



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

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**DRAMA**

**0411/12/T/PRE**

Paper 1 Set Text

**May/June 2011**

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL

**To be given to candidates on receipt by the Centre.**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the three stimuli and on the extract from Itamar Moses' play *Bach at Leipzig* provided in this booklet.

You may do any preparatory work that is considered appropriate. It is recommended that you perform the extract, at least informally.

You will **not** be permitted to take this copy of the text **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.

A clean copy of the text will be provided with the Question Paper.



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This document consists of **25** printed pages and **3** blank pages.



**STIMULI**

You are required to produce a short piece of drama on each stimulus in preparation for your written examination. Questions will be asked on **each** of the stimuli and will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

- 1 Addicted to exercise
- 2 All for one, one for all
- 3 My lucky break

## EXTRACT

**Taken from *Bach at Leipzig* by Itamar Moses**

These notes – adapted from those in the published version of the play – are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

*Bach at Leipzig* is a historical comedy, written in 2005 by American playwright Itamar Moses. The action takes place in Leipzig in 1722 as Johann Kuhnau, revered organist of the Thomaskirche (the most prestigious musical post in the city) suddenly dies.

In an age when musicians depended on financial support from the nobility or the Church in order to pursue their craft, the post at the Thomaskirche in the cultured city of Leipzig is a near-guarantee of fame and fortune. The city council invites six musicians to audition for the vacant position, including Johann Sebastian Bach (although he does not appear in the play).

The play explores the way in which the musicians resort to bribery, blackmail and betrayal in an attempt to secure the most coveted musical post in eighteenth-century Europe.

The action takes place in the Thomaskirche, in Leipzig, Germany.

**Characters**

Johann Friedrich Fasch	<i>Organist and Kapellmeister at Zerbst, in his fifties</i>
Georg Balthasar Schott	<i>Organist at the Neuekirche in Leipzig, in his fifties</i>
Georg Lenck	<i>Organist and Kantor at Laucha, in his late thirties</i>
Georg Friedrich Kaufmann	<i>Organist and Kantor at Merseburg, in his fifties</i>
Johann Martin Steindorff	<i>Organist and Kantor at Zwickau, in his twenties</i>
Johann Christoph Graupner	<i>Organist and Kapellmeister at Darmstadt, in his fifties</i>
Georg Phillip Telemann	<i>Organist and Kantor at Hamburg, 'The Greatest Organist in Germany'</i>

**Glossary of terms**

Kantor	<i>the title of the Director of Music in a church</i>
Kapellmeister	<i>the title given to a musician in Germany who worked for royalty or nobility</i>

## SCENE ONE

[As the lights fade, the beginning of Bach's "Prelude in A Minor" for organ plays, perhaps cutting off with the sound of wind, a carriage, a slamming door. At this, a man in his fifties, JOHANN FRIEDRICH FASCH, appears, alone in a pool of light, wearing a traveling cloak.]

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Fasch:

Leipzig. June, 1722.

My darling Anna:

By the time you receive this letter, I will have sent it. I know that I embarked suddenly, my sweet angel. I am sorry for it, especially so soon after the birth of our infant daughter, so soon that she does not yet have even a name. But I had no choice. 10

From an early age, my gingersnap, I heard everything in nature – from the squeak of wheels on a passing stagecoach to the slap of feet in mud puddles – as melodies and harmonies. The insomnia that has plagued me since childhood is, I think, in part a result of the hum that often springs, unbidden, from my throat. As is the insomnia that now plagues *you*. Eager for the training I knew I needed, I found my way here, to Leipzig, and to the man whose reputation drew me: Johann Kuhnau. He held the post of Thomaskantor, presiding over both the services at the Thomaskirche and the students at the Thomasschule, which stood across from each other on the Thomaskirchof, in the area of Leipzig honoring St. Thomas. 15 20

Recognizing my potential, Kuhnau began to give me private lessons in his study. It became clear to me then how profound was his devotion to the Lutheran faith. On his walls, above his writing desk, his washbasin, *everywhere*, he had affixed scrolls bearing the sayings of Martin Luther. Above his keyboard, one, my favorite, read: "Youth should be taught this art, for it makes fine, skillful people." And indeed it was not simply as a musician but as a person that Kuhnau instructed me, alternating musical lessons with religious ones. Music, Kuhnau taught me, was God's gift to us, and our only worthy way of praising God in return. And at the close of every lesson he would say, "You, Johann, are my most cherished pupil." 25 30 35

But, Anna, my meadow, my lamb, as I grew older I found it in me, as never before, to *disagree* with Kuhnau. About composition, at first, as I tired of the rigid forms he taught me. But soon my queries, like our lessons, shifted from music to religion. Need our music praise God *at all*? I wondered. Why not make it simply for each other? Soon, I found myself questioning even the most fundamental tenets of his faith. Consubstantiation! Election! The Doctrine of Predestination itself! Each meeting would begin with humble apologies for the last but soon escalate to bitter argument. And one day when I went to his study for my lesson, bearing a *gift*, no less, that day – oh, Anna, my empath, this will break your heart – that day there was another student in his room. A new student at his keyboard. And he said, Anna – I heard it myself – Kuhnau said to this boy, "You, Johann, are my most cherished pupil." 40 45 50

I dropped my gift by the door, where it shattered. It had been ridiculous in any case: a simple vase, unadorned. I left the school that very night. My teacher and I never spoke again. And my insomnia, which his devotion had quelled, returned. Then I met you, my milk-skinned moppet, and it was conquered for good. When your doctor procured for me that mysterious powder from the East. But I remained ... haunted. 55

Which brings me to the reason for my sudden flight. The night I left you, I received a missive. It bore the unmistakably genuine seal of the Leipzig Guild of Musicians, and was enfolded in the metal case they employ for important correspondence. Inside was a letter. Or, no, not a letter but a piece of music, a melody that, when decoded, contained a message. "I am dying," he said. "I wish to choose a replacement. Come see me at once." Such melancholy! For here was terrible news, and yet, in the same moment, a chance to reconcile! And more! A chance to guide Leipzig according to *my* principles! For what else could this mean? *He must have seen that he was wrong!* I pounded roadways into dust, threw coins at gatekeepers, pausing only in the courtyard itself, where, through the windows of the church, I could hear the inimitable sound of my old teacher at the organ. I mounted the steps, entered the church, and stalked the halls to the great doorway itself ... 60 65 70

[FASCH *turns.*]

## SCENE TWO

[*Lights up on the anteroom of the Thomaskirche.*] 75  
 [Double doors upstage center lead into the church proper. Various other exits, archways. Several simple wooden benches stand against the stone walls. Another man in his fifties, GEORG BALTHASAR SCHOTT, is seated here, near the doors. A moment.] 80

Schott: Johann Friedrich Fasch!  
 Fasch: Georg Balthasar Schott.  
 Schott: What brings you here?  
 Fasch: Stagecoach, primarily. And, for this last portion, my feet.  
 Schott: Of course. And for what reason have you come? 85  
 Fasch: It is a beautiful church. One doesn't come to Leipzig without paying a visit to the Thomaskirche.  
 Schott: Indeed, indeed. But no, Herr Fasch. Why are you *here* at all? In Leipzig?  
 Fasch: A whim, Georg. I am simply passing through. [*Beat.*]<sup>1</sup> Although I might ask you the same question. 90  
 Schott: You might, but it would be strange. I live here.  
 Fasch: No: *here*. Are you not still employed as organist at the Neuekirche? In the cobbler's district, under the bridge, across town?  
 Schott: I am. But there is a problem with the organ at the Neuekirche. 95  
 Fasch: What's that?  
 Schott: It is across town, under the bridge, in the cobbler's district.  
 Fasch: Ah.

