

Dieterich Buxtehude's Membra Jesu Nostri:  
An historical overview, analysis and conducting guide

by

Youn Ju Kim

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Gregory Gentry, Chair  
Gary Hill  
William Reber  
Rodney Rogers  
Timothy Russell

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

Dieterich Buxtehude (ca. 1637-1707) is known for his many organ works. However, no significant portion of his choral music is in the standard performing repertoire. Buxtehude's large-scale choral work *Membra Jesu Nostri* should be considered a seminal "passion" composition in part because of its historic position in early German Lutheran church music. It also serves as an example of the heightened levels of affect in a seventeenth century devotional passion. To better understand Buxtehude and his music, an overview of his life, career and religious beliefs are discussed, including the incorporation of pietism and mysticism in his cantata, *Membra Jesu Nostri*. Details of the composition's structure, unifying thematic elements and text sources with translations are included. Historical performance practices are discussed, including the composer's probable intent of having one of the seven cantatas performed every day before Easter. This research study also provides conductors with a variety of practical performance considerations. Through these observations, it will be shown that Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* is one of the most well-conceived and well-constructed choral works of the early Baroque era.

## DEDICATION

*In nomine Jesu, Soli Deo Gloria*

(In the name of Jesus, to God alone be the glory)

And to my parents

Kim, Ha Sub and Lee, Jung Ji

My love and respect will always be with you.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND ...	
COMPOSITIONAL STYLE .....	1
His Career prior to and in Lübeck.....	2
Buxtehude’s Choral Music.....	5
2 THE MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI	
AS A DEVOTIONAL PASSION.....	10
Contrast Between Orthodoxy and Pietism.....	15
Mysticism .....	20
3 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI.....	29
Historical Background of Membra Jesu Nostri (BuxWV 75).....	29
The Seven Cantatas of Membra Jesu Nostri .....	41
No. 1 Ad Pedes.....	41
No. 2 Ad Genua.....	48
No. 3 Ad Manus .....	54
No. 4 Ad Latus .....	62
No. 5 Ad Pectus.....	66
No. 6 Ad Cor .....	70
No. 7 Ad Faciem .....	82

CHAPTER	Page
4 PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS .....	88
5 SUMMARY AND THE MUSICAL VALUE .....	93
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	96

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 4 <i>Ad Latus</i> , mm. 16-20 .....	22
2. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad Pedes</i> , mm. 84-85 .....	24
3. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> No. 3 <i>Ad Manus</i> , third aria.....	35
4. Key Structures of Buxtehude's <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> .....	36
5. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> , mm. 1-5 .....	39
6. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> .....	43
7. Structure of <i>Ad Pedes</i> .....	44
8. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> , mm. 1- 5 .....	45
9. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> , mm. 81-91 .....	46
10. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> , mm. 1- 2 .....	47
11. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 1 <i>Ad pedes</i> , mm. 35-37 .....	49
12. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 2 <i>Ad genua</i> , mm. 1-19 .....	50
13. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 2 <i>Ad genua</i> , mm. 79-84 .....	52
14. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 2 <i>Ad genua</i> , mm. 97-102 .....	53
15. Structure of <i>Ad manus</i> .....	55
16. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 3 <i>Ad manus</i> , mm.14-19 .....	57
17. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 3 <i>Ad manus</i> , mm. 40-76 .....	59
18. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 3 <i>Ad manus</i> , mm. 97-104 .....	60
19. Structure of <i>Ad latus</i> .....	63
20. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 4 <i>Ad latus</i> , mm. 1-5 .....	64
21. Structure of <i>Ad Pectus</i> .....	67

Figure	Page
22. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 5, <i>Ad Pectus</i> , mm. 1, 4, 9 .....	68
23. Structure of <i>Ad Cor</i> .....	71
24. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 6, <i>Ad Cor</i> .....	73
25. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 6, <i>Ad Cor</i> mm. 1-16 .....	75
26. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 6 <i>Ad Cor</i> , mm. 99-106 .....	77
27. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 6 <i>Ad Cor</i> , mm. 120-130 .....	79
28. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 6, <i>Ad Cor</i> 143-147 .....	81
29. Structure of <i>Ad Faciem</i> .....	83
30. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 7, <i>Ad Faciem</i> , mm. 38-47 .....	84
31. Buxtehude, <i>Membra Jesu Nostri</i> , No. 7, <i>Ad Faciem</i> , mm.116-123 ...	86

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION AND COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

A prolific composer of sacred vocal and instrumental ensemble music, Dietrich Buxtehude's (ca. 1637-1707) fame as a composer mainly derives from works that he composed during his tenure as organist at *Marienkirche* (St. Mary's Church) in Lübeck. He also composed vocal cantatas, concertos, and oratorios, though his position did not require him to do so. In actuality, his surviving vocal music outnumbers his keyboard and ensemble pieces, totaling more than 120 vocal and choral works, 120 keyboard pieces, and twenty-one instrumental sonatas. While many of these works are extant, a large number have been lost. Among his surviving works, *Membra Jesu Nostris* exudes beauty and splendor while also reflecting on the passion of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

*Membra Jesu Nostris* contains many of the concepts from Baroque mysticism, Lutheran devotional music, and German Pietism. For Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostris* represents a musical passion story about the crucifixion, God's ultimate sacrifice and love for mankind. A *Passion* is "a dramatic portrayal of the events in the life of Christ from the Last Supper through the betrayal to the Crucifixion." Buxtehude composed seven cantatas that each focus on a different

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, several words appear frequently: passion, cantata, and movement. For the purposes of the ensuing discussion, the word *passion* refers to the entire work as a seven-cantata cycle known collectively as *Membra Jesu Nostris*. Within this *Passion*, there are seven complete works known as *cantatas*. And within each *cantata*, there are several *movements* including *sonata*, *tutti*, *ritornello*, and *aria* sections.

body-part of the crucified Christ: the feet, knees, hands, side, heart, breast, and face. Each cantata within the cycle is composed of six-movements, with an opening sonata followed by a *tutti* choral section, three arias, and a closing *tutti* section. By creating so many similarities, Buxtehude unifies the entire set of cantatas.

### **His Career prior to and in Lübeck**

Considered one of the leading Lutheran composers of the late seventeenth century, Buxtehude was the “most important representative of northern Baroque church music.”<sup>2</sup> Scholars do not know much about his early years, but Buxtehude is thought to have been born in Sweden in 1637 and to have lived in Denmark as a child. His father held the position of organist at the church of St. Ojai in Helsingør (Denmark’s second largest city) and was most likely the source of his son’s music education. It is not certain whether Buxtehude’s mother was of Danish descent, but he clearly grew up speaking multiple languages.<sup>3</sup> He attended a Lutheran Latin School, which is evident in his knowledge and use of the language. While in school, he studied astronomy, geometry, mathematics, and music, which were all a part of the curriculum. This early knowledge of music and Latin formed his foundation for a career as a church musician. Like J.S. Bach, Buxtehude was not only a master composer, but also a virtuosic organist. He held the position of

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<sup>2</sup> Hermann Wettstein, *Dieterich Buxtehude (1603-1707): Bibliography of His Life and Work* (München: K. G. Saur GmbH & Co KG, 1989), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Kerala J. Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 11.

organist at *Marienkirche*<sup>4</sup> at Lübeck from 1667 until his death in 1707, a position which was regarded as one of the most prestigious in Northern Germany. As the music director of *Marienkirche*, his responsibilities included playing for services, leading the choir, composing music, and serving as a secretary, treasurer and business manager for the church. Buxtehude was required to perform music on the organ for morning and afternoon services on Sundays, for feast days, and for Vespers. He supplied the customary preludes, musical offerings of the choir, and music for communion. Outside of his church duties, Buxtehude was the director of the *Abendmusiken*, a concert series that featured performances of sacred dramatic works.

Considering his position at Lübeck's most important church, Buxtehude was *de facto* the director of music for the entire city.<sup>5</sup> After becoming a citizen of Lübeck in 1668,<sup>6</sup> Buxtehude married the youngest daughter of his predecessor Franz Tunder (1614-1667). This may have been a condition of his employment at the church, as his own daughter would later marry his successor.<sup>7</sup> Buxtehude soon

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<sup>4</sup> The *Marienkirche* (St. Mary's Church) was originally built in 1310 near the cultural center of Lübeck near many of Lübeck's wealthiest families. Until the mid-fifteenth century, the city of Lübeck was the busiest port between the Baltics and Western Europe, and St. Mary's Church benefited greatly from the town's economic prosperity.

<sup>5</sup> Snyder, 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>7</sup> Kerala J. Snyder, "Buxtehude, Dieterich," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04477> (accessed September 10, 2011).

gained fame as an organist and eventually drew the admiration of both J.S. Bach<sup>8</sup> and Handel, and earned him the reputation of being “the greatest organist between Scheidt and Bach.”<sup>9</sup> In addition to his fame as a composer and organist, Buxtehude was well known throughout the region for re-instating an earlier tradition of presenting *Abendmusik* concerts at the *Marienkirche*.<sup>10</sup> Tunder, his predecessor, had established the weekday concert series at least as early as 1646.<sup>11</sup> The *Abendmusiken* was a point of pride for the city of Lübeck and was described in a 1697 guidebook as a musical event that “happens nowhere else.” Buxtehude performed his church duties and organized *Abendmusik* events until his death in 1707.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bach famously visited Buxtehude for four months in 1705 and considered him to be a model organist and music director. From: Snyder, Kerala J. “Buxtehude, Dieterich.” In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>9</sup> Walter E. Buszin, “Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707): On the tercentenary of his Birth,” *Musical Quarterly* 23 (1937), 465.

<sup>10</sup> *Abendmusik* was a social gathering that took place in the evening in which Buxtehude would perform his vocal works. Buxtehude engaged municipal as well as church musicians to perform his vocal compositions during the *Abendmusik* concerts between 1678 and 1692.

<sup>11</sup> Buxtehude moved the concerts to the Sundays of Advent, and added two new balconies to the church to help accommodate larger numbers of musicians.

<sup>12</sup> Snyder, 54.

## Buxtehude's Choral Music

Though he gained international celebrity as an organist, Buxtehude also contributed substantially to choral repertoire. His extant vocal catalog consists primarily of works composed in German (eighty-six), although thirty-three are in Latin, two in Swedish and one in Italian.<sup>13</sup> Though the works written in Latin appealed to the most educated churchgoers in Lübeck, the language was probably not understood by the average citizen. The educated public, having attended Latin schools, was familiar with the language and its rhetorical tradition. Wealthy patrons supported these works because they considered the music to be refined and sophisticated.

### *Text, Cantata Genre, and Style of Northern German Church Music*

North German church music during Buxtehude's time emphasized praise, devotion, and the clear presentation of biblical texts. In the adherence of these goals, the majority of his works utilize either biblical prose or strophic poetry. Both poetic and biblical texts were set alone and in combination and twenty-five of the works were derived from the book of Psalms. Buxtehude preferred to set only a few verses of each text in a single work. Psalms were appropriate for almost every day in the church year and "...most of those that Buxtehude chose express sentiments of praise or trust in God."<sup>14</sup> Other biblical

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<sup>13</sup> Snyder, 138.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

texts in Buxtehude's catalog came from the book of Isaiah, as well as other parts of the Old and New Testaments.

Unlike some of his predecessors, Buxtehude did not often use entire Psalms. He preferred to set only a few verses at a time. Buxtehude also used the "Song of Solomon" for four pieces (BuxWV 45, 50, 75/4, 75/6) and followed the church tradition of interpreting the love between man and woman as a metaphor depicting the love between Jesus and the soul.<sup>15</sup> The remainder of the biblical texts utilized by Buxtehude was drawn from the book of Isaiah, the apocryphal book of Zacharias, and a variety of other New and Old Testament sources. In addition to biblical texts, Buxtehude used German poetry for seventy of his vocal works. These texts are mostly sacred songs, but seven are related to weddings, two to funerals, and one to the city of Lübeck itself. He also used German chorale texts from a variety of sources in twenty-two of his works. Besides Martin Luther, who was the author of four of Buxtehude's texts, no author is represented more than once in Buxtehude's extant catalog.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Buxtehude's SSATB Works*

Between 1680 and 1687, Buxtehude composed primarily for Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto, Tenor, and Bass (SSATB) voices, and *Membra Jesu Nostri* is a prime example. In fact, during these years, he wrote twenty-one pieces for SSATB chorus. These choral works cover a wide range of texts, scoring,

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<sup>15</sup> Snyder, 139.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 141.

compositional style and length.<sup>17</sup> Buxtehude used texts in both German (eighteen) and Latin (three), and instrumental performing forces range from a singular basso continuo accompaniment (BuxWV 114) to five voices with fifteen instruments and continuo (BuxWV 51). With the exception of the *Missa alla Brevis*, all of Buxtehude's SSATB works consist of either biblical prose or strophic poetry.

