

Completions and Reconstructions of Musical Works
Part 1: Introduction - Renaissance Church Music and the Baroque Period
by Stephen Barber

Introduction

Over the years a number of musical works have been left incomplete by their composers or have been partly or wholly lost and have been reconstructed. I have a particular interest in such works and now offer a preliminary survey of them.

A musical work in the Western classical tradition is the realization of a written score. Improvisation usually plays a very small part, and is replaced by interpretation, which means that a score may be realized in subtly different ways. The idiom in most periods involves a certain symmetry in design and the repetition, sometimes varied, sometimes not, of key parts of the work. If the score is unfinished, then a completion or reconstruction by a good scholar or composer allows us to hear at least an approximation to what the composer intended. The use of repetition as part of the overall design can make this possible, or the existence of sketches or earlier or later versions of the work, or a good understanding of the design and idiom. Without this the work may be an incomplete torso or may be unperformable. The work is not damaged by this process, since, unlike a picture, a sculpture or a building, it exists not as a unique physical object but as a score, which can be reproduced without detriment to the original and edited and performed without affecting the original version. Completions and reconstructions may be well or badly done, but they should be judged on how well they appear to complete what appears to be the original design by the composer. It is therefore highly desirable that completions and reconstructions be published, with clear indications of what has been added. This has been done, for example, by Nick Sandon in his work on the Peterhouse partbooks, by Martino Tirimo in his edition of Schubert piano sonatas, and by Deryck Cooke in his edition of Mahler's tenth symphony. If you don't like the idea or the individual realisation, you don't have to listen to it.

Completions are of works which the composer did not finish, for example by not continuing the composition beyond a certain point or by not turning a short score or piano score into an orchestral one. Of course, some works may have been abandoned because the ideas did not seem promising or because a commission fell through, but many worthwhile works have been left incomplete. The work required may vary from editorial tidying up to providing orchestration, filling out sketches or even supplying lost or uncomposed parts of the work. Mozart's *Requiem* calls for all these operations at different points of the score. A number of operas have recitatives supplied by different composers, for example Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* has recitatives by his pupil Franz Xaver Süssmayr: I shall not be considering such cases. If one or more parts of the score were originally extant but are lost, then the task is one of *reconstruction*, as in some Renaissance church music. These operations need to be distinguished from other possible rehandlings of works which I briefly consider.

Composers sometimes *revise* their works. They then usually prefer the revised version to be played and the original version discarded. However, performers and the public sometimes disagree, so, for example, the original version of Prokofiev's fourth symphony is usually preferred to his revision. Sometimes both versions continue in circulation side by side, such as the two versions of Hindemith's song cycle *Das Marienleben*. Sometimes performers make cuts, for various reasons, and these may be observed or opened out. This is particularly common in operas. (I tend to prefer the fullest possible musical version, even at the expense of dramatic cogency or economy.) Even if suppressed, early

versions can sometimes be recovered or reconstructed, the most spectacular example being Beethoven's *Fidelio* – see below.

A *conflation* is a version of a work formed by combining or drawing from more than one version left by the composer. This often happens with operas. An example is the normal stage version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which combines most of both the Prague and the Vienna versions. A more complicated one is Gluck's *Orfeo*, for which Berlioz pioneered combining the Vienna and Paris versions, involving some transpositions and rearrangement. Modern performances may be of either original version or a conflation of the two; I discuss this in more detail below. Some people frown on conflations, because they do not correspond to a single score left by the composer; the counter argument is that they aim to achieve an ideal version which combines the best of what the composer left. Disapproval of conflations is a recent attitude, dating back about fifty years; before then it was normal, and not only in music: the standard text of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, for example, is a conflation of two texts of different dates. My own view is that there is nothing wrong in principle with conflations, and the only question is how well they are done. I like the idea of ideal versions.

A *transcription* is an arrangement of a work for forces other than those in the original score. An example is Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an exhibition*, written for piano but orchestrated by Ravel or by someone else – there are several orchestral versions of this work. Composers themselves sometimes transcribe their own works for different forces: Haydn made three versions of his *Seven Last Words*. Stravinsky made a version of *The Rite of Spring* for piano duet for use in rehearsal but it has become a concert work in its own right. A transcription is of an extant original; if the original is not extant, the task becomes one of reconstruction, as we shall shortly see in the case of Bach. Earlier composers such as François Couperin often left the choice of instruments to the performers, so this then becomes an aspect of interpretation.

