

An Overview of Dietrich Buxtehude's *Abendmusiken*: A Benchmark Event in Corporate Funding for the Arts

I. Introduction

- A. Annual concert series in Lübeck
 - 1. St. Mary's Church
 - 2. Presented during the last two Sundays of Trinity and the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of Advent
 - 3. Began on Thursdays, but then moved to Sundays
 - 4. Funded by businesses in the community
- B. Historical importance
 - 1. Creation of new musical genre
 - i. Opera in the church more prevalent
 - ii. Five-part oratorio form
 - a. Each part to be performed at a separate concert
 - iii. Style did not spread far outside of Lübeck area
 - a. Question of whether Bach's split performances of his *Christmas Oratorio* was inspired by *Abendmusiken*
 - 1. Bach visited Buxtehude 30 years earlier
 - 2. Concerts that were accessible to the general public
 - 3. Connection between the arts and business

II. History

- A. Definite source of origin not clear
 - 1. Earliest accounts come from Caspar Ruetz
 - i. Cantor at St. Mary's
 - a. Church concert tradition established before Buxtehude arrived
 - 2. Stories hard to solidify and there is little evidence
 - i. No official orders from the church for these performances
 - ii. No specific church celebrations or feast days
 - 3. Was the only event of its kind in Northern Germany during the 17th century
- B. Dietrich Buxtehude
 - 1. Director of all of the music at St. Mary's
 - i. Organized production
 - ii. Composed music
 - iii. Raised necessary funds
 - iv. Chose personnel
 - v. Conducted performances
 - 2. Familiarity with church concerts
 - i. Johann Lorentz's concerts at St. Nicholas Church in Copenhagen
- C. Began on Thursday evenings
 - 1. Only official account was from 90-year-old man
 - 2. Tradition of businessmen going to St. Mary's before going to the stock market
 - i. Organist would play to entertain the men while they waited
- D. Businessmen enjoyed what they heard and gave the organist gifts as a thank you
- E. Moved to Sundays
 - 1. Thursdays were very loud and noisy
 - i. Everyone was invited, so there were children running around
 - a. People talking and running behind the choir
 - b. Businessmen still talking about trading
 - ii. Police employed
 - a. 1682

- b. Due to early darkness and large crowds
 - 1. Also used during Christmas services
 - 2. “The atrocious noise of the mischievous young people and the unruly running and romping about...” (Ruetz in Snyder, 64)
 - 2. Church would be warmer on Sunday because of the morning services
 - 3. No criticism from clergy at St. Mary’s about performing theatrical works outside of the liturgy
 - i. Acceptance of opera style in the church during this time
- F. Balconies added
 - 1. Buxtehude had two new balconies added to the nave when he arrived
 - i. Near the large organ
 - ii. Procured donors to help
 - 2. Total of six balconies
 - i. Space for 40 singers and instrumentalists
 - 3. Rarely used for liturgical purposes
 - i. Designed for church concerts
- G. Abolished in 1810
 - 1. Due to French occupation

III. Funding

- A. Businessmen and businesses would give money as a thank-you for the free concerts
 - 1. Patronage at a new level
 - i. Support rather than ownership
 - a. Not just the royalty could influence the music that was being performed
 - b. Multiple people could contribute
 - 1. Larger group of supporters/fans
 - i. More feeling of community accomplishment
- B. Buxtehude was encouraged to employ more musicians as there was more funding
 - 1. Violins
 - 2. Singers
 - i. Grew to a much larger production
 - ii. Had concerns with quality of musicians from the church school
 - a. Employed singers from the Hamburg Opera
 - 1. Documents about employing Mr. Kuntze
 - 2. Brought in Italian opera divas
 - i. Two weeks of rehearsals, then performances
 - 3. By 1675, five *Abendmusiken* concerts were part of budget; became part of musicians’ contracts for the church year
- C. Matthaues Rodde
 - 1. Director at St. Mary’s
 - 2. Considered innovative businessman in Lübeck
 - i. Wine trader
 - ii. Whale products
 - 3. Opened doors for music publishing with Sweden
 - i. Major trader of wine and other goods
 - ii. Brought scores from Buxtehude to be published in Sweden
 - a. Some anonymous scores have been traced back to Buxtehude and Lübeck due to this relationship
- D. Peter Hinrich Tesdorpf
 - 1. Wine importer/businessman
 - i. Business guild member
 - a. Used business and commerce groups to speak out for support of “Advent Music

at St. Mary's" (Snyder, 69)

E. Issues of continuation of funding

1. Audiences wanted more music
 - i. Larger productions
 - ii. More performers
2. Funding from businesses decreased
 - i. "Poorly recompensed by citizenry" (Snyder, 61)
 - a. Buxtehude became increasingly frustrated
3. St. Mary's Church began to supplement financial needs

