

**Jean-Marie Straub on
CHRONICLE OF ANNA MAGDALENA BACH
Passages from a conversation from the 14th, 16th and 18th of May, 2010¹**

From Friday, 14 May 2010

HF: The first reel, that is eight shots, and for me so much is clear: the first reel, that is exactly the time in Köthen, at the court in Köthen. That is the time when Anna Magdalena came together with Bach.

Straub (*simultaneously*): Yes, it ends with: that "his resolution" toward Leipzig as a residence "dwindled during a quarter of a year." --

HF (*simultaneously*): -- "trainierete." [for *dwindled*]

Straub: -- "trainierete." Are you sure it is "trainierete"?

HF: Yes.

Straub: In my memory -- You are probably right, but in my memory it was "trainierte." But that is dangerous, because...

HF: "Trainierete" is a still older form; the "e" has disappeared in the meantime.

Shot 1²

STRAUB: Yes. -- So, the first...?

HF: It surprised me yesterday when you emphasized that the first shot, that is, the first cadenza, which begins even before the first shot, before one sees anything --

Straub: It is like a curtain going up, before an earthquake, or before a --- whirlwind (*Wirbel*). So for me this is the greatest whirlwind in the history of art. No one has created anything stronger since then. Good. -- So, and...?

HF: I wanted to say I was a bit surprised when you said yesterday, that was our very personal decision, that that stands at the beginning, because I have always heard and

¹ During the conversation Straub and HF had the printed German film text at hand: *Jean-Marie Straub, Chronik der Anna Magdalena Bach. Frankfurt/M.: Verlag Filmkritik 1969 (Cinemathek - Ausgewählt Filmtexte 23)*. Find the English translation of the scenario on LE BACHFILM, DVD 2, *Photos et documents inédits*.

² *Shot 1* etc: inserted for organization. A line separates passages: ----- Cuts are rare within them.

experienced it as if almost no other possibility existed. That is also extreme modernity on Bach's part, which is found in this cadenza --

Straub: Yes. Yes.

HF: -- and it is an extreme virtuosity --

STRAUB: Yes.

HF: -- and besides, it is music at the court. And those who are informed, they will rather believe that he had composed it already before Köthen. And at some point it occurred to me that --

Straub: But the chronology is also what is certain. According to Dürr and so on, that would have been the last thing he composed, the last concerto. The last is not the sixth.

HF: And at some point in regard to this beginning a saying occurred to me that I think you have quoted once, namely that this beginning is the tiger's leap into the past. Benjamin says that somewhere -- and so is this beginning.

STRAUB: How?

HF: It is a word from Walter Benjamin that you --

Straub: Ah, the tiger's leap. Yes, because I call that a "whirlwind," that isn't right in German, either. How do you say "*tourbillon*" in German?

That has to do with geology -- yes, with geology. Whether it was conscious or not, that is another question.

HF: With geology?

Straub: Yes, such a movement exists only in great nature.

HF: Yes, and not only in water, but rather sometimes, when one looks at cliffs, one also sees such movements. Only that is a different scale of time.

Straub: Yes. -- And one sees the man who invented or wrote or composed that, say, not as a man or as a human being -- one sees him from behind, that was the wit of it. It's not a great stroke of wit, but wit nonetheless. And one sees, slowly, how his movements emerge, and what kind of energy it takes to reproduce what he has invented on paper.

The one who really deeply felt that, without saying a word, that was Peter Nestler, at the editing table. He had been editing RHEINSTROM in the next room for a few days, and then I said to him at one point, come, we'll show you the beginning of the film -- he really felt that, and even then he made no comment. He felt the same thing somewhat

later in the film with the Ricercar a 6 from the Musical Offering, where Leonhardt is shown a bit less from behind [*shot 93*]. But where the violence of the bodily movement was almost even greater.

Otherwise there are three other points that are related to that: that is naturally the grand organ in Freiberg/Saxony, the grand chorale [*shot 69*], and before that the b-minor piece in Grosshartmannsdorf at the organ [*shot 49*], and finally, but that is almost the reverse, the flip-side, that is the 25th Goldberg Variation [*shot 85*]. But then.... then the virtuosity, we might say, is suppressed, or delayed, and then one has the pain. And Joachim Wolf said to Leonhardt, during the first take, because Leonhardt always did this -- *indicates heavy breathing* -- during the Goldberg Variation: Is that so painful? And Leonhardt said then: I don't know. (*Laughs briefly.*)

Those are the five points that are related and that are a bit different each time. But this beginning is really like a curtain that goes up before an... before Aetna as it begins to spit.

And of course it's not just the composer who is there, but also the performer. That was what we wanted to link together.

So what else would you like to say?

HF: When the shot tracks in, you also see that the notes on the page have been written by hand.

Straub: Yes. -- And that he's reading them, and not playing from memory or acting as if he were playing from memory.

HF: He is also always turning pages.

Straub: Yes.

That was the second practical question that we asked him. When he had told us in Amsterdam he would do it, he had only one lingering doubt -- and we'll maybe talk about that later. And then I asked him: Well, how should we do it. From memory? I said it very shyly. He said: No way, no way. No composer would do that. Have you ever seen Stravinsky? He always had his sheet music there and read it. There aren't composers who play from memory. Then I told him: I thought so, too, and I'm glad that you reacted so strongly.

HF: And what kind of sheet music did he play from?

Straub: I don't know anymore.

HF: Because, well, one can clearly see that they're handwritten. You can even see the traces of an ink stain on the page.

Straub: What kind of manuscripts are out there? The thing that's in Berlin [*autograph score*] and I think there are other parts somewhere else. I don't know or remember if we bound them together, as it seems. But we clearly and obviously didn't make them up and -- or there was a facsimile somewhere. I don't know.

Also of interest is that man there on the wall [*Portrait painting in shot 1*]. I have no idea who that is, but it belonged to the hall in Eutin. And that one across from it -- I never would have put it there. But what always interested us was how, when we had to very precisely come up with a shot for the camera, we had to nevertheless accept everything that had been delivered to us. That chair right there [*in shot 2*] I hated for two hours because I thought you couldn't do it like that. You don't know what it is -- it looks like it would be in a train or a waiting room, and then I suddenly accepted it because of the little interval with the trees and because of the wood on the wall. It is not a seat, it was -- how do you say it? -- along the window and corner. That was a *banquette*. *Poltrone*, *banquette*.

Shot 2 and Shot 1

That's only 24 frames [*shot 2*]

HF: This shot of her is unbelievably short, and --

Straub: It's very simply -- I don't know if it's that unbelievable -- but very simply twenty-four frames, not twenty-five, but twenty-four. Not twenty, but twenty-four.

HF: It was also never important to me to think about whether or not that's the same space in which she's sitting, where --

Straub: That always belonged to our humble craft. No no, we would never have let ourselves, for the sake of a pretty shot: to find a better-looking sofa, a different window. No no, you can even partially recognize that here, that's a piece here that you will find again there [*from shot 2 to shot 1*]. No no, we never let ourselves do that. That always was part of the rules of the game: that you accept what you get.

So yes, she just sat there the entire time while he played. And that was important for him to know precisely that she was there behind him. We and he both felt that he had to have her sitting at his back. She was a musician after all, had studied with Kurt Thomas, etc., and her husband is Drewanz, at Darmstadt. And she listened to him as one who knows music, and he knew very well that she was sitting there and listening and watching him.

Before the one by Leonhardt, I only knew one recording [*of the concerto*] that had impressed me. That was the one by Eduard Müller in Basel. And after a few months, you see, [Leonhardt] confessed to us that he was his teacher. And yes, he had hidden himself under Eduard Müller's harpsichord in Basel to avoid military service in Holland. The Eduard Müller is available on "Archiv" [*the record edition*], which you can hear for yourself. It's a little more bombastic, and has a Swiss character, but it is very, very... And since then I've heard it done ten times by different people, but I never again... yes.

What else would you like to ask about this first reel?

HF: In the script, the first shot of Anna Magdalena is the first one, and the one that is now the first shot was the second.

Straub: The exact same thing happened with the Kafka film: an exterior shot in which he puts down his luggage on the ship. In the script that Fischer [Verlag] published, it's wrong. It's the other way around. But here -- I don't know anymore.

The idea was the other way around. You saw a person, a woman, who was listening and watching. But the idea of a curtain being raised was no longer present, and that's why we... But I don't believe that we changed it at the editing table. That had to have happened earlier.

Reel 2, Shot 9 to Shot 36

Straub: Yes, so -- "Ever since his youth" [*shot 9*], stories of traveling around because of different organs [*shots 9 to 14*]. Then: "But then as a cantor" [*shot 16*], second sequence, with the written documents [*shot 15 to 32*]. Then we could have taken "Jesus gathered about him the 12 Disciples" as the first cantata, since I think that was the first one he had performed in Leipzig [*as its own practice piece, for Estomihi, 7 February 1723*]. We did not do that. Or the one before that, as a practice piece for him [*"You, the True God and David's Son," also for Estomihi Sunday, a practice piece brought from Köthen*]. But we went with the first cantata, the first performed cantata [*shot 16: BWV 75, 30 May, 1723, 1st Sunday, performed as music for his installation*] until Christmas, because that ends with "And the Latin Magnificat for Christmas" [*shot 31-32*]. Then that's an arc again.

HF: And between these two episodes of short shots [*cityscapes shot 9-14, autograph shots 15-32*] -- the first one is the flashback, the second one the first year of cantatas -- there is a shot that is significantly longer, which is shot 15, where you see the handwritten title page of the little organ book.