A *pastiche* is a work in the style of another composer, such as some of the encore pieces Fritz Kreisler wrote and pretended had been written by various minor earlier composers. Prokofiev's *Classical symphony* is supposed to be in the style of Haydn, and it does have some Haydnesque characteristics, but more Prokofievan ones. A *pasticcio* – the English equivalent is *parody*, but in this sense there is no suggestion of mockery – is a work formed by taking various different existing compositions and putting them together into a new work. Examples include Mozart's first four piano concertos, which are closely based on works by other composers to which he added orchestral parts. More recent works of this kind tend to take existing themes and rework them, such as Respighi's *Boutique Fantastique*, which uses pieces by Rossini, or Hindemith's clumsily but accurately titled *Symphonic Metamorphoses on themes by Carl Maria von Weber*. Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* purports to be a pasticcio of Pergolesi, but is far too characteristically Stravinskian to be seen as anything other than an original work – and it seems that most of the material he used was not by Pergolesi anyway.

Sometimes there is a *rediscovery* of a work which had been thought lost, such as recently of Stravinsky's *Chante funèbre* (Funeral Song) for his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov – see below. Or the work might have been forgotten or not known to exist, such as Schumann's violin concerto, which was suppressed by his widow and Brahms but surfaced in the 1930s. Minor and forgotten works by many composers occasionally turn up.

Sometimes composers add *additional parts* to works which are already complete. Haydn could not use wind instruments in his *Nelson Mass* (Missa in angustiis) because his employer had just sacked the

players, but his colleague Johann Fuchs later provided parts for them. Mozart added wind parts and made other changes to Handel's *Messiah*. Grieg added accompaniments for a second piano to four of Mozart's piano sonatas. Schumann added piano parts to Paganini's solo violin *Caprices*. There are probably many more such versions, but I shall not be exploring them here.

Religious music can be performed as it stands, or it can be set in its known or plausible context in the liturgy in the form of a *liturgical reconstruction*. For example, the fixed parts of the Mass (the Ordinary) can be surrounded by the parts specific to a particular occasion (the Proper) and sometimes also by the relevant readings and prayers. It is then not the music which is reconstructed but the context. There have been a number of recordings featuring such liturgical reconstructions, and I touch on them briefly. However, some religious works, such as the *Mass in B minor* of Bach and the *Missa Solemnis* of Beethoven, are impractical for liturgical use, while others, such as the *Requiems* of Berlioz and Verdi, are intended only for concert performance.

Some composers write incidental music for plays and films. They may then make concert suites out of some of this material, or it can be played and recorded as it stands. Such works as Mozart's incidental music to *Thamos*, Beethoven's to *Egmont*, Schubert's to *Rosamunde*, Schumann's to *Manfred* and Mendelssohn's to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are well established in their own right. However, the work of making concert suites is sometimes done by other hands, and on occasions enthusiasts want the complete original score rather than a briefer suite. I give some examples below. Film music presents special challenges. The original performance materials may have been lost (MGM destroyed a huge quantity of them) and they sometimes have to be reconstructed from the film soundtracks or test pressings. This is a specialized field about which I know little. I shall therefore necessarily be very selective in discussing film scores. For an old but still useful survey see [here](#).

However, these terms are not sharply distinct and I shall in any case occasionally cross the boundaries, particularly in dealing with revisions, orchestrations and transcriptions. The textual history of some of these completions and reconstructions can also be very complex. I have endeavoured to provide succinct and accurate accounts but sometimes I have had to simplify and sometimes I have given links to longer discussions.

An issue I have deliberately omitted is the controversy which has surrounded some completions. Mahler's widow opposed Deryck Cooke's performing version of his tenth symphony but changed her mind when she heard a recording of it. The Elgar estate realized that some of the sketches for his third symphony had been published and would enter the public domain, so they commissioned Anthony Payne to undertake a realization of the work to forestall others.

