

Abstract of the DLA Thesis

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**The musical settings of the Magnificat by Samuel
Scheidt for voices and keyboard**

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1. Preliminaries

A lot of researchers point out in connection with Samuel Scheidt that the musical settings of the Magnificat are very significant in the composer's oeuvre. The musical settings of the Magnificat can be found in Scheidt's important collections of concertos in the *Concertus sacri* and the 3rd and 4th volume of *Geistliche Konzerte* and *Tabulatura nova* written for the organ and the keyboard.¹ The techniques of composition in these musical settings are typical. Mahrenholz emphasizes that in the vocal and keyboard compositions mostly this type of choral variation is dominating in this field of music.² Gessner points out that more than half of the Magnificat-verses in the volumes of *Geistliche Konzerte* were built on intact cantus firmus.³

Firstly I wanted to deal with the concertos of Scheidt. While I was studying the volumes of *Geistliche Konzerte* I found the Magnificats cum laudibus created with the help of the German and the Latin verses. I was wondering what can

¹ KREYSZIG 2006, 104. p.

² MAHRENHOLZ 1924, 93. p.

³ GESSNER 1961, 70. p.

the connection be between the works of Scheidt and the first variation of Bach's *Magnificat* where we can also find tropes. The tradition of linking the works of the two composers suggests that both of them can be connected to an ancient custom. Gessner did not go thoroughly into the musical settings of the Magnificat deeply. Kreyszig searches them only in connection with the inherited and fashionable compositional techniques.

The researchers write less about the volume of *Concertus sacri* than *Geistliche Konzerte* and *Tabulatura nova*. The influence of the Italian style for Scheidt is considered to be evident but has not been described in details yet.⁴

I was studying not only the church services, music in Halle and the vesper but also the other parts of the church services, the people performing them and the tradition. By dealing with the Magnificats of *Concertus sacri* I emphasize how Scheidt can be connected to the Italian style and how uniquely he used to compose his music. Finally I want to demonstrate the tradition in connection with the tropical Magnificats.

⁴ MAHRENHOLZ 1924; SERAUKY 1939; GRÜB 1989.

2. Sources

The primary source I relied on was Collected Works of Samuel Scheidt.⁵ I found the volumes of this in the library of The Liszt Academy of Music and in the music section of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna.

To find more information about the Magnificat-compositions I was also studying the Collected Works of Giovanni Gabrieli, Michael Praetorius, Johann Hermann Schein, Heinrich Schütz because they played an important role in creating and establishing the „stile concertato”.

To get to know the German protestant church service in the 16th-17th century I relied on Blume's and Herl's books.⁶ In connection with the church service in Halle I used Mahrenholz's book about Scheidt and the first two volumes of Serauky's book.⁷ Not only Mahrenholz's and Searuky's books, but also Gessner's dissertation⁸ and Kongress-Bericht's work were the sources of information to get to

⁵ *Samuel Scheidts Werke*. Hrsg. und bearb. von Gottlieb Harms und Christhard Mahrenholz und andere. 16 Bde. Bde. 1-13., Hamburg, 1923-1965.; Bde. 14-16. Leipzig, 1971-1981.

⁶ BLUME 1965 and HERL 2004.

⁷ MAHRENHOLZ 1924, SERAUKY 1935 and 1939.

⁸ GESSNER 1961.

know the style of Scheidt. In order to study the tradition of Magnificat cum laudibus I was reading the articles of *Musik und Kirche*.

3. Methods of Analysis

Introducing the church services in Halle I emphasize both the general German and the unique features.

I was studying the techniques of composition, the structure of them, and the variety within the composition-types. In connection with these I also show some of the musical motifs which illustrate the text.

In case of the Magnificat cum laudibus the language of the texts is the original, if there is no Hungarian translation in the protestant hymn books used in Hungary. Writing the entire texts of the tropes my aim was to demonstrate how they become explanations of the canticles connected to holidays.

4. Results

In Halle the priests used the church service by Justus Jonas, a colleague of Luther. In the church order of the town the theories of Luther were dominating. So they insisted on singing Latin liturgical songs until the end of the 17th century. In other towns of Germany these disappeared earlier.

They created the order of the songs very carefully. Polyphonic music fitted into this. Polyphonic music played an important part in alternatim practice and performing „Musik”.

They established the structure of the church music work in details. The music of the three main churches was provided by the Kurrenda choirs of the local Latin school and the Kantorey. The Kurrenda choirs used to sing choraliter. The Kantorey used to sing figural. It consisted of the more talented students. While performing figural music the local musicians called Stadtpfeifers joined them. They rehearsed for the church services by „exercitium musicum”. Every 3rd Sunday they played figural music in the same church. When the Kurrenda choir sang choraliter the organist played figural.

Scheidt was the Hofkapellmeister and the Director der Music. He had the opportunity to conduct his concerto music by the help of well-trained musicians and singers. Like in Venice the important church holidays were made more spectacular by performing these many-voiced Magnificat-compositions of the *Concertus sacri*.

The Magnificats cum laudibus of the *Geistliche Konzerte* are connected to the three main church holidays. Singing the Latin and German Christmas carols among the Magnificat-verses was because of a custom called Kindelwiegen. This medieval custom lasted until the 18th century in the protestant church. Opposing his contemporaries Scheidt composed Magnificats cum laudibus about Easter and Pentecost. He was unique in this field.

Scheidt connected the stile concertato to the technique of cantus firmus. He was very consequent in this. The foregoer of this can be found in Monteverdi's *Vespro della beata Vergine*. The German contemporaries didn't do this. The compositional techniques varied from verse to verse or within a verse emphasize that one text is together with different music.

In the 3rd volume of *Tabulatura nova* Scheidt composed all tones used for singing Latin Magnificat including tonus peregrinus. This is the longest collection of liturgical organ works during that time. The theory of coral variation and the using of cantus firmus are stronger in this volume than in the concertos.