of this document will not afford space for a complete analysis of all six.

individual points of text are sometimes set in a very similar manner and often embody a comparable affect. Sandström mimics Bach's opening "Der Geist hilft" gesture by setting a florid passage in the upper voice and an accompanying figure in the lower voices. The quickly moving melisma on "Geist" conjures a musical image of the Holy Spirit moving about. Finally, Sandström chooses to employ a texture reminiscent of Bach's texture. Again, the opening of the motet provides a crystalline example. Bach begins with a short antiphonal gesture followed by both choirs singing in homophony. Sandström's motet begins in exactly the same manner with the choirs singing in a call-and-response style to one another in mm. 1-4 and ultimately joining forces in m. 5.

While the two composers' motets share many similarities they also contain notable differences. First, Sandström's choice of key and meter in these motets is quite different from Bach's. Whereas Bach's setting begins in 3/8 meter and in the key of Bb Major, Sandström's setting begins in 4/4 meter and in a rather vague region of G Minor. Second, even as both composers very deliberately develop musical material, their means for doing so are quite different. For instance, Bach relies heavily on imitation for much of his contrapuntal writing. Sandström uses imitation but also frequently relies on a gesture of expansion and contraction to spin forth his material. (See Chapter 3 for a definition of expansion and contraction and Example 3 for an example from "Der Geist hilft.") As a final point, while Bach's music would certainly be performed with dynamics and expressive gestures, according to standard performance practice, his scores contain very little, if any, musical or expressive markings. Sandström, however, makes liberal use of such markings by regularly writing *accelerando* or *ritardando*, *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, and a wide variance in dynamic markings. Table 3 provides a section-by-section comparison of "Der Geist hilft" which yields additional similarities

and differences in the two composers' works. [Note: in the following table JSB represents Johann Sebastian Bach and SDS represents Sven-David Sandström.]

Table 3. Section-by-section comparison of "Der Geist hilft"

Section 1	Similarities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The openings of both are antiphonal but culminate in unison statements of "Der Geist hilft" (m. 5 in both).</li> <li>➤ The opening melodic contour in SDS is similar: leap of a P4 followed by a melismatic flourish and final interval of a descending M3.</li> <li>➤ In SDS Choir II answers with exactly the same statement; in JSB Choir II answers with almost the same statement.</li> <li>➤ Each composer creates ebb and flow with initial gestures, JSB with meter and text stress, SDS with musical markings (<i>cresc.</i> and <i>decresc.</i>) and text stress.</li> <li>➤ The "Denn wir wissen..." point of text, while scored quite differently, has a rhythmic interplay resulting in a quick antiphonal interaction from Choir I to Choir II. JSB keeps it short (m. 41.) while SDS is less subtle (m. 14).</li> <li>➤ Both composers score a significant change at "sondern der Geist selbst"; this makes sense as "sondern" means "but," and there is a notable change in the Romans text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JSB writes a fugue, treating the final three lines of text as one point of music but gives precedence to the first two lines (i.e. fugue subject);</li> <li>• SDS treats the final three points of text as entities unto themselves within a larger whole (i.e., as a tripartite large section); it is also interesting that Sandström sets the text as "sondern der Geist <i>hilft</i>" as opposed to "sondern der Geist selbst."</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Both composers are interested in word painting: both set the word "Geist" (spirit) as a melisma to symbolize a hovering creature; both highlight the word "Seufzen" (sighing) with syncopated and weak-beat gestures.</li> </ul>
Differences	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ JSB's is scored in a triple meter (3/8); SDS's is in 4/4.</li> <li>➤ JSB's is firmly rooted in Bb Major; SDS's is vague in that it begins with G Dorian material but explores additional regions of G# Minor and B Minor.</li> <li>➤ JSB develops the first point of text by repeating it, placing it in a different choir, placing it in a different key (e.g., the dominant in mm. 17-20), and elongating it into a sequence (e.g. mm. 33-37); SDS develops the first point of text mainly through his use of expansion and contraction technique (see Ch. 3.1).</li> <li>➤ SDS has a great variance of tempi within one section; JSB maintains a steady tempo.</li> <li>➤ Both composers have a return of the opening "Der Geist hilft" material but how and where they return are different: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JSB places the return in mm. 69-76, immediately following the "denn wir wissen" point; it is not an exact copy of his opening material (mm. 1-8) but it is very similar and has the same harmonic structure;</li> <li>• SDS places it at the very end of the section (mm. 75-85) and scores an exact repeat except for the fact that the choirs are reversed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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**Section 2 Similarities**

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- The division of text is similar, i.e., two lines of text for each musical point.

**Differences**

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- JSB reduces the texture to four parts; SDS maintains a double-choir texture.
- JSB writes a fugue.
- JSB maintains the same key as section 1 (Bb Major); SDS uses a new key/region (G# Minor/B Major)
- JSB writes a firm ending to finish the section (V → I cadence in Bb Major); SDS concludes the section with an Ab<sup>7</sup> chord which functions as a segue to section 3.

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**Section 3 Similarities**

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- The style of composition for both works is melody and accompaniment.
- Both composers set basically the same tune for both verses of the chorale (JSB's is slightly adjusted).
- Both works end with a firm V → I cadence in Bb Major.

**Differences**

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- JSB scores a four-part chorale; SDS scores a melody that is accompanied by seven voices (saattbb).
  - JSB begins and ends the section in the same key (Bb Major); SDS begins the section in a key/region (Ab Major) other than that of the final cadence of the piece (Bb Major).
  - JSB changes the harmonization from the first quatrain to the second; SDS scores the second quatrain ("O Herr, durch dein...") in almost the same manner as the first quatrain but with slight alterations (e.g., the choirs are reversed, both choirs eventually singing together, and soprano I solos are added in mm. 153-154)
  - SDS writes an extended Hallelujah.
- 

Like the settings of "Der Geist hilft," both Sandström's and Bach's setting of "Singet dem Herrn" share many characteristics on the microscopic level. First, leaving the second movement of each motet aside, both composers have set the text of the outside movements in an extremely virtuosic manner. This includes the use of much coloratura, large ranges in each vocal part, extensive singing in upper tessituras, harmonic challenges, and very lively tempos.

Another similarity is that Sandström often takes Bach's lead in highlighting a word of German text that illuminates the passage as a whole. For example, the word "singet" is so incredibly important in Bach's setting that it is the only text sounded for the first 8 measures. Sandström takes this concept to an entirely different level by setting only the word "singet" for the opening 51 measures of his motet. An additional example of this word painting is the



treatment of the word “alles,” which means “all,” for both composers treat the word similarly by setting a melisma on it.

A third and final way that both composers’ writing bear similarities in “Singet dem Herrn” reveals itself in comparable uses of imitation. One prime example occurs in movement two at the point where each composer sets the text “Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an.” As seen in Example 1, Sandström begins the movement by writing a descending scalar gesture that eventually turns upwards at the very end. This, then, is imitated in succession by each voice part. This figure is a unifying device because it is used four times throughout the movement: prior to each of the three verses of the chorale (mm. 1-4, mm. 29-35, mm. 59-66) and, finally, in the concluding section of the movement (mm. 89-97).

Example 1. Imitative writing in Sandström’s “Singet dem Herrn,” Mvt. 2, mm. 1-4

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a Coro II part. The score is in 3/4 time, marked with a tempo of quarter note = 63. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score shows the beginning of the movement, with the text "Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an, fer-ner-un-ser" under the notes. The Soprano part starts with a descending scalar gesture that turns upwards at the end. The other parts imitate this gesture in succession. The score is marked with "pp" (pianissimo) and "II".

Bach’s setting of the same text is quite similar, scoring a descending scalar gesture, but one that leaps upward in the middle. (See the tenor part in Example 2 for an illustration of the initial figure.) Another parallel is that, with this gesture, both composers outline the tonic triad (Sandström outlines Ab Major and Bach outlines Bb Major). Finally, the pairs of voices that

answer the initial imitation share a connection. For example, Sandström first sets the figure in the bass and tenor voices at the tonic level (Ab Major), and then answers those two voices, in imitation, with the alto and soprano voices at the dominant level (Eb Major). Bach, in mm. 162-163 (see Example 2), the point at which all voices sing the imitative figure, has an initial duet in the tenor and alto voices at the tonic level (Bb Major) which, in turn, is answered by a duet in the bass and soprano at the dominant level (F Major).

Example 2. Imitative writing in Bach's "Singet dem Herrn," Mvt. 2, mm. 162-164

162

Gott, nimm dich fer-ner un-ser an,

Gott, nimm dich fer-ner un-ser an,

Gott, nimm dich fer-ner un-ser an,

Gott, nimm dich fer-ner un-ser an,

While the two composers' settings of "Singet dem Herrn" share many similarities, they also contain notable differences. First, each composer varies the means by which the two choirs are used, yet Bach offers a greater variety of textures in his composition. Both composers use similar textures that include antiphony, employing only one choir for a given phrase, and aligning all eight voices vertically. Specific to Bach and not employed in this movement by Sandström, however, are the two choirs having independent musical ideas that are presented simultaneously. One example occurs in the opening of Bach's motet where Choir I sings

melismatic “singet” flourishes while Choir II punctuates the “singet” text via quarter notes. A similar example is found in mm. 75-95 where Bach has Choir I singing very florid fugal material and Choir II singing supporting material with longer note values.

A second and major difference in the two motets occurs in movement two. For a composer looking to emulate Bach’s setting of “Singet dem Herrn,” even from a simple structural standpoint, the second movement would undoubtedly pose a problem. Bach weaves two separate German texts, a chorale by Johann Gramann and an aria by an unknown author, by alternating lines of the chorale with lines of the aria.<sup>31</sup> Choir II is assigned the chorale text and sings in a strict chorale manner while Choir I answers each line of the chorale in a quasi-fantasy style.

Sandström devises his own unique solution for setting these two texts. He scores the chorale text and aria text in separate choirs, as did Bach. However, rather than break up the chorale line-by-line, he sets each of the three quatrains of the chorale as a complete, uninterrupted entity. Whether for practical means or artistic, he also begins the movement with the aria text rather than the chorale. Table 4 presents the original texts Bach considered, Bach’s arrangement of the text for his motet, and Sandström’s arrangement of the text for his motet.

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<sup>31</sup> Ron Jeffers, *Translations and Annotations of Choral Repertoire, Volume II: German Texts* (Corvallis: Earthsongs, 2000), 67.