Some completions and reconstructions have been recorded only once, while others have many recordings. Where there are many, I mention only one or two. I give record companies and also catalogue numbers when these seem needed. These are not a guarantee that the recording is currently available. It may have been deleted, reissued with a different number or by a different company, incorporated into a box set or made available only as a download or as a special pressing from ArkivMusic or Presto. EMI was taken over by Warner, which has reissued many of their recordings. Similarly, Philips has been incorporated into Universal, and many of their recordings have been reissued on Decca or DG. If I mention two different recording companies this means two different recordings; for example, Heinz Holliger has made two different recordings of reconstructed Bach oboe concertos. An internet search will usually turn up most recordings and often reviews of

them too. I try to avoid considering completions or reconstructions which have not been recorded on CD but sometimes it seems necessary.

Renaissance Church Music

In the Renaissance, choral music was usually copied out into partbooks, one for each voice, rather than in the form of scores such as choral singers use now. A complete set of partbooks is needed to perform the work. In England, because of the upheaval of the Reformation, during which a good deal of Latin-texted church music was destroyed or mutilated, some of the surviving sets are incomplete.

The Baldwin partbooks were copied and originally owned by John Baldwin (1560-1615). He was a singer at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and then at the Chapel Royal. They are now in Christ Church College, Oxford. They lack the tenor partbook. Some of the pieces in the set can be found elsewhere, but around sixty are unique to this set. The composers represented include major figures such as John Taverner, Robert White, Thomas Tallis, Robert Fayrfax and John Sheppard. Various scholars have been working on restoring the missing line. David Wulstan's reconstruction of John Sheppard's *Media vita* has been recorded by the Westminster Cathedral Choir under Martin Baker (Hyperion) and by Stile antico (Harmonia Mundi). The Marian Consort under Rory McCleery have recorded a collection titled *Loquebantur* (Delphian). Contrapunctus under Owen Rees is working systematically through the collection, and two discs have so far been issued: *In the midst of life* and *Virgin and child* (Signum).

The Peterhouse books date from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, for a time kept in Peterhouse College, Cambridge, and now in the Cambridge University Library. There is both a Henrician collection, which dates from 1539-41, so after the English Reformation, and a larger Caroline collection, which dates to between 1625 and 1640. The Henrician collection was originally in five parts but now lacks the tenor and part of the triplex books. The Caroline collection was originally in nineteen books but now lacks four of them. They contain music by Robert Fayrfax, Nicholas Ludford, John Taverner, Christopher Tye and Thomas Tallis and also by numerous lesser composers, some represented by just one work. The scholar Nick Sandon has been working on restoring them for years and has published his work (see [here](#)). Using this, Blue Heron under Scott Metcalfe have issued five discs of music from this collection on their own label, under the title *The lost music of Canterbury*. This includes works by Hugh Aston, Nicholas Ludford and John Mason, and the complete surviving works of Hugh Sturmy, Robert Hunt and Robert Jones. Another collection is *Our Lady: music from the Peterhouse partbooks*, from the Byrd Ensemble under Markdavin Obenza (Scribe).

Another project of this kind is to restore the Sadler partbooks, collected by the clergyman John Sadler (1531-c.1591/2) and now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Composers represented include Thomas Tallis and William Byrd, as well as earlier composers such as Robert Fayrfax. They are almost complete but are in very poor condition because of the use of acidic ink which has damaged the pages. They require digital restoration. Stile antico have given concerts of some of the restored music but have yet to release a recording of it.

A slightly later composer in a similar position is Martin Peerson. His Latin motets survive in a single copy, one of whose parts is missing. This has been reconstructed by Richard Rastall and the collection recorded by Ex Cathedra conducted by Jeffrey Skidmore (Hyperion).

In continental Europe the outstanding figure where reconstruction is needed is Carlo Gesualdo. Of his two books of *Sacrae Cantiones*, the second lacks two of its six parts. The first person to attempt a

reconstruction was none other than Stravinsky, who worked over three of the motets as *Tres Sacrae Cantiones*. He did not aim at musicologically correct solutions and you can at moments hear his own personality peeping through. These have been recorded by James Wood (Hyperion) and Duncan Ferguson (Delphian). James Wood also achieved a scholarly reconstruction, recorded by him with Vocalconsort Berlin (Harmonia Mundi). Stravinsky's *Monumentum pro Gesualdo* is an arrangement for chamber orchestra of three of his madrigals; it involves some recomposition but no actual completion. There are recordings by Dennis Russell Davies (ECM) and Philippe Herreweghe (Pentatone). Stravinsky himself recorded both works derived from Gesualdo (Sony).

I want to register my admiration for the scholars and performers who have managed to supply the missing parts of these works. Anyone who cares for this repertoire should explore them.

Liturgical reconstructions of music from this period include James O'Donnell's amplification of Orlande de Lassus' *Missa Bell'Amfitrit'altera* with other music of the time (Hyperion) and Paul McCreesh's of Tomás Luis de Victoria's *Requiem* (DG).

The Baroque Period

Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* can be performed as it stands, or other works can be added to form a liturgical reconstruction. There have been several of these, including Andrew Parrott (Virgin Veritas), Jordi Savall (Astrée) and Paul McCreesh (DG). Other liturgical reconstructions, using music by Monteverdi and others of the time, include *Mass of Thanksgiving* by Andrew Parrott (EMI) and *1612 Italian Vespers* by Robert Hollingworth (Decca). Paul McCreesh has specialized in this kind of work, and he has also recorded *Venetian Vespers* (DG), *A Venetian Coronation 1595* (Virgin and Signum) and *A Venetian Christmas* (DG).

A number of Monteverdi's operas have been lost, among them his second, *L'Arianna*, apart from one number, the celebrated *Lamento d'Arianna*, which he published in more than one version. However, the libretto survives. The contemporary composer Alexander Goehr had the idea of recomposing the opera, using the original libretto, slightly cut, and including the *Lamento*. However, this is not a work of pastiche: Goehr is an admirer of Monteverdi but also of Schoenberg and he was a pupil of Messiaen, so his *Arianna* is a twentieth-century recreation of Monteverdi (NMC).

Some of François Couperin is lost completely, such as the second and third sets of his *Leçons de Tenèbres*. In the case of his motets, three of them lack the original parts for upper strings. These have been supplied and recorded by Edward Higginbottom (Novum).

Heinrich Schütz's last work, the *Opus ultimum* also known as *Schwanengesang*, was not written with a view to performance and disappeared from sight. The core of it is a setting of the whole of Psalm 119, the longest psalm, for eight-part choir. An incomplete set of parts was found in 1900 but not edited and it was presumed lost in the Second World War before more turned up in the 1970s. Two vocal lines had to be reconstructed; this was first done in 1984 by Wolfram Steude, recorded by Philippe Herreweghe (Harmonia Mundi) and the Hilliard Ensemble (Erato). A more recent reconstruction is by Werner Breig, recorded by Hans-Christoph Rademann (Carus).

There is a mystery about J. S. Bach's third *Brandenburg Concerto* (BWV 1048). Between the two fast movements, where you would expect a slow movement, there are only two chords. Some ensembles play just these, perhaps with a cadenza-like flourish, but some think that Bach would have improvised

or interpolated a slow movement, closing with the two chords. Suitable slow movements which have been suggested are the third movement from the violin sonata BWV 1021, the second movement of the organ sonata BWV 530, and the rejected original third movement from the violin sonata BWV 1019 (which requires altering the chords). However, I have not found a recent recording which uses any of these.

Bach often reused his own works for different purposes. Sometimes several versions are extant, sometimes only one. In particular, he probably adapted instrumental pieces now lost for cantatas, which he had to produce in large numbers and which survive. Bruce Haynes had the idea of adapting some cantata movements back into instrumental ones, and assembling them into a group of six concertos, to parallel the six *Brandenburg Concertos* which we have. He also set himself the challenge of repeating Bach's orchestral combinations in his new set. He numbered them *Brandenburg Concertos 7 to 12*, and they have been recorded by Eric Milnes (Atma Classique). As there are many cantatas, there is scope for others to do something similar.