#### *Vocal Concerti and Arias*

In addition to his many choral works, Buxtehude wrote both vocal concerti and arias. The sacred concerti of the seventeenth century were stylistically similar to the motets of the late sixteenth century. For example, Giovanni Gabrieli altered the motet by adding the vocal soloists and instrumentalists to the chorus. This new style, a predecessor to the seventeenth century sacred concerto, achieved great popularity. These antecedents to the sacred concerto shared many characteristics with genres like the cantata, *cantio sacra*, and *motetto*.<sup>18</sup> The definition of concerto in the early seventeenth century was taken from combining the Italian verb *concertare* (agreement) with the Latin verb *contertare* (competition). Considering this combination, the resulting definition was the uniting of opposing forces.<sup>19</sup> The vocal concerto, or the alternating of one voice or many voices with each other or an instrumental group, was devoted almost exclusively to biblical

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<sup>17</sup> Susan L. Reid, "The Twenty-One SSATB Vocal Works of Dieterich Buxtehude: An Annotated Bibliography" *Choral Journal* 39:4 (November 1998), 9-20.

<sup>18</sup> Ann Kirwan-Mott, "The Small-scale Sacred Concertato in the Early Seventeenth century" (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press: 1981), 37.

<sup>19</sup> Kirwan-Mott, 12.

prose settings. When a chorale text appeared, the melody of the chorale often dictated the musical motives.

Early concerti included *ritornelli*, *sonatas*, or *sinfonias* at structural points, and these passages tied sections together or introduced and reinforced the mood or affect of the text. Buxtehude used the term ‘sonata’ not only in his instrumental music but also for his vocal pieces. Each sonata section was short and usually less than thirty measures. Only rarely do these sonatas use motivic material from the vocal music that will follow, though they are always in the same key.

Arias were typically set to strophic sacred poetry and expressed important ideas and emotions. The texture of these arias was homophonic and usually only one or two emotions were expressed at any given time. With its repeated harmonic progressions, the strophic aria was closely related to the strophic bass variation while allowing for melodic changes to accommodate the meaning of the text.

As both these genres developed through the seventeenth century, stylistic elements merged, and the first and last strophes of an aria might be set in concerto style, or a section of a concerto could convert into a more static homophonic texture. These two genres were also combined into larger multi-movement works that were eventually called cantatas. Many of Buxtehude’s cantatas include arias and concerti, and therefore may be called “Concerto-Aria” cantatas. *Membra Jesu Nostris* is a prime example of the concerto-aria cantata as it centers the focus, either concerti or aria style, on the body of Christ.

*Collections of his Choral works and present- day scholarship*

At present, there are two main collections that house the majority of Buxtehude's surviving vocal music. The Lübeck Tablature A 373 is contained in the *Deutsche Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin and holds twenty complete vocal pieces. The Gustav Düben Collection at Uppsala University has in its archive hundreds of original manuscripts, including the unique seven-part cantata *Membra Jesu Nostris*.<sup>20</sup>

The International Dieterich Buxtehude Society (IDBS) promotes research into the composer's music. Founded in 1932 in Lübeck, Germany, the IDBS has been instrumental in supporting Buxtehude research and scholarship. Though the original society dissolved, it was reconstituted in 2004 and today is very active in the proliferation and understanding of Buxtehude's music. Harpsichordist, organist, conductor and professor Dr. Ton Koopman is the current president of the society and musicologist Dr. Christoph Wolff serves as head of the curators' board. Dr. Koopman focuses his attention on promoting and educating musicians about the works of Dietrich Buxtehude, by recording his music.

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<sup>20</sup> Snyder, 338.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI AS A DEVOTIONAL PASSION

In the seventeenth century, musical meditations on the account of Christ's death on the cross were not as common as settings of other Lutheran devotional texts. Non-liturgical or semi-liturgical genres such as the cantata and sacred concerto set texts focused on love for Jesus, while passion meditations were reserved only for holy week. Perhaps partially due to this musical trend, Erdmann Neumeister's cantata reform of 1704<sup>21</sup> introduced an increasing number of free texts, many with intimate and devotional themes, into the music of the devotional passion. As a result, dramatic musical settings of the passion story became increasingly popular towards the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the early eighteenth-century.

In Lutheran devotion during Buxtehude's time, death was not feared but embraced.<sup>22</sup> This style of devotion described the relationship between God and humans as similar to the relationship between a faithful soul and a heavenly bridegroom. In this way, death could be anticipated with longing and not feared.

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<sup>21</sup> Before the reform, the cantata was a dramatic madrigal sung by one voice with a basso or lute accompaniment. The dramatic Passion only developed into an independent genre from the early-eighteenth century onwards. Neumeister wrote several poems that embraced the church year and were especially meant to be used as cantata texts.

<sup>22</sup> Isabella van Elferen, *Mystical Love in the German Baroque* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 258.

Texts from this period often reflect the type of desire usually reserved for love poetry. In his music, Buxtehude set many texts that reflected Lutheran longing for death.

The few non-liturgical or semi-liturgical devotional passions of the seventeenth century focused on the same themes as the theological and poetic representations of the passion. These works were grounded in the concept of “reciprocal love for the dying bridegroom, the physical beauty of the crucified Christ, or desire for eschatological union.”<sup>23</sup> Buxtehude attempts to portray Christ’s suffering through highly expressive music and text. He also uses the many thematic and stylistic characteristics of the Lutheran passion meditation in his musical construct of *Membra Jesu Nostrae*.<sup>24</sup>

The devotional passion is the meditative genre that demands the most intensity of response in poetic or musical language.<sup>25</sup> Luther emphasizes the importance of an active involvement of affect in the passion meditation. Lutheran theologians of the baroque period recognized the emotional purpose behind the passion and required active religious participation of each individual believer. For instance, Heinrich Müller (1631-1675), a Rostock theologian, writes, “We owe, after all, the greatest love to the crucified Jesus. Let us love him, for he has first

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<sup>23</sup> Elferen, 249.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 92.

loved us.”<sup>26</sup> Due to these theological requirements, the devotional passion evokes an admiration for Christ’s work on the cross, a call for repentance of sins, and a reciprocating love.

The belief in a personal relationship with God was one of the principle differences between the Lutheran community and the Catholic Church. After the Reformation, *sola fide* (the belief in justification by faith alone) became the prime belief of Lutherans.<sup>27</sup> With the rise of Protestantism throughout portions of the German-speaking world, religious leaders embraced the idea that although faith was sufficient for salvation, it should also be reflected in personal religious practice. This spiritual reform movement came to be known as *Pietism* after the title of Philipp Jakob Spener’s (1635-1705) *Pia desideria* (Pious desires), published in 1675.

In *Pia desideria*, Spener introduces his concept of the six “pious desires.” The first desire is the devotion to studying Scripture in small group settings known as conventicles. The second desire involves lay people gaining universal priesthood among believers through attendance at the conventicles. Spener’s third desire is for all Christians to understand that the essence of Christianity cannot be earned only through doctrinal theology or knowledge; rather, it is the total experience of faith in Scripture and practicality of the Christian life. Spener

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<sup>26</sup> Elferen, 93.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Luther’s theology lies in the opposing theologies of “glory” and of “the cross.” See Alister E. McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther’s Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

expected that his pietism would face criticism, so his fourth desire was that he would face religious controversies with a spirit of charity. His fifth desire was that disciplining or training pastors should go beyond mere doctrinal learning of orthodox theology, but should also focus on practicality of shepherding flocks based on devotional and practical theology. Finally, to the newly appointed pastors, Spener asserts in his sixth desire that they should work towards good Christian instruction and inspire their followers from the pulpit.<sup>28</sup> Thus, *Pia desideria* focuses on the following: high emphasis on personal piety, importance of conventicles for development of personal piety, focus on personal Scripture reading, simplicity of Christian doctrine, and equal emphasis on layperson and pastor's role in Christian life.

The Pietist movement, however, began far earlier than the year this book was published. Many writers prior to Spener explored the principles of Pietism putting emphasis on good works as evidence of the believer's devotion. *Vom wahren Christentum* (True Christianity) was written by Johann Arndt and published in four books between 1605 and 1609. Arndt's theology of practical piety would find him many followers in the last decade of his life, both pastors and scholars, throughout North Germany.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1964).

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Webber, *North German Church Music in the Age of Buxtehude* (Oxford, Clarendon: 1996), 10.

In the early to mid-seventeenth century in Germany, there was a rise in interest in mysticism that was carried over from the medieval concept of the *unio mystica* (mystical union), almost corporeal union of the believer and Christ. This would lead to an emphasis on one's inner spiritual life. These ideas were reflected in the poetry and chorale texts, which included personal imagery such as Christ as the bridegroom. The emphasis was more on "I" than on "we," which placed the focus on the spiritual journey of the soul. Many German cantata librettos possess a highly personal character, which reflects seventeenth century thought. These mystical aspects harken back to this time when divergent views of different groups of Lutherans broke out into open conflict towards the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, a growing fascination towards self-awareness, personal piety, and subjective emotional experiences formed the basis for the rise of Pietism.<sup>30</sup>

There exists a strong connection between Orthodox Lutheran devotion and early Pietist mysticism. One of the most noticeable elements of a cantata text of this period is the emphasis on the mystical union of Christ, symbolized as the groom, and the church as the bride.<sup>31</sup> Mystical themes are viewed in a way that come very close to the language of Pietist mysticism, especially in the texts of the

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<sup>30</sup> Hans Ludwig Holborn, "Bach and Pietism" (Ph.D Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1976), 18.

<sup>31</sup> J.S. Bach's cantata "Wachet auf" (BWV 140) is a prime example of both groom and bride.

Orthodox Lutheran devotions.<sup>32</sup> Poets who specialized in the vernacular of Christ often used the same theme of love between Jesus and the faithful soul based on medieval mysticism and restructured to the poetic language as it is brought up to date. “Glorifying in the blood and wounds of the crucified Christ was a common feature of the pietistic Lutheran poetry of the time.”<sup>33</sup>

Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostris* is an example of the heightened levels of this affect in the seventeenth century devotional passion. Based on the medieval passion poem “*Salve mundi salutare* (Greetings, savior of the world),” which is dominated by themes of spiritual love, *Membra Jesu Nostris* is filled with text painting and symbolism that expresses the sacrifice and redemption that Christ bore on the cross. This cycle is a perfect example of the spiritual intensity and zeal of Christ’s passion for the German faithful of the late seventeenth century. Its seven meditative cantatas reflect on the limbs of a crucified Redeemer in music that enhances highly provocative words. This piece adds credibility to the notion that Buxtehude was one of the greatest German masters of passion music.

### **Contrast Between Orthodoxy and Pietism**

Followers of both Pietism and Lutheran Orthodoxy believed that music was of utmost importance in communicating the Word of God. “The music had to

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<sup>32</sup> Elferen, 159.

<sup>33</sup> David Cox, “Buxtehude and His Passion Music” *The Musical Times* 112, no. 1537 (March 1971): 232-243.

be based on a biblical text and a chorale, to support these or translate them into the language and understanding of the congregation.”<sup>34</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) insisted that simple hymns with organ accompaniment were all that was needed for worship music and that the congregation would best understand the words if the music was not overly complex. The Lutheran Orthodox church was more accepting of music rooted in secular traditions and allowed for the Italian secular style as long as the words related to the worship. Nonetheless, the Pietist movement played an important part in the development of new music. Poetry and literature by Pietist writers permeated both sides of the German religious debate: “The Pietist movement gave new impetus to song composition.”<sup>35</sup>

Again, Pietist literature focused on the individual soul, which was considered capable of unique, individual expression. Sermons, devotions and poetry expressed the feelings of individual souls. In addition, Pietist literature expressed longing for Christ in heaven and spurned earthly wants and desires. It was believed that worldly pleasures were nothing compared to the awaiting joy of heaven. For the devout Pietist, Christ was the reason for living and because of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, humans were given the chance to reach mystical union with him in Heaven.