Straub: Yes, because that's the conclusion of the set of stories about the organ, and it was a possibility to have a bit of punctuation --

HF: So it's the caesura, and that's the connection between these --

Straub: Yes, exactly.

HF: -- and in addition, the fact that one sees the title page of the little organ book connects with what one hears, because that's one of the --

Straub: Trio sonatas.

HF: And that's one of the one or two -- There are only four points in the film, where one only hears the music, and this one here is the first one. And you once said --

Straub: There's a little bit of longing to be found in it, because this organ, this trio sonata then comes across as something that had existed earlier but would never happen again, because his appointment as cantor in Leipzig did not have anything to do with the organ at first, except for a few trips to inaugurate organs. So that is the last time one can mention the organ before ... because then comes his position as cantor.

And we wanted the story of "And the Latin Magnificat for Christmas," and we had hesitated a long time about it, because we wanted to have a piece from one of the four short masses performed, and we weren't able to accomplish it in the construction of the film. We wanted something in Latin before you hear "Kyrie," which is in Greek.

HF: You once said that François Louis pointed you to the trio sonatas.

Straub: Yes. He just died a few days ago. Just to add. One day he said to me -- we were 18, 19, 16 years old, I don't know -- Straub, you should listen to the trio sonatas, if you haven't yet heard them. You would like them, *c'est comme la musique de foire* [*It's like fairground music*].

HF: And then you used precisely those sonatas?

Straub: Hmm... It had to be something that wasn't very intense, although it still had to emotionally connect with nostalgia or longing or youth. But it's nevertheless more, well let's say it's a... piece of film scoring in a documentary film. So it could not be very glossy, so that it wouldn't destroy the commentary. That was a bit complicated. So we selected it in this light. But it's also because there's a feeling to be found inside of it, and because of the volume, and because of the commentary, yes.

HF: It's also beautiful, and that's maybe something someone might want to know, that he's playing the trio sonata on an organ in Lüneburg. With Lüneburg -- [*shot 9 cityscape Lüneburg, beginning of the largo section of the trio sonata*]

Straub: Yes, that's almost the only one we recorded without an image. That has to be the only piece. We made a special trip to Lüneburg with a microphone as high as the organ, a pole about this long -- *indicates its huge length* -- that then moved like this -- *indicates its unsteadiness* -- and the height was... hopefully there wasn't a sudden draft or anything. Yes.

HF: It may occur to some that you see the Merian engravings of Lüneberg, Hamburg, Arnstadt, Lübeck, Mühlhausen, Weimar, and then comes the little organ book [*shot 15*], but there are no cityscapes of Köthen and Leipzig. Only much later do you see one of Dresden again [*shot 68*], but of Köthen and Leipzig, you see nothing.

Straub: Those are also the kind of decisions that you desire to make, that you think it's very good that you don't see Leipzig or Köthen.

What I'd now also like to add about the point we've reached is the "Sicut erat" in the Magnificat. We permitted ourselves to leave out the "Sicut erat in principio." There's a passage right after that [*after the "Gloria Patri"*], that we also permitted ourselves to

leave out. Sometimes I think now that maybe... I've sometimes thought that it was wrong, or that we never should have let ourselves do that.

HF: Did you film that as well?

Straub: No, no. That was decided in advance. They were already tired enough. If we had, on top of that...

HF: In one shot [*shot 33*] the movement of the camera begins almost at the beginning of the take, and I've always liked the spot when you then see the trumpeter prepare to blow.

Straub: They spit even.

HF: Yes, you have to make it moist.

Straub: Yes, these are the things that you of course take into account, and that requires a little bit of patience on location, so that everything is right and -- though it applies for anyone who makes a film -- that's the way it should be. Any film, regardless of which film.

HF: And that is [*up to shot 32*] still the continuation of the trio sonata, and then, after Anna Magdalena had earlier spoken of the time in Köthen, then she tells of his position in Leipzig and about his musical duties and duties as a teacher [*beginning with shot 16*], and there one sees the autographs.

Straub: Of the complete cantatas up to Christmas of the first year. And all different. What is preserved or what has survived is simply different -- sometimes illegible, sometimes very much written by hand, sometimes only one part, sometimes....

HF: You also filmed that very differently, not all in the same way. Sometimes one sees more lines, sometimes fewer lines...

Straub: Yes, yes.

HF: -- a few times there is a pan along a line --

Straub: You always have to avoid uniformity, without being systematic, but...

And again, that one starts out with a church performance in Leipzig, with "S-i-c-u-t l-o-c-u-" -- that is part of my youth, too. That is one of the things that I heard when I was very young and it always went through my head, this fugue. It is a fugue.

And we didn't hesitate to just do a reverse tracking shot in order to show this fugue.

HF: In this year Bach wrote a new cantata every week.

Straub: Yes. Until he started to tinker more with the harpsichord. Until he had again made a few trips because of organs. I don't know exactly, it went up to... When are the so-called choral cantatas?

HF: That is not the first year, that --

Straub: No, but it is still the beginning. Then he would become ... no longer so regular.

But, after this fugue from the Magnificat and "Gloria," without "Sicut erat," the last passage -- then... one connects with the narrative again. We have heard of the children, "and from their marriage ... were alive" [*shot 3*], and here it sets off for the first time, no longer about new appointments or moving around: "Of our first three children," and it sets off "Death robbed us," yes [*shot 34*].

HF: So then in the music there is a completely unbelievable connection, the Magnificat, hasn't yet faded away and already Anna Magdalena starts --

Straub: Yes, we were consciously playing with that --

HF: -- and that really collides.

Straub: -- Yes, because what she plays after the fugue and these trumpets and this Latin music, it sounds as if someone has suddenly fallen into the abyss, so... domestic, adn house music.

And that is Eutin Castle already, with the trees beyond the window. But we brought the piano with us, it's a Skowronek form Leonhardt, and we brought this furniture with us too. It comes from Blankenese, where we rented it from an antique shop, yes.

HF: And after she plays it to the end, she looks over at the child, but you don't see the child anymore.

Straub: Yes.

HF: And that's also one of the two children whose death is spoken of.

Straub: Yes. Without metaphorically falling into it or exaggerating it, of course, it was thought that the child disappears there, and therefore we permitted ourselves to look beyond her head... And in this glance after the child is no longer to be seen, then there is agaom a tender longing.

And there's: "the first composition that he had printed" [*shots 34 and 35*]

HF: It seems to me that has a correspondence to the part in the first reel where Friedemann plays [shot 3] and she plays [shot 6], and you see both of them, and then you see "The Well-Tempered Clavier" [*Handwritten manuscript, shot 4*] and --

Straub: Yes, yes, that's its return, an echo, a variation.

HF: But now it's printed. [shot 35, *partial printed copy from 1726*]

Straub: Yes. As Opus I, second shot [shot 36, *printed copy from 1731*]. We also wanted it like that because we wanted to somehow tell people that, at the time, a musical composer could have been over thirty years old and still not have published anything. And he had it printed himself. And after that, after that something bursts.

Reel 3, shots 37 through 39

[*Indicating the recitative:*] "Ja! ja! Die Stunden sind nunmehr nah" [*Yes! Yes. The hours are henceforth near*] and so on. A lot of light bursts in there as well.

And it's interesting that, without our having wanted it or planned it or tried it or... programmed it in: This is where -- and I would say this in quotation marks, although I don't like quotation marks -- the anarchistic aspect of Leonhardt is suddenly there. As he remains alone at the harpsichord, and then, "And when the roofs crack" -- he really smiles joyously, without its being calculated. If you think that this is a man who adores architecture, that does mean something. And then he does something with his hand for "Und wenn die Dächer krachen" [*emphasizes the "Dächer" -- And when the roofs crack*] -- that there is a deep smile. Joy about the roofs that crack.

HF: So that's the reason why you took this aria from this *Dramma per Musica*?

Straub: Yes, because it's such a capricious personal choice. We always liked it, because it had a lot of anarchy in it, and even lots of joy.

HF: Let's come back to the Aeolus aria, since you have spoken about Leonhardt's anarchistic moment -- was it already determined that you would take this piece?

Straub: Yes, yes. Yes, because that was the aspect of Bach that we can't get from so many cantatas which we couldn't get anyway because of the construction or the narrative or the biography. That is the aspect that is precisely the opposite of what Stravinsky argued. We wanted to let it be felt at least once in the film that for Bach, everything was possible in music: wind, fire, air, fire, air, air -- That is what we wanted to show.

But what baffles me is how one comes from this... oh yes: "He was placed in charge ... by the students" [shot 38], that is so that one knows that it also had to do with students --

HF: First comes the music, and then comes the explanation.

Straub: Yes, yes, the other way around. And so we come very simply to the Funeral Ode [*shot 39*].

And that is actually a "Ruhet wohl" ["Rest in Peace"]. And after the "Ruhet wohl" [*shot 39*] comes the aria from the Passion, with different words [*shot 41*], and after the aria comes the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion, and then the reel is over [*reel 4*].

[*With "Ruhet wohl" Straub describes here the concluding chorus of the Funeral Ode, as it is performed in shot 39, and then the concluding chorus of the St. Mark Passion, the text of which is different.*]

But that was the foundational architecture of the film, these blocks: with the air-and-wind aria [*shot 37*], "Ruhet wohl" [*shot 39*], the aria from the St. Matthew Passion [*shot 41*], the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion [*shot 42*]. It forms a powerful architecture, a great range... yes, and what is that again in such a film? Then you suddenly see a few stones and a little bit of water. (*Laughs a little.*) That then comes across not only as punctuation, but rather it comes across as -- let's say, really foreign, and that is somewhat like Rouault in a different way [*shot 86*].