Table 4. Original texts, Bach's arrangement, and Sandström's arrangement in "Singet dem Herrn," Mvt. 2

Original Texts	J.S. Bach		Sven-David Sandström	
<b>Chorale by Johann Gramann</b>	<b>Chorale</b>		<b>Aria</b>	
Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet	Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet	Choir II	<i>Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir II
Über seine junge Kinderlein,	<b>Aria</b>		<b>Chorale</b>	
So tut der Herr uns allen,	<i>Gott nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet	Choir I
So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.	Über seine junge Kinderlein	Choir II	Über seine junge Kinderlein,	
Er kennt das arm Gemächte,	<i>Gott nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	So tut der Herr uns allen,	
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,	So tut der Herr uns Armen,	Choir II	So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.	
Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,	<i>Gott nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	<i>Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan</i>	Choir II
Ein Blum und fallend Laub.	So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.	Choir II	<i>Mit allen unsern Sachen.</i>	
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,	<i>Gott nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	Er kennt das arm Gemächte,	
So ist es nicht mehr da,	Er kennt das arm Gemächte,	Choir II	Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,	
Also der Mensch vergehet,	<i>Gott nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,	Choir I
Sein End das ist ihm nah.	Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,	Choir II	Ein Blum und fallend Laub.	
<b>Aria by unknown author</b>	<i>Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan</i>	Choir I	<i>Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,</i>	
	<i>Mit allen unsern Sachen.</i>		<i>Und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,</i>	
<i>Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,	Choir II	<i>So wirst du's ferner machen.</i>	Choir I
<i>Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan</i>	<i>Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	Der Wind nur drüber wehet,	
<i>Mit allen unsern Sachen.</i>	Ein Blum und fallend Laub.	Choir II	So ist es nicht mehr da,	
<i>Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,</i>	<i>Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan</i>	Choir I	Also der Mensch vergehet,	
<i>Und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,</i>	<i>Mit allen unsern Sachen.</i>		Sein End das ist ihm nah.	Choir I
<i>So wirst du's ferner machen.</i>	Der Wind nur drüber wehet,	Choir II	<i>Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest</i>	
<i>Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest</i>	<i>Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,</i>	Choir I	<i>Auf dich und deine Huld verläßt.</i>	
<i>Auf dich und deine Huld verläßt.</i>	So ist es nicht mehr da,	Choir II		
	<i>Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,</i>	Choir I		
	<i>Und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,</i>			
	<i>So wirst du's ferner machen.</i>			
	Also der Mensch vergehet,	Choir II		
	Sein End das ist ihm nah.			
	<i>Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest</i>	Choir I		
	<i>Auf dich und deine Huld verläßt.</i>			

A third major difference in the approach to scoring these motets is found in movement three. While each composer successfully captures the spirit of the text, a song of praise voiced with exuberant joy, his means of doing so are quite different. Bach divides each of the verses of text (Psalm 150:2,6) into two large sections. The first section (mm. 221-255) is scored for double choir, is antiphonal, and is in 4/4 meter. In the second section (mm. 256-367), Bach reduces the 8-part scoring to 4 parts, changes the meter to a 3/8 dance meter, and employs a fugue. Thus, two completely different sections of music emerge. Sandström departs from this, combining the two texts and essentially writing one enormous expansion and contraction gesture that develops over a period of 81 measures. After the climax in m. 81, the music suddenly subsides into soft and low registered “Hallelujah!” chords. Table 5 provides a movement-by-movement comparison of “Singet dem Herrn” which yields additional similarities and differences in the two composers’ works.

Table 5. Movement-by-movement comparison of “Singet dem Herrn”

<b>Mvt. 1</b>	<b>Similarities</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Both composers score a harmonically static opening few bars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JSB’s writes a pedal Bb;</li> <li>• SDS only uses Bb<sup>9</sup> harmonies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Each of the opening gestures culminates in an Eb major chord (JSB in m. 9 and SDS in m. 8).</li> <li>➤ The points of text are often divided at same point.</li> <li>➤ Both composers set the word “singet” to a long melisma.</li> <li>➤ The point of text “Singet dem Herrn” is compositionally spun out much more so than the point “ein neues Lied.”</li> <li>➤ Both settings make use of antiphony.</li> <li>➤ Both settings are highly virtuosic and include the use of much coloratura, large ranges in each vocal part, extensive singing in upper tessituras, harmonic challenges, and very lively tempos.</li> </ul>
	<b>Differences</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ JSB’s begins with each choir having a different musical gesture (Choir I sings melismatic flourishes and Choir II sings quarter note punctuation); SDS begins with each choir having the same melodic material.</li> <li>➤ SDS employs many expressive devices to help the movement develop.</li> <li>➤ JSB’s ends with a fugue and in a very robust manner; SDS ends with an</li> </ul>

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extended contraction that includes a pronounced *rit.* and *decresc.* and much lower vocal registers.

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**Mvt. 2 Similarities**

- The first melodic gesture of the aria text is related to the initial soprano melody in the chorale:
  - JSB writes a descent of 4 steps and a leap up;
  - SDS writes a descent of an octave that is mostly stepwise and outlines Ab Major.
- Both composers make use of a chorale.

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**Differences**

- Each composer sets the text in fundamentally different ways (see Table 4).
- JSB maintains the same key as Mvt. 1 (Bb Major); SDS uses a different key than that of Mvt. 1 (Ab Major).
- JSB writes one extended chorale for Choir 2; SDS scores the same chorale three different times.
- JSB's writing is mostly a dialogue between the two choirs; SDS's writing only uses the gesture of dialogue as a transitional device (e.g., mm. 26-28).

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**Mvt. 3 Similarities**

- Both composers write an interplay between the two choirs
- Both composers set extremely rhythmic musical material.
- In both settings, Choirs 1 and 2 sing the same or similar material.
- Both settings are highly virtuosic and include the use of much coloratura, large ranges in each vocal part, extensive singing in upper tessituras, harmonic challenges, and very lively tempos.

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**Differences**

- The harmonic schemes are quite different:
    - JSB begins in Eb Major (the subdominant of Bb) and the final cadence is V → I in Bb Major
    - SDS begins with Ab<sup>M7</sup> material, uses that for the first 75 measures, and concludes with Db Major material.
  - Regarding form, JSB writes two distinct sections of music:
    1. mm. 221-255 are scored double choir and are antiphonal;
    2. mm. 256-367 are scored for combined choirs and employ a fugue.
  - Regarding form, SDS writes a through-composed movement.
  - JSB concludes the movement with two bright and punctuated statements of "Hallelujah"; SDS closes his movement with multiple expressions of "Hallelujah" scored in very low registers and sung at a *pp* dynamic level.
- 

Analysis of the works at the macroscopic level illuminates numerous ways in which Sandström uses Bach's motets as grounding for his own compositional purposes. For example, Sandström uses very similar or identical structural elements in his motet composition, including the text employed, the division of text, and imitative writing. Additionally, Sandström maintains a connection with the eighteenth century German motet of Bach's day by composing sacred

works for choir that contain no independent instrumental parts. Inspection at the microscopic level yields even more parallels between the two composers, including the division of points of text at exactly the same place, the use of the Baroque gesture of word painting, and imitative gestures scored in a very similar manner.

However, while there are a number of similarities that clearly show Sandström's emulation of Bach, the microscopic inspection begins to highlight ways in which Sandström's writing moves beyond that of Bach. Sandström very clearly understands and appreciates the significance of this comparison of his work with that of Bach. In my interview with him in March 2014 he notes:

And then, I notice I do things that Bach should never have been able to do, because it wasn't existing at that time. That's interesting. A cluster was totally impossible, of course. Here you can write a cluster and no one [will] say anything about that today. But that's why it is interesting.

Sometimes I think about what Bach [would say] if he would come in and listen just now. That's very interesting, because if you are [an] open-minded guy, even if you lived over 300 years ago, you should be able to accept whatever. So we don't think Bach is good [only] because he is a fabulous technician. He is good because it is something to listen to. And that's everything together. So that's a very big complexity.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, while Sandström clearly imitates Bach, his own writing expands the breadth and scope of the motet in contemporary terms.

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<sup>32</sup> Sven-David Sandström in discussion with the author, March 2014.

## CHAPTER 3

### BEYOND BACH: SANDSTRÖM'S COMPOSITIONAL LANGUAGE

The discovery of a quote by Camilla Lundberg in *The Swedish Choral Miracle* was rather providential. While Lundberg wrote some twenty years ago in reference to Sandström's compositional voice, she succinctly highlights many of Sandström's fundamental compositional gestures discussed in this paper. Of his compositions Lundberg says: "...this music flows without interruption, generously unfolding with an almost obscene attractiveness one aspect after another of harmonic beauty, rhythmic game-playing or contrapuntal interplay."<sup>33</sup>

#### 3.1 Expansion and Contraction: "Generously Unfolding"

One of Sandström's most commonly employed compositional devices is what I have termed the expansion and contraction technique, abbreviated as E&C. This very organic method impacts the texture by adding or subtracting voices, elevating or decreasing the dynamic, and/or accelerating or decelerating the tempo. E&C offers the composer a wide variety of options to work with a given theme. Susan Swaney (2009), writing in her doctoral dissertation, "Sven-David Sandström: An Overview of his Latin Masses as an Introduction to his Choral Style," chronicles this technique during an interview with Sandström in 2007:

As Sandström describes his current compositional process, he starts with the text, which suggests a melodic or motivic idea, which he then harmonizes. Nowadays he looks for opportunities to use major chords, because "nobody uses them anymore." Once the motivic/harmonic material is conceived, he begins to plot out the larger structure. These larger structures often involve additive or developmental processes, to be discussed below as "accumulation." Sandström's music is nearly always characterized by *fortspinnung* of these melodic/motivic building blocks. These are his tools of trade.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Camilla Lundberg, "Sven-David Sandström: Back to the Future at 50," *Fazer Music News* 5 (Autumn 1992): 3.

<sup>34</sup> Susan Swaney, "Sven-David Sandström: An Overview of his Latin Masses as an Introduction to his Choral Style," (DM diss., Indiana University, 2009), 29.



A quintessential example of an E&C would begin with a single voice presenting a melodic fragment in a low register and at a very soft dynamic. As this voice repeats the fragment, additional voices are added to the texture one at a time. As voices are added, or sometimes after all the voices have entered, the dynamic will slowly and steadily rise and the voices will ascend to increasingly higher registers. Often, this rise in pitch is coupled with entrances that occur more frequently and with, at times, an acceleration of tempo. Each of these added components continues to build momentum and energy until the apex is reached. What follows is the contraction, generally marked by a descent in vocal register, a reduction of voices in the texture, a decrease in dynamic, and/or a relaxing of tempo. Typically, the gesture of contraction is significantly shorter than the gesture of expansion.

