

# JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

1685–1750

# ST. JOHN PASSION

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Opening Chorus:

*Herr, unser Herrscher, dessen Ruhm In allen  
Landen herrlich ist!*

(Lord, our sovereign, whose fame is glorious in all the world.)



# LEWIS THOMAS TO CARL SAGAN

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Asked what message he thought should be included on the disc that was included in the Voyager mission, he said: "I would send the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach." Then he paused and added: "But that would be boasting."

## LEWIS THOMAS TO CARL SAGAN

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It should be mentioned that the first human music that would be heard on the Voyager disc is Bach's 2nd Brandenburg Concerto—along with two more of his works. He is the only composer—West or East—represented by more than one composition.

# SOMERSET MAUGHAM

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She played Bach. I do not know the names of the pieces, but I recognized the stiff ceremonial of the frenchified little German courts and the sober, thrifty comfort of the burghers, and the dancing on the village green, the green trees that looked like Christmas trees, and the sunlight on the wide German country, and a tender cosiness; and in my nostrils there was a warm scent of the soil and I was conscious of a sturdy strength that seemed to have its roots deep in mother earth, and of an elemental power that was timeless and had no home in space.

# PABLO CASALS

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The miracle of Bach has not appeared in any other art. I don't deny that Bach is a German master, but it is a mistake to try and restrict him with a national label...He is among those geniuses who shine over all nations and all times.

# FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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In Bach there is too much crude Christianity, crude Germanism, crude scholasticism. He stands at the threshold of modern European music, but he is always looking back toward the Middle Ages. Personally I find it impossible to take such a tone-deaf philosopher seriously.

# HAROLD C. SCHOENBERG

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Bach's music remains stronger than it ever was. Stronger, indeed, for we can look at it in historical perspective, comparing it with the music of the other great men of his day—Handel, Vivaldi, Couperin, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti. By any measurement Bach eclipses all. His vision was greater, his technique unparalleled, his harmonic sense frightening in its power, expression, and ingenuity.

# HAROLD C. SCHOENBERG

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Bach's music has endless variety. At its worst--and Bach could write dull music, though never bad music--Bach's music bears signs of haste and impatience, and clearly he was dashing off a formula piece to meet the demands of a specific occasion. But his average is very high, and at its best his music is at the summit of the art.

# BACH TODAY

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- One of the best-selling albums of all time is a recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, played on piano (instead of harpsichord.)
- The pianist was a young unknown who became one of the most fascinating and controversial artists of the 20th century.

# **GOLDBERG VARIATIONS**

## **ARIA**

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Glenn Gould (1932–1982), piano

New York City

June 1955

# EISENACH (1685)



# ARNSTADT (1703–1707)

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# MÜHLHAUSEN (1707–1708)