And that cost us a trip, and we filmed it at four o'clock in the morning -- we were already there with our camera. Until a bashful sun turned up.

I would call that quite consciously... the trivial aspect of the film.

HF: Both of these funeral pieces -- the funeral ode for the queen [*shots 38 and 39*] and the funeral music for the prince [*shot 40 and 41*], the latter having a connection with the St. Matthew Passion, they also share a context, as well. Because the final chorus of the funeral ode is used again in the funeral music for the prince of Köthen -- You don't hear it in the film, but that is a subterranean connection. And then this final chorus of the funeral ode is also used again as the final chorus of the St. Mark Passion.

Straub: That is the "Ruhet wohl" from the St. Mark Passion.

shot 41

HF: By the way, I always thought that it's Christiane Lang herself who's singing [*in shot 41*], but that isn't her.

Straub: Yes, that is something that we never permitted ourselves in a film, where it's... someone else who sings. It was because she was sick, and the other one was just to the side, at the very edge.

HF: That means it had been planned that she sang herself?

Straub: Yes, yes, she didn't want to. Leonhardt also said that she couldn't do it. And so we accepted it as an experiment. These experiments also belong... well, they

mean that you are now and then ready to make an exception to your great principles, that you're not always remaining stubborn.

shot 42

And about the St. Matthew Passoin, since we just arrived there: I have to also say, that it was the only spot in the film where I... how many takes had we planned? Is it still written somewhere? [*i.e. in the script*]

HF: There are, I think, four different positions.

Straub: Yes, one chorus, the other chorus, Cantus firmus, orchestra, right, left, center and so on.

HF: Yes. And how did you do it with the sound?

Straub: Kept setting up again and again...

HF: But the way you've cut it, you could not have edited the sound.

Straub: Oh, yes. But it is --

HF: The "Sehet!" [See!] from the one shot, and the "Wen?" [Who?] from the other shot?

Straub: Yes. There were points in the score, where you could have simply interrupted. And then we recorded it almost like a rehearsal [*as a whole*], and with this first take I said, let's not do the separate shots -- so that people could talk with Hochet in the sacristy and with Leonhardt about the sound recording and microphones -- I told you that we don't do individual takes. We'll record it in one whole block. And that is how it stayed.

And even then the first take was better than the four others or the three others. I don't know anymore.

Only the attack was not good. Then we conferred and Leonhardt said, let's take this one because it is much better than the next three, despite the first measure, which is off. Then he said, you know what you do, you lay the commentary over it.

HF: Leonhardt said that?

Straub: Yes [*The last words of the commentary, "for the first time" at the beginning of shot 42.*] We would have put the commentary there anyway, because that was the only place -- but it fit.

HF: I still don't quite understand the solution before, with the different shots. Had you filmed it all completely through with each camera position?

Straub: No. no no. We would have allowed ourselves to make blocks and splice them together. We had mentioned that to Leonhardt and he had agreed. It was a little unsettled, but...

Naturally, when I say that now and you react that way, it's quite clear it was shit. But I only noticed that it was shit after the first rehearsal take. Then I said to Danièle right away, we're not doing it. She didn't make a sound, she just went -- *makes a gesture* -- to me.

HF: Because those are such short segments: "see!", "Whom?", "The Bridegroom."

Straub [simultaneously]: "Where?" "To Where?", "Where?", "To where?", yes, "Like a lamb," "slaughtered at the foot of the cross," that would have been one piece, "Slaughtered at the foot of the cross" would have been one segment.

HF: And then the musicians would only have played this piece?

Straub: Yes. -- Maybe that would have gone wrong. That's why we first wanted to have three good takes of the whole thing, because I was naturally very unsettled. But I didn't give up because I still wanted to do it. We had planned four days and we did it in one. Because it was very crowded up there with this whole band, and all the equipment to carry up.

HF: With such a shot as the one from the St. Matthew Passion, where did you have the light?

Straub: Everywhere. There was even lighting outside.

HF: The organ loft of St. Thomas is always from this side.

Straub: Yes, that is the St. Wilhadi Church in Stade.

HF: And the University Church is always from the other side.

Straub: Yes. It is called St. Cosmae.

Stade in the "Altes Land" [Lower Saxony].

HF: How did you come upon Stade?

Straub: Ah, who knows? We just traveled around, partly because of the few organs that we have in the film, we criss-crossed the "Altes Land" for months and months. We traveled by bus -- and then because of the St. Thomas Church we searched everywhere. We even had one church in Switzerland, in a cloister; that was the beginning. That was Wenzinger's idea -- what is it called, on the Rhine? Yes, and then we

discovered Stade, by accident, I don't remember. We liked Stade a lot, as a small city that had remained at the stage where Leipzig probably was at that time. It has what they call film; it also has to do with history and sociology. And the fact that just there in this town two churches had been preserved and restored a bit, that was also not incidental. That was because the historical development... That was up on the Elbe, very close. We stayed there. And you know what happened a few years later?

HF: An atomic power plant.

Straub: Yes. -- Exactly where we had our little hotel, where we stayed with all the sound people and so on. The others were in the city. The musicians were all divided among three hotels in the city. And we were up there on the Elbe. And the Elbe is wonderful; it's wide. Every evening when we drove home, as one says, we were quite happy.

Again shot 42

HF: The funeral music from which Anna Magdalena sings the aria, which is in the St. Matthew Passion [with a different text] is the after all the mourning music for the prince who had been seen before [*shot 8*]. Who had died very young.

Straub: "the Prince died in Köthen and, as a former court-singer, I helped make there the funeral music, completed and performed by the former chapel-master" [*shot 40 - 41*]. Do you know where that is from? We didn't want to invent such sentences, that comes --

HF: From the necrology?

Straub: No, those are accounts from the court. The only part we struck out: "Mrs. So and so was paid so and so much for funeral music," "was paid so and so much," we took out. So small parts of sentences are from me: "...and I helped make there."

Yes, what you don't know is that there is a story there, or something one has to relate. That's the only moment where Hochet grew pale and almost fell over. Because in in this church in Preetz the box [the organ loft] where we were was all made of wood, and the church was all stone. And there was a huge problem for three whole hours. Because of the instruments -- flutes and oboe -- that was really a problem. We had to do some tinkering... and then came the decision to use the sound from the other woman. And that worked fine. And because she really was a singer [Christiane Lang-Drewanz], it was only possible with her because she really had made every motion with her mouth and everything. The only thing that was not hers were the actual sounds, because she physically just didn't have the sounds.

HF: What did you tinker with to solve these acoustical problems?

Straub: The microphones, millimeter by millimeter. That was a problem of space, of two spaces.

HF: Did you have to set up walls like Renoir did sometimes?

Straub: No, we never wanted to do that. We also didn't have room.

Again shot 42

HF: Can you remember of there were pieces of music that are now in the film that you knew very early on should be included?

Straub: Hm... It's silly, but let's say the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion. Otherwise... yes, when we got to that point -- is there a date there? [*in the script*] -- when we got to that point we knew that we didn't want to change the pieces of music. So, since [19]66 the selection of the music was definitive; we wouldn't have changed a thing.

HF: And the selection of music is all from you two? There is nothing from Leonhardt included?

Straub: No. Not a trace. -- No no, when he got it he said, good, good.

Then after filming the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion and then during the days of filming he said: I have been dreaming of this music four nights long, really dreaming. The structure within it -- Lamb of God -- and he said, that comes from your filming. Until then that never happened to me.

From Sunday, 16 May 2010.

On rehearsing with the musicians

HF: How long or how much did Leonhardt need to rehearse the individual pieces for the individual shots? It would vary, of course.

Straub: No, no, not at all; he didn't want to. It was only to be sure of the microphone and so on. He didn't want to rehearse. The musicians had done their work and the singers had done their work and he gathered them together and right away he -- No no, he had no great wish to rehearse. That was not his style at all.

HF: He had rehearsed with the musicians beforehand?

Straub: No. -- They came prepared, like the boys. He was not in the country house where the boys practiced for three weeks. He left that to Hennig.

HF: And the musicians had also practiced on their own?

Straub: Naturally.

HF: I think you once said that before the film Leonhardt had hardly ever conducted an orchestra.

Straub: Probably, yes. -- After the question of whether to use a score or no score came the funny question of a baton or no baton.

Gielen, when he saw the film for the first time, was enthusiastic about Leonhardt's conducting technique, as they say. He wouldn't believe he had never conducted. He said, such gestures of the conductor are unheard of, that is unique. And that was very nice, since it has nothing to do with vanity. He said, What he does there, he is the only one who can do that. And the way he does it, the precision of the hands and the arms, for him [Gielen] as a conductor, that was a revelation. Aside from the interpretation.

Again on shot 37 to 42.

HF: The last time we had already discussed almost up to the St. Matthew Passion, but I want to come back to what comes immediately before it: the Aeolus [*shot 37*], the Funeral Ode [*shot 39*], and the the aria from the Funeral Music [*shot 41*].

Straub: That produces different layers -- things that were known or [some] that were never performed or recorded, and things that were very well known as recordings. The Aeolus was known, but not very well. The aria had never been recorded with these words, or the Funeral Ode, either, I don't think.

HF: The Aeolus and the Funeral Ode that immediately follow one another are both commissions from the university [*students*], which is also said in the commentary [*for the Funeral Ode*].

