

EUROPEAN BACH INTERPRETATION AT THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM

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INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Project

Following the completion of my research project on German Bach interpretation, for which I conducted interviews with twenty-four German performers and scholars during Summer 1997,¹ more new questions faced me than I had originally set out to explore. Thus I continued my research by traveling to Europe to interview Bach specialists there. The opportunity to expand my research on Bach interpretation to other European countries—namely Belgium, Britain, France, and the Netherlands—was supported by a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.² The Watson Foundation stresses, however, that the year is to consist not only of research on a particular topic, but also to be, above all, a *Wanderjahr*—an opportunity for recipients to immerse themselves in foreign cultures and to explore the world in conjunction with a certain theme.³ Indeed, Bach was my primary, but not my sole

¹Documented in my article, “Currents in Bach Interpretation in Contemporary Germany,” *BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute*, 30/2 (1999): 1–26.

²Based in Providence, Rhode Island, the Thomas J. Watson Foundation grants annually sixty fellowships to new graduates of liberal arts colleges throughout the United States. The fellowship provides recipients with full funding for one calendar year abroad, during which the recipient pursues an independent project of his or her choice.

³The projects of the other fifty-nine recipients of my year included, for example, “The Role of the Press in the Middle East,” “Notions of Fate and the Future in the Chinese Almanac,” and “The Sociocultural Impact of the Endemic Guinea Worm.”