<sup>1</sup> *Beat* = momentary pause

- Schott: Strange time for a journey all the way from Zerbst. Travel is dangerous. War is brewing between the cities of Merseburg and Zwickau. 100
- Fasch: The roads are quiet. Merseburg has just appointed a new ambassador to Zwickau, to secure the peace. [*Pause.*] From the courtyard I could have sworn I heard *him* playing.
- Schott: So you did. He is engaged in a closed and lengthy concert for himself. 105
- Fasch: How unusual.
- Schott: Not at all. It is his custom every afternoon. For hours.
- Fasch: What a boon for those who live nearby! They must listen enraptured! 110
- Schott: Indeed, they *must*. It's audible for half a mile. At the tavern across the street, the hired musicians abandon their efforts, as Kuhnau fills the rafters above their heads and renders them obsolete.
- Fasch: I hear nothing now.
- Schott: An acoustic anomaly. His music escapes through the stained glass on the other side of the cathedral, and those nearby are entombed in silence. But it is, as you heard, perfectly clear from a greater distance. 115
- Fasch: [*Privately.*] Oh, yes. I remember.
- Schott: Of course. You were his student. 120
- Fasch: Yes.
- Schott: So perhaps you are *not* simply passing through after all.
- Fasch: Perhaps not simply. No. [*Pause.*] Speaking of which ...  
[FASCH *gestures for SCHOTT to let him pass. SCHOTT stares back innocently.*] 125
- Schott: What?
- Fasch: May I go?
- Schott: You may. It was delightful to see you.
- Fasch: May I go *inside*?
- Schott: Oh no, no, no! He is loath to relinquish a single moment at the instrument while he can still play! 130
- Fasch: Of course. But how can we be sure that he plays still?  
[SCHOTT *opens the door a crack. There is a sudden swell of pipe-organ music, in mid-phrase, a rapid-fire run of high notes over low groans. He closes the door again, and the music snaps off as suddenly as it began.*] 135
- Schott: He does.
- Fasch: He's ... remarkable. After all these years.
- Schott: Yes. All these years.
- Fasch: What is he – seventy-five, eighty? 140
- Schott: Eighty-one.
- Fasch: Eighty-one. Remarkable. [*Pause.*] Do you think he's nearly finished?
- Schott: I can only hope that he is.
- Fasch: Perhaps if I could just call out to him, so that – ? 145  
[SCHOTT *opens the door a crack. There is another swell of music, even more impressive than the first. FASCH is rendered inaudible.*]
- Schott: [*Over the music.*] What? I'm sorry, my friend, I can't hear you!  
[FASCH *motions for SCHOTT to close the door. He does. The music snaps off.*] 150

- Schott:* You see? To make such an attempt now would do no good. You would raise your voice in greeting, and be drowned out by the many other voices under his command. You are too cavalier, Herr Fasch. It is a lucky thing that I am here, as a bulwark. To guard him. 155
- Fasch:* Let me pass.
- Schott:* No.
- Fasch:* It is not your place to forbid my entrance.
- Schott:* Nor is it yours to enter. Given your betrayal of all that he holds dear. 160
- Fasch:* I ... beg your pardon?
- Schott:* It is not mine you ought to beg. Your deviation from the good Lutheranism practiced by great men like Herr Kuhnau has thrown your congregation into utter disarray. 165
- Fasch:* I am beloved in Zerbst.
- Schott:* I think not, Johann.
- Fasch:* I assure you, Georg. You have confused me with another musician.
- Schott:* That seems unlikely. 170
- Fasch:* It is very likely. Half the musicians in Germany are called Johann. The other half are called Georg. It is a blessing, Balthasar, that we all have middle names with which to distinguish ourselves from one another.
- Schott:* I suppose, Friedrich, that it is. 175
- Fasch:* I shall wait until he emerges. Out of respect for *him*.
- Schott:* Very wise.
- Fasch:* Do you think we might listen, from the threshold, as he plays?
- Schott:* I suppose.
- Fasch:* You don't think he'll mind? 180
- Schott:* I don't think he'll notice.  
[SCHOTT opens the doors. The music flares. FASCH and SCHOTT stand in the open doorway, watching. At its peak, the music cuts off abruptly. Then it starts again, spasmodically. Then there is a thump, and a blare of adjacent low notes, as though the organist had pressed his head against the bottom of the keyboard and left it there. Which, judging from their reaction, is precisely what has happened. The drone sustains.] 185  
[FASCH runs inside. SCHOTT backs away from the door, stunned. FASCH emerges.] 190
- Fasch:* There are clergy in the courtyard. Get them. [Pause.] Get them!
- Schott:* Yes. Yes. Right away.  
[SCHOTT runs off and can be heard offstage shouting.]
- Schott:* Help! Help! We need help!  
[FASCH turns out, into a pool of light. The drone sustains quietly underneath.] 195
- Fasch:* But, Anna, the instrument he played is all that I have left of him now. I had hoped to return to you right away, my lily, my lake, but that is not possible. For something awful has occurred.  
I'll write again when I have time. 200  
Yours, Johann  
[FASCH releases a carrier-pigeon and watches it ascend: the sound of wings ... wind ...]  
[Blackout.]

## SCENE THREE

[GEORG LENCK, *late thirties, alone in a pool of light.*] 205

*Lenck:*

*Leipzig. June, 1722.*

My dear Catherina:

I have arrived safely, and in time, having arranged passage with a gentleman who allowed me to accompany his carriage. Because he did not know I was there. Clinging to the underside of it. Yes, as I am fond of saying, I, Georg Lenck, am so poor that I cannot afford even a middle name with which to distinguish myself from other Georgs! But that, after all, is why I've come – to reverse my fortunes at last. And not through some foolhardy scheme, as when I had you defraud your parents by feigning an expensive illness called bogus fever. No. This time there is real glory to be had! I have brought with me dozens of letters in praise of my musical talent, and, thanks to my adept calligraphy, each is in a different script. And each signed by a fictitious duke. For this memorial is to be hosted by the Leipzig Council itself, the very men charged with selecting Kuhnau's replacement. This is indeed a happy day!

[LENCK *turns. Lights up on the anteroom. FASCH and SCHOTT are here. LENCK is sobbing on FASCH's shoulder. FASCH comforts him.*] 225

*Fasch:* Georg Lenck. How wonderful of you to come.

*Lenck:* There was no question about it, Herr Fasch. The moment I received the messenger pigeon bearing news of his demise, I knew that I would feel incomplete if I let him pass without paying tribute. 230

*Fasch:* I trust that the trip from Laucha was uneventful.

*Lenck:* I wish it had been. A crazed bandit accosted me on the road: dirty rags, a gleaming sword, a hood concealing his face. He tried to steal my luggage.

*Fasch:* No. 235

*Lenck:* Oh, yes.

*Fasch:* It must have been dreadful.

*Lenck:* No, it is very attractive, which is no doubt why he wished to steal it.

*Fasch:* Well, we are very sorry to hear it. 240

*Lenck:* Thank you. But it could have been worse.

*Schott:* Yes, there are things we'd be sorrier to hear. Your music, for example.

*Lenck:* Excuse me?

*Schott:* For example, he might have stolen your music. 245

*Lenck:* Ah. Hello, Herr Schott.

*Schott:* Lenck.

[SCHOTT *and* LENCK *shake hands.*]

*Lenck:* Fear not. To prevent just such a calamity, I keep my scores inside my cloak, strapped to my very body. Indeed, the north is in utter disarray. War is brewing between Merseburg and Zwickau! 250

*Schott:* So I've heard.

*Fasch:* Has not Merseburg just appointed a new ambassador to secure the peace?