Bach's keyboard concertos are all considered to have been adapted by him from versions which were originally for violin, flute, oboe or oboe d'amore. Three of these are extant: the violin concertos in A minor (BWV 1041) and E (BWV 1042) and the double violin concerto in D minor (BWV 1043). The others can be reconstructed by extracting the solo line from the keyboard version. Many people, including myself, find these reconstructed versions better than the extant keyboard ones, particularly the violin versions of the D minor (BWV 1062) and the G minor (BWV1056), the violin and oboe version of the C minor (BWV1060) and the oboe d'amore version of the A major (BWV1055). There are now a number of discs offering reconstructed concertos in various combinations. Recent violin versions include Alina Ibragimova (Hyperion) and Isabelle Faust (Harmonia Mundi), and older versions by Monica Huggett (Gaudeamus) and Elizabeth Wallfisch (Virgin Veritas, two separate discs) should not be overlooked. There is also a useful round-up by Neville Marriner (Eloquence). For flute versions there are collections by Patrick Gallois (Naxos) and Jean-Pierre Rampal (CBS MDK) and a number of individual recordings, and for oboe Heinz Holliger (Philips and ECM), Marcel Poncele (Accent) and Christian Hommel (Naxos).

Bach was reported to have composed five settings of the Passion. Two of these are the extant *St. Matthew* and *St. John Passions*. Of the others, the *St. Luke Passion*, though written in his hand and in that of his son C. P. E. Bach, is spurious. The actual composer is not known, though some think it may have been Johann Melchior Molter. There is a recording by Wolfgang Helbich (CPO). The *St. Mark Passion* is lost, but the libretto is extant, and the work is generally thought to have reused music from the *Trauer-Ode* (BWV 198) and to have itself been drawn on in the *Christmas Oratorio* (BWV 248). There have been nearly thirty reconstructions. You can read a summary of them [here](#) and there is a fuller account [here](#). I have been very happy with the Simon Heighes version as recorded by Jörg Breiding (Rondeau). The remaining Passion may have been the early *Weimar Passion*, much of whose material Bach reused in the *St. John Passion*. There is an article about it [here](#). Alternatively, it may refer to one of three versions Bach adapted from the *St Mark Passion* usually attributed to Reinhard Keiser, which you can read about [here](#).

The *Musical Offering* contains a number of canons, written in enigmatic notations, which have to be realized by the performers or by a scholar editing the work. There are numerous recordings; a particular favourite of mine is Ensemble Sonnerie (Virgin). The six-part *Ricercar*, written for the

keyboard, has frequently been orchestrated, notably by Webern, who used his own technique of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, in which the individual lines are frequently passed from instrument to instrument. Recordings include Pierre Boulez (Sony and DG) and Christoph Poppen (ECM).

Bach left his last work, *The Art of Fugue*, unfinished. There is a motto theme which runs throughout the work, except that in the last, unfinished fugue, *Contrapunctus XIV*, it does not appear. On most recordings the performers play this as Bach left it, allowing it to break off in the middle of a phrase. This I find irritating and inartistic. Nottebohm, best remembered as the person who deciphered Beethoven's sketch books, was the first to demonstrate that the motto theme of the whole work combines with the three themes of the unfinished fugue in a way which could not possibly be accidental. There have been several completions using this. You can find a summary [here](#). The one I prefer was made by Donald Tovey in 1931 and performed by him on the piano (for the score see [here](#)), to conclude a recording of the rest of the work by the Roth string quartet (Divine Art). No recent keyboard recording has included it, as far as I know, but there is an excellent quartet arrangement by Robert Simpson which does, played by the Delme quartet (Hyperion). (I discuss Busoni's *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, which is based on Bach's work, below.) Tovey also thought that Bach's scheme for the work included a totally invertible fugue on four subjects. He wrote one, included in his edition (Dover Books), but it does not seem to have been recorded. Nor does anyone seem to have taken up Tovey's suggestions for preludes from earlier Bach works to precede each of the fugues. We could do with a recording which does this and which also includes Tovey's completion of the unfinished fugue and his invertible quadruple fugue in both versions.