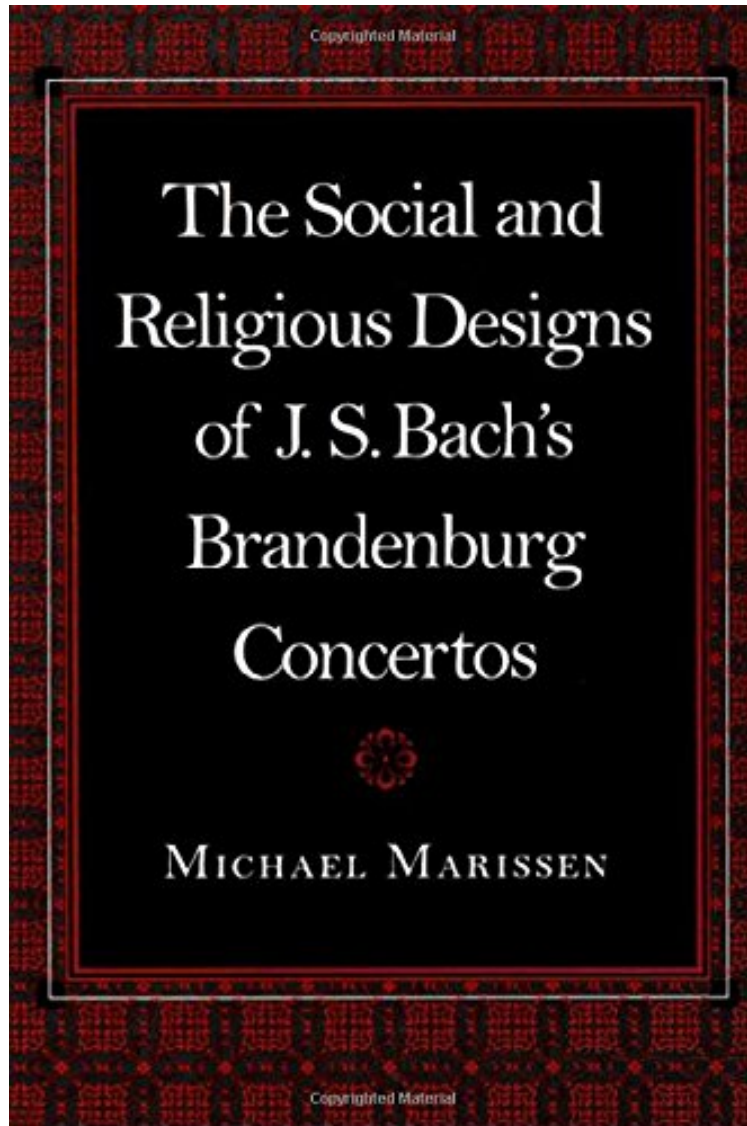


(Download free ebook) The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos

# The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos

*Michael Marissen*

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**Michael Marissen : The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Well Written Essay By WhitefrozenMarissen present a well written essay concerning the social and religious designs of the Brandenburg concertos. The author takes a

counterintuitive position on the many of the accepted thoughts and ideas as related to one of Bach's greatest works. Also, the author cites many other works to prove his point and leaves the reader with, I think, a much better understanding than most written works about the Brandenburg concertos. I believe he leaves a few things unanswered but overall a well designed essay, a fantastic read.

This new investigation of the Brandenburg Concertos explores musical, social, and religious implications of Bach's treatment of eighteenth-century musical hierarchies. By reference to contemporary music theory, to alternate notions of the meaning of "concerto," and to various eighteenth-century conventions of form and instrumentation, the book argues that the Brandenburg Concertos are better understood not as an arbitrary collection of unrelated examples of "pure" instrumental music, but rather as a carefully compiled and meaningfully organized set. It shows how Bach's concertos challenge (as opposed to reflect) existing musical and social hierarchies. Careful consideration of Lutheran theology and Bach's documented understanding of it reveals, however, that his music should not be understood to call for progressive political action. One important message of Lutheranism, and, in this interpretation, of Bach's concertos, is that in the next world, the heavenly one, the hierarchies of the present world will no longer be necessary. Bach's music more likely instructs its listeners how to think about and spiritually cope with contemporary hierarchies than how to act upon them. In this sense, contrary to currently accepted views, Bach's concertos share with his extensive output of vocal music for the Lutheran liturgy an essentially religious character.

"The field of Bach studies has been greatly enriched by the appearance of [this book].... [It] is full of significant insights into the nature of the [Brandenburg Concertos].... [It] offers a fascinatingly fresh approach to these masterworks."--F. Ellsworth Peterson, Notes  
"For anyone who is interested in exploring the remarkably rewarding challenge Bach lays down for the human family, this is a careful, helpful, plausible, and perceptive analysis."--Paul Westermeyer, Church History  
"Full of important and closely argued discussions of individual aspects of chronology, source criticism, musical structure, and [Bach's] biographical background.... [Marissen] is very informative on analytical and historical points, effectively demolishing many received beliefs, especially regarding chronology and source filiation."--Michael Talbot, Music and Letters  
From the Inside Flap  
"Michael Marissen's new and largely persuasive conceptions do much to increase our awareness of Bach's historical environment and his tendency to reformulate the conventions of his day. . . . The basic points of his book will appeal to a wide range of readers concerned with eighteenth-century studies."--John Butt, University of California, Berkeley  
"A superb study that accomplishes more than many much longer books. While the Brandenburg concertos have often been examined by musicologists, they have not really been taken seriously as cultural texts. Marissen makes it very clear that this kind of interpretive work is crucial if we are to understand music's historical and cultural significance."--Susan McClary, University of California, Los Angeles  
From the Back Cover  
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