One of the clearest examples of E&C in “Der Geist hilft” is found in mm. 23-42 (see Example 3). Sandström begins the passage by presenting the initial cell in a low register of the B2 voice and at a very hushed dynamic (*pp*). The expansion begins with the B2 voice followed immediately by the B1 voice, again in a low register and at a soft dynamic but with a variation of the original cell. Slowly and steadily, additional voices are added to the texture, first T2, then T1, then A2, and so on. Once the final voice has entered (S1 in m. 35), Sandström writes a *tutti crescendo* and places all the voice parts in a slightly higher register. The climax of the expansion is reached in m. 42 with both choirs arriving at the word “sondern” at the same time and singing *mezzo forte*. While the contraction is only one measure in length, it displays many of the elements one would expect, including a descent in vocal register, a *decrescendo*, and a reduction in the number of voices in the texture.

Example 3. E&C in Sandström's "Der Geist hilft," mm. 23-42

B sub.  
 23 ♩ = 144 25

S  
 A  
 T  
 B *pp*  
 son - dern der Geist hilft, son - dern der Geist hilft, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

S  
 A  
 T *pp*  
 son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

B *pp*  
 son - dern der Geist, \_\_\_ son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft, son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

---

28 30

S  
 A *pp*  
 Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

T *pp*  
 son - dern der Geist, son - dern der Geist, son - dern der Geist, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

B *pp*  
 son - dern der Geist, son - dern der Geist, son - dern der Geist, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

S  
 A *pp*  
 son - dern der Geist, \_\_\_ son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

T *pp*  
 son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist, \_\_\_ son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

B *pp*  
 son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist, \_\_\_ son - dern \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

33 35 tutti: *pp cresc.*

S *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist,

A *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist,

T *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist,

B *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist,

S tutti: *pp cresc.* son - dern der Geist, son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der

A son - dern der Geist, son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der

T son - dern der Geist, son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der

B son - dern der Geist, son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der

38 40 tutti: *(cresc.)* *mf* *pp*

S *(cresc.)* son-derm der Geist, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

A *(cresc.)* son-derm der Geist, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

T *(cresc.)* son-derm der Geist, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

B *(cresc.)* son-derm der Geist, Geist\_\_ hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

S *(cresc.)* Geist, son - dern der Geist,\_\_ son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist hilft,

A Geist, son - dern der Geist,\_\_ son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist hilft,

T Geist, son - dern der Geist,\_\_ son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist hilft,

B Geist, son - dern der Geist,\_\_ son - dern\_\_ der Geist, son - dern der Geist hilft,

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With the basic E&C formula delineated it is quite interesting to see how Sandström varies its use. For instance, one way to employ this technique is to use it within a section as an entity unto itself, i.e., a complete E&C gesture. The opening measures of “Jesu, meine Freude,” Mvt. 2, mm. 1-16 provide a notable demonstration of this point (see Appendix A). In this example, Sandström sets the point of text “Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen” as one complete musical thought. He begins with a bass voice in a low register, gradually stacks the voices from low to high, writes a steady *crescendo*, and has each voice ascend in pitch. The segment climaxes with a homophonic texture in m. 11 and then descends in pitch, gradually getting softer, the texture reduced one voice at a time. Since the gesture is complete, i.e., an entity unto itself, what follows is a new musical idea.

A second way Sandström employs the E&C technique is as a means of unifying two or more sections, i.e., an extended E&C gesture. An example of this may be seen in looking across a large section of music in “Der Geist hilft,” mm. 23-74 (see Appendix B). Contained within this large section are three individual E&C gestures (a, mm. 23-42, b, mm. 43-58, and c, mm. 59-74), each functioning separately as an independent thought but also building one upon the other.

Looking across the three sections (see Table 6), one notes interesting developments. First, Sandström builds intensity by heightening the dynamic range and by beginning the *crescendo* earlier and earlier in each subsequent section. Next, the total number of voices singing expands across the three sections, as does the amount of time for which tutti voices are singing. Finally, Sandström keeps the energy moving forward by using extremely brief contraction periods in the first two sections (each is only one measure in length), but a longer contraction in section c. This elongation of the final contraction into a four-measure unit,

coupled with a concluding *ritardando*, allows enough time for the gathered energy of the final climax to be released.

Table 6. Extended E&C gesture in “Der Geist hilft,” mm. 23-74

Section	Dynamics	<i>Cresc.</i> begins	Number of voices	Tutti voices culminate	Length of contraction
a. mm. 23-42	<i>pp</i> → <i>mf</i>	In the 11 <sup>th</sup> measure	Only 8	In the 13 <sup>th</sup> measure	1 measure
b. mm. 43-58	<i>pp</i> → <i>f</i>	In the 4 <sup>th</sup> measure	Mostly 8; some 10- and 16-part divisi	In the 5 <sup>th</sup> measure	1 measure
c. mm. 59-74	<i>pp</i> → <i>ff</i>	In the 1 <sup>st</sup> measure	Mostly 16-part divisi	In the 1 <sup>st</sup> measure	4 measures

A second example of an extended E&C, mm. 1-57 in “Singet dem Herrn” (see Appendix C), highlights additional variants across an extended passage, including acceleration, length of melodic material, and transposition. While Sandström does not write a deliberate *accelerando* in this passage, he does do something that gives the music a sense of gathering speed—he shortens the length of each of the sub-sections “a” while keeping the amount of melodic material nearly the same (see Table 7). For example, sub-section Ia is 6 ½ measures long and the S1 part sings 22 pitches. (The pitch count includes only those in the cell and does not include the sixteenth notes at the end of the section.)

Table 7. Extended E&C gesture in “Singet dem Herrn,” mm. 1-57

Section	Sub-section	Sub-section length	Melodic material (sop)	Primary Material & Length	Tonal Region
I. mm. 1-17	a. mm. 1-7	6 ½ measures	22 pitches	Cells: 2-3 notes	Bb <sup>7</sup>
	b. mm. 8-17			Coloratura: 1-2 beats	Eb
II. mm. 18-33	a. mm. 18-23	5 ½ measures	20 pitches	Cells: 3-5 notes	C <sup>7</sup>
	b. mm. 24-33			Coloratura: 2-3 beats	F
III. mm. 34-57	a. mm. 34-37	3 ½ measures	24 pitches	Cells: 5-8 notes	D <sup>7</sup>
	b. mm. 38-51			Coloratura: 3-5 beats	G

Sub-section IIa is 5 ½ measures long and the S1 part sings 20 pitches. Sub-section IIIa is 3 ½ measures long and the S1 part sings 24 pitches. Again, the same amount of music, or slightly more music, in a shorter period of time creates a quickening gesture.

Table 7 further illustrates how Sandström builds momentum and intensity across the three large sections via the primary melodic material. In each of the sub-sections “a,” Sandström uses short cellular material which swells across the three sections, beginning as two- to three-note cells and expanding to five- to eight-note cells. In a similar manner, the length of each of the sub-sections “b” contains an increase of primary material as well.

Finally, as mentioned above, one of the primary means of expansion in the E&C is to have the voices slowly ascend to a higher and higher register. In the opening of “Singet dem Herrn,” Sandström did not do this within any single section; rather, he achieved this across the sections by composing each of the two subsequent sections one tone higher. Section I contains Bb<sup>7</sup> and Eb material, section II contains C<sup>7</sup> and F material, and section III contains D<sup>7</sup> and G material. Thus, over the course of the 57-measure passage the music has been transposed up by a major third.

### 3.2 Harmonic Ambiguity: “Obscene Attractiveness”

Sandström’s harmonic language, one of lush post-romantic chordal structures, has been given many names. Per Broman refers to Sandström’s mid- to late-harmonic writing as “artificial romanticism—artificial in that his chord progressions do not follow the syntax of any known romantic composer.”<sup>35</sup> Lundberg’s description of Sandström’s harmonic language as “obscene attractiveness” is most likely a reference to the lushness of the music.<sup>36</sup> Whatever term

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<sup>35</sup> Broman, 492.

<sup>36</sup> Lundberg, 3.

one might use to describe it, Sandström's use of a primarily tonal language that is not tied to diatonic function, his predilection for the major-minor seventh chord, and his employment of third-related chord progressions results in a wonderfully ambiguous harmonic language.

An analysis of the chorale in "Der Geist hilft," mm. 118-137 (see Appendix D) reveals his use of diatonic language but in a manner that is not tied to standard diatonic function. The opening chord of the chorale, Db Major, is preceded in m. 117 by an Ab<sup>7</sup> chord. One's ears naturally hear a V<sup>7</sup> – I progression and an establishment of Db Major as the new tonality. However, the third chord of the movement is Eb<sup>7</sup>. This is either a tonicization of the fifth scale degree (Ab in Db Major) or a V<sup>7</sup> – I progression in the true key of Ab Major. It is hard to pin down the exact key because Sandström's progressions keep one guessing. One has to hear the entire chorale to realize the finality of the Eb<sup>7</sup> to Ab chord progression in mm. 135-136 as a true V<sup>7</sup> – I relationship. But no sooner has he firmly established what appears to sound like a firmly rooted Ab major chord than he introduces a Gb, the final eighth note of m. 136, at the last possible moment. The Ab chord then becomes Ab<sup>7</sup> leading to the opening Db major chord of the second verse. What results is quite ambiguous and "obscenely attractive." Table 8 provides a complete chordal analysis of the chorale

Table 8. Chord Progressions in “Der Geist hilft,” mm. 118-137(1)

Du hei - li-ge Brunst, sü - ßer Trost, Nun hilf uns, frö-lich und ge - trost																	
Db	f	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Ab - <sup>7</sup>	Db	f <sup>6/4</sup>	Eb <sup>7</sup>	C <sup>7</sup>	f - <sup>9</sup>	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Ab	Db <sup>7</sup>	bb	Eb <sup>7</sup>	f	C <sup>7</sup>		
IV	vi	V <sup>7</sup>	I	V <sup>7</sup> /IV	IV	vi <sup>6/4</sup>	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup> /vi	vi <sup>9</sup>	V <sup>7</sup>	I	IV <sup>7</sup>	ii	V <sup>7</sup>	vi	III <sup>7</sup>	
In dei - nem Dienst be-stän-dig blei - ben, Die Trüb-sal uns nicht ab-trei-ben. O...																	
Ab	f <sup>6/4</sup>	Db	Bb <sup>7</sup>	Ab	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Bb <sup>7</sup>	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Ab	f <sup>6/4</sup>	Db	Bb <sup>4/3</sup>	f	Eb <sup>7</sup>	Ab - <sup>7</sup>	Db	
I	vi <sup>6/4</sup>	IV	II <sup>7</sup>	I	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup> /V	V <sup>7</sup>	I	vi <sup>6/4</sup>	IV	II <sup>4/3</sup>	vi	V <sup>7</sup>	I	V <sup>7</sup> /IV	IV

On the one hand, Sandström is working within tonality since most of the chords may be found within Ab Major. Furthermore, one finds leanings towards functional tonality with progressions such as vi – V<sup>7</sup> – I at “heilige Brunst” and V<sup>7</sup>/V – V<sup>7</sup> – I at “bleiben, Die Trübsal.” However, as many traditional rules are being broken or bent as are being followed, including the progressions V<sup>7</sup> – V<sup>7</sup>/vi – vi<sup>9</sup> – V<sup>7</sup> at “süßer Trost,” V<sup>7</sup> – vi – III<sup>7</sup> – I at “getrost In,” and IV – II<sup>4/3</sup> – vi at “uns nicht.”