So: the two pieces of music from the university, the first for a birthday [of a professor], the second for a death [of the queen], and then comes the death of the prince. And this funeral music which was performed for the Prince of Köthen is lost, has not been preserved -- *only the text is preserved* -- but one can reconstruct them because so many pieces are in the St. Matthew Passion. And furthermore, the chorus one hears in shot 39 [*from the funeral ode for the queen*] also appears in the music for the prince. So there again -- it is all intertwined.

Straub: That is so.

HF: Strangely, there seems to be some uncertainty when the St. Matthew Passion was performed for the first time, whether it was performed in 1729 or as early as 1727.

Straub: Yes, how is that? If it was 1727, then the aria would be...

HF: Then the aria would have come out of [!] the St. Matthew Passion and into the funeral music--

Straub: Yes, well, I can say one thing about that: Leonhardt would instantly bellow and cry out and say that cannot be. This path --- it's unknown, is absolutely impossible for a Baroque person. What is called a parody, that can only go --

HF: -- in one direction.

Straub: Exactly. And one would never have dared to make a piece of secular music out of a piece of church music, never. So he was so fanatical about that, you can hardly imagine.

HF: But then, in a certain way they are both church pieces.

Straub: How?

HF: Even the funeral music is not secular music like the Aeolus, but rather that is the funeral [*in the church*]. So at least it is closer to the liturgy. And it has always amazed me that Dürr writes: "The thesis that the funeral music was the original model and the St. Matthew Passion represents the parody fails to convince me." So, that made me wonder.

Straub: Perhaps he was overly hasty, but I liked the idea of "And three weeks later" [*shot 41*]. At that point, naturally, even Leonhardt's fanaticism -- it has a gap, a loophole, a limitation. Because in that case, even if it was three weeks later and not earlier, the point is naturally that it happened practically at the same time. With all the material on the St. Matthew Passion, who knows whether he wrote the aria for the St. Matthew Passion first and then secretly the text for the funeral music. That's why I liked the idea of "three weeks later." That confuses a bit and creates a certain disorder, which I liked.

Or a doubt, let's say.

Straub: So, in short, this block including the Aeolus, the funeral ode, the funeral music and the St. Matthew Passion is really something very daring in its construction and

very interesting, because it's devilishly un-chronological and un-ideological, too. We didn't brood over it very much, but I'm very proud of it.

And that occurs a second time later on, but a bit more simply.

HF: And one encounters one more thing at this point, which is very important. We already talked about the fact that after the Magnificat [*shot 33*] the gavotte follows immediately [*shot 34*], and you've said that is like an abyss one is falling into. And --

Straub: That's also the idea -- into the private sphere.

HF: Yes, and after the "Like a lamb" comes no more music. The sea comes first, then the sun --

Straub: Yes.

HF: -- and then there is no more music for quite some time.

Straub: What does that mean? You'll have to explain that to me.

HF: I'm not explaining anything at all, but I'm trying to say what I experience at that point. One could say the the Magnificat has a right to be followed by a silence. But what is essential, and what you have done here, it that it is not a system but rather a --

Straub: That is what you called rhythm before; that is construction. That is why many films, even some of the most beautiful, collapse and fall apart. Because they have not worked to the very end to create a -- let's take a horrible word -- tension, which at least...holds up. And the ideal is not that it it holds up but rather that it very slowly increase. But not as far as... to the moon. And gradually, yes. And those are things that were there on paper, but naturally took on concrete form through the power of nerves at the editing table. On paper one can't just think: conclusion of Magnificat and immediately the harpsichord affair; there's no such thing. One writes the one after the other. What then emerges as a bang or an explosion -- that emerges at the editing table. And there every musicologist or every child would have said, please, that won't work, that's too harsh, and so on.

HF: But apparently you had an idea of how that could be, because it is carried out exactly as it was put down [*in the script*].

Straub [*at the same time*]: And that's what one tortures oneself with before shooting, even if it is all put down on paper.

One should both be mercilessly hard on oneself, as Vlado said, and parallel to that and in spite of it all, very cautious, painstaking and very -- gentle. That's a tiny bit of the dialectic, let's say.

Shot 44, and 45 to 47

HF: Now we are at the three Town Councillors and then comes the "Short but Most Necessary Draft" and that --

Straub: Yes, well, that was the sharp reply to "Not only does this cantor not do anything" [*shot 44*]. Then comes Bach's indirect answer, that's what that piece is [*shot 45 - 47*]. At least that's what we allowed ourselves for the film.

HF: That is also there a bit earlier already. One hears the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion and that is already an answer to that: the three of them sit there and one says, he does not do anything.

Straub: Yes, a construction must always go this way and that way, forwards and backwards, otherwise it's not a construction. Yes, well then?

HF: Then comes the cantor and reads from the "Draft" --

Straub: The first word is important: "It is notorious."

HF: That is the first time we hear his voice --

Straub: Not only that. His handwriting [and his language].

HF: His handwriting has been --

Straub: Seen in the cantatas.

HF: Yes, and also --

Straub: In the titles.

HF: -- in the text by Anna Magdalena there was already something that comes from him.

Straub: Yes, in the text, "for which reason also his resolution dwindled during a quarter of a year." That was naturally a letter from Bach. "My resolution dwindled." We would never have allowed ourselves to invent something like that. But it was amusing, to go from "my" to "his"... He writes, "I had a music loving as well as knowing gracious Prince." That becomes "He had" [*shot 7 - 8*]. So, well, what did you want to say about that now?

HF: There are two places in the film where one sees Bach and Anna Magdalena together. That was before --

Straub: In the aria. And now.

HF: -- in the aria, and here. And those are three shots that I think are so unbelievably beautiful --

Straub: That is in the library of Haseldorf Castle.

HF: -- that each time they take one's breath away -- or I don't know, they give one breath probably, these three shots. Even his movements: in his right hand he has the quill, still, the quill, and the left arm at first is lying across the writing --

Straub: Yes, because my first rebellion regarding cinema goes in this direction, in this area, and the people who act as if they are painting a picture in front of the camera, a painting by Van Gogh or whatever. Or as if they put some composer's score quickly on paper with a quill -- I always found that idiotic. So here we tried something different. Every child, and not only the most idiotic of filmmakers and even many others, would have shown a little writing with the quill before he reads. Yes, now, only the quill is left.

HF: But in the way he reads it and how he moves as he reads, he also phrases it right. And at a point where it says, "But since the present status musices...", he props his left arm up, and while he then continues on, he moves his left hand while speaking.

Straub: Yes and what he says there is really quite proud and very... "are more complicated" and so on, that is very personal and very autobiographical. Where is the passage? [*First in shot 62.*]

Then comes the cynical matter with the corpses...

HF: That comes later; it's in the letter to Erdmann in Danzig [shot 48].
So it is these three shots: first one sees him reading, then one sees her --

Straub: Then one sees for the first time a loving gesture, Anna Magdalena's hand.

HF: -- and that is really unbelievable, the way she lays her hand on his shoulder for a moment. That arises completely from her motion as she walks around him; it emerges from that as if on its own.

Straub: "But since the present status musices is now quite different from that heretofore, since taste has changed wonderfully," and so on, "the former kind of music will no longer sound to our ears, and all the more," that is quite autobiographical. Very self-aware.

And then he writes a personal letter dealing with money [*shot 48*].

HF: Now in regard to these three shots [*shot 45 - 47*] I wanted to raise something else -- are you still willing?

Straub: Yes yes.

HF: Namely, in the script that is quite different.

Straub: Aha. What is? -- I need to learn something.

HF: Here in the film it is three shots [*shot 45 - 47*].

Straub: You mean the reading from the "Well-Appointed Music"?

HF: Yes. And here in the script it is five shots.

In shortened form:

Medium shot of the door: AMB comes into the frame, stops, listens. The cantor reads (off screen).

Close-up: Handwritten manuscript of the "Draft" in the hand of the cantor, who continues to read.

Close-up of the cantor still continuing to read.

Close-up to medium long shot: first close-up of AMB, then pan with her to the window and to the cantor who sits at his desk and continues to read, medium long shot.

Shot of the sky. The cantor continues to read (off screen).

Straub (*with the script*): But that is dropped. [*That is likely to mean the first of the shots, AMB at the door, in which the cantor reads (off screen) from a passage before "It is notorious," with which he begins to read in the film.*]

HF: That is dropped. And then one would first have seen the writing and heard the cantor reading, and only then would one have seen him. And then it is somewhat different, when she moves. But the big difference is that there would have been an image of the sky.

Straub: Hm. With which text?

HF: "all kinds of music" --

Straub: -- "whether it come... [from Italy or France]", that is the origin -- *laughing* -- the clouds bring that to us from France.

The last decisions one makes like the ones here, that is like playing poker or throwing dice. It's always a wager. That's also a challenge to oneself. It's never a question of calculation and so on.

HF: That means that when one now sees these three shots as they are, one thinks that could be no other way, that is the --

Straub: -- the only solution.

HF: -- that has found the form that is the only solution. But when one reads the script one sees that perhaps there could have been a different solution. That would have been a different solution, but not an inferior solution.

Straub: But that would have been too bad for the clouds at the end. During the aria, the duet [*shot 83*].

Shot 48

Straub: By the way, there is an error here. There would almost have been another one, but we corrected it in time. The first error is -- even Leonhardt is partly guilty, in spite of everything.

(*Quotes from the Recitative in shot 48*): "the doors were closed for fear of the Jews [Juden]," it says in the score of, who is it, Peters.

HF: Perhaps it would have to say "Jüden."

Straub: Naturally, and in the film it says "Juden." I'm still ashamed.

Someone corrected that in the first edition and no one checked it.