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<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1974), 254.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 254.

Mysticism and Pietism gradually began to influence German poetry and literature as the Lutheran church became increasingly relevant. “There was no attempt to upset the sacramental foundation, and the acts and forms of worship remained unchanged. But private devotion and pious contemplations were held in ever increasing esteem.”<sup>36</sup> Many of the religious poets expressing this combination were the prominent ministers of the time.

Until well into the eighteenth century, Lübeck was a center of conservatism in both economics and religion. The Pietist movement began in Lübeck around 1665 or 1666. Pietist meetings had been outlawed by the city council, but their supporters identified themselves as a group interested in fostering greater personal spirituality outside the church. Lübeck native and theologian Johann Wilhelm Peterson (1649-1727) lived in the city from 1675 to 1676 while hoping to gain a position in the clergy. Peterson interacted with Spener, author of *Pia desideria* (1675) and helped proliferate Spener’s ideas among the spiritually unfulfilled in Lübeck. Though Peterson was eventually forced to leave Lübeck, he kept in contact with his colleagues there while working in Lünenberg and Eutin. Pietist leader August Hermann Francke was also a native of Lübeck and had returned for a short time in 1690. After preaching once at St. Mary’s, he was branded a heretic and was prevented from preaching in Lübeck ever again.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Blume, 188-189.

<sup>37</sup> Snyder, 43.

The bond between theology and music is evident in the devotional passion of Buxtehude. In the article, “*Figure und Affekt in Buxtehude’s Choralkantaten*,” Martin Ruhnke discusses Buxtehude’s *Membra Jesu Nostris* in terms of rhetorical figures in a basic overview by category, including word stress, word repetition, silence, melisma, meter, dissonance figures and word-painting (otherwise known as *hypotyposis*).<sup>38</sup> Ruhnke, while pointing out Buxtehude’s use of rhetorical devices, also discusses the theological ramifications of the use of meter. In addition, Gregory Scott Johnston in “Protestant Funeral Music and Rhetoric in 17th Century Germany: A Musical-Rhetorical Examination of the Printed Sources,” provides insight on the “Figurenlehre: Catabasis and Anabasis, Hyperbole and *Hypobole*, *Exclamatio*, and Duple and Triple Meter.” Though Johnston does not speak directly about Buxtehude’s music, he uses other examples of duple meter to depict earth and suffering, while triple meter depicts heavenly joy.<sup>39</sup> Ruhnke, in his article above also mentions the meter changes that correspond to the affect of the text, especially with the words “trinity,” “eternal life,” and “heavenly peace.” There is no question that Buxtehude was aware of the Pietist factions in Lübeck, but it is unlikely that he ever took part in any events held by the groups. Buxtehude’s career would not have allowed him to involve

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<sup>38</sup> Martin Ruhnke, “Figure und Affekt in Buxtehude’s Choralkantaten,” in *Dietrich Buxtehude und die Europäische Musik seiner Zeit: Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 35, eds. Arnfried Edler and Friedhelm Krummacher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1990), 84-100.

<sup>39</sup> Gregory Scott Johnston, “Protestant Funeral Music and Rhetoric in Seventeenth-Century Germany: a Musical-Rhetorical Examination of the Printed Sources” (Ph.D. diss, University of British Columbia, 1987), 164-190.

himself with Pietism, a movement that was largely underground during his tenure at St. Mary's.

In regards to Buxtehude's cantata *Membra Jesu Nostri*, musical rhetoric devices are used as a tool to convey the passion story and Christ's suffering on the cross. The theological and rhetorical figures work together to create a connection with the passion music. George Buelow in his "Rhetoric and Music" provides a basic overview of rhetoric devices and music.<sup>40</sup> In rhetorical analysis, it may be observed that Buxtehude incorporates certain affects in various keys such as c minor, e minor, g minor, and a minor. In the key of c minor, Buxtehude utilized conjunct writing, patterned figures, and regular, continuous rhythm with harmonies that are stable and diatonic. In e minor, chromatic inflections represent sadness and in g minor, the music appears austere with the older *ricercar* form (an elaborate contrapuntal instrumental composition in fugal or canonic method).<sup>41</sup> In

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<sup>40</sup> Buelow's specialty as an American musicologist in German music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offers an array of insight regarding the art form of Baroque music, and Passion music in particular. See George Buelow, "Rhetoric and Music," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d. edition. (London: MacMillan Publishers Limited: 2001); George Buelow, "Teaching Seventeenth-Century Concepts of Musical Form and Expression: An Aspect of Baroque Music," *College Music Symposium* 27 (1987): 1-13.

<sup>41</sup> Kerala J. Snyder, "Buxtehude, Dieterich," in *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04477> (accessed September 10, 2011).

a minor, modal traditions are invoked with Phrygian cadences and lamenting, austere qualities.<sup>42</sup>

In *Membra Jesu Nostri*, Buxtehude created a great deal of tension by juxtaposing moments of consonance and dissonance. Dissonance is often employed to portray the emotional and physical pain that is endured by Christ's body. In addition, the alteration of major and minor keys raises an important issue, perhaps more than the key movements. Buxtehude portrays his vision of Heaven in major keys while depictions of the earth are in the minor mode. Furthermore, *Membra Jesu Nostri* involves a theological relationship between the music and Christ's passion. The transition of c minor to E $\flat$  Major conveys parallels in the text as an upward ascent from Christ's feet to his knees before returning to c minor in the last cantata.

### **Mysticism**

Lutheran mysticism is based upon the idea that Christians, as a result of original sin, are not capable of obtaining a perfect union with Christ. Buxtehude fills the music of his devotional passion with mystic qualities. According to Lutheran theology, Jesus descended to Earth, taking on the form of Man and God, to provide reconciliation between humankind and the Creator. Lutherans further believe his death on the cross not only serves as a physical representation of Christ's suffering, but also as a spiritual representation of the pain and suffering

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<sup>42</sup> Shelbie Simons, "Dialog and Dualism: A Study of Lutheran Theology Applied to Selected Buxtehude Vocal Cantatas" (DMA Diss., University of Oklahoma, 2006), 21.

endured for the salvation of humankind. Other important mystical themes include a Communion meditation and mystical longing for death. The desire for mystical union with Jesus and the reality that this reconciliation cannot be fully attained in this life are perhaps the most important concepts of Lutheran mysticism.<sup>43</sup>

Buxtehude demonstrates the paradox of pain and joy in a combined portrayal of mystical union with Christ, as love for Jesus is simultaneously expressed at the foot of the cross. He represents the joy of the *unio mystica* (mystical union) through dance-like rhythms and sixteenth notes. He also addresses the humiliation of the cross through *passus duriusculi* (a chromatically altered ascending or descending melodic line), as seen in Figure 1. He uses the device of *catabasis*, (a descending musical passage which expresses descending, lowly, or negative images or affections)<sup>44</sup> as seen Figure 1.1, and to create a growing sense of dissonance and discord.

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<sup>43</sup> Elferen, 310.

<sup>44</sup> Dieterich Bartel, *Musical Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 442-443.

Figure 1. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 4 *Ad Latus*, mm. 16-19.

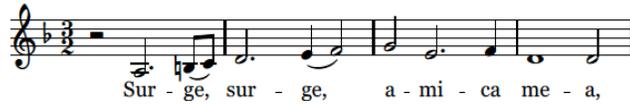


Figure 1.1. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 1 *Ad Pedes*, mm. 84-85.



Buxtehude represents mystical joy with major keys, triple meter, stepwise intervallic movement, rising motifs (*anabases*), and parallel thirds. *Membra Jesu Nostri* contains much evidence of the use of these devices. For example, the opening chorus of *Membra Jesu Nostri*'s sixth cantata is a musical dialogue for two soprano voices that complement a bass voice rhythmically and in parallel thirds. The word *vulnerasti* (ravished) conveys a sense of "falling in love," which descends through a minor sixth to represent the meaning of the text, evoking bittersweet emotions. The display of parallel thirds, flowing movement in close intervals, consonance, and complementary rhythms represent the joyful aspects of love. At the same time, longer rhythmic values, the minor mode, a static continuo part, sixth chords, and the main motif on the word *vulnerasti* denote Christ's suffering. Thus, Christ's wounded body and soul is musically articulated as a love

metaphor, which is in much agreement with the Passion theology of Lutheran devotion.<sup>45</sup>

In *Membra Jesu Nostris*, Buxtehude frequently chooses dance rhythms and cheerful moments in triple meter to highlight the joy of the spiritual union.<sup>46</sup>

According to Walter Blankenburg, other expressive devices may be used in relation to *unio mystica*, such as rhythmic homophonic parallel thirds and sixths between two voices. These are harmonic representations of the passionate union between Christ and the soul, as well as complementary rhythms representing mystical union.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps Buxtehude adopted these conventions to represent the spiritual love that evolved throughout the seventeenth century and developed them further into a display of mystical love.

The text of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris* exhibits several indicators of mystical love through the combination of poetry and Biblical passages. Most of the Bible verses, along with the prose of each of the seven cantatas, are adapted from the Song of Solomon as well as other books of the Bible, which theologically and pedagogically strengthen Lutheran mysticism and its passion theology. The verses of the *Rhythmica oratio* from the third cantata describe the blood as a representation of Christ's love to provoke a heartfelt reciprocation of

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<sup>45</sup> Elferen, 256.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 311.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Blamkenburg, "Mystik in der Musik J.S. Bach," in *Theologische Bach-Stufirn*, ed. Walter Blankenburg and Renate Steiger (Neuhausen-Suttgart: Hänssler, 1987), 57-59.

love. The following, Figure 2, is the text of the third aria found in the third cantata, *Ad manus*.

Figure 2. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri* No. 3 *Ad Manus*, third aria.

In cruore tuo lotum	Moistened by your blood
me commendo tibi totum,	I entrust myself wholly unto you;
tuae sanctae manus istae	May your holy hands
me defendant, Jesu Christe,	protect me, Jesus Christ,
extremis in periculis.	In my last hour of need. <sup>48</sup>

The *tutti* sections incorporate rhetorical devices in the solo sections with the question “What are these wounds?” articulated as a homophonic statement (*exclamatio*) to represent the startled believer meditating on the cross. At “in the middle of your hands” the distress turns into a humble compassion while sharp dissonances are heard in the descending homophony. At the last repetition of the line, the music moves towards a consonant cadence.<sup>49</sup>

The mystical desire for death may also be observed in the seventh cantata of *Membra Jesu Nostri*. As Christ approaches the final moments of life, the believer sets his eyes upon his wounded countenance, smeared in blood and saliva. Feelings of joy and excitement are evoked as Christ’s impending death leads to a promise of mystical unity during the final meditation on the cross. In the last line, “*facie sputis illita*” (the face spat upon and soiled), Buxtehude conveys joy with the use of dance-like rhythms. In this aria, Christ’s blood and

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<sup>48</sup> Buxtehude *Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>49</sup> Elferen, 252.

suffering are the source of dissonance, which are expressed through the text and key of c minor, also serving as a source of reconciliation. The chorus renders its text in a fast 6/4 meter and homophonic texture denoting joy at the prospect of man's reconciliation with God. This *tutti* section ends with a final center of focus on the meditation of the cross. Thus, the believer expresses his longing for eschatological union with Christ through his last moments of suffering and death.<sup>50</sup> The mystical aspects found throughout Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* are clear examples of Lutheran Passion devotion that symbolize the reconciliation of God and mankind through Christ's suffering on the cross. He employs specific musical and textual qualities to further emphasize mystic love as a profound component of Lutheran theology. To illustrate the textual qualities mentioned above, the following should be considered:

1. In his first cantata, *Ad pedes* (to his feet), the music might be used to reminisce on how the sweet and merciful God came to offer reconciliation to the guilty by using the text from the *Rythmica oratio*. Jesus, while showing his mercy, came to earth to bring the good news and to proclaim peace with his holy feet. It is the sinner's prayer that they may have the strength to follow Christ on the cross. This is a message to embrace the wounds created by the nails in his feet.