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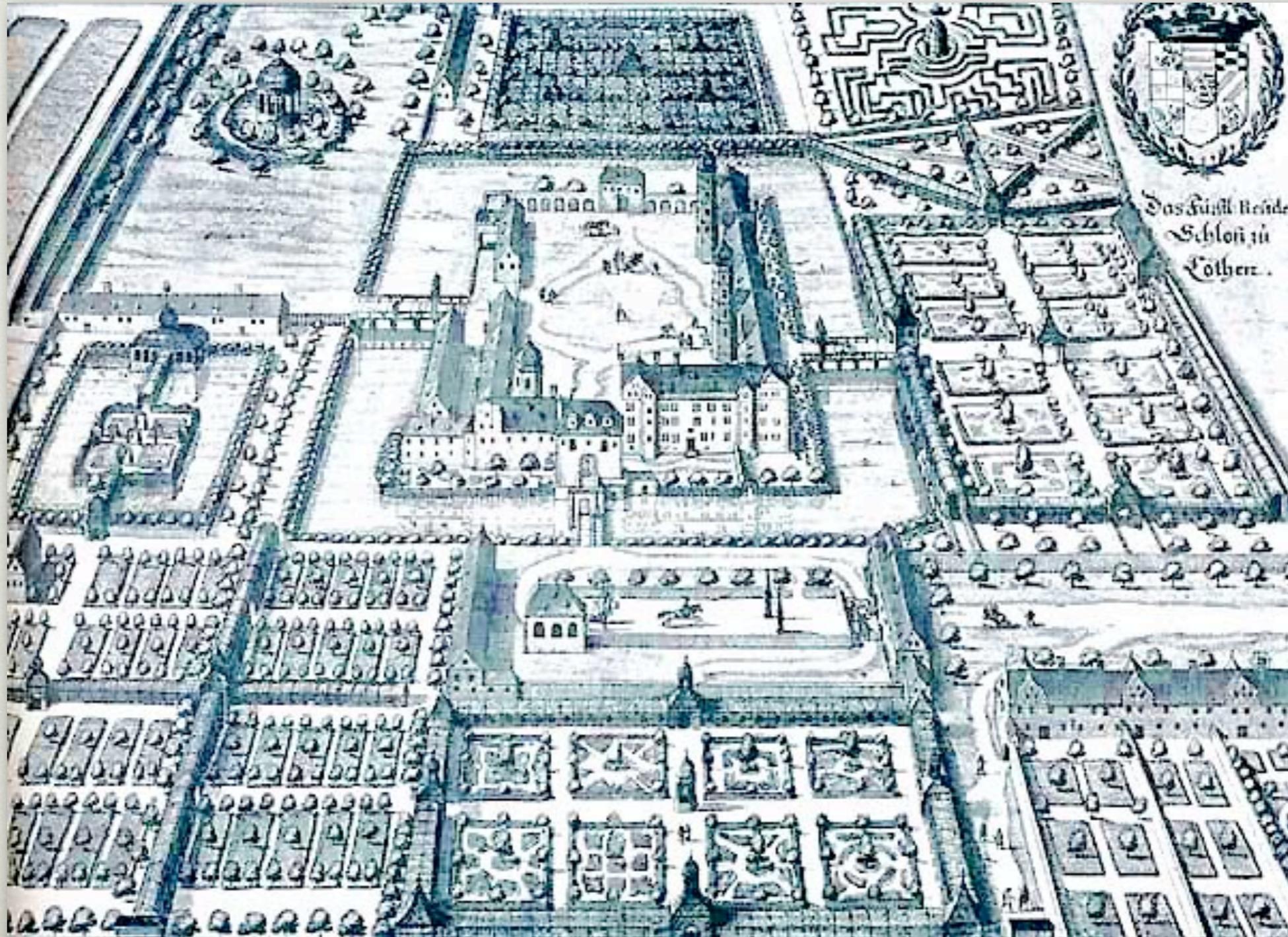