And that would have been Leonhardt's responsibility, because he spent ten days in the hotel in Stade checking every piece that Danièle had copied by hand with the quill, every part and so on. He found not one error there, I have to admit. Then he said to Danièle, My compliments. it's strange that you have never written music. -- And this we simply overlooked -- I as well as Danièle and Leonhardt and the singers. Jüden.

HF: How much did Danièle write of the sheet music, because you --

STRAUB: Everything where -- there are many cantatas, I don't know anymore, we still have at home, no, we destroyed them, because we didn't want that in the world... If there was no facsimilie, a score, there was only one score of this or that work, then there would be parts that were missing. I could be wrong, but it could be that the sheets that are there for the St. Matthew Passion don't exist. That would be sheets done by Danièle. She bought paper like the paper Bach had, and made a gadget with five quills and such -- for months and years she did that at night, in Schwanthalerstrasse. They need the parts in order to sing, and if there were no original parts from a work, Danièle produced them from the score. And Leonhardt really... there he was, didn't move for hours on end, trying to find one error.

HF: That means you didn't use any printed sheet music?

STRAUB: No. Nowhere.

HF: And the boys, they had to learn to sing from this handwritten sheet music.

STRAUB: Yes. One also sees how they turn the sheets around. Those are sheets like the original parts, whenever they are not the original parts themselves.

HF: This cantata that comes now, "Am Abend desselbigen Sabbats" [But in the evening of the same sabbath] --

STRAUB: Ah, this aria is wonderful. That is a personal selection. Because I wanted an evening to be seen and heard. And Bach accomplishes that. Not only air and fire, but also light.

HF: That is a cantata --

STRAUB: That is the most beautiful thing I know of Bach's, except the aria "Am Abend da es kühle war... kam die Taube wieder, und trug ein Ölblatt in dem Munde" [In the evening, when it was cool... the dove came back, bearing an olive leaf in its mouth"]. What were you saying? I interrupted you.

HF: Yes, that is another... I don't know what that is. The cantata is for Quasimodogeniti Sunday, that is the first Sunday after Easter. That means, there is the Passion, and the next music one hears is the Sunday after Easter.

STRAUB: Yes, the time is very short there.

HF: And between --

STRAUB: Is the reading.

HF: Between is the reading, and between are the Town Councillors and --

STRAUB: Well, I admit...

HF: -- and between is, as you've said, the bashful sun, and between is also, if one takes it from the Church Year, then between is Easter. That means, in between is also the resurrection.

STRAUB: Fine. We were lucky then. -- But one thing we took very seriously from a liturgical point of view: that is the only piece in the film that is not music by Bach. That was the _th Sunday after Pentecost. In Latin it is "Tu dixisti," that he "convertatur," that he converts [*shot 63, Motet for the 11th Sunday after Trinity*]

STRAUB: And with this aria I'm very proud of one point: that is a lesson in theater. It is really a theatrical performance, because the camera tracks, and what happens then when he stands up, that is really like theater. And that probably also unconsciously has something to do with Renoir.

Because of the music and so on, that is really great theater. Much more theatrical than any opera.

HF: And then Anna Magdalena speaks first, "He had written to a friend from his youth in Danzig," and then one year the Cantor reading from this letter, which is about money, and about the fact that he had "a loss of more than 100 thalers" because too few people were dying.

STRAUB: What, what, what? Beforehand?

HF: While one hears the sinfonia that starts the cantata, he reads --

STRAUB: Yes, and then lightning strikes again in the film.

HF: And how! And how!

Shot 49

STRAUB: With the Prelude in D minor. A tiny organ but the most excellent that I know aside from Alkmaar.

HF: How did you arrive at the Grosshartmannsdorf?

STRAUB: Probably through a book on Silbermann. And then one sees Leonhardt act like a puppet for the only time in the film. But he was as giddy as a child, as he played that.

And after this outburst of joy follows a litany: "We had just lost our one-and-one-half-year-old Christiane Dorothea. And death soon robbed us as well of our four-year-old Regine Johanna and little Johann August Abraham two days after his birth." End of the reel.

And that is again the contrast with the organ.

Shot 51 and following

STRAUB: Yes and now comes the shock, let's say. After little Johann August Abraham comes the shock of music that is only heard. And not by accident is this the Kyrie from the co-called B-minor Mass. And not only does one only hear it, without performance, but one sees the sheet music, which has hardly occurred before now.

HF: That is the only time since all the cantatas that one again sees hand-written notes, but in this case one sees the music and hears it at once.

STRAUB: Yes, probably the only time.
Those are things that belong to -- the grand word -- art. Either one plays with repetitions, or one plays with things that are not repeated. Those are then variations in one sense and variations in another sense: that belongs to the play -- the game -- that has been called art. Yes.

HF: And while one hears the instrumental part of the Kyrie, one again hears the voice of the Cantor reading from his letter of tribute. Which is quite simple in a way, because for Bach that belongs together.

STRAUB: Yes, but it's also scandalous. Because here the great Lutheran is offering his services to a great Catholic ruler. And look what he wrote for this: a Latin mass. And not a *missa brevis*, which would be suited to a worship service in Leipzig, but rather one that would not be usable.

And then that is linked together at the end: "He also wrote for the mass," which he dedicated to so-and-so, "and he wrote," "appended an earlier Gloria," "and also wrote a Sanctus and a Hosanna," and so on. That comes at the conclusion [*shot 105 to 110*]. There one has a complete Catholic mass. Here it is not yet complete [*shot 51 to 56*], but is in the process of being completed, because one immediately hears the Osanna with "Frohes Volk," [*The "Preise dein Glück" (Proclaim your fortune), shot 57, was worked into the B-minor Mass as "Osanna."*]

HF: I think one also does not know when this Kyrie was performed during Bach's lifetime. Whether they performed it in Dresden isn't known, I don't think

STRAUB: But "in tiefster Devotion eine grosse Missa" [*With the deepest devotion a grand mass*] [*shot 51*] -- where does that come from? Consisting provisionally only of Kyria and Gloria, but grand. We didn't invent that.

HF: No, he dedicated it, but apparently it's not known whether they then performed it in Dresden.

STRAUB: Ah, I think it's known for sure that he never had it performed. I read somewhere that the parts had never been touched. It's also known that the Brandenburg Concertos were never performed there in Brandenburg. Because they were untouched. No one had unpacked them.

HF: It was three more years before he received the title of court composer [in Dresden] and he had to write again.

STRAUB: And immediately after the orchestral interlude of the Kyrie "an evening music" [*Abendmusik*] is announced [*shot 56*], and the evening music is the Osanna.

That's the bit of wit, and another very small virtue of this film, that grand words are avoided. It's funny after all, that the Osanna is introduced as an evening music. Because first of all that is specific and true, and second it's not turned into a grand artistic presentation. Or performance. Yes.

HF: And these Drammata per Musica that one sees as printed texts --

STRAUB: That is a series, a sequence [*shot 52 - 56*].

HF: -- much of that went into the Christmas Oratorio. [*Cf. shot 58*]

STRAUB: Yes. -- That is also only a "charnière" as one says. "And at Christmas in the same year he gave...", and that is once more a piece [*i.e. the chorale from shot 60, 61, 62?*] that we wanted to put into the puzzle. Because this chorale is something so important to me that we dragged it into a film for the second time, in BRIDEGROOM.

Shot 59, 60 and 61

HF: I thought you perhaps had a special relationship to this Ascension Oratorio and to this chorale.

STRAUB: Yes, yes, you were right about that.

HF. For one thing, because it's in BRIDEGROOM, and --

STRAUB: Because of the expansiveness and on the other hand, by contrast, one comes to the same word again: impatience. "Du Tag, wann wirst du sein" [O day, when wilt thou be" -- that is the idea from BRIDEGROOM. And we wanted to have it in the Bach film.

HF: And like the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion only this music gets its own image of the sea, in addition.

STRAUB: Yes. -- Because this completes the block: Kyrie, Osanna, Chorale. It's yet another way to make audible and to show how that is connected for Bach in his own works. Here with a foreign order, another order.

And then one sees something private again.

Shot 62 and following, conflict over the prefect Krause

HF: Yes, or less something private, but rather something professional --

STRAUB: Yes, professional, let's say professional. That is a counterpart to the Well-Appointed Church Music [*shot 45- 47*].

And not by coincidence did that also happen in Haseldorf. Those were lovely people.

[Like shots 45-47, shot 62 is also filmed there]

HF: With this conflict over the prefect Krause, it has turned out in the film as you have said once before: there has to be a connection between the realities one has at hand -- the music and the autographs and the texts and Leonhardt. And I believe it really has been accomplished, because Leonhardt's temperament is itself strongly present in this conflict. And when Leonhardt says, "Ich kehre mich daran durchaus nicht, es mag kosten was es will" [I don't care in the least, cost what it may], he is very restrained, very measured.

Straub: Yes, but also decisive. It's then we realized that he is a great actor.

We rehearsed for days with the one who answers him then, the rector [*shot 65*], so that he would be able to more or less learn it and get it across. With Leonhardt we rarely had that -- he'd never heard Wolf before then, he heard him for the first time before he said, "I don't care in the least, cost what it may." That was the first time he had heard Wolf. And that was on film, we didn't film that ten times. The boys were coming out of the church, that took an eternity with the door and the noise of the feet in the church, with the echo. And they came out and there was someone else outside the door who immediately started up -- *indicates the tone of voice* -- "Babababababa," and Leonhardt was almost surprised because that was something quite new to him. Also the scene where he grabs Krause and takes him to the stairs [*shot 63*] we barely rehearsed.