Lenck:	No, they appointed a new ambassador to <i>fail</i> to secure the peace. Merseburg's prince has intentionally selected his least qualified subject.	255
Schott:	Did you take my ring?	
Lenck:	What? Oh. Yes. [ <i>He returns a ring he obtained during the handshake.</i> ] A keyboardist's fingers – if I don't keep them busy, they busy themselves.	260
Schott:	Yes, you keep them so busy – at cards, and dice, and worse – that you spend more time in a cell than you do at the organ.	
Lenck:	I am beloved in Laucha! [ <i>To FASCH.</i> ] Be careful with this one, Fasch. It is his habit to twist the truth about his rivals as a form of leverage.	265
Fasch:	I had noticed, yes.	
Lenck:	When I was last in Leipzig auditioning for a post, at the Neuekirche, he suggested that we pool our resources and petition to <i>share</i> it. Then, the night before the audition, he slipped a note under my door, summoning me to a clandestine meeting at which he blackmailed me!	270
Schott:	Auditioning for a post, Georg? I thought you were here to pay tribute.	
Lenck:	[ <i>Beat.</i> ] So! By the time word of Kuhnau's death reached me, rumor held that he had collapsed while performing.	275
Fasch:	The deacons wouldn't allow us to move him until the doctor arrived. But by then, of course, it was too late.	
Lenck:	It's true?	
Fasch:	His music and his life, ending together, without the benefit of a cadence. A sudden and final interruption, of both the man and his art.	280
Schott:	It was dramatic in the extreme.	
Lenck:	The moment must have been.	
Schott:	No, the noise. His head depressed the keys. We had to listen to those sustained notes for half an hour. The man performed his own dirge with his face.	285
Lenck:	Sounds awful.	
Schott:	It certainly did. Kuhnau's features were so smooth, you see, it was hideously dissonant. If he'd had a sharper nose, narrower cheekbones –	290
Fasch:	Yes, Herr Schott, I'm sure that when you expire face-first into a keyboard your hawklike countenance will produce a glorious fugue.	
Lenck:	[ <i>Moving toward the doors.</i> ] The service is inside?	295
Schott:	No.	
Fasch:	Only the body.	
Lenck:	[ <i>Beat.</i> ] I'm sorry. So he's all <i>alone</i> ?	
Fasch:	I ... [ <i>Beat.</i> ] What do you mean?	
Schott:	The official memorial is to take place later on. For directly concerned parties only.	300
Fasch:	Ah, yes. Music. Eulogies. Food and drink.	
Schott:	Prayer.	
Lenck:	And will you both attend?	
Fasch:	I was his most cherished pupil. And he: my only teacher.	305
Lenck:	[ <i>To SCHOTT.</i> ] And yours as well? You being a native of the city?	
Schott:	As it happens, no. I chose, instead, to learn music from my father. But we were colleagues, of course. Peers.	
Lenck:	[ <i>Hiding his disappointment.</i> ] Well ... as an ... <i>indirectly</i> concerned party I suppose that I must pay homage ... now. [ <i>Pause.</i> ] He won't wait forever.	310

- Fasch:* Quite.
- Schott:* Although, in fact, he will.  
[LENCK *opens the doors. Faint sad organ music floats out.*]
- Lenck:* Who do you suppose is playing? Quite an honor, to accompany 315  
Kuhnau's ... final public appearance.
- Scott:* No one even asked me.
- Fasch:* Nor me.
- Lenck:* Well. Perhaps a harpsichordist is stretching.  
[FASCH and SCHOTT *precede LENCK through the doors.* 320  
LENCK *claps SCHOTT on the shoulder as he passes, skillfully removing a gold chain from SCHOTT's neck. He turns out, into a pool of light, with a smirk.*]
- Lenck:* Catherina, things are on the turn. I promise you. And this time I 325  
really mean it. I'll write again when I have time.  
Yours, Georg  
[LENCK *releases a carrier-pigeon.*]  
[*Blackout.*]

## SCENES FOUR AND FIVE

- [*Two men, in separate pools of light: GEORG FRIEDRICH KAUFMANN, who is in his fifties, and JOHANN MARTIN STEINDORFF, who is in his twenties.*] 330
- Kaufmann:* Leipzig.
- Steindorff:* June, 1722.
- Kaufmann:* My dearest Gisela:  
I hope this letter finds you well, and that you do not 335  
despise me for leaving you all alone, with our fair city on the brink of war, and only your gardener, valet, and footman to keep you company. I will try not to stay away long, though the footman, especially, has assured me that you will be in good hands. And though circumstances in Merseburg are precarious, my hope is 340  
to prevent bloodshed there, even while in attendance here.
- Steindorff:* My dearest Susanne: [*Beat.*] No. My darling Henrietta: [*Beat.*]  
No, no. Maria, Magdalena, and Margaret, my minxes: [*Beat.*] No, 345  
no, no. [*Then, soberly.*]  
My dear father:  
Thank you, once again, for this chance at glory. As you said, though our fair city is on the brink of war, I am more likely to honor you here, at the keyboard, than there, with my sword. And I shall bring honor to you, Father. And to all Zwickau. As you command.
- [*Lights up on the anteroom. KAUFMANN and STEINDORFF turn in.*] 350
- Kaufmann:* Truly, Johann, you must reconsider.
- Steindorff:* I'm sorry, Georg, I cannot.
- Kaufmann:* Our presence here together is surely an opportunity! On your soil, and on ours, negotiations have failed. Where better to make 355  
one last attempt than on the neutral ground of Leipzig?

- Steindorff:* Herr Kaufmann, I know that you take seriously your recent appointment as Merseburg's ambassador. But / am here solely in my capacity as a musician. I am not empowered to negotiate.
- Kaufmann:* Yours is the most powerful family in Zwickau, Herr Steindorff. That carries responsibilities you cannot avoid. 360
- Steindorff:* [*Quietly.*] Yes, I know. [*Beat.*] But as I'd very much like to attend this memorial *before* –
- Kaufmann:* Martin, please. My people do not want a war.
- Steindorff:* They ought to have considered that before they began bombarding Zwickau with missives, insulting my father. 365
- Kaufmann:* I beg your pardon. Those came in response to slanderous epistles from *your* city, insulting our prince. Furthermore, from what I have seen *all* of the letters – from *both* sides – are signed by entirely fictitious dukes! Have you considered that we may be the victims of a conspiracy by some tiny warmongering faction? 370
- Steindorff:* No, for each letter is in a different script.
- Kaufmann:* Perhaps it is the work of a single adept calligraphist!
- Steindorff:* Ridiculous. And, whether the letters are genuine or not, the rift they describe is all too real. 375
- Kaufmann:* Both our cities are Lutheran!
- Steindorff:* Yes, but ours is determined to remain that way. Your prince allows bastardized cults to flourish! The Calvinists! The Pietists! All manner of unacceptable distinct sects! There is no hope of reconciliation. 380
- Kaufmann:* Then why have I repeatedly been invited to stay as a guest on your family's estate?
- Steindorff:* Your understanding of politics is as sophisticated as your music.
- Kaufmann:* Why, thank you!
- Steindorff:* A halfhearted show of diplomacy is the final step toward open war. 385
- Kaufmann:* Your father is a lover of music, is he not?
- Steindorff:* I ... What of it?
- Kaufmann:* I heard that once there was an organist who owed him an *enormous* sum, but so taken was he with the man's skill at the keyboard that he never collected the debt. 390
- Steindorff:* [*Overlapping.*] Yes, yes, but I fail to see –
- Kaufmann:* Think! *That* is what unites us! Our art! Our theatre! Our music! *Culture*, Steindorff! That is, in the end, all that distinguishes us –
- Steindorff:* [*Wearily.*] From the animals, yes. 395
- Kaufmann:* No! From the English!
- Steindorff:* What?
- Kaufmann:* From the Italians! From the rest of Europe!
- Steindorff:* [*Beat.*] German culture is all that distinguishes us from non-Germans. 400
- Kaufmann:* Yes! And I propose a renewed commitment to our common Germanity! These sects are not irreconcilable, for they are not so distinct, after all!
- Steindorff:* They are irreconcilable because they are almost exactly the same. The Doctrine of Predestination is the cornerstone of them all. But we Lutherans can accept the notion that an Elect few are Predestined for Paradise only if it comes with the private understanding that *all* of us are included. The Calvinists have made the small mistake of taking the same religion and imposing actual *standards*. Where they reign, they ban song, and dance, and all forms of expressing the very culture *you* so revere. The strictures they impose close like a vice from without! Limiting 405
- 410