While diatonic function is not Sandström’s primary objective, as demonstrated in the above progressions, it is interesting to note his proclivity for employing major-minor seventh chords. Sandström scores these progressions with a variety of outcomes. Examples within the chorale in which the major-minor seventh chord resolves as expected include the progression Ab<sup>7</sup> – Db on the word “Brunst” as well as the progression Eb<sup>7</sup> – Ab at “heilige Brunst,” “Die Trübsal,” and “nicht abtreiben” (see Table 7). On the other hand, Sandström frequently betrays one’s expectation by employing major-minor seventh chords with unorthodox resolutions. Table 9 contains examples of major-minor seventh chords with resolutions that one would expect and with resolutions one would not expect.



Table 9. Major-minor seventh chords and resolutions in “Der Geist hilft”

Resolving as Expected		Not Resolving as Expected	
m. 19	Bb <sup>7</sup> → eb	m. 15	Bb <sup>7</sup> → ab
m. 74	D <sup>7</sup> → g	m. 122	Eb <sup>7</sup> → C <sup>7</sup>
mm. 91-108	F# <sup>7</sup> → B	mm. 125-126	Db <sup>7</sup> → bb
mm. 117-118	Ab <sup>7</sup> → Db	mm. 127-128	C <sup>7</sup> → Ab
mm. 130-131	Eb <sup>7</sup> → Bb <sup>7</sup> → Eb	mm. 129-130	Bb <sup>7</sup> → Ab

Another tool Sandström uses in his harmonic palate, one similar to that of the masters of the Romantic and post-Romantic era, is the exploitation of relationships between chords whose roots are separated by a third, i.e., a mediant relationship. Often, Sandström will realize a mediant relationship with very direct means such as transitioning from one section of music to another. One example occurs in mm. 108-109 of “Der Geist Hilft” where Sandström shifts from the previously tonicized area of B Major (note F#<sup>7</sup> to B Major progressions in mm. 91-107) to an unprepared G Minor chord in m. 109. A second example may be observed in mm. 51-57 of “Singet dem Herrn,” in which Sandström quickly moves from a well-established G Major section to a firm Eb Major cadence in m. 57. One additional note of interest is that Sandström uses a circle of fifths (G → C<sup>7</sup> → F<sup>7</sup> → Bb<sup>7</sup> → Eb), a very Baroque gesture, to make this G – Eb progression.

Sandström also achieves mediant relationships by less direct means. Frequently, he will mirror a previous portion of music two times, back-to-back, each time setting the material one tone higher. The result is that, over the course of the three passages, the music will have progressed upward or downward by a major third, such that the initial section and the final section share a chromatic mediant relationship. This sort of relationship, a sequential modulation using a chromatic mediant relationship, is not uncommon in music of the nineteenth century. What is unique is Sandström’s use of E&C as a means for the modulation in his music.

Two examples, one from each of the motets, underscore this technique. The first, which occurs at the end of “Der Geist hilft” (mm. 156-189), contains three passages of similar music (mm. 156-165, mm. 166-177, and mm. 178-189) that progress from Db Minor material, to Eb Minor material, to F Minor material respectively. Thus, the music progresses by an interval of a major third from Db up to F. The second example occurs in the opening measures (mm. 1-51) of “Singet dem Herrn” (for a representation of these measures, see Appendix C). This passage, comprising three smaller sections (mm. 1-17, mm. 18-33, and mm. 34-51), does indeed progress up the interval of a M3 by way of two whole tones. Unique to this passage is Sandström’s use of dominant seventh material that helps establish the new tonal region. For example, in mm. 1-7 he uses Bb<sup>7</sup> material to establish Eb Major in mm. 8-17; in mm. 18-23 he uses C<sup>7</sup> material to establish F Major in mm. 24-33; and in mm. 34-37 he uses D<sup>7</sup> material to establish G Major in mm. 38-51. Thus, Sandström has exploited a mediant relationship, in the above two examples a chromatic mediant relationship, by way of a whole-step motion.

### 3.3 “Rhythmic Game-Playing”

One of Sandström’s favorite gestures is rhythmic manipulation. He makes playful games out of the rhythms by having one voice, a group of voices, or an entire choir play off another voice, group of voices, or choir via slight rhythmic manipulations of similar material. Typically, this happens one of three ways: 1) by displacing the beat of entry to an unanticipated beat, 2) by shortening or elongating one or more rhythms within a segment, or 3) by using a combination of the two. The four entrances in mm. 35-37 of “Der Geist hilft” provide examples of all three (see Example 4).



Two of the greatest examples of rhythmic game-playing occur at the end of “Der Geist hilft” and “Singet dem Herrn.” The “Der Geist hilft” example occurs on a small scale and within a very short period of time, seven measures of music (mm. 156-162) moving at a very quick tempo (192 beats/minute). In these measures, Sandström sets three expressions of the word “Hallelujah.” While the first two statements are equal in length (ten beats) and spacing between syllables of text, Sandström slightly alters the second iteration (m. 159) by beginning it on beat four instead of beat two. The third statement of the text (m. 161) is quite different from the first two in that Sandström begins on an off-beat and contracts the entire statement into an eight-beat span (see Example 5).

Example 5. Rhythmic game-playing in “Der Geist hilft,” mm. 156-162

The musical score for "Der Geist hilft" (mm. 156-162) is presented in a four-part vocal setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as 192 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 156-160) features the lyrics "-le- ja, -le- ja, -le- ja." The second system (mm. 161-162) features the lyrics "Hal- lu- Hal- lu- Hal- lu-". Performance markings include "tutti: pp cresc." and a fermata (F) over the first measure of the first system. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and bass notes in the left hand.

Sandström adds further complexity and interest to this section by setting the four syllables of text (Hal – le – lu – ja) in a pointillistic style. He achieves this by displacing a pattern of three short, punctuated chords (c#, E<sup>7</sup>, b) across the two choirs and often placing rests between the chords. Further, since there are only three chords for the four syllables of text, the repetition of chords begins prior to the repetition of text. As Sandström is wont to do, he uses this entire gesture two additional times in the closing measures of the motet (mm. 166-172 and mm. 178-184).

The final movement of “Singet dem Herrn” also provides another interesting example of rhythmic manipulation, this time one that happens on a large scale. For the first thirty-eight measures of movement three only four notes are sounded, Ab, C, Eb, and G. Furthermore, each voice of the sixteen-part texture sings only two of these notes (e.g., the A1 voice part sings only G-Ab, G-Ab, and so on; the B2 voice part sings only Ab-Eb, Ab-Eb, and so on.). Despite such limited musical material, no two measures are the same because of Sandström’s inventive use of rhythmic manipulation.

In this section of music, Sandström achieves great complexity by first establishing a rather simple pattern in the first measure: eighth note, eighth rest, eighth note (see Example 6). Next, he sets the pattern at an equidistance in all the voice parts in one choir (e.g., S1 begins on beat 1 in m. 1; A1 begins on beat 1 in m. 2; T1 begins on beat 1 in m. 3; and B1 begins on beat 1 in m. 4). Then, he has the second choir answer in canon with a nearly exact repetition. In this particular instance, Choir II answers eight beats after Choir I begins such that the T1 and S2 voice parts align, B1 and A2 voice parts align, and so forth (as indicated by the arrows inserted in the score).

Example 6. Rhythmic game-playing in “Singet Dem Herrn,” Mvt. 3, mm. 1-8

Further rhythmic gaming is achieved by repeating the same pitch sequence and vocal entries but varying the beat of entry for each of the two syllables of text. For example, the sopranos in Choir I sing precisely the same pitches and texts in mm. 1, 3, and 6. However, the entrances in mm. 3 and 6 occur later, the “and” of beat 1 and beat 2, respectively. Also, Sandström increases the resting time between the two syllables: m. 1 contains an eighth rest, m. 3 contains three eighth rests, and m. 5 contains four eighth rests.

The next half of the same section (mm. 22-38), the point at which Sandström introduces new text (“dem Herrn”), is composed in a similar manner. Sandström establishes a rhythmic pattern, passes it through each voice part of a given choir, and has the other choir answer in canon. What is particularly interesting about these bars is that Sandström continues to find

subtle variations in rhythm. First, instead of a short-short pattern, as in mm. 1-21, he writes either a short-long pattern (i.e., an eighth note plus a quarter note) or long-short pattern (i.e., a quarter note plus an eighth note). Then, he reduces the duration of elapsed time from one voice part to the next (e.g., S1 to A1) from four beats to three. Additionally, the elapsed time of the entrances of the canon is contracted from eight beats to six. Each of these rhythmic variants in concert with one another gives his music effervescence and rhythmic vitality.

### 3.4 Melodic Cells: “Contrapuntal Interplay”

Lundberg’s final descriptor of Sandström’s style, “contrapuntal interplay,” is apt in describing his propensity for using small melodic cells with great variance. While the length of the cells differ depending on the amount of text expressed, many of the melodic cells share certain characteristics, such as melodic contour or a tendency to outline a triad. The opening seven measures of “Singet dem Herrn” provide a glimpse into Sandström’s contrapuntal interplay. While the passage looks very busy on the page, in fact, very little compositional material is being used. Each voice part is assigned only three pitches (e.g., B2 sings only F, Bb, and D). What appear to be many varied entrances turn out to be only five melodic cells, two of which are simple elongations of two existing gestures. The five cells, a, b, c, a’, and c’, are labeled in Example 7. Closer inspection of the cells reveals the following: First, cell b is a near retrograde of cell a, such that when placed back-to-back, as in m. 1, the effect is a palindrome. Second, the fourth and fifth cells (a’ and c’) are simply rhythmic manipulations, or elongations, of cells a and c. Finally, further rhythmic intricacy is achieved by moving the position of a cell.