Behind this Calvinist lurks a great actor. He conceals himself. But he's inside there.

HF: From what I have read about Bach --

STRAUB: Again, that is the disparate aspect: here is suddenly a moment of feature film. But what did you want to say? I interrupted you.

HF: I got something of the impression that Bach, as one can imagine from what is documented, had something of your temperament.

STRAUB: He has what?

HF: He had a temperament more like yours. Bach more or less explodes. Not like this, even in very critical situations, in such a temperate way as Leonhardt.

STRAUB: That too -- in life and in such situations where... How do you know he would explode? Besides, this is about theater and there is no explosion; in theater there is theater. And violence in theater is not an explosion; violence is violence.

What?

HF: Because of this Krause affair Bach and Rector Ernesti wrote long letters to the Leipzig Town Council and in one letter Ernesti writes -- (he was still rector when Bach died, and he acted with great correctness in regard to Anna Magdalena, the widow) -- and ...

STRAUB: With great correctness but they refused her every penny after Bach's death.

HF: The issue was whether she could still reside for half a year in the Cantor's lodgings. He supported that. He was also Godfather to at least one child before Bach and he had their falling out.

STRAUB: So you see, Bach didn't explode after all.

HF: But in a letter to the Leipzig Council Ernesti writes that Bach had chased Krause "out of the [organ] loft with bellowing." So, if that is exaggerated...

STRAUB: Yes, well bellowed. What could he have bellowed? In the film he bellows, "Away!" That's something. That suffices. "Out!" in the middle of the worship service, that is bellowing...amidst the music, even. The people below certainly heard something of the "Out!"

What did you say?

HF: Bach also did comical things. There was a conflict with a director of the boarding school, from Freiberg, I think, who wrote that the music was detrimental to the pupils. Bach then took that up and engaged someone to write a reply. Bach then edited this reply, making it much stronger. And in it there is a passage where he turns the word "rector" around, saying that if people would clean out their dirty ears (Dreck-Ohr), they would then hear what music is. And...

STRAUB: That's good.

STRAUB: So, regarding our preparatory work, [for] the story with Kittler [and Krause] and so on, they were hardly in Spitta at all. We came upon them in...

HF: It's in the Englishwoman's book.

STRAUB: Exactly. Yes, but that comes from Sanford Terry.³

For Sanford Terry that is... that is actually the inverse of Spitta, and that is why this woman got the idea [for her book], because of just these aspects.

Shot 69

³ *Charles Sanford Terry, Bach: A Biography. Oxford, 1928. German: Leipzig, 1929.*

HF: And after all this conflict -- according to the literature it's not known how it ended, but it carried on over two years; and in the film it then says, "He looked to the council for very soon and prompt help," but "he could not rid himself of Krause." [*shot 68*]

After all this comes the organ concert in the Frauenkirche in Dresden.

STRAUB: Again, that is the contrast. After this personal conflict comes... comes something so ... very festive. The most beautiful of the great organ chorales. "Heiliger Geist" [God, Holy Spirit].

That is probably the most powerful thing that he wrote, along with the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion. And that, in turn, is thus a rhyme -- the St. Matthew Passion and this chorale.

And with that begins again in turn the interest in the harpsichord.

HF: That is the organ in Freiberg?

STRAUB: Yes. The cathedral. -- Closely related in the voices and so on, only one year later than the one in Dresden. We tried to find it and it took a good bit of trouble. Leonhardt had no idea about it.

HF: Perhaps the organ in the cathedral in Freiberg is even somewhat earlier than the one in the Frauenkirche in Dresden. [*The Frauenkirche which was destroyed by the bombing of Dresden on 13-14 February, 1945.*]

STRAUB: Well, I say one year later, but it could be one year earlier. I could be wrong. But what is important is that it's very close in time. And technically very similar.

STRAUB: How far are we? How far did you want to go?

HF: We're now at the seventh reel.

STRAUB (*with the printed film text*): End of the sixth reel -- well then, I'll point out that there is no sun here. [*In shot 69, unlike shot 43.*]

HF: These two shots at the sea -- were those two different places and two different days? [*Shot 43 and shot 61.*]

STRAUB: The same place. It was only the time. I don't remember if the sun had not yet come up, or whether it had already disappeared into the mist -- I don't remember.

But they were shot separately. Not filmed continuously. It was really cold. That is the only place up there in the north where one sees the sunrise. It's on the Danish border.

HF: In the script the Ascension Oratoria didn't yet have this emphasis by way of the shot of the sea.

STRAUB: Ah, yes -- it was only behind the opening chorus of the St. Matthew Passion? Yes, that happened at the editing table. But probably only because we had two different ones. Otherwise we would not have done that. Twice the same sun we wouldn't have...

From Tuesday, 18 May 2010

Shot 70 and following

HF: The eighth reel has two parts, I believe. It begins with musical instruction and then Anna Magdalena speaks in the commentary of the pupils and the worries about the sons. She speaks of Friedemann and Emanuel and then it comes to Bernhard. Then come the three letters that Bach wrote about Bernhard to Herr Klemm. The first from October, 1736, and the last from May, 1738.

STRAUB: Yes, but beforehand the lesson on the basso continuo is important, which is not by Bach, and which he partially reads but yet also adopts it for himself...

HF: That comes late in the film's narrative, that one sees Bach's instruction.

STRAUB: Yes. But how does one suddenly get to... Klemm? There is not transition.

HF: The transition is in the commentary.

STRAUB: Where? "All his pupils" [*shot 71*], the idea of the basso continuo. Pupils... Yes, fine, but in the image comes...?

HF: In the image, for seven shots there are the letters [*shot 71 to 77*].

STRAUB: Yes. Without transition.

After "Geplärr and Geleier" [*shrieking and monotony*] [*shot 70*] come the only personal letters that Bach wrote. So these letters to Klemm are the only ones that give any indication of Bach's soul or psychology or whatever. In the modern sense. There's nothing else. Those are the letters to Klemm about Bernhard. And they crash suddenly into the film after the lesson on the basso continuo. And then, to build a bridge, one hears "All his pupils." "Pupils" is the bridge word. "Gott und er Republik mit Nuetzen..." [*for the use and service of God and the Republic...*] [*Shot 71*]. Then "Friedemann." And then suddenly: "but Bernhard" [*shot 72*]. And with that one hears a text that comes from these really personal letters. And that is already a lot. Perhaps there were others, but the only ones that were preserved are the letters to Klemm about Bernhard. So, October 1736, November 1736.

HF: And the last one a year and a half later.

STRAUB: May, 1738. Yes. (*Reads:*) "to labor himself, in order to learn to acknowledge" -- in some book or other was written, "the lesson" [*Belehrung!*], and we discovered that in time: "the conversion [*Bekehrung!*] is to be attributed solely and uniquely to the Divine Good."

"But Bernhard suddenly died" [*shot 77*].

There, after these personal letters, comes the title of the third part of the Clavier-Uebung [*shot 78*]

HF: Do you want to suggest something with that, that Bach's teaching [*shot 70*] comes so long after Bach had taken up his position in Leipzig?

STRAUB: Yes, because his teaching consisted in developing the boys [as singers], and the musicians... the the cantatas and so on -- he was very busy, completely occupied, and he had no time to devote himself directly to instruction and learning. And suddenly comes: Third section of the Clavier Exercise. First the instruction in basso continuo, third section of the Clavier Exercise, in between the son Bernhard... yes. And during this time he dedicates himself... In the film there is now very much less in the way of church performances but rather, after the organ, more harpsichord. And after the Clavier Exercise, harpsichord [*shot 78 - 80*], what comes then, to end the reel? Something very personal. After the cage with the linnet bird [*shot 81*] comes something about Anna Magdalena. And that has been passed down, not by herself, but by letters from the cousin in Schweinfurt. There is again reference to him with the cask of mead.

HF: She reports --

Straub: Yellow carnations, garden, linnet bird [*shot 81, Commentary*].

HF: At this time the cousin Elias was in Leipzig. She reports that also in the commentary, "lived in our house during those years" [*shot 80*]. That was from October 1737 to October 1942.

Straub: (*reads*): "During those years, our beloved and good cousin Mr. Johann Elias Bach, well-established cantor at Schweinfurt, lived in our house. He was matriculated at the university of Leipzig as a student of theology, and at the same time..." So. And this beloved and good cousin Johann Elias is portrayed, without saying it, by the one who plays the Italian concerto [*shot 80, heard since shot 78*].

HF: That is a student of Leonhardt's, I believe.

Straub: Yes indeed. He had a limp, in life. He [Leonhardt] told us, I suggest this man to you, he is the one of my students that I most...

He is famous in the meantime. Bob van Asperen.

HF: After the letters to Klemm about Bernhard -- and there was no music [*shot 71-77*] -- one sees two original printed documents: first the third section [*shot 78*] and then the second section of the Clavier Exercise [*shot 79*]. So the order is reversed --

Straub: In such cases the commentary says "had been," "the second section had been." [*As in shot 79.*]

HF: -- and one reference is that the second section belongs to the Italian concerto [*from shot 78-80*] and a hidden reference is that the Kyrie, God Holy Spirit, belongs to the third section of the Clavier Exercise [*from shot 69*].

Straub: Yes, indeed, which had not been indicated earlier. On the big organ. In the film that means in practice that this play, this performance of Kyrie, God Holy Spirit, takes place before the thing was printed. Somehow.

HF: In this second part of the eighth reel, there is the arc of tension in the music from the andante of the Italian concerto, which one sees Elias playing, to the duet from the cantata [*shot 83*]. And what one sees in between and hears reported -- about the yellow carnations, about the linnet bird, which one also sees -- I think that is also the most extreme point of the love story --

Straub: Yes.