- all freedom! Meanwhile, sprouting like weeds from within, the Pietists embrace an *individual* spirituality that frees them from all limits! Both are disaster. 415
- Kaufmann:* You simply parrot your father's rhetoric, Martin. And *he* longs for a time that may never return.
- Steindorff:* Is that so?
- Kaufmann:* Yes. The very beginning of religion. When all of us were simply Lutheran. 420
- Steindorff:* [*Beat.*] I'm going inside.  
[LENCK enters, followed by FASCH.]
- Lenck:* We'll join you.
- Kaufmann:* Wonderful!
- Steindorff:* Ah, the insufficient prince. 425
- Lenck:* Shouldn't you be opportunistically performing?
- Fasch:* Steindorff played during the viewing of the body.
- Kaufmann:* How marvelous!
- Steindorff:* Thank you. I do believe that I was.
- Kaufmann:* You know, gentlemen, I feel that I must admit: I am engaged in *researching* each and every one of you! Collecting old letters, interviewing acquaintances, reconstructing your lives! 430
- Fasch:* To ... what end, Herr Kaufmann?
- Kaufmann:* My hope is to assemble these findings into an exhaustive musical biography of our era. So, forgive me, but I do not know when I will ever again have the privilege of being among so very many fine composers! 435  
[SCHOTT enters. He takes in the occupants of the room.]
- Schott:* Oh, my dear God.
- Fasch:* Good morning, Balthasar. 440
- Schott:* Yes, we'll see. Gentlemen! Welcome to Leipzig! I am happy that you have all been so warmly received by our city.
- Steindorff:* Hardly. When I arrived, a wild brigand of some sort leaped from the bushes and attacked me on the road, near the gates.
- Lenck:* Was he wearing nothing but rags, and a hood, and waving a sword? 445
- Steindorff:* The very one! I've never been more convinced of the wisdom of tucking my musical scores into the soles of my boots, as I do when I travel.  
[During this, SCHOTT has moved to stand between the others and the door.] 450
- Schott:* But ... before we go inside ...
- Fasch:* Oh, honestly, have you an *obsession* with blocking this doorway?
- Schott:* You misunderstand. In fact, Fasch, I wish to ... [*Generally.*] First, in the sight of those gathered, composers all, I am sorry if, in my protective zeal, I prevented you from speaking to your teacher one last time. 455
- Fasch:* Well. Well. I do appreciate it. In fact, perhaps I should apologize for my behavior during that encounter as well. 460
- Schott:* Accepted.
- Fasch:* All that remains now is to ensure that his legacy is carried on as he would have wished.
- Schott:* Yes! My feelings exactly! Perhaps together we can bring that about. 465
- Fasch:* [*Offering his hand.*] Yes! Yes, to ensure that German music –
- Schott:* [*Taking it.*] Remains exactly the same!
- Fasch:* Yes. What?

- Steindorff: Touching.
- Lenck: Beautiful. Let's go in. 470
- Fasch: [*Blocking the door.*] Just a moment. Again, I apologize. However, he would have wanted nothing of the kind.
- Schott: I beg your pardon, but I spoke to him daily for half my life.
- Fasch: And, begging yours, let me suggest that I think perhaps he altered in his final days. 475
- Schott: I am so sorry. But why on earth do you think that?
- Fasch: He wanted music to survive, and would never have robbed it of the one thing it requires in order to do so.
- Schott: And what is that, pray tell?
- Fasch: Innovation! 480
- Schott: God forbid. Kuhnau prized good craftsmanship, yes, but never *innovation*.
- Fasch: Only because he often mistook innovation for poor craftsmanship.
- Schott: Why should we obey the shifting fashions of the day? Or, worse, *set* them? 485
- Fasch: In the music! Only in the music, Herr Schott!
- Schott: But when you deny the musical principles laid down by our predecessors you risk denying their religious ones as well.
- Fasch: That is preposterous! New music might, in fact, *reach* those who do not *like* the work of our predecessors. Or such would be the intent. 490
- Schott: I am not comforted, Friedrich, for intent is not the issue.
- Kaufmann: Me?
- Fasch: My middle name is also Friedrich. 495
- Kaufmann: How strangely inconvenient.
- Lenck: Is this going to go on much longer?
- Steindorff: Yes, the memorial won't wait forever.
- Lenck: Although, in fact ... [*Beat.*] No, he's right, it won't. [*FASCH and SCHOTT block the doors together.*] 500
- Fasch: } Gentlemen!
- Schott: }
- Fasch: This should be of grave concern to you all.
- Schott: Indeed, it should. [*They turn back to each other.*]
- Fasch: Martin Luther did not nail his ninety-five theses to the great doors at Wittenberg only to have *you* rid the world of music. 505
- Schott: Nor did he only to have *you* rid it of God! [*Beat.*] When the theme rises in a joyful figuration, it must be because the congregation, at that moment, sings of an angel's joy at the birth of our Lord. If the melody grows morose, it is at the turn of the story to Mary's grief as Christ lay dying, or because the word "sin" or "death" has cropped up in the text. And if we abandon these rules we will write music that brings the heart to *any* joy, or to joy at *anything*. To joy without God. 510
- Fasch: You sound just like him. 515
- Schott: Why, thank you.
- Fasch: *Individuals* gravitate toward individual expressions of faith.
- Schott: [*With contempt.*] So, you are a Pietist.
- Fasch: My point exactly! Why must everything have a name?
- Schott: So that we know which houses to burn. 520
- Fasch: If a man feels his connection to the Eternal through pure music that brings pure feeling, then it is the godliness in it that matters! Not that someone sings the word "God"! Form is an illusion! A

- fragile vase no sooner questioned than shattered! Why insist that  
*our* rules harden into permanence when no others ever have? 525
- Schott: Because we got them right!
- Fasch: But when you give people the choice –
- Schott: But, Fasch! It is *choice* that is the illusion! Life, like music, involves  
choice *only* on the part of the Creator! Why, that was the entire  
purpose of the Reformation! 530
- Fasch: What?
- Schott: The Doctrine of Predestination!
- Fasch: Predestination is nonsense! It renders all our actions meaningless.  
The gates of heaven do not open at the capricious behest of  
some unseen hand. No! We seize the handle ourselves! 535
- [*The escalation has been steady. Now everyone stares at  
FASCH. A long moment.*]
- Schott: So. It is not *only* music you wish to alter. After all. [*Pause.*] And  
so what would become of the flock you'd lead as Kuhnau's  
successor? 540
- Fasch: Well, I ... [*Long pause.*] I am not Kuhnau's successor.
- Schott: Ah. But that is why you are here, is it not? [*Generally.*] That is  
why all of you are here? Not to *honor* the man but to *replace*  
him?
- Fasch: Someone must. 545
- Schott: And clearly it must not be you. Mysticism is not faith! We are  
not meant to experience *pure feeling*! This is not Italy! Would  
you have us, as they do, drive our congregants into an unending  
sensual frenzy?
- Steindorff: Which way to Italy? 550
- Schott: This is not a joke! Germany is in utter disarray – scattered bands  
of dukes and princes sprouting like weeds and turning on one  
another! And all the while the Catholics close like a vice from  
without! Risen from the Mediterranean, an Italian ogre rattles the  
gates, roaring Vivaldi! To the southwest are poised a gaggle of 555
- French dances! And across the water our own Georg Friedrich  
produces opera after opera for the English!
- Kaufmann: I am not across any water.
- Fasch: He means Handel. Whose name also begins with Georg  
Friedrich. 560
- Kaufmann: How –
- Schott: And do not think that this threat is confined to music or to politics.  
French cathedrals resplendent with gold and jewels! Drug-  
addled Italians painting the Son of God in whore's colors as  
some twisted grotesque! I do not know what they will call this 565
- ignominious new age, but it runs entirely counter to the spirit of  
the Reformation.
- But. Just as this can infect our music, so too can our music  
beat it back. And Leipzig shall be our bulwark. But who among  
you is worthy to lead this great defense? Who will slay the ogre, 570
- crush the dancers, and preserve the old way anew? *Who will  
stand upon our battlements and lead us?*
- [SCHOTT *turns away from the others brusquely and opens the  
doors. Music, once again, floats out. A moment.*]
- Schott: It's all right. A cat is walking across the keyboard. 575
- [SCHOTT *goes inside.*]
- Kaufmann: I'm sorry. They're holding auditions for Kuhnau's post?  
[FASCH *has removed a vial of white powder from his coat,  
pinches a bit between his fingers, and inhales it.*]

*Steindorff:* [*Intrigued.*] What is that, Fasch? 580  
*Fasch:* It's medicinal. [*Beat.*] Gentlemen, shall we?