Example 7. Melodic cells in “Singet Dem Herrn,” Mvt. 1, mm. 1-6

For example, cell a is first heard in m. 1 as an offbeat, syncopated gesture but is also used on the beat in Choir I, m. 3, beat 4. Sandström treats cell b the same, first with an on-the-beat gesture in m. 1, then with a syncopated gesture in m. 5. With only a very small amount of music, he has given himself almost endless compositional possibilities.

Chapter 3 clearly shows fundamental ways in which Sandström’s music extends beyond the language of Bach. First, Sandström’s gesture of expansion and contraction, one of his most recognizable features, contains periods of sustained *crescendo*, *accelerando*, and voices



ascending to and sustaining very high tessituras, all of which were completely unheard of in Bach's time. Second, while Bach's music is firmly rooted in major-minor tonality, Sandström freely makes use of romantic and post-romantic gestures with little concern for diatonic function. Finally, his propensity for taking a very small block of musical material and treating it in a variety of ways via rhythmic gaming or melodic cell variation is very much rooted in a contemporary compositional language.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

The interview with Sandström (March 2014) helped to place the motet project into a larger perspective and clarify many questions surrounding Bach's influence on Sandström. Exploring the primary research question to this study—"To what extent did Sven-David Sandström emulate the motets of J.S. Bach in the composition of his own Bach Motet Project?"—yielded many similarities in the motet writing. Of course, Sandström did make very deliberate efforts to unlock the meaning of the text and to set the text well. Therefore, it is no surprise that so many of the striking similarities in the two composers' works are born out of structural elements that come directly from the text. Sandström comments, "The form in the piece you can't do so much about, because it is what it is. It is already written in the text."<sup>37</sup> In this regard, he comes nearest to Bach.

However, after speaking with Sandström at length about these works and about his compositional approach, I now believe that many of the similarities resulted from unconscious or subconscious decisions by Sandström. Because he spent years as a chorister singing Bach's works, Sandström knew Bach's motets quite well. Therefore, he actually labored to avoid certain gestures so that his music would not imitate Bach's too closely. He notes:

I sang all of [those works], so I know the pieces very good....Too good to make it easy, you understand. As soon as I saw the text, I heard Bach's music. Which was rather tricky, so I have to try to kill it as good as I could.<sup>38</sup>

This analysis and this document prove that in many areas of composition, Sandström sees Bach more as an inspirational figure than someone to emulate. For instance, Sandström's unique

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<sup>37</sup> Sven-David Sandström in discussion with the author, March 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

compositional language with gestures of expansion and contraction, harmonic ambiguity, and rhythmic game-playing is one that vastly differs from Bach's. Sandström speaks to this:

You live today and you can't change that. If you don't realize that, you should do something else. You do what you should do today and what you feel you should do. I try to compare myself with the best composers like Bach. I use that. And everyone who listens to these pieces is comparing it, you know. But if the piece is working, no one sits and analyzes it. It is just working. It is nice to listen to. And then, they remember Bach as a polarity in their thinking.

That's the most interesting thing I take out from this situation. So that's why I am working with it. To find my position. It sounds very heavy talk, but in the histories, so to speak, where am I today? It is a little point there somewhere, but anyhow it has connection with the back and perhaps I do think that could look forward a little sometimes.<sup>39</sup>

In the end, what remains is the music. Perhaps the greatest contribution a project like the Bach Motet Project makes to the musical world is that it brings to life new works that both stand on their own as great pieces of art but also illuminate past art for the current generation. To this end, Sandström observes:

It is very interesting to hear the same text with new music, and suddenly you reflect, and suddenly you listen to that and you remember things. It opens your thinking, your reflection. As soon as you listen to a piece you always compare with other pieces you already know. That is the only thing you can do, ja? But in this comparison you suddenly come to a point where you find the new piece you are listening to worth just listening to without comparisons. And then it's working.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that, with the composition of the Bach Motet Project, Sven-David Sandström, one of the pre-eminent voices in modern choral composition, has paid homage to Bach in these works while at the same time deliberately forging his own expressive path.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

APPENDIX A

QUINTESSENTIAL E&C GESTURE IN “JESU, MEINE FREUDE,” MVT. 2, MM 1-16

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$\text{♩} = 96$

Sopr. — — — —

Mezzo — — — —

Alto — — — —

Ten. — — — — *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun

Bar. — — — — *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun

Bass *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun Es ist nun

5

Sopr. — — — — *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun nichts —

Mezzo *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun nichts Es ist —

Alto *ppp cresc.* — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun  
(cresc.)

Ten. — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun nichts —  
(cresc.)

Bar. — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun nichts Es ist —  
(cresc.)

Bass — — — —  
Es ist nun Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun nichts Es ist nun

tutti: *cresc.*

8

Sopr. Es ist nun nichts Ver - damm — Es ist nun nichts Ver-damm -

Mezzo — nun nichts — Ver - damm — Es ist — nun nichts — Ver-damm -

Alto nichts Ver - damm — Es ist nun nichts Ver - damm - - - -

Ten. Es ist nun nichts Ver - damm — Es ist nun nichts Ver-damm -

Bar. — nun nichts — Ver - damm — Es ist — nun nichts — Ver-damm -

Bass nichts Ver - damm — Es ist nun nichts Ver - damm - - - -

tutti: *f* *dim.*

11

Sopr. - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

Mezzo - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

Alto - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

Ten. - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

Bar. - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

Bass - - li - ches Ver-damm - li - ches Ver - damm - li - ches an de - nen de - nen de -

14 15  $\text{♩} = 48$

tutti: (dim.) *ppp* *cresc.* *ppp* *cresc.*

Sopr. - nen de - nen - n, die in *ppp* *cresc.*

Mezzo - nen de - nen - n, die in *ppp* *cresc.*

Alto - nen de - nen - n, die in

Ten. - nen de - nen - n, die in Chri - sto *ppp* *cresc.*

Bar. - nen de - nen - n, die in Chri - sto *ppp* *cresc.*

Bass - nen de - nen - n, die in Chri - sto *ppp* *cresc.*

19 20 *ff* *dim.*

tutti: (*cresc.*)

Sopr. Chri - sto Chri - - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri - sto

Mezzo Chri - sto Chri - - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri - sto

Alto Chri - sto Chri - - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri -

Ten. Chri - - - sto Chri - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri -

Bar. Chri - - - sto Chri - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri -

Bass Chri - - - sto Chri - sto Je - - - - - su sind, Chri -

APPENDIX B

AN EXTENDED E&C GESTURE IN “DER GEIST HILFT,” MM 23-74

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B <sup>stüb.</sup>  
 23  $\text{♩} = 144$  25

S  
 A  
 T  
 B *pp*  
 son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

S  
 A  
 T *pp*  
 son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

B *pp*  
 son - derm der Geist, \_\_\_ son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft, son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

28 30

S  
 A *pp*  
 Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

T *pp*  
 son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

B *pp*  
 son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, Geist \_\_\_ hilft,

S  
 A *pp*  
 son - derm der Geist, \_\_\_ son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

T *pp*  
 son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist, son - derm der Geist, \_\_\_ son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

B *pp*  
 son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist, son - derm der Geist, \_\_\_ son - derm \_\_\_ der Geist hilft,

33 35 tutti *pp* cresc.

S *pp* son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist.

A *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist.

T *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist.

B *pp* son-derm der Geist hilft, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist, son-derm der Geist.

S *tutti* *pp* cresc. son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der

A son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der

T son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der

B son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der

*tutti* *(cresc.)* 40 *mf* *pp*

S son-derm der Geist, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

A son-derm der Geist, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

T son-derm der Geist, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

B son-derm der Geist, Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist hilft, son-derm der Geist

S *tutti* *(cresc.)* Geist, son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist hilft,

A Geist, son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist hilft,

T Geist, son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist hilft,

B Geist, son-derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist, son - derm der Geist hilft,

43 45

*pp* tutti: *crec.*

S ver - tritt uns,

A ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns,

T ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns,

B ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns,

*pp* *crec.* tutti:

S ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs

A ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs

T ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs

B ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs



tutti: *crec.* 50

S ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te,

A ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te,

T ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te,

B ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te,

tutti: *crec.*

S bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt...

A bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt...

T bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt...

B bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt...

tutti  
(cresc.)

52 55

S ver-tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt

A ver-tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt

T ver-tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt

B ver-tritt uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns, ver - tritt

S — uns, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns, ver-tritt uns, aufs

A — uns, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns, ver-tritt uns, aufs

T — uns, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns, ver-tritt uns, aufs

B — uns, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver-tritt uns, ver-tritt uns, aufs

tutti  
(cresc.)

56 *f* *pp* *pp cresc.*

S — uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, mit un-aus-sprech-

A — uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, mit un-aus-sprech-

T — uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, mit un-aus-sprech-

B — uns, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, mit un-aus-sprech-

S bes - te, aufs bes - te, aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, Seuf - zen,

A bes - te, aufs bes - te, aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, Seuf - zen,

T bes - te, aufs bes - te, aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, Seuf - zen,

B bes - te, aufs bes - te, aufs bes - te, ver - tritt uns aufs bes - te, Seuf - zen,

60  
tutti: (cresc.)

S li - chem Seuf - zen, aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un -  
 A li - chem Seuf - zen, aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un -  
 T li - chem Seuf - zen, aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un -  
 B li - chem Seuf - zen, aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un -

Sprech - li - chem mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - - zen,  
 Sprech - li - chem mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - - zen,  
 Sprech - li - chem mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - - zen,  
 Sprech - li - chem mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - - zen,

63  
tutti: (cresc.)

S aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un -  
 A aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un -  
 T aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un -  
 B aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un -

mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem, sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem, sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem, sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem, sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,

66 tutti: accel. (cresc.)

S aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 A aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 T aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,  
 B aus - sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen,

S mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un - aus -  
 A mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un - aus -  
 T mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un - aus -  
 B mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, mit un - aus -

69 tutti: (cresc.) (accel.) *ff* *f* *mf* rit.

S Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 A Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 T Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 B Seuf - zen, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,

S sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 A sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 T sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,  
 B sprech - li - chem, mit un - aus - sprech - li - chem Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen,

73 (rit.) tutti: *p* *pp* *pp*

S Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 A Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 T Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 B Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.

S Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 A Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 T Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.  
 B Seuf - zen, Seuf - zen.

APPENDIX C

AN EXTENDED E&C GESTURE IN “SINGET DEM HERRN,” MM 1-57.

Reproduced with permission from Gehrmans Musikförlag.