2. In his second cantata, *Ad genua* (to his knees), sinners are brought to their knees in hopes that their God would redeem them. Though Christ is

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<sup>50</sup> Elferen, 258-259.

the one who hung on the cross, he was the true God. Through Jesus, sinners seek a contrite spirit. This cantata provides a moment for the listener to seek healing with a message of hope and forgiveness.

3. In his third cantata, *Ad manus* (to his hands), Jesus's torn and nailed hands are holy and the blood that drips from them is also holy. The passages reflect an offering of kisses to the holy hands of Christ with thanksgiving. And even in the final hour, the sinner expresses devotion into the hands of Jesus. This is a message of thanksgiving and delight. The word "holy" appears four times in this cantata, giving the word special meaning. However, Buxtehude suggests that the word "holy" is a spiritual state of being which does not exist in this world. Christ is perfect and holy, and humans strive for a state of holiness; holiness that only exists in perfection: Jesus.

4. In his fourth cantata, *Ad latus* (to his side), Jesus displays his power of love by the out-pouring of his blood through his side, which cleanses the filthy heart. Buxtehude expresses that, even in death, the repentant sinner should remain by his side. The following Bible verse expresses the emotions felt by man: "my heart arises like a dove in the cleft of the rock, in a hidden place of the cliff."<sup>51</sup> This symbolizes the soaring Christian life, which results in Christian sanctification.

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<sup>51</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

5. In his fifth cantata, *Ad pectus*, to his breast, Buxtehude expresses a longing for the spiritual milk that allows for growth into salvation. One would approach touching the breast of love with trembling, acknowledging his breast as a display of reverence. A request is made for a clean heart and a will of denial so that man might conform to a life of Jesus, filled with virtues. Buxtehude conveys a message of being chosen as Christ invites us to feed on the spiritual milk of his breast.

6. In his sixth cantata, *Ad cor* (to his heart), Buxtehude quotes scripture while expressing joy and contentment in one's heart. With a joyous heart, man is moved and addresses the Lord:

Let your love enter,  
Into the innermost part of my heart-  
The heart of a sinner and guilt-laden person.  
Through me, your heart will be torn asunder,  
Becoming exhausted by the wounds of love.

With the living voice of my heart  
I call to you, sweet heart, for I love you.  
Incline yourself toward my heart,  
so that it can nestle against you  
with humility.<sup>52</sup>

This cantata serves as the high point of *Membra Jesu Nostri*, and the beauty of the Latin poetry is illustrated with frequent meter and rhythmic changes. The Latin word *Ad cor* appears nine times: five times as “my heart” and four times as “heart of Jesus,” including “my heart” in Song of Solomon 4:9.

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<sup>52</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

7. Finally, in his seventh cantata *Ad faciem* (to his face), the emotional development of the preceding cantatas arrives with finality at Christ's countenance. There is a longing to see the face of Jesus on the cross, the face smeared with blood from the thorns on his head. Through his suffering, man finds protection and freedom from death. The face of the risen Christ shines on his people and he provides salvation and mercy at the end of days. The cantata ends with the word "*Amen*" which conveys a message of glorification. The entire collection of cantatas begins with the feet of Jesus, working upwards towards the head, ending with the face of Christ. On his countenance, glory is revealed.

With the movement from feet to face, the good news and divine peace provides the foundation of the accomplished work that is displayed in the face of Christ. Each cantata acknowledges a significant body part, creating a connection and interaction of the good news from beginning to end. Through Buxtehude's compositional methods, he creates a passion which embraces the ideology of Lutheran theology but at the same time includes aspects of mysticism and pietism. This is achieved through text selection, rhetorical devices and thematic and stylistic characteristics of Lutheran passion music.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF MEMBRA JESU NOSTRI

#### **Historical Background-*Membra Jesu Nostr* (BUXWV75)**

**by Dieterich Buxtehude**

Buxtehude completed his *Membra Jesu Nostr* cycle in 1680.<sup>53</sup> The full title of the work reads: “*Membra Jesu nostr* *patientis sanctissima*” (The most holy limbs of our suffering Jesus). To this title, Buxtehude added the note: “*humilima Totius Cordis Devotione decantata*” (sung whole-heartedly in the humblest devotion). On the original title page, Buxtehude dated the work 1680, but he may have completed it at an earlier time.<sup>54</sup> The purpose of the work is also shrouded in mystery though it could have been composed as a part of Buxtehude’s regular duties in writing music for the *Abendmusiken* concerts, or perhaps the work exists solely as a testimony of the composer’s personal devotion. In addition, scholars do not believe that the pieces were written for Protestant services.<sup>55</sup> In any case, it is one of his more expressive works.

The composer dedicated *Membra Jesu Nostr* to Swedish court *Kapellmeister* Gustav Düben (1629-1690), who was not only a personal friend of Buxtehude’s, but also the man responsible for preserving the composer’s cantatas

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<sup>53</sup> Dieterich Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostr*, ed. Thomas Schlage, (Stuttgart: Carus- Verlag, 2007), VII.

<sup>54</sup> An example of inaccurate dating by Buxtehude comes from his oratorio *Die Hochzeit des Lamms*, which shows the same completion year of 1680, but was performed two years prior at an *Abenmusiken* concert.

<sup>55</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostr*, ed. Schlage, VII.

in what later became the Düben Collection.<sup>56</sup> Düben copied most of Buxtehude's vocal works and organized them into various collections between the years 1680 and 1690. As a testament to their friendship, Buxtehude dedicated *Membra Jesu Nostris*: "to the respected Herr Gustav Düben, music director to His most illustrious Majesty the King of Sweden, and my noble and most venerable friend."<sup>57</sup> But it remains unclear whether or not Düben commissioned the work for the Swedish court.

Though the intended use of the piece is unknown, it is most likely that Buxtehude did not expect it to be performed in its entirety. We may suppose this for several reasons. First, Düben created the tablature using different formats and different types of paper for each cantata of the work. Additionally, none of the title pages of these parts features the name of the cycle to which they are included. In *Membra Jesu Nostris*, the last cantata is marked "No. 7," the sixth, *Ad cor*, is called *Passione nostri Jesu Christi*. Düben also considered the first of them "For Easter or for any time." The Cantatas may have also been intended for the seven days of Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday and ending on Holy Saturday before the music appropriate for the feast of Easter.

The text of the arias of *Membra Jesu Nostris* are derived from the poem "*Salve mundi salutare*," also known as the *Rhythmica oratio*. Typically attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, this text may have actually been written by medieval

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<sup>56</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostris*, ed. Schlage, VII.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, VII.

poet Arnulf of Louvain (ca. 1200-1250). Both the *Rhythmica oratio* and “*Jesu dulcis memoria*” --another poem attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux- were widely popular during the seventeenth century and were translated from Latin into many languages<sup>58</sup> and during the seventeenth century were openly accepted by both Protestants and Catholics. Together, they are the source for ten of Buxtehude’s works.<sup>59</sup> The subject of these texts is the crucifixion of Christ. The seven body parts portrayed in the seven cantatas of *Membra Jesu Nostri* are interpreted allegorically and graphically to convey a sense of worship shared in the suffering on the Cross. There are three stanzas for each section of the composition setting them as arias. Each cantata contains a verse from the Old Testament, except for the fifth cantata, *Ad pectus*, which contains passages from the New Testament. Buxtehude used three half verses from each of the seven parts of the *Rhythmica oratio*--translated into German and published in Hamburg in 1633 as the text for the arias of *Membra Jesu Nostri*.

On the original manuscript, the work is framed by the phrases “*In nomine Jesu*” (In the name of Jesus), and “*Soli Deo Gloria*” (To God alone be the glory); the former written before the first cantata and the latter after the final cantata.<sup>60</sup> The letters I.N.J., for *In Nomine Jesu* represent the mystical expression of the Lutheran theology on the cross. The adage *Soli Deo Gloria* is appended to the

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<sup>58</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Schlage, VII.

<sup>59</sup> Snyder, 140.

<sup>60</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Schlage, VII.

concluding *Amen*. Despite these unifying phrases, none of the title pages for the parts contain the cycle title *Membra Jesu Nostris*, although the last includes “No. 7.”<sup>61</sup> Although each cantata within *Membra Jesu Nostris* focuses on a particular body part, the work can be viewed as a musical account of the various emotions felt when pondering Christ’s crucifixion.

### Structure

Sonata - *Tutti* - Aria / Ritornello - Aria/Ritornello - Aria/Ritornello - *Tutti*

*Membra Jesu Nostris* may be viewed as one cyclic work for passion in a concerted organization and may be observed as a series of related cycles where the reiteration of motives occurs. Each cantata begins with an instrumental introduction (sonata) that is followed by a *tutti* in which the choir begins to sing. A series of several arias with *ritornelli* follows written for one or more voices with the same bass (*continuo*) line. Except for numbers one and seven, each cantata is concluded by an exact repeat of their respective opening *tutti section*.

In music from this period, *ritornelli* are typically connected with arias. The arias of this cycle are, however, not connected to the *ritornelli*. Each of the seven cantatas contained in *Membra Jesu Nostris* are comprised of six sections: a sonata, a *tutti*, three arias, and a repeat of the *tutti*. The pauses in the music between the arias and the *ritornelli* give the listener more time to contemplate and digest the meaning of the text.

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<sup>61</sup> Snyder, 199.

The orchestration consists of two violins, one violone, and *basso continuo* where the fundamental (the bass notes on which the chord structure is formed) is played an octave below the cello for the majority of the time. The orchestration remains the same in every cantata except for the sixth, which calls for five viola da gambas and *basso continuo*.<sup>62</sup>

Each cantata begins with an instrumental *sinfonia* followed by a *dictum* (passage from the Bible) that is not connected to Jesus' death on the cross. The arias pertain to the parts of the body and end with recurring passages from the Bible. An exception occurs in the first cantata, with *salve mundi salture* (the first aria is sung by the chorus again), and the last cantata, which concludes with a final choral "*Amen*."

The structures of the cantatas in *Membra Jesu Nostris* share similarities in form. In every first movement, the sonata is comprised of instruments alone. Most of the *tutti* choral sections call for a full five-part chorus (SSATB).<sup>63</sup> The arias are intended for solo voices, or a trio of voices,<sup>64</sup> and are performed in short Latin poetic strophes. The seventh cantata stands alone in featuring a five-part *tutti* homophonic chorus. These arias are short in duration and most of them include *ritornelli*. In cantata one and seven, the *tutti* is repeated, but with extra text added.

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<sup>62</sup> The continue instruments would have likely been organ and violone.

<sup>63</sup> With the exception of cantatas five and six.

<sup>64</sup> Solo arias in cantatas one, five, six, and trio arias in cantatas two, three, and four.

The musical structure of each sonata is reflected in the spiritual content of the latter parts of the cantata and the music itself is highly meditative in character.

The sonata sections at the beginning of each cantata are short in length with sparse instrumentation. Each cantata contains scripture passages in the opening choral *tutti* sections. Buxtehude set the poetry of the arias and the biblical text of the concertos with each stanza containing the same bass line (strophic or strophic variation form).

The texts used in *Membra Jesu Nostris* are emotionally dynamic and focused on the “holy” number seven. Though each of the seven cantatas can function individually, they exist within the greater framework of the piece as suggested by the overall key structure of the work. Figure 3 outlines the keys for each section.

Figure 3. Key Structures of Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*.

Cantata	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Title	<i>Ad pedes</i>	<i>Ad genua</i>	<i>Ad manus</i>	<i>Ad latus</i>	<i>Ad pectus</i>	<i>Ad cor</i>	<i>Ad faciem</i>
Key	c minor	E $\flat$ Major	g minor	d minor	a minor	e minor	c minor

The first and last cantatas are in c minor and the first three keys outline a c minor triad (c minor, E $\flat$  Major, g minor). All but the last of the remaining keys move around the circle of fifths (d minor, a minor, and e minor). The seven parts of Christ's body are ordered from the foot of the cross and upward (C-E $\flat$ -G), much like a representation of the upward redemption that Christ symbolizes. The overall effect of the cycle perhaps embodies the many emotions surrounding Jesus's crucifixion.

Each individual cantata begins with a repeated note, either of a same or different rhythmic value, with the exception of the seventh cantata, which begins with the repeated note but with a displacement of an octave in the Violone and Basso continuo parts. This unifying characteristic is observed in Figure 4 and its sub figures.

Figure 4.1. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 1 *Ad pedes*, mm. 1-5.<sup>65</sup>

No.1 - Ad pedes  
Ecce super montes pedes

D.Buxtehude

Sonata

Violino 1  
Violino 2  
Violon

Figure 4.2. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 2 *Ad genua*, mm. 1-9.

No.2 - Ad genua  
Ad ubera portabimini

D.Buxtehude

Sonata in tremulo

Violino 1  
Violino 2  
Violon

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<sup>65</sup> For all figures labeled 4.1- 4.7, all musical examples from: Dieterich Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Martin Straeten, free-score.com. [http://www.free-scores.com/PDF\\_EN/buxtehude-dieterich-membra-jesu-nostri-19745.pdf](http://www.free-scores.com/PDF_EN/buxtehude-dieterich-membra-jesu-nostri-19745.pdf) (accessed September 2, 2011).





Figure 5.1. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 1 *Ad pedes*.

**No. 1 - Ad pedes, m. 35**

Sal - ve, mun - di sa - lu

Figure 5.2. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 4 *Ad latus*.

**No. 4 - Ad latus, Alto Tenor Bass, mm. 102-103**

Ec-ce ti-bi ap-pro - pin quo, par - ce, Je - su, si de

Ec-ce ti-bi ap-pro - pin quo, par - ce, Je - su, si de

Ec-ce ti-bi ap-pro - pin quo, par - ce, Je - su, si de

Figure 5.3. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 7 *Ad faciem*.

No. 7 - Ad Faciem, Ritornello, mm. 93-95



These elements combine to create overarching musical ideas that are built into each movement, shown in Figures 4 and 5.

## The Seven Cantatas of Membra Jesu Nostri

### No. 1 “Ad Pedes”

1. “Ad Pedes”  
(Nahum 1:15)

1. To His Feet <sup>66</sup>

Soprano, I & II, Alto, Tenor, Bass  
Ecce super montes pedes  
evangelizantis et annuntiantis pacem

Behold, on the mountains the feet  
of him who brings good tidings, who  
proclaims peace.

Soprano I  
Salve mundi salutare  
salve, salve Jesu care!  
Cruci tuae me aptare

Greetings, savior of the world!  
Greetings, beloved Jesus!  
I should like to hang with you on  
your cross.

vellem vere, tu scis quare,  
da mihi tui copiam

Verily you know why;  
Give me your strength.

Soprano II  
Clavos pedium, plagas duras  
et tam graves impressuras  
circumplector cum affectu,  
tuo pavens in aspectu,  
tuorum memor vulnerum.

The nails in your feet, the hard strokes  
and the severe weals—  
full of emotion I embrace them,  
full of anxiety at the sight of you,  
bearing your wounds in my mind.

Bass  
Dulcis Jesu, pie Deus,  
ad te clamo, licet reus,  
praebe mihi te benignum,  
ne repellas me indignum  
de tuis sanctis pedibus.<sup>67</sup>

Sweet Jesus, merciful God,  
I call to you, though I be guilty;  
show your mercy to me,  
do not reject me, unworthy,  
from your holy feet.

*Ad pedes* is the first cantata of the cycle and opens with a *sonata*, an introductory instrumental movement scored for two violins, one violone and

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<sup>66</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>67</sup> The text source for all the arias come from “*Rhythmica oratio*,” based on the poem “*Salve mundo salutre*” by Arnulf von Löwen.

organ continuo. A choir of five parts (SSATB) follows, singing an imitative setting from the prophet Nahum with basso continuo accompaniment. Brief instrumental interpolations are added throughout with a five-part *tutti* section. Next is the soprano aria with basso continuo, *Salve mundi salutare* (Greetings, savior of the world), and a final instrumental *ritornello*. The second soprano aria, *Clavos pedum* (the nails in your feet) takes on a similar pattern, followed by the bass aria *Dulcis Jesu* (sweet Jesus) with a different melody on the same harmonic structure. The cycle ends with the choir and instruments, returning to the biblical text with the Latin poetry, *Salve mundi salutare* (Greetings, savior of the world). This cycle is the only one in the entire cantata that includes the Latin poetry at the end along with the biblical passages.

This first movement starts with the sonata section in c minor with a homophonic texture and straightforward harmony. The remaining sections of the cantata are also in c minor, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Structure of *Ad Pedes*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C	c minor	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	C	c minor	Nahum 1:15
III	Aria (SI) / ritornello	C	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (SII) / ritornello	C	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (B) / ritornello	C	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	C	c minor	Nahum 1:15, Arnulf

Double-dotting the rhythms in the French Overture style might be a consideration when performing. This could be added in m. 3 of the violin and violone notes shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 1 *Ad pedes*, mm. 1- 5.<sup>68</sup>

No.1 - Ad pedes  
Ecce super montes pedes

D.Buxtehude

Sonata

Violino 1

Violino 2

Violon

Canto 1

Canto 2

Alto

Tenore

Basso

Continuo

In the *tutti* section, the voices and instruments are called upon to stress “*Ecce*” (behold) in the meditative c minor chord, which indicates sorrow that is easily heard by the listener. Figure 8 is an example of how Buxtehude sets the text *Ad te clamo* (I call to you) to an ascending series of sixteenth notes.

<sup>68</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 2.

Figure 8. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 1 *Ad pedes*, mm. 81-91.

Basso

Dul - cis Je - su, pi - e De - us, ad te cla - mo li - cet re - us, prae - be mi - hi te be -

nignum, ne re - pel - las me in dignum, praebe mi - hi te benignum, ne re - pel - las me in dignum de

tu - is, de tu - is sanc - tis pe - dibus, praebe mi - hi te be - nignum, ne re - pel - las me in dignum de

This metaphor is highly descriptive of a calling out to Jesus on the cross or God in Heaven. Buxtehude then sets the next phrase, *ne repellas me indignum* (do not reject me, unworthy), in descending pitches. This symbolizes the humble state of man as guilty sinners.<sup>69</sup> Starting with c minor (which implies a sorrowful mood), the affect then changes with the ascending line to portray peace and goodness. The final moment is expressed with a major cadence, reflecting the good news of Jesus's victory over death.

<sup>69</sup> Ryan Board, "Dieterich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*: A Study in Baroque Affections and Rhetoric" (DMA diss., University of Missouri, Kansas City, 2006), 70.





No. 2 “Ad Genua”

2. “Ad Genua”  
(Isaiah 66:12)

2. To His Knees <sup>71</sup>

Soprano I & II Alto, Tenor, Bass  
Ad ubera portabimini,  
et super genua blandicentur vobis.

You shall be carried upon her hip,  
And dandled upon her knee.

Tenor  
Salve, Jesu, rex sanctorum,  
spes votiva peccatorum,  
crucis lignum tnaquam reus,  
pendens homo verus Deus,  
caducis nutans genitus!

Greetings, Jesus, king of the saints.  
thou welcome hope for the sinner,  
hanging on the wood of the cross  
Like a guilty man, yet the true God,  
bending with doomed knees!

Alto  
Quid sum tibi responsurus,  
actu vilis, corde durus?  
Quid rependam amatori,  
qui elegit pro me mori,  
ne dupla morte morerer?

How should I answer you,  
feeble of action, hard of heart?  
How should I repay your love,  
thou who chose to die for me,  
that I might not suffer a twofold death?

Soprano I, II, Bass  
Ut te queram ment para,  
sit haec mea prima cura,  
  
non est labor nec gravabor,  
sed sanabor et mundabor,  
cum te complexus fuero. <sup>72</sup>

To seek you with a pure spirit,  
may that be my primary concern,  
it is neither troublesome nor arduous  
for me,  
because I shall become whole and pure  
upon embracing.

Figure 11 is a representation of the form, meter, tonality, and textual sources found in this cantata.

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<sup>71</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>72</sup> The text source for all the arias come from “*Rhythmica oratio*,” based on the poem “*Salve mundo salutre*” by Arnulf von Löwen.

Figure 11. Structure of *Ad genua*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C	E♭ Major	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	3/4, C	E♭ Major	Isaiah 66:12
III	Aria (T) / ritornello	C	E♭ Major	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (A) / ritornello	C	E♭ Major	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (SI, SII, B) / ritornello	C	E♭ Major	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	3/4, C	E♭ Major	Isaiah 66:12

In *Ad genua*, the second cantata, Buxtehude focuses on Christ's knees. Buxtehude employs a large amount of *tremolo* that may suggest pain, suffering, weeping and intense devotion, as seen in Figure 12.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Board, 70.



The use of *tremolo* is indicated on the top page of the score (using an Italian variant of the term) might imply the half note and whole notes notated be performed in groups of four repeated eighth notes.<sup>75</sup> It is also possible that this may be an indication to the organist to play this movement with the *tremolo* stop, which produces a sound more closely related to vibrato. The instruments appear to have a limited in the *sonata* and the *ritornellos*. Nevertheless, these instrumental parts are rather expressive. Particular to German music of the seventeenth century, the term *tremolo* seems to appear in passages with strong emotions.<sup>76</sup>

The arias in this cantata, like the other cantatas of *Membra Jesu Nostris*, are set to virtually the same bass line. The use of a key signature with three flats and the triple meter is likely symbolic of the trinity and holy images. The text of the *tutti* section, “*Ad ubera portabimini, et super genua blandicentur vobis,*” is presented three times in repetition to reinforce the theme of the trinity. Texture appears chordal and homophonic with points of imitation during the *tutti* choral section. Figure 13 shows the first tenor aria in which Buxtehude uses a bending

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<sup>75</sup> Dieterich Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostris*, John Eliot Gardiner, Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, DDD 447 298-2, 1990.

<sup>76</sup> The Purcell Quartet, *Membra Jesu Nostris* (London: Chandos Records, 2010).

and weaving series of sixteenth notes as an example of *hypotyposis* (mimicry of acts only, not of manners or feeling) on the word *caducis* (bending).<sup>77</sup>

Figure 13. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 2 *Ad genua*, mm. 79-84.

79 re - us, pen - dens ho - mo, ve - rus de - us, ca - du - cis, ca - du - cis, ca - du - cis, ca - du - cis

82 - cis, ca - du - cis, ca - du - cis nu - tans ge - ni - bus, ca -

The imagery of the Trinity is further reinforced by the fact that the third aria is scored for three voices: soprano I, soprano II, and bass. In contrast, the second aria shown in Figure 14 contains a frequent repetition on the word *dupla* (twofold). Each time this word is stated, the sixteenth notes from the first aria are restated to remind the listener of the bending knees that save mankind from a “twofold death: a physical and spiritual death.”<sup>78</sup> Buxtehude uses three voices as a reflection on the meaning of the text.

<sup>77</sup> John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe* (New York: Norton, 2005), 497.

<sup>78</sup> Board, 72.

Figure 14. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 2 *Ad genua*, mm. 97-102.<sup>79</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a vocal and piano piece. The first system, starting at measure 97, features a vocal line in a treble clef and a piano accompaniment in a bass clef. The vocal line contains the lyrics: "mo-ri, ne du - - pla, ne du - - pla, ne du - -". The piano accompaniment includes fingering numbers 6, 6, 6b, 5b, and 5. The second system, starting at measure 100, continues the vocal line with the lyrics: "- pla, ne du-pla mor-te mo - re-rer, ne du - pla mor-te mo - re-". The piano accompaniment includes fingering numbers 6, 6, 6b, 6, 4, and 5. Both systems are in a key with one flat (B-flat major) and a 3/4 time signature.

With the use of consonant harmony, pitch repetition and stepwise motion, especially in the first and second arias, there is an emphasis on the text conveying a message of peace. However, the instrumental sonata section contains repeated suspensions, chromaticisms, and unexpected harmonies portraying a sense of sorrow. *Ad genua* is the only cantata written in a major key. This cantata also provides a moment for the listener to seek healing as well as a message of hope and forgiveness.

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<sup>79</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 18.

No. 3 “Ad Manus”

3. “Ad Manus”  
(Zacharias 13:6)

Soprano I & II, Alto, Tenor, Bass  
Quid sunt plagae istae  
In medio manuum tuarum?

Soprano I  
Salve Jesu, pastor bone,  
fatigatus in agone,  
qui per lignum es distractus  
et ad lignum es compactus  
expansis sanctis manibus.

Soprano II  
Manus sanctae, vos amplector  
et gemendo condelector,  
grates ago plagis tantis,  
  
clavis durs, guttis sanctis,  
dans lacrimas cum osculis.

Alto, Tenor and Bass  
In cruore tuo lotum  
me commendo tibi totum,  
tuae sanctae manus istae  
me defendant, Jesu Christe,  
extremis in periculis.<sup>81</sup>

3. To His Hands<sup>80</sup>

What are these wounds  
in thy hands?

Greetings, Jesus, good shepherd,  
exhausted from your struggle with  
Death, tormented by the wood,  
And affixed to the wood  
by your outstretched, holy hands.

Holy hands, I embrace you  
and, lamentingly, I take pleasure in  
you, I give thanks for these severe  
blows, for the terrible nails and  
the holy drops of blood,  
I kiss you while weeping.

Moistened by your blood,  
I entrust myself wholly unto you;  
May your holy hands  
protect me, Jesus Christ,  
In my last hour of need.

The following, Figure 15, is a representation of the form, meter, tonality,  
and source of text found in this cantata.

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<sup>80</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>81</sup> The text source for all the arias come from “*Rhythmica oratio*,” based  
on the poem “*Salve mundo salutare*” by Arnulf von Löwen.

Figure 15. Structure of *Ad manus*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C	g minor	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	C	g minor	Zacharias 13:6
III	Aria (SI) / ritornello	3/4	g minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (SII) / ritornello	3/4	g minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (A, T, B) / ritornello	3/4	g minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	C	g minor	Zacharias 13:6

*Ad manus* focuses on Christ's bleeding hands. The text of the opening chorus is derived from Zechariah 13:6: "*Quid sunt plagae istae in medio manuum tuarum?*" (What are these wounds in thy hands?). The verses of the medieval poems address the blood as a symbol of Christ's love, which awakens heartfelt reciprocal love.<sup>82</sup>

The cantata begins with an instrumental sonata that foreshadows some of the motivic material from the concerto of this cantata.<sup>83</sup> This is followed by the *tutti* statement *quid sunt plagae istae* (what are these wounds). The first soprano aria, *Salve Jesu, pastor bone* (Greetings, Jesus, good shepherd), with its closing *ritornello* leads to a second soprano aria with the same musical material, *Manus sanctae* (holy hands). The ending of the third verse, *in cruore tuo* (moistened by

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<sup>82</sup> Isabella van Elferen, *Mystical Love in the German Baroque* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 250.

<sup>83</sup> Board, 75.

your blood) is scored for alto, tenor and bass. After the *ritornello*, the chorus *quid sunt plagae istae* is again repeated.

This opening chorus is divided into three parts, which constitutes a symmetrical ABA form. Each subsection is comprised of one solo section and one choral section, so that the question “What are these wounds in thy hands?” is intoned a total of six times.<sup>84</sup> The A section, as shown in Figure 16, combines a pair of voices moving in parallel thirds with a separate solo voice.

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<sup>84</sup> Board, 251.

Figure 16. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 3 *Ad manus*, mm.14-19.<sup>85</sup>

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble and instruments. The score is marked 'Tutti' at the beginning. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs) and the second system has four staves (treble, alto, bass, and a lower bass clef). The lyrics are in Latin: 'Quid sunt pla - - - gae is - tae quid sunt pla-gae is - tae in'. The music features parallel thirds and harsh dissonances. There are some numerical markings (6/5 and 6) in the lower bass staff.

Despite the consonant motion of the non-solo voices, the three voices often combine to form sharp dissonances. Figure 16 also displays a variety of emotional text painting that helps to illustrate Christ’s sacrifice. The bittersweet nature of Christ’s love is illustrated in Buxtehude’s combination of parallel thirds with harsh dissonance. This example of text painting shows how compositional methods can augment the message of the text. In this case, the use of stylistic elements associated with a secular genre adds to the meaning of the text.

<sup>85</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 24.

All three arias are set over the same basso continuo line. The first two arias contain exactly the same melody and rhythm, but with different texts. The first aria conveys more about Christ's wounded hands while the second aria focuses more on the emotional aspect of their mixed feelings of remorse, dedication, and gratitude.

Set in the key of g minor, *Ad manus* may be an expression of intimate pain, suffering, and sorrow. While the three arias are fixed over the same bass line, the first two possess the exact same rhythm and melody. The text of the first verse meditates on Jesus' wounds but focuses on the nails piercing Jesus' hands and attaching them to the cross. The passion poetry of the second verse mixes guilt, devotion, and grieving while focusing on the holes and drops of blood. In these two versus (soprano I and soprano II), Buxtehude employs similar emotional imagery. Buxtehude sets the words *fatigatus* (fatigued, exhausted) and *gemendo* (lamenting) to the same melisma because they offer similar emotional imagery. Buxtehude also employs a number of *melismatic* lines for text painting to express sadness. In the score, he indicates not only the emotions but also the meanings of the text that are conveyed using words such as *fatigatus* and *expansis*, as indicated in Figure 17. The word *expansis* (outstretched) is set to a long *melisma* in the first verse, while *lacrimas* (weeping) is set to the same melisma in the second verse. Similarly, chromaticism expresses sorrow, pain, and misery in the music.

Figure 17. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 3 *Ad manus*, mm. 40-76.<sup>86</sup>

Aria Soprano 1mo

40 Sal-ve Je-su, pas-tor bo-ne, fa-ti-ga-tus in a-go-ne, qui per

49 lig-num es distrac-tus, et ad lig-num es compac-tus, qui per

59 lig-num es distrac-tus et ad lig-num es compactus ex-pan-

68 Ritornello

- sis sanc-tis ma-ni-bus ex-pansis sanc-tis ma-ni-bus.

The 3/4 meter implies a joyful mood. The third aria (fifth movement), with three voices (alto, tenor, bass), symbolizes the holiness of the imagery, which is Christ's body hanging on the cross. Not only does it symbolize the imagery, but the fifth movement of the third cantata also carries the theme of Christ's bloody

<sup>86</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 26.

hands that lead to his death, ultimately resulting in the reconciliation between Man and God. The joy of this reconciliation is expressed in the lively meter and three-part voicing. Figure 18 shows the aria is in 3/4 like a *sarabande* rhythm.

Figure 18. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 3 *Ad manus*, mm. 97-104.

97

Ma-nus sanc-tae, vos amplex-tor, et ge-men-do con-de-lector,

6 6 6 5+ 7 6 5 6 4+ 6 7 6

Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne offer descriptions of the *sarabande* character as including triple meter (3/4) and serious affects such as nobility, are majestic, and passionate. Thus, it should be in a slow tempo, and balance two of the four-measure phrase structure and characteristic rhythmic pattern.<sup>87</sup> The *sarabande* rhythm provides an expression and feeling of the return and victory of Jesus and how it empowers his believers. The dance-like feeling of the *sarabande* rhythm illustrates the joy and paradoxical expression. There are two meanings that come into play in the arias. Though the text conveys the pain and suffering that Christ endures, the paradox is found in the reconciliation that he offers to all of mankind, thus resulting in an expression of joy and thanksgiving. The bloody hands of Christ are symbolic of the same hands that reach out to sinners and provide freedom and salvation. All this is expressed in the rhythm, tempo, form,

<sup>87</sup> Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach: Extended Edition* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2001), 236.

harmony, and meter changes.

While the closing *tutti* movement is a repeat of the opening chorus, the musical passion meditates on the emotional emphasis on the contrast between Christ's suffering and his love. The metaphor displayed by the blood is musically independent and becomes a symbol of love. Buxtehude applies the text as a reference to the blood and wounds to metaphors of musical love. The texture of this movement is homophonic and polyphonic. All vocal ranges remain comfortably within the voice, allowing a richness of sound in the middle range of each part. The aria sections call for soloists who are capable of performing long *melismatic* passages. The application of double dotting the rhythms is necessary for the sonata section.

No. 4 “Ad Latus”

4. “Ad Latus”  
(Song of Solomon 2:13-14)

4. To His Side <sup>88</sup>

Sop I & II, Alto, Tenor, Bass  
Surge, amica mea, speciosa mea, et veni,  
colomba mea in foraminibus petrae  
in caverna maceriae.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and  
come away. O my dove, in the clefts  
of rock, in the covert of the cliff.

Soprano I  
Salve latus salvatoris,  
in quo latet mel dulcoris,  
in quo patet vis amoris,  
ex quo scatet fons cruoris,  
qui corda lavat sordida

Greetings, side of the savior, in  
which sweetness of honey, lies  
concealed. In which power of love is  
revealed, from which the spring of  
your blood gushes forth, which  
washes clean the besmirched heart.

Alto, Tenor, Bass  
Ecce tibi appropinquo,  
parce, Jesu, si delinquo  
Verecunda quidem fronte,  
ad te tamen veni sponte  
scrutari tua vulnera.

Behold, I am approaching you,  
spare me, Jesus, if I fall.  
With reverent visage,  
I come of my own free will to you,  
to examine your wounds.

Soprano II  
Hora mortis meus flatus  
intret, Jesu, tuum latus,  
hinc expitans in te vadat,  
ne hunc leo trux invadat,  
sed apud te permaneat.<sup>89</sup>

May my soul at the hour of death  
enter your side, o Jesus, when I pass  
away, may it enter into you, so that  
it is not attacked by a wrathful lion,  
but may forever remain with you.

The following, Figure 19, is a representation of the form, meter, tonality,  
and textual sources found in this cantata.

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<sup>88</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>89</sup> The text source for all the arias come from “*Rhythmica oratio*,” based  
on the poem “*Salve mundo salutre*” by Arnulf von Löwen.

Figure 19. Structure of *Ad latus*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	6/4	d minor	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	3/2	d minor	Song of Solomon 2: 13-14
III	Aria (SI) / ritornello	C, 3/2	d minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (ATB) / ritornello	C, 3/2	d minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (SII) / ritornello	C, 3/2	d minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	3/2	d minor	Song of Solomon 2: 13-14

*Ad latus* may seem as if it is centered around the theme of mystic, erotic love containing a variety of affective words to that affect.<sup>90</sup> At first, there is a subtlety in the connection found between the poetry and the text as it relates to the parts of the body. Yet Snyder postulates that the dove in the “covert of the cliff” represents the spirit of the sinner entering Jesus’s side in his hour of death.<sup>91</sup> This cantata is placed at the center of the cycle and the arias are developed differently from the rest. After an opening sonata with dance-like double-dotted rhythms, there is an anticipatory glimpse of redemption as the chorus sings a verse from the Song of Solomon 2:13-14 with confident joy “Arise, my love, my fair one, come away.”

The first and third arias share the same melody but different texts, and the middle aria contains three-voice textures. Starting with the sonata in 6/4, which

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<sup>90</sup> Board, 77-78.

<sup>91</sup> Kerela Snyder, liner notes to *Membra Jesu Nostris*, conducted by John Elliot Gardner, Deutsche Grammophon 447 298-2, 1990.

feels dance-like, and the second *tutti* section changes to 3/2, representing a holy image. The text from the concerto expresses the holy image and the idea of redemption. Motivically, the ritornello shares similarities with the ritornello of the *Ad manus* (to his hand). The first three measures of the *Ad latus* ritornello are almost an exact reiteration of the *Ad manus*. (See Figures 20.1 and 20.2).

Figure 20.1 Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 4 *Ad latus*, mm. 88-90.



Figure 20.2 Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 3 *Ad manus*, mm. 131-133.



There is a noticeable contrast in the rhythmic and meter changes throughout this cantata. The opening sonata starts in 6/4 while the *tutti* is in 3/2. The aria is written in 4/4 and the ritornello, like the *tutti*, is in 3/2. The sonata section contains many leaps, although the ritornello utilizes mostly stepwise motion. Buxtehude takes the text of the music and creates an image of a fluttering dove at measures one and two of the beginning of the sonata where the sustained

notes leap up the octave, as seen in Figure 20.3 in the violin I and II lines.

Figure 20.3 Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 4 *Ad latus*, mm. 1-5

No.4 - Ad Latus  
Surge amica mea

D.Buxtehude

Sonata

Violino 1

Violino 2

Violon

After the sonata, the *tutti* melody similarly portrays the rising and ascending of the Christian soul. In movements three, four, and five, the music paints an image of Christ's followers surrounding the cross in reverence. The text of the second aria expresses lament at the examination of Christ's wounds. The third aria represents the confession of Christians remaining at the side of Jesus. Texturally, Buxtehude alternates between imitation and homophony. Due to the tension created by the changing meter, a transition is necessary between the dance-like 4/4 sections of the aria and the 3/2 sections of the ritornello.

No 5. "Ad Pectus"

5. "Ad Pectus"  
(1 Peter 2:2-3)

5. To His Breast<sup>92</sup>

Alto, Tenor, Bass

Sicut modo geniti infantes  
rationabiles, et sine dolo  
concupiscite, ut in eo creascatis  
in salutem. Si tamen gustastis,  
quoniam dulcis est dominus

Like newborn babes, long for the  
pure spiritual milk, that by it to you  
may grow up to salvation;  
for you have tasted the  
kindness of the Lord.

Alto

Salve, salus mea, Deus,  
Jesu dulcis, amor meus,  
salve, pectus reverendum,  
cum tremore contingendum,  
amoris domicilium.

Greetings, Lord my salvation,  
sweet Jesus, my beloved,  
greetings, worthy breast;  
I may only touch you with quivering  
hand, o domicile of love

Tenor

Pectus mihi confer mundum,  
ardens, pium, gemebundum,  
voluntatem abnegatam,  
tibi semper conformatam,  
juncta virtutum copia.

Render my heart pure,  
ardent, pious and full of sighs,  
allow me to cast aside my own  
desires, and to become yours,  
in the fullness of all virtues.

Bass

Ave, verum templum Dei,  
precor miserere mei,  
tu totius arca boni,  
fac electis me apponi,  
vas dives, Deus omnium.<sup>93</sup>

Hail, true temple of God,  
I pray you, have mercy on me, you  
the shrine of all goodness, let me to  
be among the chosen ones o  
precious vessel, o God of all things.

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<sup>92</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>93</sup> Recall the text source for all the arias is "*Rhythmica oratio*," based on the poem "*Salve mundo salutare*" by Arnulf von Löwen.

The following, Figure 21, is a representation of the form, meter, tonality, and textual sources found in this cantata.

Figure 21. Structure of *Ad Pectus*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C	a minor	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (ATB)	C, 3/4, C	a minor	1 Peter 2:2-3
III	Aria (A) / ritornello	C	a minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (T) / ritornello	C	a minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (B) / ritornello	C	a minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (ATB)	C, 3/4, C	a minor	1 Peter 2:2-3

In Cantata No. 5, Buxtehude dwells on the concept of the breast as a source of sustenance. Buxtehude equates man, in his search for spiritual sustenance, to a newborn baby clamoring for his mother's milk and protection.<sup>94</sup> In the sonata, Buxtehude utilizes the technique of *fauxbourdon*, writing descending first-inversion chords in parallel motion. During this period, parallel thirds were generally forbidden, except while applied in *fauxbourdon* to achieve special affect. The descending parallel chords may have been used to elicit

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<sup>94</sup> Peter Dirkson, Liner notes to *Death & Devotion: Buxtehude, Tunder, Weckmann, Ritter* (The Netherlands Bach Society, Channel Classics: 2004).

imagery of sustenance flowing from heaven, but it is impossible to say for certain why Buxtehude employed *fauxbourdon* in this work,<sup>95</sup> as seen in Figure 22.

Figure 22. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 5, *Ad Pectus*, mm. 1, 4, and 9.<sup>96</sup>

No.5 - Ad Pectus  
Sicut modo geniti

D.Buxtehude

Sonata

The musical score is presented in a system with seven staves. The top staff is Violino 1, followed by Violino 2, Violon, Alto, Tenore, Basso, and Continuo. The Continuo part includes figured bass notation. The score shows measures 1, 4, and 9. The Continuo part includes figured bass notation.

<sup>95</sup> Board, 79.

<sup>96</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 43.

The concerto text of *Ad pectus* is taken from I Peter 2:2-3. Along with the *tutti* section of *Ad cor*, the *Ad pectus* concerto is scored for only three voices. The two soprano voices are missing. The concerto begins in common time but moves to triple meter at the text *ut in eo crescatis in salutem* (that by it, you may grow up to salvation). By changing to triple meter, Buxtehude sanctifies the section and reminds the listener of the holiness symbolized in the trinity. He reverts back to common time at *si tamen gustastis* (for you have tasted) and interrupts the contrapuntal texture with a homophonic passage at *quonam dulcis est Dominus* (the sweetness of the Lord). Four bars later, Buxtehude emphasizes this text by repeating the music in altered form.

Utilizing the same music, the three arias are a strophic variation. By repeating *Jesu dulcis, amor meus* (sweet Jesus my love), the first aria continues with the theme of the concerto, which is the nourishment that comes from Jesus's breast. Buxtehude emphasizes the word *tremore* (quivering) by repeating the word with different embellishments. The drop of an octave at the beginning of the *ritornello* appears to continue with the theme of spiritual sustenance falling from Heaven. In the second aria, Buxtehude emphasizes the words *semper* (always), *virtutem* (virtues), *ardens* (ardent), *pium* (pious) and *gemebundum* (full of sighs); in the third aria, Buxtehude portrays Christ's body as a host to God's spirit.<sup>97</sup> Buxtehude accomplishes this by adding two solo violins and violone to the ensemble in yet another symbol of the trinity.

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<sup>97</sup> Board, 81.

No. "6 Ad Cor"

6. "Ad Cor"  
(Song of Solomon 4: 9)

6. To His Heart <sup>98</sup>

Soprano I & II Bass  
Vulnerasti cor meum,  
soror mea, sponsa.

You have ravished my heart,  
my sister, my bride.

Soprano I  
Summi regis cor, aveto,  
te saluto corde laeto,  
te complecti me delectat  
et hoc meum cor affectat,  
ut ad te loquar animes.

I greet you, heart of the highest  
King, I salute you with joyous  
heart; it delights me to embrace  
you, and my heart demands,  
that you inspire me to speak to you.

Soprano II  
Per medullam cordis mei,  
peccatoris atque rei,  
tuus amor transferatur,  
  
quo cor tuum rapiatur,  
languens amoris vulnere.

Let your love enter, into the  
innermost part of my heart the heart  
of a sinner and guilt-laden person  
Through me, your heart will be torn  
asunder, becoming exhausted by the  
wounds of love.

Bass  
Viva cordis voce clamo,  
dulce cor, te namque amo,  
Ad cor meum inclinare,  
ut se possit applicare  
devoto tibi pectore.<sup>99</sup>

With the living voice of my heart,  
I call to you, sweet heart, for  
I love you. Incline yourself towards  
my heart, so that it may nestle  
against you with humility.

The following, Figure 23, is a representation of the form, meter, tonality,  
and textual sources found in this cantata.

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<sup>98</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>99</sup> The text source for all the arias come from "*Rhythmica oratio*," based  
on the poem "*Salve mundo salutre*" by Arnulf von Löwen.

Figure 23. Structure of *Ad Cor*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C, 3/2	e minor	
II	SI, SII, B / ritornello	C, 3/2	e minor	Song of Solomon 4: 9
III	Aria (SI) / ritornello	C	e minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (SII) / ritornello	C	e minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (B) / ritornello	C	e minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	SI, SII, B	C	e minor	Song of Solomon 4: 9

*Ad Cor* (To His Heart) begins with an introductory three measures (*adagio*), followed by imitative entries in the following *allegro* section, with five viola da gambas. This cantata serves as the very heart of the work - the love theme in the *Membra Jesu Nostri* cycle is brought to a climax in Cantata VI. An alternation of slow and fast sections is observed in the beginning of this cantata, which is continued into the three-part section, *vulnerasti cor meum* (you have ravished my heart), for two sopranos and one bass. Unlike the other movements, the *tutti* section is followed by a *ritornello*, which leads into the first aria, *Summi regis cor* (heart of the highest king). Between each aria, there is a *ritornello* that leads into the next. The second soprano aria, *per medullam cordis mei* (let your love enter) is followed by the third bass aria, *viva cordis voce clamo* (with the living voice of my heart) and the final three-part *vulnerasti*, differing in its last bars, when the singers softly repeat the words *cor meum* (my heart).

The biblical text for the *tutti* comes from the Song of Solomon (you have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride). The verses are related to the *Rhythmica oratio*, an example of erotic, mystic text that describes Jesus's love. It is focused on the image similar to that of the Song of Solomon, which inspires the devotional passion, viewed as a tale of love in Lutheran devotion. This love and passion is displayed in Christ's eventual death on the cross: the ultimate act of sacrifice and love. The other cantatas call for only two violins, violone and continuo, while this cantata is uniquely scored for five viola da gambas, and continuo. The number five may be used to represent humanity through the human five senses and five appendages (head, feet, and arms).<sup>100</sup> The five viola da gambas symbolically rip and tear at the heart of Jesus, leaving him wounded and exhausted, in a metaphor for human violence towards Christ.<sup>101</sup> The tempo changes that occur, as seen in Figure 24, may also imply the exhausted heart of Jesus in 3/2 time (*adagio*) followed by 4/4 time (*allegro*) to depict the ripping and tearing of Jesus' heart.

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<sup>100</sup> Bartel, 15.

<sup>101</sup> Board, 82.

Figure 24. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 6, *Ad Cor*, instrumental sonata section.

Meter	Tempo	Measure numbers
4/4	<i>Adagio</i>	mm. 1-3
4/4	<i>Allegro</i>	mm. 4-8
3/2	<i>Adagio</i>	mm. 9-14
4/4	<i>Allegro</i>	mm. 15-17
3/2	<i>Adagio</i>	mm. 18-29
4/4	<i>Allegro</i>	mm. 30-34
4/4	<i>Adagio</i>	mm. 35-38

The arrangement of the first sonata may be seen as having a symmetrical mirror pattern where the outermost sections (mm. 1-3 and mm. 35-38) call for *adagio* with 4/4 time, the next inner section (mm. 4-8 and mm. 30-34) calls for *allegro* at 4/4 time, the second most inner sections (mm. 9-14 and mm. 18-29) call for *adagio* at 3/2 time, and the most central section (mm. 15-17) indicating *allegro* in 4/4 time.

The heart of the cantata, as seen in Figure 25, contains a longer instrumental section of thirty-eight measures, which is comparably larger than the earlier and later sonatas from the other cantatas. This length may be due to its centrality in the work. Several differences may be observed in the *adagio* and *allegro* sections. In the *adagio* sections, the texture is mostly homophonic with

step-wise motion. In contrast, the *allegro* section displays mostly polyphonic textures with melodic leaps and mostly dotted rhythms as well as sixteenth notes.



The choice of Buxtehude's text, set in his *Membra Jesu Nostri*, might very well be considered an expression of Christ's love for all of humanity. The music certainly reflects both his life and death: the death that Christ endures on the cross is a devotional passion that arouses paradoxical emotions.

The three viola da gambas in the Bass aria ("*viva cordis voce clamo*") provide a greater emphasis to the words: with the living voice of my heart. Buxtehude utilizes a call and response technique by contrasting vocal and instrumental lines as they echo one another, as exemplified in Figure 26. This is the only place in the cycle where a *ritornello* appears in a concerto movement. The *tutti* section calls for two sopranos and one bass accompanied by continuo, starting with the two sopranos in dialogue using the same text.