# WEIMAR (1708–1717)

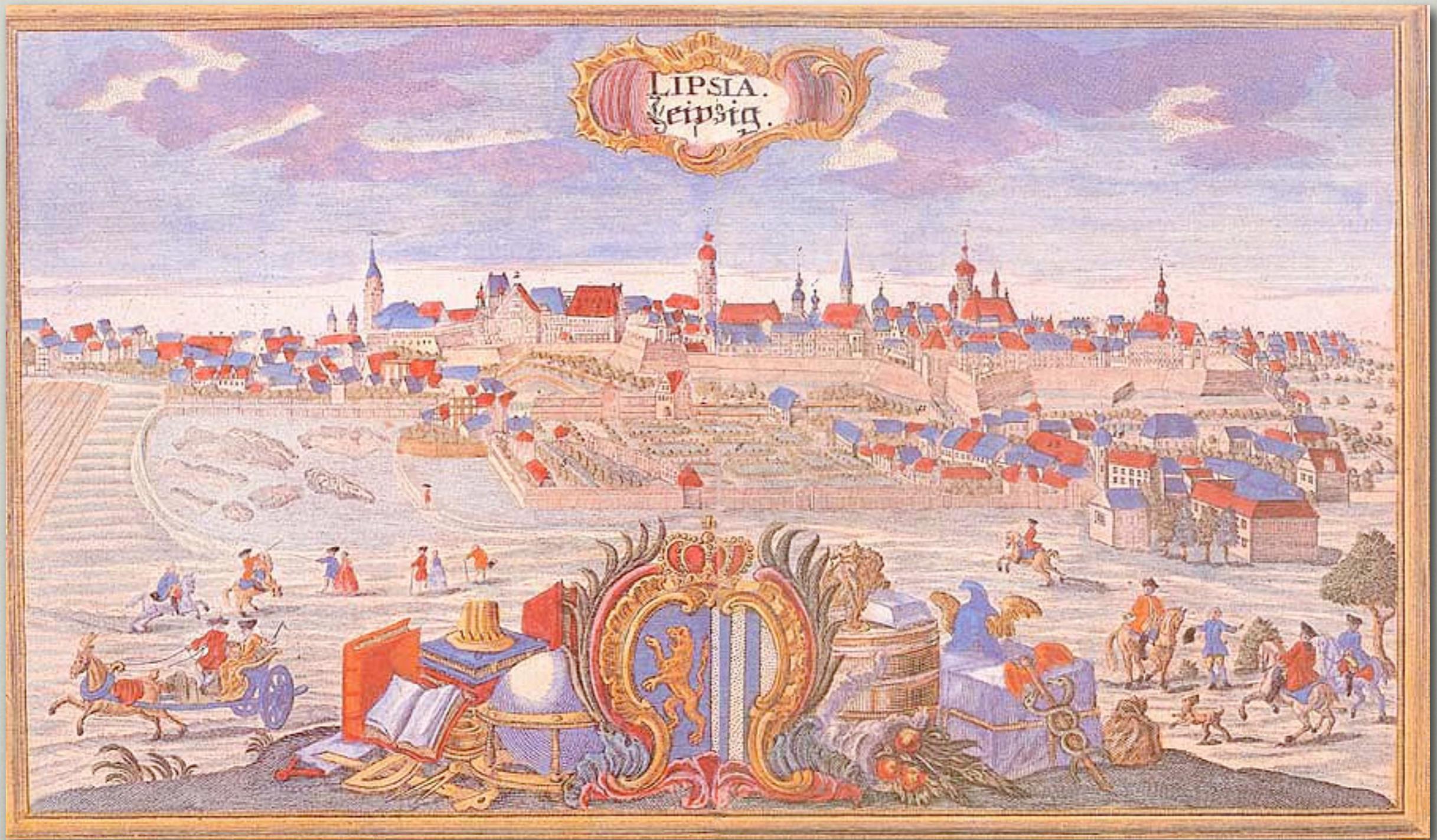
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# CÖTHEN (1717-1723)



# LEIPZIG (1723–1750)



# LEIPZIG: THOMASKIRCHE

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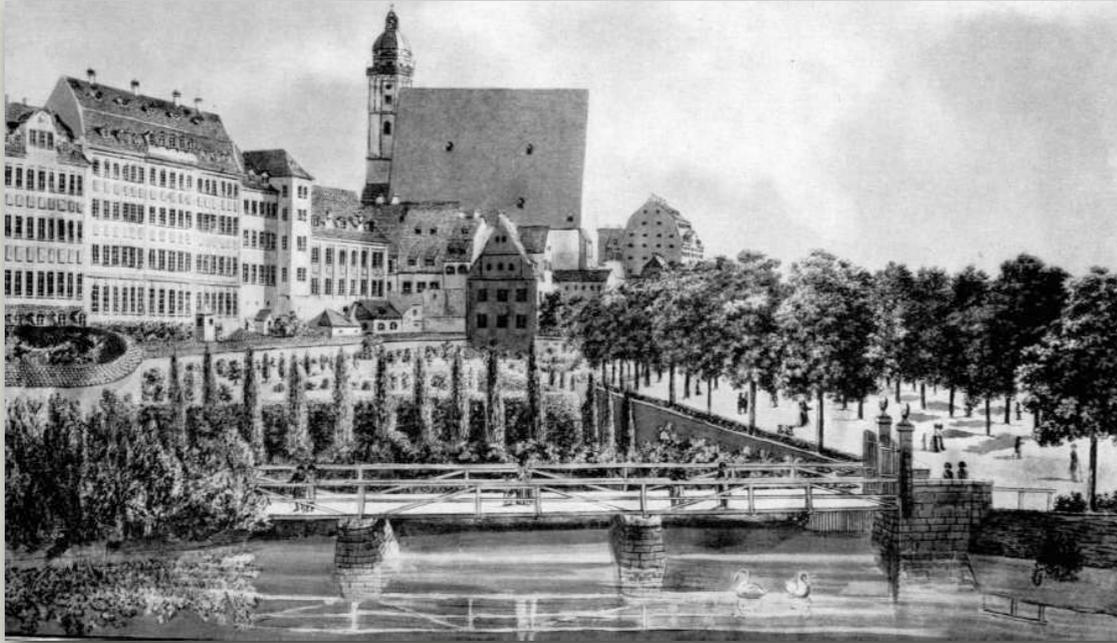