HF: -- and in such a way that everything is held in the balance, and again in such a way, that one cannot possess it. It is there, but it is inaccessible at the same time.

Straub: Here is the most extreme point of the feature film. Because, after we have seen the woman sick in bed, it says, and the narrative goes, he was away in Halle or maybe it was in Berlin, and then it ends with "When comest thou, when comest thou, I await, I await." Good, and the next reel, "Shortly after his return" -- well, that is almost childlike.

Then comes another Clavier Exercise.

HF: You have also already spoken of the fact that Leonhardt insisted that it be a boy's voice, and that is for the --

Straub: So that a contradiction arises.

HF: Yes. I was recently taken aback when you said that the carpet with the Dream of Jacob was already there [*shot 82*]. I thought since it has such a presence, it had to have come from you, but --

Straub: That was the only cell, do you call it a cell, that had anything in it, and that is completely --

HF: Where was it filmed, this shot?

Straub: That is a cell in the Kloster Lüne, where the boys are seen earlier as well [*shot 66?*].

HF: And this carpet was there?

Straub: That is no carpet. You can call it a carpet, but it was on the wall. We didn't move the bed at all. It stood there and still stands there in front of this image. So out of twenty cells we chose this one and --

HF: So you did.

Straub: Yes, fine. -- One plays with the gifts one is given. Or that are passed down.

HF: Can it be that between the duet and her lying ill -- since it is a dream that this image depicts -- that a connection between the two develops.

Straub: It has to, naturally. But when one decides something like that, for God's sake one must not think about it. Otherwise one doesn't do it. Yes.

After this bed, this image of Jacob's Ladder, that is almost childish painting -- one sees the clouds [*shot 83*]. And we filmed the clouds outside the window. Not just anywhere.

As if she would have been able to see the clouds as well.

HF: The clouds and the two shots of the sea, that is the only time in the film that one sees the world outside.

Straub: Exactly.

HF: Otherwise, everything is in interiors.

Straub: Yes. And the [exterior shots] always serve as punctuation.

HF: Because even the trip to Berlin -- one does hear the horses, but one only sees the cab of the coach, and one sees not view to the outside.

Straub: That was also not possible [?]. Because where we filmed that, for hours on end, was on the outskirts of Munich. And after a few hours and we had finished shooting Leonhardt said: I have never seen so much ugliness in all my life. -- Yes. But that also fits with his expression.

HF: So of the world outside, one sees the trees through the window, and the trees move. But when one really is outside, that is only where there is no land and no people, in the air or at the sea.

Reel 9, shot 84 and following, and again shot 83

Straub: Here that commences with... let's say with a legend. Sleepless nights and a golden goblert, "which was filled with 100 gold Louis." That is really like a fairy tale. The Imperial Russian agent at the Dresden court.

HF: That is the beginning of the next reel. I still wanted to say about the eighth reel: the cantata from which the duet comes, "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme," is for the 27th Sunday after Trinity. That is a Sunday that only occurs when Easter is very early. That occurred only twice during Bach's time in Leipzig, so it's easy to determine that the cantata is from 1731 and that it could have been performed again in 1742. In addition, Dürr writes of this duet, "Heavenly and earthly love are here melded into one. Musically, this passage belongs to the most beautiful love duets in world literature."

Straub: Those are the things that are the point of departure for THE BRIDEGROOM, THE COMEDIENNE, AND THE PIMP. That is the same text as the text by the Spaniard. And not by accident. From this duet emerged THE BRIDEGROOM, THE COMEDIENNE, AND THE PIMP. By way of Juan de la Cruz and no longer from the Bible. Yes.

And after the 100 gold Louis one sees something. Which is not identified. That is, an engraving by Rouault [*shot 86*] As if that were the screen or the carpet. Like, more or less like the Jacobs Ladder, but the other way around and in the house in Leipzig. One can imagine that's what it is. After the end of the Goldberg Variation one sees something like a caress, and that is the moon. That is, not the moon, but basically it's the sky. And that is called "Chantez matînes, der Tag wird wieder geboren" [Sing, morning, sing, the day is born again]. [*Shows the image plate in the Miserere Book.*] The original is like this. [*Indicates the size.*] He printed that himself, printed it himself for days.

HF: He supervised the printing.

Straub: Yes. More than supervised.

HF: Even this small edition he supervised.

Straub: I bought this when I was sixteen or so.

Now I give you a revelation, or maybe not. Somewhere in some conversation with Mizoguchi he proclaims that he especially likes and is interested in one painter. And then they say to him, yes, who? And he says: Rouault. (*Laughs forcefully.*) Seriously. (*With laughter.*) That's it, the very surprise, that in deep Japan someone suddenly mentions something European.

HF: Well, I think I've read all the conversations there are with Mizoguchi, there aren't so many --

Straub: Helmut, I read it, I didn't invent it. It's out of the way somewhere, very short, but it's there.

HF: Mizoguchi and Rouault, that is ...

And in the film it's actually morning twice. Once it is here [*shot 86*], and then it is here [*shot 87*].

Straub: Yes, that is the cut.

HF: And I think that is the longest narrative piece, because she hangs up the cage with the linnet bird [*shot 87*] and we had seen the bird quite a long while earlier [*shot 81*].

And then there is a knock at the door and Elias comes again --

Shot 88

Straub: Whether one recognizes him or not, I don't know. But there is a knock at the door, a spirit or a ghost.

HF: One sees him, too.

Straub: And how. For the first time one sees him. And what a Dutch accent he has.

HF: Yes. Much stronger than Leonhardt's.

I still find this section strange, with the suicide of the deputy-rector: Siegmund Friedrich Dresig who killed himself on 11 January 1742. But he had played no special role in Bach's life, unlike Rector Ernesti.

Straub: He has nothing to do with Ernesti.

HF: He was deputy-rector at the time that Ernesti was rector, and he is mentioned in one letter from Ernesti about the Krause conflict, but --

Straub: What does Ernesti say about him?

HF: Only that he was there, nothing more. And --

Straub: Yes and I -- what did you want to say?

HF: I wonder how this spirit gets in there, this shadow, this shape that one has not heard of before and never hears of again and --

Straub: Yes, It is actually there, and not only there, that one gradually, now, only now... at that time I would never have come upon the idea: Basically the narrative of the Bach film is much more complicated than the narrative of NOT RECONCILED, where everyone said they didn't understand a word, it jumps and jumps.

And then I can report one more thing: I really can't tell you -- maybe Danièle could have, I doubt it , but could be -- how we came upon the diea of having that

suddenly crash in. How, from where, and so on I do not know. Who tells about that, actually.

HF: I've searched in the literature -- and then I found it from you. In the interview back then in *Filmkritik* [10/68, October 1968, p. 689] --

Straub: Ah, then I still knew, now I don't know anymore. An old memory is worthless.

HF: You said that it comes from a letter from Elias.

Straub: That would be right, yes.

HF: But how you came upon this letter --

Straub: That could be, it could be Sanford Terry.

HF: But that is really a strange intrusion, because --

Straub: Intrusion is the right word.

HF: It occurs to me again that you --

Straub: But who knows whether that's not from Mizoguchi? About Rouault merely -- that's all possible. (*Laughs.*) Yes, and it occurs...?

HF: -- that you once said --

Straub: That is the night with the Goldberg Variation, the day that seems gloomy, the bird that crashes in, intrudes -- and then suddenly a ghost. A ghost does come from Mizoguchi, naturally. So what did you want to say? I interrupted you again.

HF: It is also a shock because for the whole lifeworld of this time -- in this time, as it is in the film as well, death is always present --

Straub: Yes, but differently.

HF: -- but not this death, not the suicide.

Straub: Here death is more modern, let's say.

HF: Yes, that's it exactly.

Straub: That is the intrusion of our world.

HF: Yes, what I just wanted to say, that you once said that this is also a modern film.

Shot 88 an shot 89, then shot 90

Straub: This is also a provocation: it is a suicide, and look, then comes the transition: "My God! when will come the beautiful: Now!" I don't know how Leonhardt reacted to that, or Dürr, or who knows who -- that is really more than... I wouldn't say daring, but personally strange. It really is a provocation. From suicide one comes upon the idea of Bach with sweet death.

HF: And in addition, at just this place in the commentary come the words, "In the last years he performed some of his earlier church pieces again." That is the first time in the film that such a thing is dated, where we are given to understand that Anna Magdalena is speaking after his death.

Straub: Yes. And then comes something -- I was indeed conscious of this -- then comes just this very thing. That is really like a carriage that is driving toward death [*shot 90*]. Whether one suddenly has Mizoguchi before oneself, or Dreyer, I don't know, that is certainly... He may be smiling, but that is just one more point.

And the sounds and the image, that really is, let's say, that has to do with Murnau if not with Mizoguchi. One dare not even mention Fritz Lang.

Rather it's something between Mizoguchi and Murnau. But that was not planned, it turned out that way.

That is the return of the journey in NOT RECONCILED with Danièle. In a different manner. But that was not on the outskirts of Munich; Danièle was more fortunate. That was in the English Garden.

(*Quotes from NOT RECONCILED*): "The fool of a Kaiser, the fool of a Kaiser."

Lots of people said to me, but she doesn't speak a word of German. She should not have said "the fool of a Kaiser" but rather [*with a rolling "r" at the end of Narr, for fool*].

Some even said to me, Who is this? Who is this mad Jewish woman? (*Laughs, acidly.*) The mad Jewish woman. They were mistaken, since Danièle was unfortunately not a Jew.