# Singet dem Herrn

Sven-David Sandström  
(2003)

$\text{♩} = 126-132$   
*pp sempre* **I** *ppp*

S  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet

A  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet

Coro I  
T  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet

B  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet

S  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

Coro II  
A  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

T  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

B  
Sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

3

Coro I  
*ppp* sin - get

*ppp* sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

*ppp* sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

Coro II  
*p* sin - get *mp* sin - get *p* sin -

*pp* sin - get *p* sin - get *mp* sin - get *p* sin - get

*p* sin - get *mp* sin - get *p* sin - get



16 *pp* *pp sempre*

Coro I  
- get sin - - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

Coro II  
sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

20 *ppp*

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

6

24

Coro II

*ppp* *pp* *p* *mp*

sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - -

sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - -

28

Coro II

*mp* *mf* *mp* *p*

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

get sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - - get

- get sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - - get

- get sin - - - get sin - - - get sin - - - get

32

Coro I

*pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

Coro II

*pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

- get sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

sin - - - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin -

7

36 *ppp* *ppp*

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet singet singet sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet singet singet sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet singet singet sin - get sin - get

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet singet singet singet sin - get sin - get

*ppp* *ppp* *ppp*

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

- get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get singet singet

40 *mp* *p* *mp*

sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

43 *mp* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

sin - get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

get sin - get sin - get

46

Coro I

get sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

Coro II

sin - get sin - get sin - get sin - get

50

sin - get sin - get ein neu - es neu - es neu - es

11

get sin - get ein neu - es neu - es neu - es

55

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne der Hei - li -

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne der Hei - li -

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne der Hei - li -

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne der Hei - li -

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne

es neu - es Lied die Ge - mei - ne die Ge - mei - ne

APPENDIX D

CHORALE IN “DER GEIST HILFT,” MM 118-137

Reproduced with permission from Gehrmans Musikförlag.

118  $\text{♩} = 48$  *pp* 120 rit. ----- tempo 125

S Du bei - li - ge Brunst, sü - ßer Trost

A *pp*

T *pp* m m m m

B *pp* m m m m

S *pp* Nun hilf uns, frö - lich und ge -

A *pp* m m m

T *pp* m m m

B *pp* m m m

tutti: 127 (*pp*) 130 rit. ----- tempo 135 rit.

S Die Trüb - sal uns nicht ab -

A m m m

T m m m

B m m m

tutti: (*pp*)  
 S trost In dei - nem Dierst be - stän - dig bie - ber,

A m m m m

T m m m m

B m m m m

136 (rit.)-----tempo

S  
A  
T  
B

trei - ben.

m

m

m

m

tutti:  
(pp)

O Herr,

m

m

m

m



APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPT OF SVEN-DAVID SANDSTRÖM INTERVIEW

Transcript of Interview with Sven-David Sandström, Visiting Professor of Composition, Indiana University, March 27, 2014

JF: I have been referring to your work on the motets as the Sandström Bach Motet Project. Are you comfortable with my doing that? Is there a formal name for the works?

SDS: No, it really started Stefan Parkman, the rather famous Swedish choral conductor. He was the chief conductor of the Radio Chorus at the time. He wanted a piece. He wanted me to do *Lobet den Herrn*. And he called me, I remember that I was out drinking coffee somewhere in Sweden, and he called me. "Oh, I can't do that, that's stupid." He said, "Use the same text as Bach. I will do *Jesu, meine Freude* the same concept, with Bach." And I went to him and I did it, of course. Ja, because, why not? I felt a little confused, because it was difficult to start. And then, it went on like that. The next piece was commissioned by the Austrian. There was really commissions, all of them. The second was for Gary Graden. It was, uh....

JF: Komm, Jesu, komm? Der Geist hilft?

SDS: No, no...Komm, Jesu, komm, it was. That was the second, and the third was *Singet dem Herrn*. It was commissioned by Gary and Ingemar Månsson. He was my choral leader for all the years I was working with the....Lunds Chamber. He commissioned that and he did it first performance. This is the most difficult one. Not just talking about Bach's piece because that is really difficult. And then the third was *Jesu, meine Freude*, which was commissioned by the Danish Radio Chorus. So you see, it's all different. And then, *Der Geist hilft* was commissioned, I think, together. Ja. Gary Graden, St. Jakob's Chamber Choir, and Ingemar Månsson, too. So that's...Ja. More or less. We have 5 here, or 6?

JF: Do you have *Komm, Jesu, komm? Fürchte dich nicht?*

SDS: *Fürchte dich nicht, ja!* That was commissioned from a chorus in Belgium. So you see, it is spread all over. But the conductors helped me with this. This is the way it is working. The conductors, I know them, I know the choir, too, but if the conductor does not want to commission, it will not be of course, so this is the way it is working. So in the end I was very interested in fulfilling this, of course, to pick all 6. In the beginning, I didn't want to do anything. So that's rather many years before with the first piece. 2005? Ah, 3-5, and so on. So it took 10 years to do everything.

JF: In the beginning, did you ever think, "I would like to set all of them."

SDS: No. I see, 3-5-7, I see that now. It was 2 years between this. It was a rather long time, so I didn't sit and do all of them, which is a little interesting, perhaps. I waited for someone to commission it, which is not so strange. I have to live off of that. In Sweden, if you are successful, as I must say I am, it is possible to get a rather good income on commissions and royalties. Royalties, it is very good paid in Sweden, very careful and working fine. The only problem, since I do so much church music, there is very little paid in church, you know. And worship is nothing, so that is free. So, that's a little pity, I should want more money! So that is

the start of that big project, that was a coincidence, but it worked out and most of the time I couldn't leave it before I finished all of it, of course, and I looked for different possibilities.

JF: As you neared the end of the project, or maybe even in the middle, was each piece its own composition, or were you trying to make any type of thread run through them?

SDS: No, I can say I had - all of them are for two...double chorus except *Jesu, meine Freude*.

JF: Six-part?

SDS: Ja, six-parts, double choir, so that is rather big settings. And it's like Bach, too, Bach...it's the same, I mean, *Jesu meine Freude* is not double choir. They do that normally with different settings, you know. 4 voices, 8 voices...It is a very tricky piece to do, because it is difficult to get it...interesting, because it is a variation situation. And mine is a little the same. I tried to follow this background the Bach reality. And at the same time I did this other piece which is interesting to think about, the High Mass, which I did much earlier, 2004? It is built on B Minor Mass of Bach, so that's a rather big piece. And it started before this, I mean, the interest to take Bach. And then I did *Messiah*, was commissioned from Rilling in Germany, performed there and in Oregon Bach Festival. So it was together with this I crawl into this interest of the music. Not the music itself, but more about the text. Nothing else. The music I didn't have to think about, because it was existing, and I sang all of them, so I know the pieces very good...Too good to make it easy, you understand, it's...as soon as I saw the text, I heard Bach's music. Which was rather tricky, so I have to try to kill it as good as I could. And that was not so difficult once I had started, because I get my idea about it. The form in the piece you can't do so much about, because it is what it is. It is already written in the text. That is the good thing with these texts, they are very good texts, so it grows out a good piece with a good form, I mean, *Messiah* for instance, a wonderful text. So that's a very good theatrical thinking so that is working very fine. And the same with *St. Matthew Passion*, of course, you know, it is a fabulous text pulled together different ways. So I think it helps you. But that's not the reason why I wrote it. The reason was that I am very interested in sacred music, more and more over the years, and I am very interested in trying to find my own position in historic sense, that's why it's interesting to look 300 years back and see what is happening. When I write the piece, I try to get Away from Bach as far as I can, but of course there is some ingredients sometimes, some imitations, and some sort of fugatos say like that, it is not fugues at all like Bach does, because I try to avoid that. And when you do the piece normally, the *Singet dem Herrn*, I mean, is almost the same as Bach's piece in 3 parts, because there is a big aria in the middle so you have to take care of that. We do it different and I try to do it different and I have some other ideas, but you can't really get totally away from it. It is fast-slow-fast, the piece. And the others are the same ideas a little. It has very much to do with the text. I try to read the text myself and take away the way Bach read it, because he read it a special way, of course, when he composed it. He read the text and tried to find the gospel of the text. And I did it my way. That is a big difference from Bach's time when the gospel or the meaning of the piece is very different because their relation to God is very different today. God in Bach's time was dangerous, if I say so. He was...the maestro of everything. Today, you can choose what you want to do with God yourself. He is not dangerous, so to speak. He is something you can take to your heart or deny it. It doesn't matter so much for much people. You are free today. Before they were not free, the church musicians.

I think as a composer, you feel that, but you don't use it if you don't want it. I mean, Bach...you never really heard about Bach's relation to God. You have no idea, I think. You cannot figure it out. I think he was a normal composer, I mean, he was blessed from a good, a fantastic spirit, of course, to write music. But, he tried to do his best, and I try to do my best, too. So the reality is almost the same. And now I talk about the interesting thing for me. I sat at the table as Bach did, and read the text and tried to make a good piece out of it. That is a very good and interesting feeling, because Bach and these guys are so high up, you know, in quality, untouchable people. I think that is totally stupid. It is not meaning at all in that. They are normal people like you and me. Some are more gifted than others, but they are not holy for that. They are normal people, that's the thing in music. That's why we can touch and sing it in different ways. There's no rules. You can do Bach's music exactly as you want. No one cares. Ja, they care. They get angry with you, but you are allowed to do it, if you do it good and interesting. And today we have no idea how they sounded at that time. Not the slightest, I should say. It sounded terribly bad, I think. It was really difficult music, especially in the big cathedrals...the music swirling around...the fugues...it was more clusters I think. That is really interesting. Bach didn't think so much about that. He just wrote it, because he saw the structures, he saw this as fantastic good. I know they can't do it so good, but I don't care. It's just the way I want it and it is still alive, so that is fantastic I should say. Ja? See he didn't think about that, either, of course. No! No composers think about that. They just write the piece and some are better than others, so they survive.

JF: Do you think about that in your own work, any limitations, that is, or do you just say, "I write this because I like it that way"?