[*The lights shift. KAUFMANN and STEINDORFF turn out together.*]

*Steindorff:* And now, Father, it is time.  
*Kaufmann:* I'll write again, Gisela, when I have time. 585  
*Steindorff:* Yours, *Johann*  
*Kaufmann:* Yours, *Georg*

[*STEINDORFF and KAUFMANN release carrier-pigeons together: two sets of wings.*]

[*Blackout.*] 590

### SCENE SIX

[A man in his fifties, JOHANN CHRISTOPH GRAUPNER, alone, in a pool of light. He wears a traveling cloak.]

*Graupner:*

Leipzig. June, 1722.

Doctor Schultz: 595

Throughout my journey from Darmstadt, I spoke aloud to myself the optimistic incantations you suggested. "I am important to those who are important to me." And: "I am beloved by those whose love matters." But they were empty in my mouth, and, at last, after hundreds of repetitions, the carriage driver begged me to be quiet. 600

I know, and you have repeatedly assured me, that I, Johann Christoph Graupner, ought to count myself lucky to have such a name and reputation. Which is to say, a name so recognizable that many people think they have heard of me, without being quite sure, and a reputation as the second-greatest organist in Germany. But my hope is that here, at last, it shall be different. That I shall surpass my nemesis, and be the most revered of all. My devotion to Calvinism allows me to accept nothing less. 605

To that end, I arranged my audition through letters, and contrived to delay my arrival until the day before the auditions were to begin, to build the anticipatory dread of the others, who would no doubt have noticed my conspicuous absence, and superstitiously avoided even the mention of my name. So that I would appear first as a more shadowy and menacing figure, I tarried near the gates until dark. At which point I was attacked by a daft highwayman, who emerged from the foliage. It is for this very reason that, when I travel, I attach my scores to the flesh of my thighs with surgical thread. 615

In any event, once inside the gates I descended upon the Thomaskirchof, seized a clergyman, and asked where I might find the others. Learning they'd taken quarters in the church itself, I mounted the steps, wrapped in my most impressive cloak, and lurked just outside the antechamber until I heard voices. I then pounded on the door, so that the echoing crashes might 620 625

- silence their conversation and better prepare them to witness their approaching doom ...  
*[Lights up on the antechamber, as GRAUPNER sweeps triumphantly into it. There is no one else in the room.]*
- Graupner: Behold! *[Beat.]* Damn. 630  
*[GRAUPNER picks up his luggage and stalks off deeper into the church. STEINDORFF enters from another direction holding a note. He is agitated. Seeing no one, he looks off in several directions. He rereads the note. SCHOTT enters. A moment.]*
- Steindorff: What is the meaning of this? A note, slipped under my door, summoning me to a clandestine – 635
- Schott: Yes, Herr Steindorff, I was hoping to have a word.
- Steindorff: *[Thoughtfully.]* “Cantankerous.”
- Schott: I was hoping to have a word with *you*.
- Steindorff: Be my guest. But I am not so easy to describe in a word as you are. 640
- Schott: I wish to discuss our agreement.
- Steindorff: I don't. I don't wish to be seen with you at all. The others could walk in at any moment.
- Schott: Fear not. They've all gone to the tavern across the street. 645
- Steindorff: Even so. When the Council awards me the post tomorrow, the choice must appear untainted. And, in return for your aid, you will receive what you were promised: dominion over the students at the Thomasschule. There is nothing to discuss.
- Schott: Oh, but there is. 650  
*[Schott produces a letter from his coat.]*
- Steindorff: What's that?
- Schott: I have a younger brother in Zwickau. Perhaps you know him? Johann?
- Steindorff: Perhaps. What is his name? 655
- Schott: That *is* his name.
- Steindorff: Oh! I thought –
- Schott: Yes. He is the sub-deacon at your church.
- Steindorff: What does he do there?
- Schott: He administers to the sick and the poor. 660
- Steindorff: Then, no. I do not know him.
- Schott: Very well. But he knows you. He has seen you, after your performances on Sundays, stealing into the choir balcony.
- Steindorff: It's true, I go there when I wish to feel closer to God.
- Schott: With a young lady. 665
- Steindorff: She wishes to feel closer to God as well.
- Schott: I am sure. But which one?
- Steindorff: *[Perplexed.]* Which God?
- Schott: No, which lady? On ordinary Sundays, it is Henrietta. On festival Sundays, it is Susanne. And on feast days, a trinity: Maria, Magdalena, *and* Margaret! 670
- Steindorff: *[Incredulous.]* What sort of Lutheranism does your brother practice?
- Schott: Highly observant.
- Steindorff: No doubt. 675
- Schott: In fact, most notoriously of all, it seems the newly appointed ambassador of Merseburg has *also* been your victim!
- Steindorff: *[Outraged.]* He has not!
- Schott: *[Patiently.]* In that you have dallied with his wife.
- Steindorff: Oh, yes, I see. 680

- Schott: I hold here a letter detailing these transgressions. And I am prepared to address copies to all who might find it of interest.
- Steindorff: Then I will have it dismissed as a forgery.
- Schott: It bears the unmistakably genuine seal of the Leipzig Guild of Musicians. 685
- Steindorff: Then I shall blame the interference of a mischievous courier.
- Schott: I will enfold it in the metal case we employ for important correspondence.
- Steindorff: But you are a Lutheran! Blackmail violates your principles!
- Schott: And lechery yours. Punishing the latter seems to necessitate the former. For you, too, are a Lutheran. 690
- Steindorff: Exactly! Thus any sinful actions on my part were Predestined by God himself at the beginning of time. I had no choice!
- Schott: I ... Predestination is not an excuse to act badly! On the contrary, we *recognize* the elect by their good actions! 695
- Steindorff: Balthasar, perhaps you yourself seldom enjoy the company of a woman. If so, *I* can arrange for you a most pliant –
- Schott: I seldom enjoy the company of a woman because my wife is dead. Taken in childbirth, along with our first child. [*He turns to go.*] Consider this divine judgment, Martin. For your crimes. 700
- Steindorff: Herr Schott. *Please!*
- Schott: I have no choice. [*Pause.*] Unless ...
- Steindorff: Unless?
- Schott: Leave Leipzig.  
[STEINDORFF *sits, defeated. Then he begins to laugh.*] 705
- Schott: *Laughter, Steindorff?*
- Steindorff: My father embarked on this collusion because he saw in you a kindred spirit. One who recognized the threat to our faith and hoped to keep this post in our hands. But you are not so righteous as you pretend. 710
- Schott: Oh?
- Steindorff: No, you are nothing but a petty malcontent salving his own wounds. Despite the way you have anointed yourself the guardian of Kuhnau's legacy, in fact, he *despised* you.
- Schott: What do you mean? We were *peers*, colleagues – 715
- Steindorff: Yes, so long as you remain under the bridge, in the cobbler's district –
- Schott: I love the Neuekirche!
- Steindorff: Even when you were a boy! A native of Leipzig! A musician! And yet never even admitted to the Thomasschule! 720
- Schott: I never applied!
- Steindorff: And if I abandon my claim? What then? You cannot sway the Council on your own. Indeed, it was *you* who first described their fractiousness! Some require bribes, you said, and *we* supplied them! Some seek to divine Kuhnau's final wishes, you said, and *we* confirmed that he left none! Some seek the candidate with the most fame, you said, and *we* persuaded Hamburg to double the salary of its Kappelmeister to prevent him from attending! Your knowledge was *useless* until we provided our resources! 725
- Schott: And so thank goodness your resources have already been provided. 730
- Steindorff: [*Beat.*] But ... ! I ... !
- Schott: Do you see now? The Greatest Organist in Germany is conspicuously absent. My devotion to Kuhnau is well known. I placed your bribes. The outcome is inevitable. Goodbye, Martin. 735  
[SCHOTT *walks away.*]