# ST. MATTHEW PASSION (1727)

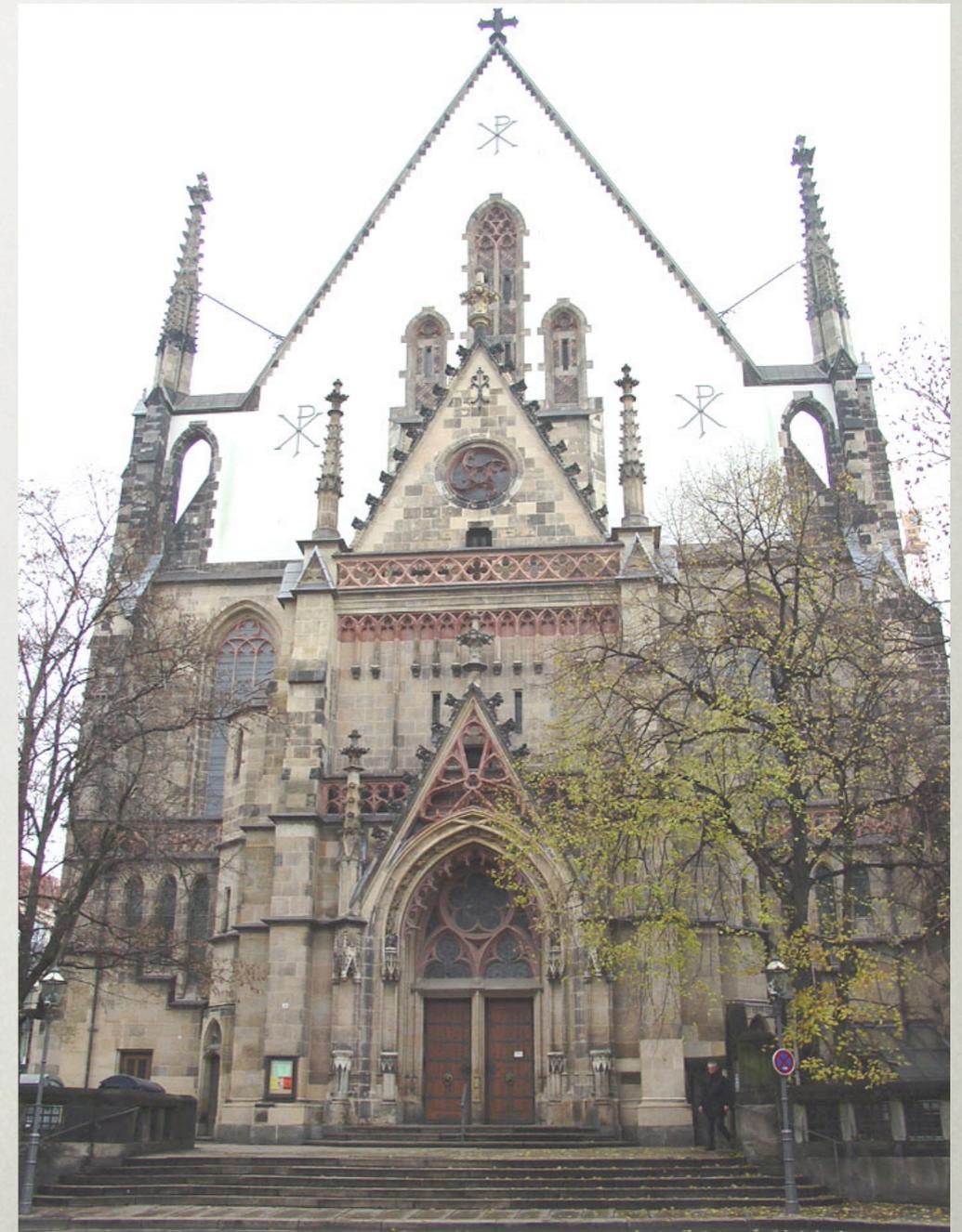
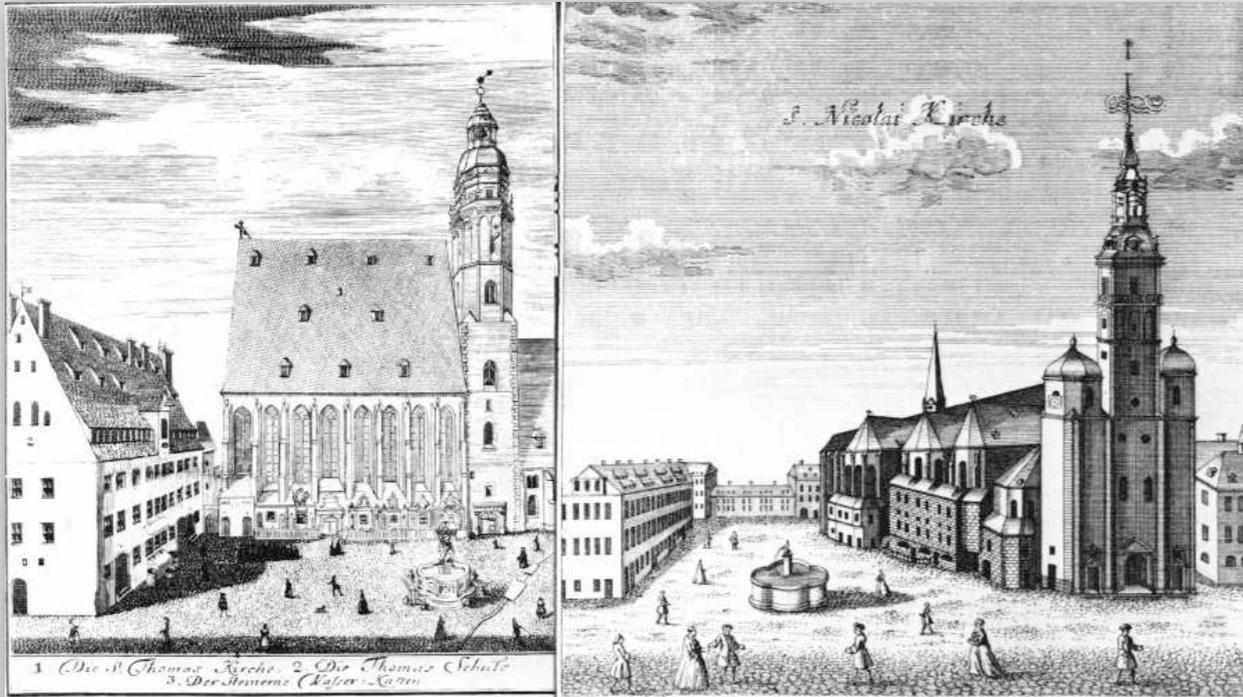
- From the opening chorus

# LEIPZIG

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# THE LAST YEARS



# BACH'S GRAVE IN LEIPZIG

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