SDS: Ja, I write it. Of course, I am happy people like it. As everyone is. But you should notice that Bach's writing was mostly at his job. He had to do it. Next Sunday, "O my god, I must write a new piece." A new cantata, "what do I do now?" and then he went home and made some children and sat and wrote it. It was very interesting. He was a very normal man. I don't know if he was nice or stupid, I have no idea. There is nothing like that written about him, I think. He was very normal at this time. He wasn't specially known, either, so he just did his job. I think that is a good habit as a composer to do your job and feel your gift. If you are gifted, you should do it and you should fulfill your life the best you can. You cannot do so much more. If the pieces are surviving or alive one year or 45 or 250, you can't do anything about it, it doesn't matter so much. The most beautiful thing is if the piece is working when it is sung the few years you are still alive yourself. And so that is nice of course. This talk I have with you opens up thinking, you know, about history and meaning and why we do it and is it some meaning to compose? Ja, I think it is. It is...the only meaning is to do new pieces, of course. Not old pieces. Many composers say, "Oh, I should've lived 200 years ago. I was a romantic." This is stupid talk, of course. You live today and you can't change that. If you don't realize that, you should do something else. You do what you should do today and what you feel you should do. I try to compare myself with the best composers like Bach. I use that. And everyone who listens to these pieces is comparing it, you know. But if the piece is working, no one sit and analyze it. It is just working. It is nice to listen to. And then, they remember Bach as a polarity in their thinking. It is very interesting to hear the same text with new music, and suddenly you reflect, and suddenly you go away, and suddenly you listen to that and you remember things. It opens your thinking, your reflection. You know, as soon as you listen to a piece you always compare

with other pieces you already know. That is the only thing you can do. Ja? But, in this comparison, you suddenly come to a point where you find the new piece you are listening to worth just listening to without comparisons. And then it's working. And that's not so easy, of course. That's the most interesting thing I take out from this situation. So that's why I am working with it. To find my position. It sounds very heavy talk, but in the histories, so to speak. Where am I today? It is a little point there somewhere, but anyhow it has connection with the back and perhaps I do think that could look forward a little sometimes. And then I notice I do things that Bach should never have been able to do, because it wasn't existing at that time. That's interesting. A cluster was totally impossible, of course. Here you can write a cluster and no one say anything about that today. But that's why it is interesting. Sometimes I think about what Bach should have said if he would come in and listen just now. That's very interesting, because if you are open mind guy, even if you lived over 300 years ago, you should be able to accept whatever. So we don't think Bach is good because he is a fabulous technician. He is good because it is something to listen to. And that's everything together. So that's a very big complexity. The more I am teaching, the less I think about technique, the more I talk with my students about what they are doing in an open way. "Why do you do it like that?" "What do you mean with that? This is some meaning to write like that." I don't say it like that, of course. But it's...the technique is another thing. The big problem of composers is to write interesting pieces in the listening situation. That is difficult. There are so many American students who have fabulous technique, you know. Ja, so it is. That is a good way of reflecting around composing and so on...Now I talk so much! Are you recording this?

JF: Yes.

SDS: That is good. Because it answers many questions if you listen to it again. But when I compose, I compose totally intuitive, more or less. I write the pieces from the beginning to the end, like a sort of yearning. I take the text and follow it to the end. Of course, I make sections in the piece, and so this should be a little homophonic and this should be a little contrapuntal. And perhaps I decide what pitches I should use, if I say some scales, or some possibilities, or...but I am very free. If I need some other pitch I can use it. It is sprawling out things, but the most structural piece, I think, is Singet dem Herrn, then, which is necessary to make these rolling possibilities. Have you heard all my pieces?

JF: All of the motets? No. They are not all recorded, I don't think.

SDS: No, I think it is just two.

JF: You said you really tried to follow the text in Bach's writing. Your text divisions are almost exact to his. Was that purposeful?

SDS: Ja, in a way. But that's what I said before. I think I read the text different than he did at this time. And that has to do not necessary that we are different type of persons. I think it has to do with the time, where we live, and the time where we live in comparison with God and the church and this feeling what it is. But I dare sometimes to make a question mark on some passages, you understand, in music, that no one hears that perhaps, but I do it. When it is very much glory, I take it away. So, for instance, in the end of Lobet... "Hallelujah," these very

simple things, I make it very simple. Not “HALLELUJAH”, like that, big. Like angels just singing on the distance like that, it is childish. I think very much in pictures when I write music. I can get inspiration from remembering when I sang the Bach motet, for instance. At church, who I stand beside and some things, can be inspiring for me instead of Bach’s music. It’s very different, you know. Inspiration is not so necessary what people think it is. It is not necessary, some notes you hear, it could be something totally different. Spiritual inspiration is interesting, because sometimes you are feeling full of inspiration and you can do things. Sometimes you don’t feel it, it doesn’t matter how much you play. So that’s a big difference, I should say. It is confusing. So the inspiration is a tricky thing. I don’t know what it is. I talk much about that with my students, too. It is really a secret thing, I mean, that’s the same as you sit with the same text as Bach, of course, that’s a sort of inspiration: to DARE to do the same piece as he did. Because the pieces are famous. And now talking about the Messiah, which was very difficult to do, of course, because of that. And St. Matthew Passion, too, I mean, because that’s very famous pieces. Messiah is probably one of the most famous of all pieces. It is really easy, I mean the choral parts are rather easy. Very spectacular. It is perfect written in a way, not so complex as Bach’s pieces, but it is very perfect, and it is smashing music. And that’s why it is difficult. That’s why I think it’s interesting. The challenging situation is an inspiration. Boring things is never inspiring. You know that, too! To try to teach your student a little too difficult piece is much more interesting. And you come to the other side, and “Ah, we can do it!” Lovely! Everyone is so happy! Ja? And they sing with full inspiration and other things. You can’t really stay and sing 11 Bach pieces at the same concert, because it’s boring. You must do different things to get inspiration. But of course, I don’t really remember when I wrote these pieces what I was thinking. But I know this: If I start a piece on Friday, it will be a different piece from if I started on Saturday. You understand? Because the start point is essential for the root of the piece. So if you write it a week later, I am sure it will be another piece. So everything is a mark from where you are and where you stand at the time when you do it. If Bach had been a cantor at another church, his music should have been different. That I am totally sure of. You are inspired of the surrounding and the positions and whatever you do. That’s why I missed my students so much when I went back to Sweden, because I didn’t like it really. I wasn’t so happy as I thought I should be. Free and easy, composing all the time, but there was something missing. I get very much inspiration from the students. Because the students, if you have a significant position as a composer, they are listening to you, to what you say. And you hear that they really want to hear what you are about to say. And that, of course, is very inspiring. So let’s see how long I will be here! Anyhow, today!

JF: You talked a little about counterpoint and imitation in Bach’s works, and you use these techniques in your own works. Did that grow out of this Bach Motet project?

SDS: You know, take this Lobet. I mean, Bach’s Lobet is not his best motet, I should say. It is rather boring C Major, what it is, I don’t remember it. So I did something totally different here, you know that. This is totally different and rather confusing as it begins. And it is not so easy as it looks. So I built it up in my own way here, and that’s very obvious I built it up like that. This is a sort of fugato, you can say, different chords between the choruses. It is jumping around. And then I tried to do a little impossible difficult thing. Because this is difficult, and...I do think it’s possible. Say this, for instance. This, of course, is coming from Bach’s piece. “Singet, singet.” I take that out and I make it sort of imitation of that in a totally different way. Just with

a new voice on it. So, three parts...So that is the way it is working. There's a sort of contrapuntic work, of course, but it is very different from his way of writing. I take some technical, I call it motivic thinking that I work out in my way. So that's a sort of inspiration for me from his. I like this "singet!" I like this word. It is very beautiful in Bach's piece. I work with that. So you remember very small details as you do as a composer, you know, that is your start point. It is nothing really. So this deeper inspiration perhaps is the same. I took it from his pieces, ja? And they have this "Sing, sing, sing, sing, sing". That I heard so that I used, the idea from the beginning. That I remember. And also "Fürchte dich"... "Fürchte, fürchte" – So I make it out in "Fffffff" and delay it like that. To make a little...a little funny thing I should say. Because I think, I hate this when it is too serious. Much music is so serious...boring serious. I think this childishness that is in good music – it is necessary to have. This is a sort of inspiration. This is a sort of creativity. All new kids are full of creativity, and they are born with the root of creativity. So that's an amazing thing to think about. That's why I talk that Bach went home and made children, but he did many children. That's what he did, the poor man! But at that time, he didn't have to take care of them, you know! He had a wife, or full of people, servants to help them. Today, it is impossible to have 50 children. She'll kill you! So, that you should compose a single piece more in your life, but he didn't. So that is a very big difference today, too...Wagner is impossible person today. Is not existing, these type of guys, that are allowed to sit and compose all the time. They have to take part in the life of the family, work, job and everything. So that's why the time and history change the possibility to compose and the pieces are shorter today than before. I think it is impossible to make an opera for 6 hours today. I mean, you can write it, but no one come and listen, I think, so that's, you know...People doesn't have time with that. But I have time with Wagner because he is so famous, and that's why it is working out like that.

But, I have smaller details in my pieces that I used, I should say. And I have also in Jesu, meine Freude this variations technique. It comes back, the chorale again, a little transposed, but I make some variations. So that I have. You can find substance or things from Bach's pieces, and then comes the deeper thing: that I know the pieces. I couldn't avoid things, and I didn't even think about when I wrote it. You heard them there and you used them perhaps, without knowing that. That's the only way you can do. You can't do things you don't know, so to speak. Even if you don't know it when you write it, you know it when you have written it, so you know it at once. But you can't write like that and know what to do. Because composing is rather tricky...it's a rather complex thing to do. When you hear music, it is normal very sweet and simple, like that, you know. But to write it is a big complexity, and to feel that you have it in your hand, everything. It is not so easy.

JF: You mentioned Bach's chorales. I believe in all the motets you maintain the chorale. Are the chorales important to you, something special?

SDS: Ja...I don't know. It worked out like that, and I think I wanted that. Because it is a good, should I call it...For the first, it is a chorale in the text, so it's difficult to do anything else about it. You can't broad it out like that. A chorale text has an idea about telling something. So short "Singet" is just "Singet", then that can work with the word. And also "Fürchte"...I work with the word and I repeat it hundreds of times, like Bach did, too. But when the chorale comes...It is the same as St. Matthew Passion, you know. The chorales are very famous, his settings of the

chorales. They are very famous settings. And everyone knows these pieces. They are fantastic settings of the chorale harmonically, in a totally new way. Before it was so much simpler, everything. This is rather complex compared with the time when it was written. I wanted to do new chorales. I did all new chorales in this St. Matthew Passion, which is terrific difficult because you already know them. When you see the text, I sing myself. So that's very different. I have to begin to sing it myself over and over again. So it's...but...ja. I think, you know, the reading of the text, I mean, it's not necessary the meaning of the text, but the structure reading of the text, which is interesting and worth thinking about.

JF: I notice in your chorales, as well as in your other writings, that you really like to use the major-minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord.

SDS: Ja, they're full of them.