- Steindorff: [*Desperately.*] My father, you know, has illegitimate children all over his estate. Once, among the peasants on our land, there was a wheelwright. A rumor in our house held that his eldest son was a bastard Steindorff. 740
- Schott: [*Beat.*] What on earth are you talking about?
- Steindorff: I asked my father, could we not take the boy in? My father thought me soft. Unworthy of the Steindorff name. He banished this wheelwright. Forced him to uproot his family. To *show* me. You see? 745
- Schott: Is that true?
- Steindorff: Almost heartbreaking, isn't it?
- Schott: Yes. Almost.
- Steindorff: Though I'd willingly trade lives with that boy now. [*Beat.*] But this post. This post, Herr Schott, is my opportunity to *prove* that I ... 750  
[*Pause.*] Your letter may or may not have its intended effect. But if I simply leave, as you ask, the result is a certainty: never again will I be welcome in his house.
- Schott: Nor will you if you disgrace it. [*Beat.*] I only mean: you may try to earn his name and sully it instead. Which prospect frightens you more? 755  
[*Pause. STEINDORFF simply looks at SCHOTT.*]
- Schott: So be it. I will release the pigeon tonight.
- Steindorff: I was wrong.
- Schott: What about? 760
- Steindorff: Cantankerous is not strong enough. Not at all.  
[*The two men look up toward a sudden bustle of entrance. LENCK, FASCH, and KAUFMANN hurry into the room.*]
- Lenck: Gentlemen! Here you are!
- Schott: Here we are. 765
- Fasch: [*To STEINDORFF and SCHOTT.*] My friends, we thought you might like to join us.
- Lenck: I've brought cards. We are all going to gamble.
- Fasch: We are not.
- Schott: [*With a glance at STEINDORFF.*] Yes, we are. All of us. 770
- Lenck: There, you see? Splendid!
- Kaufmann: Herr Schott, I was astonished to discover that there is a tavern across the street from this church.
- Lenck: Kaufmann, there is a tavern across from the Badenkirche In Merseburg! 775
- Kaufmann: Oh, no. It looks like a tavern, but it is in fact a repair shop for musical instruments. There were a number of disagreements between myself and my musicians on the subject, but it turns out that they go there, you see, to have their strings tightened ... when the tuning – 780
- Lenck: They told you it was a *music* shop! What's it called?
- Kaufmann: The ... ah ... [*Pause.*] The Wench and Swine.
- Lenck: Who did you think the Wench and the Swine *were*?
- Kaufmann: The ... the *owners*. A husband and wife who operate the business together, with two separate workshops, they told me, to complete repairs more quickly! He works downstairs, and she upstairs, with different ... specialities ... oh *God* ... 785
- Schott: [*With a look back at STEINDORFF.*] Upstairs at our tavern, Herr Kaufmann, there is nothing but a pigeon loft.
- Fasch: How do the musicians play afterward? 790
- Kaufmann: *Better*, actually.
- Fasch: Better how?

- Kaufmann:* With less urgency.  
[SCHOTT, FASCH, and KAUFMANN are gone, these last remarks fading. STEINDORFF lingers, lost in thought. LENCK, who trails a bit behind the departing throng, turns back toward him.] 795
- Lenck:* Come along, Steindorff. I have prepared a mug especially for you.
- Steindorff:* Herr Lenck? May I have a moment? 800
- Lenck:* You may. But do not dally long.
- Steindorff:* May I have a moment with *you*?
- Lenck:* Ah. Well. To take your own moments is your prerogative, but to lay claim to mine as well strikes me as greedy.
- Steindorff:* Nevertheless. 805
- Lenck:* [A slight bow.] I am at your service.
- Steindorff:* I wish to discuss your debt.
- Lenck:* [Beat.] You will have to be far, far more specific. I owe more than one. Forgive me.
- Steindorff:* If I were to forgive you, you would owe one less. I refer to the debt you owe my father. 810
- Lenck:* Which one?
- Steindorff:* [Perplexed.] Which father?
- Lenck:* No, which debt? I have admired him for so long that I am indebted to him for many things: his wisdom, his goodness, his upright – 815
- Steindorff:* Your monetary debt.
- Lenck:* Ah.
- Steindorff:* Incurred over the course of an ill-fated night of card-playing at his estate.
- Lenck:* This *is* beginning to sound familiar. 820
- Steindorff:* In the amount of four hundred and thirty florins, eighteen groschen, and nine pfennig –
- Lenck:* Yes –
- Steindorff:* And also several horses and oxen.
- Lenck:* Yes, yes, my memory has been sufficiently refreshed. What of it? 825
- Steindorff:* He wants it repaid.
- Lenck:* But ... he said he was so taken with my skill at the keyboard that he –
- Steindorff:* Nevertheless.
- Lenck:* Your father well understands my circumstances. 830
- Steindorff:* Indeed he does. More than once, he has remarked, “Georg Lenck is so poor that he cannot even afford a middle name, with which –”
- Lenck:* Ah. He has stolen my joke. In fact, each of us now owes the other. Perhaps we ought simply to cancel both debts. 835
- Steindorff:* My father wants his money.
- Lenck:* He assured me that I would have *years*.
- Steindorff:* You *have* had years.
- Lenck:* Yes, but I assumed he meant *more* years.
- Steindorff:* No. And if you are unable to pay, he will have no choice ... but to imprison you. 840
- Lenck:* I see. Or?
- Steindorff:* [Beat.] He will imprison you.
- Lenck:* Well, that’s hardly a choice at all, is it?
- Steindorff:* What shall I tell him? 845
- Lenck:* Tell him ... tell him that he needn’t worry. For I am soon to marry into a wealthy family, and that if he gives me only a little more time –