F. Establishment of patron base

1. Wrote to businesses to thank them for their contribution and encouraged them to continue their support
 - i. Sought funding from both businesses and individuals
 - ii. Buxtehude believed that these concerts were not part of his job description
 - a. A service to his patrons in the business community
 1. When funding started to decline, Buxtehude stated that it was the business community who had requested these concerts, so they should continue to fund it
 2. Complained that the love of music of substance in Lübeck was gone
 - b. Customary amount of donation
 1. 60 Lübeck marks
 - i. 1699 donations were half of full amount collected the year before
 - ii. 1700 donations were nothing
2. Sent librettos to patrons
3. Prime seating reserved for patrons
 - i. Opposite loft to performers
4. Invitation to dress rehearsals
5. Privileged access to performers
 - i. Patrons hosted performers
 - a. Able to learn about the musician's life
 - b. Helpful with budget
 1. No payment for room and board
 - i. Annas Bay Music Festival
6. Inspiration for modern corporate funding
 - i. Underwriting of opera broadcasts
 - a. Television
 - b. Radio
 1. Shell Oil
 - ii. Free concerts in the park
 - a. Major cities
 1. Boston Pops
 2. New York Philharmonic
 - iii. Focus is on bringing music to everyone
 - a. Corporations contribute to allow concerts to be free of charge
 - b. Repertoire is more approachable to general audiences
 - iv. Special events and gifts for donors
 - a. Free CD
 - b. Dinner with the conductor or composer
 - c. Matching gifts funding drives from employers

2. Three violas
3. Three viola da gambas
4. Two trumpets
5. Trombones

C. Collection of librettos

1. From performances between 1678-1687
 - i. Contained nine works from 10 seasons
 - a. Evidence of only one repeat performance
 1. Gives insight as to amount of music and expectations of new music put upon Buxtehude

D. Documented repertoire from 1681

1. Assumed five-part
2. 18th-century style

E. *Abendmusiken* 1683

1. More complete work
 - i. Employment of more musicians
 - a. Imported tenor and bass from Kiel

F. *Abendmusiken* 1684

1. Two dramatic works in five parts
 - i. *Himmliche Seelenlust auf Erden*
 - a. “Heavenly Joy of Spirit on Earth”
 1. Five separate acts
 2. Opera-like style
 - i. Many arias and ritornelli
 3. Six concerted voices
 4. Various instruments
 5. Unaccompanied voices
 - ii. *Das allerschröcklichste und allererfreulichste*
 - a. “The Most Frightful and Most Joyful”
 1. Dialogue style
 2. Five scenes
 3. Five concerted voices
 - iii. Never printed
 - a. No proof of true existence
 - b. Used as part of a promotion for the Swedish printing company

G. *Abendmusiken* 1698

1. Buxtehude wrote a major work this year
 - i. Just titled “*Abendmusiken*”

H. *Abendmusiken* 1700

1. Became a mixed program of vocal music
 - i. Departed from dramatic, opera-style genre
 - ii. No funding from businesses that year
2. First four concerts
 - i. Three vocal works
 - a. Various settings
 1. Chorales
 2. Psalms
 3. Poetry
 - b. Combination of sacred and secular
3. Fifth concert
 - i. *Hundred-year poem for the Welfare of the Imperial Free City of Lübeck*

a. Repeat performance

b. Score lost

I. *Abendmusiken* 1705

1. Performances on Wednesday and Thursday instead of Sunday

2. *Castum doloris*

i. "Castle of Sorrow"

a. Commemorated the death of the Holy Roman emperor Leopold I

3. *Templum honoris*

i. "Temple of Honor"

a. Celebrated the accession of his successor, Joseph I

4. Librettos survive

5. Costumed performances

i. Basic scenic designs added to performance

J. *Wacht! Euch zun Streit*

1. Anonymous oratorio

2. Three acts

3. Untitled

i. Doubtful of authenticity to Buxtehude

a. Meets general criteria of being part of *Abendmusiken*

1. Copied in Stockholm

4. Short prologue

i. Emphasis on new strophic poetry of that time period

5. Instrumentation

i. Five or six vocal soloists

ii. Two violins

iii. Two violas

iv. Continuo

v. Optional trombones

6. Characters are allegorical

i. Representation of things through stories and characters

K. Works remaining

1. Three librettos

2. Titles of two dramatic works

i. Announced as promotion for Swedish publishing/copying company

3. 13 shorter works performed in 1700

4. Subject of one dramatic work from 1688

5. Validation of more than 100 vocal works remaining

i. None of them match all of the *Abendmusiken* criteria

a. Text

b. Title

c. Theme

d. Correct length to be a major work in the concert

Works Consulted

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