JF: It's great, because sometimes you write in a way that is primarily tonal and then you write chords that are completely unexpected.

SDS: Ja! I can say, I have no...Longer passages are tonal in a way in my pieces. But I don't really think like that. I just write and listen and write again and go the way I want, you know. Sometimes they go the totally wrong direction. So, that's why I don't want to call it totally tonal, of course, because it's not really. But it has a touch of that, of course. The sounds that come are totally new, so that's for sure. I'm not so afraid of that. It worked out like that with this choral writing. I sit at the table and go to the piano and check everything hundreds of time. I change small details in different parts and so on, so it should be rather good to sing the line, for instance. It's a sort of a passbook in a way. Some composers are very bad with that. Some are very good. Man doesn't write very beautiful voicings for everyone who is singing. Beethoven is terrible. There is no lines at all, there is 3 pitches, so that is rather boring to sing. But that is a different thinking. He is structuring his music in a different way, so he's not a melodic writer in that way. Bach, he writes the same for the voices and for the instruments almost. He is also doubling all the time, very often. In the chorales, he is doubling with the orchestra, you know. For some reason, I don't understand. I don't do that. I have my chorales in St. Matthew Passion a cappella, which opens up a new sounds, I think it is very good. And of course, you are much more emotional today as a composer. You allow yourself to do very different level of emotional thinking in your pieces that Bach wasn't allowed to do. It was a style, you know, at that time. Not too much of that, not too soft, not too strong...a middle way. Which was, of course, very difficult. But they didn't know anything else. It didn't matter.

JF: Portions of the Bach motets are re-workings of other musical material. Did you use that technique of borrowing from yourself in the motets, or were they all newly composed works?

SDS: The motets is totally new, everything. I used things from the motets in later pieces. So in "Singet dem Herrn"... this is in "His yoke is easy" from Messiah. So that I used with orchestra. I added an orchestra to it. I used it to the end here. Here is a typical ending, too. Instead of "HALLELUJAH", almost whispering "Hallelujah..." They go out, they go out on their own to leave the place. This is also pictures I have. I have it in the beginning, "Singet...", they come into the stage, and they went out in the end. This is the sort of theatrical thinking, which is a



picture-like feeling I have when I often see the singers when I write the piece and hear them. That has to do with I sang so much myself. I sang 25 years in the choir. So I sang all existing pieces, I should say. Also new pieces, so...And I wrote my first pieces for them, too. For instance, the piece you did, "A New Heaven" and "Agnus Dei".

JF: Often times you'll use a technique where you will start with one voice or a really small piece of material that expands and continues to open up (i.e., expansion and contraction technique).

SDS: Ja. It's a normal way...You know, with the years you get some tools to work with, and you can't do so much about it. It comes back, that is your way of writing. And that is why my music sounds as it does and Bach's music sounds as it does. So it is, and sometimes I added new things to it, but mostly when you write you just do it because you know how to do it. All pieces are a little different, but people who have heard my pieces are rather sure it is me who has written that. For some reason. I don't know why, but it is the same with Bach or Schoenberg or Stravinsky – you hear very fast who has written it. And that is a fabulous thing, of course, I like that. I want that mark on me that, "It sounds like him". That's nice, so I am rather proud of that. It doesn't matter at all. And when you come to age, you can't really change your style so much. It is too late, so to speak. But the thing is for young composers, that they really should try to find a specific own way of writing early. Work hard with that. And they do it too little, in my opinion. They should be more careful to find a new way of writing than they do. They just try to do a good piece, and good pieces are always a piece already written more or less. You must jump out in the spot where you are don't know how it's working. And that's difficult, of course. Dangerous, too. Choral music is especially dangerous, because difficult pieces are not possible to do. That is a big difference from orchestras and instrumental music. And if you don't realize that, you can't write a choral piece because it sounds like hell. It sounds very bad. And I hear it, too. They do new pieces of students here and they sound so bad, because they rehearse twice, you know, for recital. They just sing totally wrong pitches and they are very happy, because they can't learn it. It takes time to learn a choral piece. You can't rehearse twice with a put-together choir. It sounds bad. So I really try to force them to hear that it sounds bad. But they don't really realize that. A choral piece doesn't sound good if it's not in tune, for instance, and it sounds nothing just like we are talking right now. The exact or the perfection, I should call it, in finding right pitches with the right mouth, all the vowels, it is not easy. If you don't sing the same in the choir, you feel like it's not in tune, really. So the qualities is very difficult to reach in the choir. It takes years to find that real good sound. So, that's why it's uh...I think it's...The interesting...When I listen to choral music, it's the choral sound, I mean. It's very beautiful with voices, ja? And they are shining, perfect, and so. That's really beautiful. I get very happy when I hear it, but perhaps not everyone do that. I don't know. People are listening to music in so different ways, you know? You think you know how it should be, but you are not sure, because I have no idea how you reach music, so to speak...You, or anyone else. I know how I feel about different music, what is good and what is interesting. But I don't know what other people think. So sometimes you write a piece and they don't understand what you think is good, perhaps. That you have to take, it's always like that. So I should talk more about that, because it's philosophic, perhaps. But the thing with these Bach motets that I notice now, it is this comparison. In Germany, they often do two of each, Bach and my piece, at the same concert. And that's fabulous, of course, because then you come to a very special part for the listener, too.

They have found it very interesting, because you get two angles with the same possibility. And it opens up, it's a key to the music, if it's a new piece. It's a key to the music that they have seen it before or heard it before. It's a good start point for listening, because for some people it could be difficult to hear a new piece for the first time. But even if this is very difficult or confusing for some people, they have a relation to it, and they compare it and set it on a spot where they understand it. So I found it a very good key for not so experienced listeners, perhaps. I never thought about that before, but I noticed that. And some people, when they come to my piece, they found my piece more interesting than Bach. Perhaps they have heard it already. So that's why this sound is very interesting, because it is a new thing, and they think they understand it anyhow, because they hear it in the comparison and find new ways of listening. So that's, I think, is one of the most interesting things with this. But now, I think, this work is over for me. This using old texts like that, I think so.

JF: You think it's over? After the Passion? Why is that?

SDS: I think I've done enough. It's mostly that. I don't think it's boring. But I think I have to find something new. There is a work in process now to make a big opera about the Bible. It's strange, but so it is.

JF: How much of the Bible?

SDS: The whole. The Swedish author has written a book called, "The Book". It's a new translation of the Bible. It's a thick book. But anyhow, it's the Bible from beginning to the end. And you know, we have to pick things out, of course. But you can follow the whole Bible. And we are working together now to find a way to get the opera. But I don't think we can make two because no houses can take that, so that's impossible. A big opera, about 4 hours long. That should be enough, I think. So that's a continuation, of course, of these sacred texts. The Bible is good in that way, it's full of pictures, you know, full of... You can take it out. You can follow it true, rather fast. You go through these favorite stories that is in the Bible, the creation and all. So I made a Creation, too, I made a ballad creation. Three years ago. It is a one-hour long piece. It's a big piece.

JF: So you haven't started composing this "Bible"?

SDS: No, no, no...

JF: What are you working on currently? Do you have any big projects?

SDS: This is the project I am working with in my head. I had to write some orchestra pieces. I had a piano concerto and flute concerto. So I just finished a little short opera. One hour long.

JF: In Swedish?

SDS: Ja, it's in Swedish. And I also just finished this very big piece. It's called "Nordic Mass". It's a choral piece, one hour long and 10 minutes.

JF: Why Nordic? Is it the language?

SDS: Ja, they wanted to call it that, the commissioner. It's commissioned by the Danish choir. It's built on this Swedish poet who got the Nobel Prize two years ago. Thomas Transtromer? It's 20 of his poems like that. So we put them together in a Mass situation. It has nothing to do with Masses.

JF: But mass text and then poetry? So like Benjamin Britten?

SDS: Ja, in a way. So it was some people who helped me with that. So it has a solo cello with it. You can rest some minutes sometimes, ja? Because it is very demanding to sing one hour and 10 minutes choral music, and it is rather difficult.

JF: Has it been performed?

SDS: No, it should be performed now in May. In Norway, in Denmark, and Sweden. To go around with it. So that's good. No, this is in Danish, even. But then I use older pieces, too, you know. This is already published pieces that I put here in the mass, because I can't do new settings of these texts. But they are rather difficult. This is not easy at all.

JF: So is this the Transtromer poetry?

SDS: Ja. It's all the time his poetry. And everything is in Swedish, which....It's rather broad music, too.

JF: So does it use the Kyrie text at all?

SDS: No. They have one...it comes on one point, for some reason. It just happened to be like that. "Christe eleison", it comes there.

JF: I've noticed in your writing of the motets that there is a lot of 8-part writing, but in your other works you most often write for a 6-part choir.

SDS: Ja.

JF: Did you grow up singing 6-part, or did you just like that sonority?

SDS: No, not at all. I just do it because I liked it. It sounded good. I started this in my High Mass. I did this piece, which is...It's a little reason why I do it, because I couple, double the octaves. Three voices, and if it's rhythmic, you can't hear more than 3 rhythmic sections, otherwise you are lost. So that's why I do it like that. It's simplicity, which is very complex. Have you heard the High Mass?

JF: Only a couple of movements.

SDS: Because that's very tricky rhythmic things in that. I started with that, and I use it all the time now. I should say that. I use it all the time. I found it good. It's like that, you know, if you have 5 voices you have one in the middle. So you have to separate them different. If you have 4, you have 4, so then you can't double it, really. You can't very quick the chorale writing thing, when they are moving on themselves all the time, like that. And 8, I mostly used when it was very thick. I very often have 12 parts of course, in these pieces, because I divide them. But that's easy in choral music. You just write 2 pitches and they sing, they divide themselves, so to speak. That's easy. It is much more difficult in strings, and so you have to write it out and things. But I do it because when I sit to play I feel a pitch is missing somewhere, so I have to put it in, double it. That is a way I am arranging or orchestrating, you can say. I have a very full sound in the basses, you know, it is heavy basses. Rather deep. And deep female voices, too...Very deep female voices, I should say that. It's down to C in some things. But there's always enough with one to sing it. In this I have a Bb, in this piece. It's always someone can sing it. I am totally sure. If they sink down a whole step, then it's difficult! And they do sometimes, you know that!

JF: Oh, I do know that!

SDS: They almost do it all the time! You must almost be a professional singer not to do it, because opera chorus never sing down. But it sounds not necessary so nice from them all the time! Sing the pitch, so to speak, a very broad pitch, but it is a pitch.

JF: So should we go get you some lunch? I know you have a very long afternoon.

SDS: Ja, we must have a little lunch.

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