- Steindorff: Ah. Do you refer to Catherina Kirkendale?
- Lenck: I ... why yes, how – ? 850
- Steindorff: I have an uncle in Laucha. A philosopher. Perhaps you know him? Georg?
- Lenck: Perhaps. What is his name?
- Steindorff: [Beat.] In any event, he assures me that you are in no way eligible to marry Fraulein Kirkendale; that, in fact, your presence in her chambers is the scandal of the town; and that, most damningly of all, upon each visit from her aging parents she forces you to adopt a masquerade wherein you disguise yourself as a nursemaid called Bodenschatz. 855
- Lenck: [Incredulously.] What sort of philosophy is it that your uncle practices? 860
- Steindorff: Morally relativistic.
- Lenck: No doubt.
- Steindorff: If you are unable to repay with coins, you can do so with labor. Yes, several years of indentured servitude on my father's land should – 865
- Lenck: No! [Pause.] Martin, please.
- Steindorff: I have no choice. [Pause.] Unless ...
- Lenck: Unless?
- Steindorff: Leave Leipzig. 870  
[LENCK sits, defeated. Then he begins to laugh.]
- Steindorff: [Quickly, wearily.] Yes, yes, I am not so righteous as I pretend, and so on.
- Lenck: [Beat.] What?
- Steindorff: And there is one further thing you must do for me. [Correcting.] 875  
For *him*.
- Lenck: What's that?
- Steindorff: Circumstances in Zwickau are precarious. As I am sure you are aware.
- Lenck: Of what? 880
- Steindorff: That there is a war brewing.
- Lenck: [Beat.] Is there? I had no idea.
- Steindorff: Pushed to the brink by a heated exchange of provocative letters.
- Lenck: A ... heated exchange of provocative letters?
- Steindorff: Some of which publicize claims about my family that are as outlandish as they are damaging. Why, some of these so-called revelations even involve myself! 885
- Lenck: [Perplexed.] No, they don't. [Then, quickly, covering.] Do they?
- Steindorff: Yes. And *you* must rob these letters of their power!
- Lenck: How? 890
- Steindorff: You will announce to all that *you* are their author.
- Lenck: [Beat.] Me? Of ... all those letters? But ... how on earth is that possible?
- Steindorff: I don't know. Claim to be an expert calligraphist.
- Lenck: Ridiculous. And why would I do such a thing? 895
- Steindorff: Spin a heartbreaking tale regarding some callous lord of one city or the other who destroyed your family when you were a child.
- Lenck: And even if I succeed I'll have evaded your father's anger and replaced it with the combined wrath of two armies girded for battle that would turn on *me* instead of on one another! But 900  
this post! This post, Herr Steindorff, is my opportunity to ... to *fling off* the nursemaid's bonnet, yes, that is the mark of my low station, to show myself ... to show *her* ... [Pause.] You have no idea what it is like to be without what you have. But do not think

- it is deserved. It is nothing more than fortunate birth. So tell me, what man is less deserving of victory than the winner in a game of pure luck? 905
- Steindorff:* The loser? [*Beat.*] I only mean: defeat will leave you without honor *and* with your debt intact. Does that prospect not frighten you more? 910
- Steindorff:* [Pause. LENCK *simply looks at* STEINDORFF.] So be it. I will summon soldiers in the morning to arrest you. And so I hope you have selected an audition piece with all its melodies clustered in the center of the keyboard.
- Lenck:* Why is that? 915
- Steindorff:* You will be able to reach little else. With your wrists shackled together.
- [*Another bustle of entrance. The two men look up as a tide of people once again disrupts the room. SCHOTT, FASCH, and KAUFMANN enter together.*] 920
- Kaufmann:* Gentlemen! Why do you keep us waiting?
- Schott:* [*Outraged, to FASCH.*] An alehouse fiddler! Speaking that way to me!
- Fasch:* [*To LENCK and STEINDORFF.*] Please, won't you join us at last? 925
- Kaufmann:* We have encountered some lovely young women! But we require a third for dancing.
- Steindorff:* [*Pointing to SCHOTT.*] You have a third.
- Fasch:* Herr Schott will not dance.
- Schott:* I will not dance to *that!* A rondo, a bourrée, a passepied! What do the French know about dancing that the Germans do not? 930
- Fasch:* Still, there was no need to become aggressive.
- Schott:* [*To LENCK and STEINDORFF, an appeal.*] I asked the tymbalist if he would plan an allemande. Or grace us with something by the masters of the last century: Tundert, Kerll, Hammerschmidt, Scheidt, Schein, Schütz. 935
- Steindorff:* Gesundheit.
- Schott:* That was the man's reply exactly! And so I grabbed his neighbor's lute and smashed it on his chin.
- [*Another exodus has begun. This time KAUFMANN, SCHOTT, and STEINDORFF go off together, with FASCH trailing a few steps behind.*] 940
- Kaufmann:* To the dance!
- Steindorff:* Will Gisela not object to the spinning of tavern damsels?
- Kaufmann:* Oh, do you know her? 945
- [*KAUFMANN, STEINDORFF, and SCHOTT are gone. FASCH turns back to LENCK, who has remained still and silent throughout the hubbub.*]
- Fasch:* Join us. We shall drink to an honorable competition in the morning. 950
- Lenck:* Herr Fasch? May I have a ...?
- Fasch:* What?
- Lenck:* I do not know. For what I need there are, perhaps, no words.
- [*LENCK begins to weep.*]
- Fasch:* My dear Georg! What is the matter? What has so distressed you? 955
- Lenck:* It is my Catherina. She has ... taken ill.
- Fasch:* Oh, I am sorry to hear it. [*Pause.*] Although I cannot say that I am surprised.
- Lenck:* [*Perplexed.*] Oh? Why is that? 960

- Fasch:* Well. I was never one to heed rumor particularly, but I have heard that a mysterious nursemaid called Bodenschatz attends her at the oddest hours of the –
- Lenck:* Yes, well, one never knows when the worst of it may strike.
- Fasch:* One never does. But what do you want of *me*? 965
- Lenck:* Her treatment is most ... expensive.
- Fasch:* Ah.
- Lenck:* Appallingly so. Why, to ensure her survival would cost some four hundred and thirty florins!
- Fasch:* I say! 970
- Lenck:* And eighteen groschen. And nine pfennig.
- Fasch:* What sort of doctor would demand a King's ransom for survival itself?
- Lenck:* It is not the fault of the doctor. He is expert in the use of all forms of emetics, sudorifics, febrifuges, and mercurials. But *this* illness is as rare as the lady herself. And there is only one cure. Which, by the way, will also require several horses and oxen. 975
- Fasch:* Oxen! What sickness is this?
- Lenck:* It is called ... false pox.
- Fasch:* [*Beat. He is not fooled.*] It sounds ... harrowing. 980
- Lenck:* It certainly is.
- Fasch:* [*Playing along.*] And ... her family will not help?
- Lenck:* The Kirkendales despise me and are convinced that her illness is feigned, to steal their money!
- Fasch:* [*Enjoying the game.*] Lenck, even if I had such an amount – and who does? – I am the wrong man to ask. Zerbst is in utter disarray. 985
- Lenck:* Since when?
- Fasch:* Why, since the flood!
- Lenck:* Zerbst is in the mountains. 990
- Fasch:* And thus we were most unprepared. Disease is rampant, and our doctors, never having learned to swim, all drowned. I have encountered every plague that nature has to offer on the roadside near my home. Indeed, I am surprised I have not encountered Catherina's false pox in my own township's fetid streets. 995
- Lenck:* In a cruel twist of fate, it strikes only the extremely beautiful.
- Fasch:* Then those closest to me are themselves at risk. My Anna has just borne us our first daughter, you see. They must both have every coin of mine at their disposal.
- Lenck:* Think no more of it. You are a fine man. 1000
- Fasch:* I have no choice but to live humbly.
- Lenck:* That is what I said.
- Fasch:* I will pray, my friend, that her humors properly balance themselves. 1005
- [A moment. FASCH starts to laugh.]*
- Lenck:* *Laughter, Fasch?*
- Fasch:* She is not sick at all, is she?
- Lenck:* [*Beat.*] I cannot deceive you. For longer than I have already.
- Fasch:* For what reason do you need money?
- Lenck:* [*A chuckle.*] How long have you known me, Friedrich? 1010
- Fasch:* Since we tested the Liebfraukirche organ together in Sangerhausen, some ... Oh, you mean how *well* do I know you. Oh, Lenck! What will happen if it is not repaid?
- Lenck:* Arrest. Imprisonment. Worse, perhaps.
- Fasch:* Then you must flee! Goodbye, Lenck. 1015
- [FASCH walks away.]*

- Lenck: [Desperately.] My father, you know ... was a wheelwright. Once, we resided on the land of a wealthy family. And one day we were banished, all of us.
- Fasch: What on earth are you – ? 1020
- Lenck: I watched as my mother died in penury, as my siblings scattered to alleyways and poorhouses, and I, the eldest, cared alone for my father, who, quite blind in his old age, would rave at me that I was not really his son. Then, one morning, his sight was restored! A tiny blessing at the end, I thought. Tiny indeed. That very day, he was felled by a massive seizure of the brain, the return of vision prefiguring only death. And no sooner had I left the home of the black-market surgeon to whom I sold his organs and limbs than I vowed that all my loved ones would be avenged. But what power did I have to do so? I am a musician, yes. But I am also a gambler. And so I honed my skills. I even went so far as to seek the aid of my cousin, a mathematician. In fact, he lives in Zerbst. Perhaps you know him? Johann? 1025
- Fasch: His name is also Johann?
- Lenck: No, his name is Maximilian. Why – ? 1030
- Fasch: Oh, I thought –
- Lenck: Ah. Yes. No. [Beat.] In any case, he is able to apply mathematics only to falling anchors and rolling boulders and such things, and was of no use. 1035
- Fasch: [Beat.] What sort of mathematics does your cousin practice? 1040
- Lenck: [Very rapidly.] Oh, he is a follower of Gottfried Leibniz, who has made it his business to unveil the numerical basis of the physical world, endeavoring to prove that a powerful order and meaning underlie even nature itself. [Beat.] Anyway, years later I returned to the site of my family's ruin, for a musical performance. Once there, I pursued an invitation to the evening card game hosted by the master of the house. Soon enough, I found myself seated across from the man himself. And, at stake, on our final hand, ownership of the very land where I was born. 1045
- Fasch: And? 1050
- Lenck: The trouble with cards, you see, is that even in a game of skill, in which queen, jester, and knave find meaning only in combination, the contest is reduced, at the last, to its simplest element. To luck alone.
- Fasch: What happened? 1055
- Lenck: I turned mine. And he turned his. I had a pretty run of princes. But they were ... insufficient, for he showed kings. [LENCK weeps again, this time in earnest. FASCH consoles him.]
- Fasch: I wish that there was something I could do. 1060
- Lenck: There is not. [Pause.] Unless –
- Fasch: Are you going to ask me to leave Leipzig?
- Lenck: Would you?
- Fasch: No.
- Lenck: But, Friedrich – 1065
- Fasch: No! I have my own mission here, as you well know.
- Lenck: Then then let me help you! Yes! We can plot together, to eliminate the others. Each must be vulnerable, in, in some way –
- Fasch: Lenck, enough of this!
- Lenck: – to bribery or blackmail or, or kidnapping, and we'll share the post, its honor, its salary, yes, I'll take on the responsibilities you do not desire – 1070

- Fasch:* *Enough!* [Pause.] This post ... this post, dear Lenck, is my opportunity to rescue our musical future. But I will have no mandate to do so if I seize it through thievery and lies. Nor will I know, finally, in my heart, that I ... that *he* ... [Pause.] A position with the power to guide music must be gained *by* music! And music alone! 1075
- Lenck:* Do they have *politics* in Zerbst, Herr Fasch?
- Fasch:* Periodically, yes. But the tactics you describe are better suited to situations when ordinary principles are suspended. To a state of a war. 1080
- Lenck:* Well, as they say, politics is only war by other means. [Beat.] I only ... You may find yourself with your principles intact, watching the future of music from afar. Does that prospect not frighten you more? 1085
- [Pause. FASCH simply looks at LENCK.]
- Lenck:* So be it.
- Fasch:* I am so sorry.
- Lenck:* That is to be expected. I am pathetic. I am bathed in defeat as surely as summer is in heat! 1090
- Fasch:* Some summers are unseasonably cold.
- Lenck:* Only to my personal disadvantage, I'm sure.
- Fasch:* Oh, stop it! This is laziness disguised as despair. None of us control our condition at birth. To guide our lives thereafter is well within our means. 1095
- Lenck:* Oh? And what was *your* condition at birth, *Herr* Fasch? Nothing that stood in the way of your advancement, it seems. Nothing that prevented you from marrying the woman you love! Please. Not one of you would willingly trade lives with me now. 1100
- Fasch:* To believe that *anything* is inevitable is an abdication of your responsibility to live. You are a gambler, yes. But you are also a musician! Indeed, that is how I first remember you, at Sangerhausen, perched at the organ, eliciting from all its speaking stops the most delightful sounds. You have an honest chance here, Georg. We all do. Not least because ... and I cannot be the only one who has noticed ... *he* is not here. The Great – 1105
- Lenck:* Shh! Don't say his name! [Beat.] Superstition.
- Fasch:* Very well. But his conspicuous absence is surely a providential sign! 1110
- Lenck:* But, Fasch, that is the worst of it. If not for all these years of poverty, of fleeing from debt and escaping from cold cells; if not for so many deaths of those I loved; if not for all the hardships thrust upon me by some unjust hand ... Oh, Fasch! The music! The music I could write! 1115
- Fasch:* You still might! What is the alternative? To destroy the world as retaliation against its injustice?
- Lenck:* Ah, well. [Pause.] In fact, Herr Fasch –  
[And a third time there is a bustle of entrance. KAUFMANN, SCHOTT, and STEINDORFF hurry into the room. FASCH is exasperated at the interruption.] 1120
- Fasch:* Yes! Yes! We will join you in a moment!
- Kaufmann:* No, no! Help us! We need help!  
[For it is now clear, KAUFMANN and SCHOTT are cradling STEINDORFF, who seems to have collapsed in their arms, barely able to walk, and who rambles vaguely as they convey him to a bench and lay him down.] 1125
- Steindorff:* [Slurred, confused.] He will not ... he will not let me ...

- Fasch:* What is this?
- Schott:* Betrayal! Skulduggery! By *your* hand! 1130
- Fasch:* I beg your pardon?
- Schott:* You shall not have it! For Steindorff has been drugged!
- Fasch:* But ... ! I ... ! My vial is safely ensconced here in my cloak!  
[KAUFMANN *raises a hand, holding up the vial for all to see: it is empty.*] 1135
- Kaufmann:* We found this on the bench. Near Steindorff's goblet.
- Fasch:* Someone must have taken it from me!
- Lenck:* From your inside pocket? Ludicrous.
- Steindorff:* He will not let me live!
- Schott:* Don't try to speak, Herr Steindorff. Guards! Guards! 1140
- Fasch:* Who, Martin? Who will not let you live?
- Steindorff:* My father! [*Pause.*] I never wanted to be a musician. I wanted to be ... a dancer! But he will not ... he will not let me – !  
[GRAUPNER *enters, arms raised triumphantly.*]
- Graupner:* Behold! Cower in fear! For standing now before you is the great – 1145  
[*There is a pounding at the door of the church: three slow echoing crashes. The men look toward the sound. A shadow is cast across the floor by someone just out of view.*]
- Graupner:* [*Beat.*] Damn.  
[*All bow toward the unseen man, except for SCHOTT, who turns out into a pool of light. The others follow in turn. And, during their letters, a man strides very slowly into view.*] 1150
- Schott:*
- Leipzig. June, 1722.
- Herr Kuhnau: 1155  
I write to you even though you are dead. For I am stunned to find myself surrounded by these men, these *pretenders* to your throne. And now ...
- Graupner:* He's here. And, Doctor, now I see why they reserved for me the second largest room. 1160
- Kaufmann:* Gisela, please send my scores as quickly as possible.
- Lenck:* Catherina, please send more money as quickly as possible.
- Steindorff:* I want to dance, Father! Why won't you let me dance?
- Fasch:* Anna, a legend walks among us. And though I believe in it not, I feel as I did when you and I first met: that I am in the presence of destiny. 1165  
[*The lights shift back. The new arrival is now downstage center, facing the double doors. He strides towards them, those in the room parting before him like reeds and bowing as he passes. He pulls open the doors. On this, SCHOTT turns back out.*] 1170
- Schott:* He has arrived. The Greatest Organist in Germany, Georg Phillip Telemann, has arrived. You'll hear from me again. In time.  
Yours,
- Fasch:* Johann.
- Lenck:* Georg. 1175
- Graupner:* Johann.
- Kaufmann:* Georg.
- Steindorff:* Johann.
- Schott:* Georg.
- [*Six pigeons are released at once: wings ... wind ... a final chord ...*] 1180
- [*Blackout.*]





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