HF: "In the last years he performed some of his earlier church pieces again" [*shot 89*]. Yes, and that is a cantata from 1727, and it has been determined that he performed it again in this time, 1746/47. And then --

Straub: And that has been proved. We didn't permit ourselves just anything... Although the selection is personal, the chronology is respected. One could have taken a different one, but ... One thing is certain, we didn't want to decide on another choral

contata. To follow that thread further. There is just a single singer. That connects with the coach and so on.

HF: I keep starting from my error, that he is the same bass as with the Aeolus [shot 37] --

Straub: No!! He --

HF: Yes, yes, I know --

Straub: The costume is not the same, either --

HF: Yes. Even if it is not the same singer, and even if it is not the same jacket, as the case may be, there is a certain correspondence of appearance.

Straub: Yes, but morally. Morally the one who sings the Aeolus is something of a brutal person, in quotation marks. And the one here is a rather gentle person.

HF: Besides, he writes --

Straub: He is almost sentimental; almost. The other one isn't so at all. -- What, who writes?

HF: Dürr writes of this aria, "I look forward to my death," that it has a joyful motion. So this is also a joyousness. A completely different kind of joy.

Straub: Yes yes, that is the correspondence. That is also the reason for your caprice about its being the same singer. It is no accident, my friend. Yes. By contrast it is also the inverse of the Aeolus aria. Thus the arc is complete.

HF: The singer also gets a certain time after he has finished singing. Not as long as Bold in HISTORY LESSONS [*Gottfried Bold, in the role of the banker*], but definitely noticeable.

Shots 90 and 91, then 92

And now, with what you've said about the moving coach, that it is a journey toward death --

Straub: Death is in Berlin. (*Laughs with amusement this time*)

HF: Yes, and the black leader that comes after it now takes on a double meaning.

Straub: "His majesty himself played him..." That is the black leader [shot 91].

HF: And where the black leader is, there one should perhaps be able to see an engraving of the palace in Potsdam. [*as it is in the script*]

Straub (*with laughter*): I can tell you what was in the first version of the script. One saw the gates of Potsdam open and close, lackeys who toppled over and ran in and hugged and so on. Yes, that was the mood of the first script. And this whole aspect of pomp or comedy has become a piece of black leader.

HF: And now, after what you have said, black leader is connected to death. The strip of black film is both the King of Prussia and death, at the same time.

Straub: Yes, not quite; it is a bit ambiguous, because it allows the possibility of imagining the pomp, and not as if... If that were shown, it would have been clumsy in any case. But there is something quite festive in this black leader. It is not only death. And look what one sees then: one sees a beautiful ceiling [*shot 92*].

Shot 90 and following

HF: I also think, as a matter of fact, that the chronology gets a bit looser in the last reels and one --

Straub: Yes, and this black leader, the point is that the pompous encounter is mentioned -- and what happened a bit more specifically? We showed nothing of Bach's playing in Potsdam. Because it's quite clear, or not quite that clear, but, if one sees the great pomp of playing the Ricercar a 6 -- that is printed in the script: "Music room in the cantor's lodgings" [*for shot 95*], so that comes later.

HF: Yes, we don't see him play it in Potsdam but rather at home.

Straub: The alibi for that is the story, "He had soon noticed in Potsdam that through want of necessary preparation his performance had not attained the success..." So what is played is not necessarily what he had played in Potsdam; it probably has little to do with it. It is what he put down on paper when he returned. That is why we wanted to do it that way.

HF: And that is the last time one sees him playing and that is the last time one sees a performance, sees music performed in the film. The two pieces of music that come then, counterpoint 19 from the Art of the Fugue [*shot 100 to 112*] and the chorale "Before thy throne" -- [*shot 113*].

Straub: Yes, but we see him one more time.

HF: We see him at the very end.

Straub: Yes. He ascends into heaven there. With this stairway [*shot 100*].

This gesture we didn't anticipate at all; he invented it. But when he does that, to meet the child: "Ah..." -- and he grabs the child. That is an invention of Leonhardt. Yes yes.

And the child was really gruesome; she cried, "I'll never do that! Not again, no, I don't want to!" That was horrible. Danièle had to go up there to console her. And Leonhardt was very glad that it worked. Took her in his arms and carried her up.

On the conclusion of the film

HF: In the last reel, the three pieces of music: the ricercar one sees him playing then the counterpoint from the Art of the Fugue --

Straub: And that is the pomp in Leonhardt's playing, because he was never so magnificent as while playing this ricercar. And that is the pomp that was conveyed by that piece of black leader but now filmed, while playing [*shot 93*].

And, what did you want to say?

HF: The middle piece of these three, the counterpoint from the Art of the Fugue, is interrupted at the point where Philipp Emanuel had written a passage that comes --

Straub: Before.

HF: -- that occurs with Godard in --

Straub: No, before. Leonhardt did not want that. He said, the last block there -- I don't want to play that. It's only a draft; he didn't finish writing it and I refuse to play that -- out of Romanticism and so on. -- No, that is not there. It stops shortly before.

HF: But one sees the page where the passage from --

Straub: One does see it [*shot 112*]. He said, it's good that one sees it but he said, no, I won't play that. One can't do that. -- Then I only smiled and said, good, you won't play it. Done.

One reads the passage from Philipp Emanuel but one doesn't see the measures before. One does not hear the measures before. His playing of the counterpoint has already stopped. Whereas everyone else has played it. Like ravens. Or like vultures.

HF: I think the Ricercar stops earlier in the film. [*Stops in shot 95.*]
The notes on the page continue on.

Straub: Yes.

HF: And in the organ chorale the notes on the page also continue further on.

Straub: Hm, I don't think so. I'm not sure. Or we chose an excerpt, I don't know. With the chorale that's another idea. It's not for the same reason.

We wanted to stop the Ricercar at a point that has neither a repetition nor a conclusion. So those are three different reasons. The result is perhaps the same.

HF: -- what I found in the Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis is that it goes to measure 26. That is the last section; that is not in the film.

Straub: And the ending is that kind of piece... The tempo speeds up and becomes more and more jittery, hastier and hastier, "To the Missa, which he had..." [*shot 105*], and so on, that is such a piece. It's a genuine piece of documentary film with fiction film within it, but that is a... The tragedy is in the rhythm. The tragedy, or rather the tragic. And that is Haseldorf Castle [*shot 113*].

HF: Where he stands at the window.

Straub: Yes. That is exactly where he read, at the window. There are only two windows.

HF: I remember that you once said regarding this last shot that you told Leonhardt, Think of Vietnam.

Straub: Did I say that? Where?

HF: I only remember it, but --

Straub: Maybe it's true.

HF: -- I'm not sure whether I remember it correctly.

The conclusion has so many short shots, which in the beginning is only true of the flashback. In the flashback and then when one sees all the autographs of the cantatas.

Straub: Yes, but the mood is different. Here is the jittery tempo, time escaping. At the beginning it is a different time. The feeling is not the same because the rhythm is also not the same.

Here is the idea of this: death appears always as something unnatural. That is a provocation on my part. Everyone one says death is a natural thing. There is nothing more unnatural than death, for me. So, good.

And that was to be sensed somehow in this rhythm at the end, which is thus different from the rhythm at the beginning. Because the rhythm at the beginning comes from youth. And the rhythm here goes toward death.

HF: The original printing of the Musical Offering [*shot 97*] appears here, and the original printing of "From Heaven On High" [Vom Himmel hoch] [*shot 98*] --

Straub: Yes, the last published pieces. Yes, "Vom Himmel hoch" is completely ridiculous, the idea of carrying the child up the stairs. Isn't it?

HF: -- and between the things one sees, Bach finished this and finished that, in between comes the child [*shot 100*], and then come three pages of Bach's letter to cousin Elias [*shot 101-103*].

Straub: And there is also this impossible text by Bach that one cannot read.

HF: Where he says he would like not more such gifts because they become too expensive for him.

Straub (*reads*): "Although my Herr Cousin may be inclined to offer to assist once more with like liquors, so must I deprecate this on account of the excess of duties levied here" -- unbelievable.

HF: Can that be --

Straub: For the first time there is a mention of the time of year, where it says, the "uncomfortable season may not permit it" [*Commentary in shot 102-103*]. So this even connects both winter with the ending.

HF: And with the letter to Elias, which you call impossible, and with the concluded B-minor Mass, which he himself never performed or heard in full -- here we have again two complete extremes of Bach.

Straub: Exactly.

That he suddenly composes this kind of credo is just unheard of. There is nothing greater, where counterpoint is concerned, as the Confiteor of the Credo. (Points to it:) "Confiteor unum baptisma in re-me-si... -- that is something unbelievable. That, with the opening chorus, with the cadenza -- those are the... Yes.

What did you say?

HF: I don't think I said anything.

The last one sees of Anna Magdalena are her hands as she holds the Bible. With the only known writing of hers, as you have often said. The dedication in the Bible [*shot 104*].

Straub: But they didn't want to let us have this Bible; they wouldn't let it out of their hands. Unfortunately you can see that in the film; it's very stiff. Those are sheets of paper which got to be too thick because we glued them into an original edition of "Montaigne's Essays." That is the one great gift Danièle presented to me. She bought it in Blois, an original edition -- the exact same format and the same leather and so on. That's why we could paste it in. There is not a millimeter of difference. So what she holds in her hand is not the Bible. It is exactly as thick, exactly as small, exactly as large -- but it is "Montaigne's Essays."

Which Barbara has been sweating over for twenty years. Yes.

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