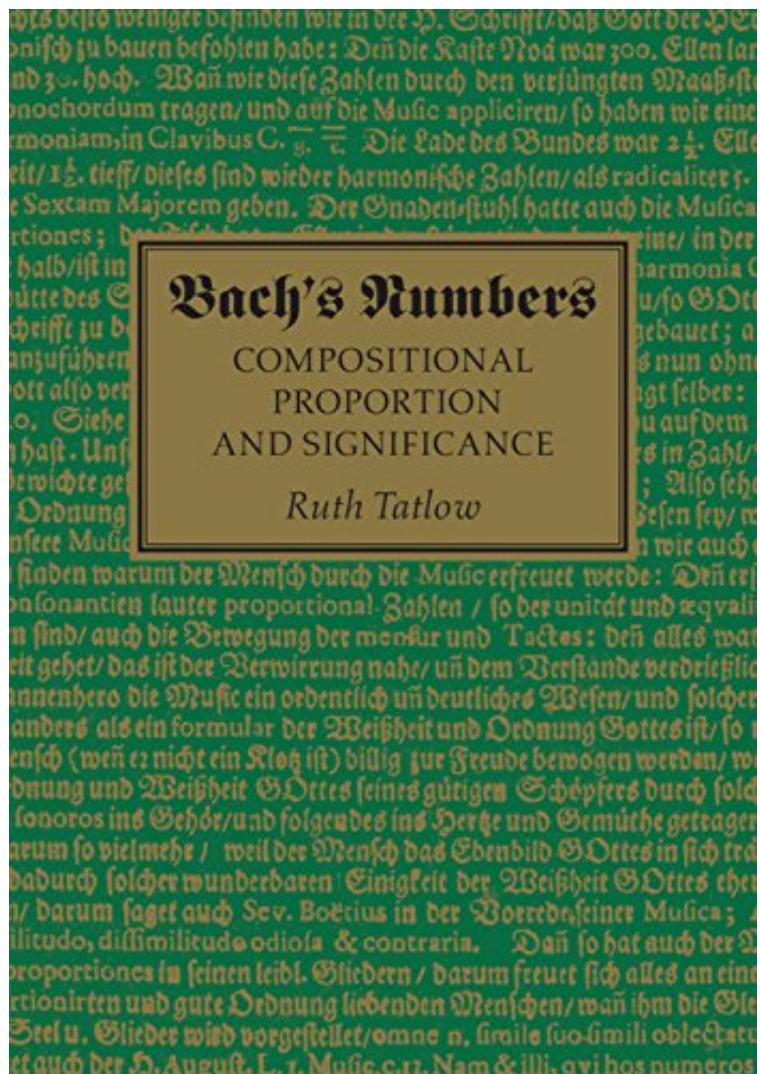


# Bach's Numbers: Compositional Proportion and Significance

Ruth Tatlow

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**Ruth Tatlow : Bach's Numbers: Compositional Proportion and Significance** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bach's Numbers: Compositional Proportion and Significance:

In eighteenth-century Germany the universal harmony of God's creation and the perfection of its proportions still held philosophical, moral and devotional significance. Reproducing proportions close to the unity (1:1) across compositions could render them beautiful, perfect and even eternal. Using the principles of her groundbreaking theory of proportional parallelism and the latest source study research, Ruth Tatlow reveals how Bach used the number of bars

to create numerical perfection across his published collections, and explains why he did so. The first part of the book shows the wide-ranging application of belief in the unity, demonstrating how planning a perfect structure was a normal compositional procedure in Bach's time. In the second part Tatlow presents practical demonstrations of this in all Bach's publications and fair copies, showing that layers of proportion can appear within a movement, a work, between two works in a collection, across a collection or between collections themselves.

"Tatlow's approach to the subject matter is unique, and the vigorousness with which her methodology is applied has uncovered numerous new and unexpected facts. Bach scholarship cannot ignore her voice." Yo Tomita in *Music and Letters* 97/3 (2016), 506-7 "Innnbsp;sheer extent and richness of background, and numbernbsp;of works examined, Tatlow's book is a most originalnbsp;and impressive achievement that will need to be takennbsp;into account in future discussions of these fascinatingnbsp;compositions." - David Ledbetter,nbsp;*Early Music* (2016), 44 (2): 341-343. "For anyone who wishes to explore the logical pathways of Bach's genius, Tatlow's analysis gets to the heart of the aesthetic, theological and Pythagorean presuppositions underlying the Bachian concepts of 'Vollkommenheit', perfection through calculation; and 'Harmonie' ... the harmony of proportion, here a mirror of divine order." Gian Mario Benzing, translated from *Corriere della Sera* (*La Lettura*) About the Author British-Swedish musicologist Ruth Tatlow is an independent scholar based in Stockholm. Her research into Bach's use of numbers led from her classic monograph *Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991) to its sequel *Bach Numbers*, through publications on methodology, inventive techniques and the theory of proportional parallelism. In 2004 she co-founded Bach Network UK (BNUK), establishing its open access web-journal *Understanding Bach* in 2006. She is currently Chair of the BNUK Council, joint editor of *Understanding Bach*, and a member of the Editorial Board of the American Bach Society. Her research has attracted awards and grants from numerous sources including the Swedish Research Council, the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, the Society of Authors of Great Britain, the British Council, The Hinrichsen Foundation, The Leverhulme Trust and the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters.