

Strict Style in Hans Georg Nägeli's Aesthetics:

*Musikalische Kunstwerke im Strengen Style von J. S. Bach und andern Meistern*

revisited

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*Musikalische Kunstwerke im Strengen Style von J. S. Bach und andern Meistern*, a musical score series published by Hans Georg Nägeli was hitherto primarily explored only in the field of Bach research. Few studies focussed on Nägeli's interest in the strict style and the fact that he highly assessed Bach in the framework of this style. However, it was apparent from both the letters sent by Nägeli to other publishers and the publication announcement appeared in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* that Nägeli collected not only Bach's music but also the works of the composers from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in the strict style. This study aims to investigate Nägeli's focus on the strict style from (1) aesthetical and (2) historical aspects as follows: (1) Nägeli's music aesthetics emphasised on *Spiel*, the nature of the free style. However, detailed reading of Nägeli's *Vorlesung der Musik* revealed that even the strict style can be compatible with *Spiel* and that imitative art, which the free style lacks, can be considered an advantage of the strict style. (2) Nägeli highlights that the strict style is succeeded by the free style and that the works of the former are significant, even for all musicians belonging to the latter's age. Additionally, Nägeli advocates the test of time, which selects works, even by the grand master such as Bach. This perspective could be inferred as Nägeli's attempt to pass the real masterpiece in the strict style to the future generation, which already survived for several years, with significance not only to the contemporary but also to the future ages. Supported by such a profound insight, Nägeli's publication of the series could be comprehended as a good example of the inclination after the turn of the nineteenth century to the canonisation of the previous styles and works.