Figure 26. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 6 *Ad Cor*, mm. 99-106.<sup>103</sup>

Aria Basso

99

Vi - va, vi - va, vi - va, vi - va, vi - va cordis vo - ce elamo,

103

dul - ce cor, te nam - que a - mo, ad cor me - um in - cli - na - re, ut se pos - sit ap - pli

Here, the composer makes expression apparent through text painting, “*Vulnerasti*,” as the soprano II sings a minor sixth to express a falling into love.<sup>104</sup> Further, he employs many devices to express the text and emotions such as the recitative-like style where the soprano I and II are portrayed; the soprano II descends a sixth as an answer, as seen in Figure 27. At the bass’s entrance, there

<sup>103</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 57.

<sup>104</sup> Bartel, 256.

is a display of imitation of the soprano I. As a result, there is a sense of tension between the soprano I and soprano II's contrapuntal lines until the bass provides an imitative entrance of soprano I to reinforce the stability of the structure.

The harmonious rhythms represent the joyful characteristics of love showing tempo changes, minor keys (e minor), fixed continuo, love duets, and the use of many dotted rhythms while interacting between homophonic and polyphonic sections (*adagio* versus *allegro*).<sup>105</sup> Similarly, the arias and ritornello sections display differences in their musical constructs. The arias are written in 4/4 meter whereas the ritornello sections are in 3/2 meter as in the instrumental sonata sections where the meters changed between 4/4 and 3/2. As a result, the structure is unified and displays a systematic framework.

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<sup>105</sup> Bartel, 256.

Figure 27. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 6 *Ad Cor*, mm. 120-130.<sup>106</sup>

120

Vul - ne - ra - sti, vul - ne - ra - sti cor me - um, vul - ne - ra - sti cor  
 Vul - ne - ra - sti cor me - um, vul - ne - ra - sti cor  
 Vul - ne - ra - sti,

6 5 ♭ 5 6

126

me - um, so - ror, so - ror me - a, spon - sa,  
 me - um, so - ror, so - ror me - a, spon - sa,  
 vul - ne - ra - sti, vul - ne - ra - sti cor

6 6 9 7

<sup>106</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 59.

The earnest plea in Christ's wounded heart is articulated musically as a love metaphor in exact agreement with his death, which moves the soul of meditation to believe in love.<sup>107</sup> The last aria (bass) is accompanied by five viola da gambas and *continuo*. However, he uses the text "*viva, viva*" (live, live) with only three viola da gambas as a dialogue between bass and instruments to create an affective echo sound. Unlike the other movements, this cantata does not take the repeat of the concerto. The reprise is scored for five viola da gambas playing repeated notes, to minimize the accompaniment and emphasize the text.

In addition, Buxtehude also adds four bars to the end of the piece, shown in Figure 28. The voices state "my heart, my heart" employing *suspuration* (a musical expression of a sigh through a rest),<sup>108</sup> expressing their final moments of existence. The strings echo their plea, leaving the listener in wonder of the moment when actual death occurs.

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<sup>107</sup> Elferen, 256.

<sup>108</sup> Bartel, 447

Figure 28. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 6, *Ad Cor* 143-147.<sup>109</sup>

The musical score is presented in seven staves. The first five staves are instrumental parts for strings and woodwinds. The sixth staff is a vocal line with lyrics "cor, cor me - um." and a piano "p" marking. The seventh staff is a figured bass line with figured bass notation: 7 #, 6 4, 5 #, b b, 7 5, 4 #, b b, 7 4 #.

Overall, this cantata contains devices such as harmonious rhythms and tempo changes to illustrate the beauty of Latin poetry and serve as the climax of the entire cycle.

<sup>109</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 61.

No. 7 “Ad Faciem”

7. “Ad Faciem” (Psalm 31:16)	7. To His Face <sup>110</sup>
Soprano I & II Alto, Tenor, Bass Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum; salvum me fac in misericordia tua.	Let thy face shine on your servant; Save me in your steadfast love.
Alto, Tenor, Bass Salve, caput creuentatum, totum spinis coronatum, conquassatum, vulneratum, arundine verberatum, facie sputis illita.	Greetings, head daubed in blood, entirely crowned with thorns, disfigured and covered in wounds, struck with the cane, the face spat upon and soiled.
Alto Dum me mori est necesse, noli mihi tunc deesse, in tremenra mortis hora veni, Jesu, absque mora, tuere me et libera!	If then, I must die, do not be stay far away from me, in the anxious hour of death; come, Jesus, without delay protect me and liberate me!
Soprano I and II, Alto, Tenor, Bass Cum me jubes emigrare, Jesu care, tunc appare, O amator amplectende, temet ipsum tunc ostende in cruce salutifera. <sup>111</sup>	If you cause me to go away, dear Jesus, then appear to me, O lover whom I wish to embrace, then show yourself to me on the cross which brings salvation.
Amen!	Amen!

The following, Figure 29, is a representation of the form, meter, tonality, and textual sources found in this cantata.

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<sup>110</sup> *Buxtehude Membra Jesu Nostri*, Bach Collegium, 1997.

<sup>111</sup> The text source for all the arias come from “*Rhythmica oratio*,” based on the poem “*Salve mundo salutre*” by Arnulf von Löwen.

Figure 29. Structure of *Ad Faciem*.

	Form	Meter	Tonality	Text
I	Sonata	C	c minor	
II	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	C	c minor	Psalm 31:17
III	Aria (ATB) / ritornello	6/4	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
IV	Aria (A) /ritornello	6/4	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
V	Aria (Coro)	6/4	c minor	Arnulf von Löwen
VI	<i>Tutti</i> (Coro)	6/4	c minor	Amen

In *Ad faciem*, there is a sense of gruesomeness in the description of the bloody face of Christ, which Buxtehude couples with joyous anticipation of his resurrection. In setting the text, Buxtehude employs joyful sounding music to represent the anticipation of becoming closer to spiritual union with God in heaven. The music returns to the original key of c minor from the first cantata. Buxtehude also returns to the original instrumentation as well. This cantata consists of a sonata, followed by a five-part *tutti* setting of *Illustra faciem tuam* (Let thy face shine on your servant). Here in this cantata, the aria is scored for alto, tenor and bass which begins with a setting of the text *Salve, caput cruentatum* (Greetings, head daubed in blood), and continues with the verse *Dum me mori est necesse* (If then, I must die). The end consists of a polyphonic *Amen*. The final three strophes, the aria and the final *amen*, are all set to Arnulf's poetry in triple meter. As in the other sections of *Membra Jesu Nostri*, the number three, expressed through triple meter, is an example of biblical symbolism. In the third

aria, the trio form, fast triple meter, homophony, parallel thirds, and affirmative dialogue illustrate Christ's bloodiest moments on the cross, as seen in Figure 30.<sup>112</sup>

Figure 30. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 7, *Ad Faciem*, mm. 38-47.<sup>113</sup>

Alto, Tenore è Basso con Violini

38

Sal - ve, ca - put cru - en - ta - tum, to - tum spi - nis

Sal - ve, ca - put cru - en - ta - tum, to - tum spi - nis

Sal - ve, ca - put cru - en - ta - tum, to - tum spi - nis

6 6 7/5 # 6 7/5 # 6 7/5 # 6 #

<sup>112</sup> Elferen, 259.

<sup>113</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 65-66.

Figure 30. (continued)

The image displays a musical score for a vocal ensemble and piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line (Soprano/Alto) and a piano accompaniment. The second system includes vocal lines for Soprano/Alto, Tenor, and Bass, along with the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "co - ro - na - tum, con - quas - sa - tum, vul - ne - ra - tum, co - ro - na - tum, con - quas - sa - tum, vul - ne - ra - tum, co - ro - na - tum, con - quas - sa - tum, vul - ne - ra - tum,". The piano part features figured bass notation with figures such as 6, 7, #, 6, #, 6, 7, #, 6, 5, 7, 6, 6. The score is in a minor key and features a steady rhythmic drive.

Even as Christ is spit upon, the music is dance-like in anticipation of the impending spiritual union. Musically, only the minor tonality reminds the listener of Christ's suffering. Buxtehude demonstrates in the *tutti* section the imitative writing at the beginning of each phrase leading to homophonic chordal sections at the cadence. In the *tutti* sections, there is a determined rhythmic drive to the cadence with steady pulsation. Unlike the other movements, the last *tutti* section is not the same as the previous cantata's *tutti* section. The third aria contains all five voices (SSATB) and the text of this movement expresses the importance of the cross in salvation. Buxtehude displays this with homophonic writing and repetitions of the word "in cruce" (on the cross) many times.

The setting of the last verse, the soul prays to the dying Christ. Joy and reconciliation are expressed through the music. Aligned with Lutheran crucifixion theology, the chorus ends with a meditation on the role of the cross. The sounding

of two short cadences emphasizes the word “*in cruce*” (three times each, a total of six times), as provided in Figure 31.

Figure 31. Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 7, *Ad Faciem*, mm.116-123.<sup>114</sup>

The image shows a musical score for Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri*, No. 7, *Ad Faciem*, measures 116-123. The score is in c minor and features five-part vocal writing and a string trio. The lyrics are: "cru-ce, in cru-ce, in cru-cesa-lu-ti-fe-ra, in cru-ce, in cru-ce, cru-ce sa-lu-ti-fe-ra." The score includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a figured bass line at the bottom. The figured bass line consists of the following figures:  $\frac{9}{4+}$ ,  $\frac{9}{4+}$ ,  $5+$ ,  $\frac{6}{3}$ ,  $\frac{6}{3}$ ,  $7$ ,  $\frac{6}{b}$ ,  $\frac{4+}{2}$ ,  $6$ ,  $\frac{[6]}{4}$ ,  $5$ ,  $\sharp$ ,  $\frac{6b}{2}$ ,  $\frac{6b}{2}$ ,  $\frac{6}{2+}$ ,  $6$ ,  $6$ ,  $5$ ,  $\frac{b}{6}$ ,  $\frac{5}{4}$ ,  $\sharp$ .

The descending chromatic melodies are realized in c minor, as if to illustrate the suffering experienced by Christ moments before he rescues mankind. The closing chorus of the entire cycle, set to the text *Amen*, ends in C Major, celebrating the reconciliation with the use of a five-part voice writing and string trio. Parallel thirds, complementary rhythms, and lingering syncopations are utilized to convey the spiritual union with Christ that has finally been achieved.

<sup>114</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, ed. Straeten, 70.

## CHAPTER 4

### PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP) is the belief that knowledge of period specific performance characteristics allows conductors and performers to better understand works and perform them within a proper historical context. Like all types of music, Baroque music should be approached with appropriate performance practices in mind. In *Membra Jesu Nostris*, clarity of sound and purity of intonation are central to the characteristic Baroque sound. Although it is uncertain where and when the first performance of *Membra Jesu Nostris* took place, due to the length (approximately seventy minutes), it certainly was not sung in total during a single service. The orchestration change for *Ad cor* would also suggest that each cantata was performed on a separate day or at a separate service. This piece, with such a small vocal ensemble, is a work of great expression, but not in an operatic way. It may be considered a difficult piece to perform, yet it is crucial that the meditative and religious nature of the work is taken into consideration and not hindered by a performer's technique. The text remains central to the entire work and articulation and accentuation of the words should remain the highest priority.

During the Baroque period, the text was one means of determining the tempo, articulation and overall affect of the composition. It was then, and continues to be, imperative that the articulation of text remains clear, in order to accurately portray the meaning in a historically and aesthetically manner.

Scholars are unclear about the number of vocalists or instrumentalists used in Buxtehude's larger vocal works. The size of his choirs and instrumental ensembles were larger only in his *Abendmusik* concerts, where the funds he received from the business community paid for extra musicians and singers. Since Buxtehude was not the cantor, nor the conductor, he did not have many singers at his disposal. It is possible that a majority of his church works, including *Membra Jesu Nostri*, were designated for solo singers (one singer per part) and one instrumentalist to a part.

Choirboys would have sung the soprano parts, but they were not always available to Buxtehude. Soloists were often men, including those performing the soprano parts. Female sopranos were not allowed to perform in the church and there were no Italian castrati living in Lübeck, though a visiting castrato performed at St. Mary's for Easter Sunday in 1672.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, male *falsettists* made up the soprano range to a much greater extent in the seventeenth century. Praetorius lists three types of singers in the soprano range: *Eunuchus* (castrato), *Falsetista*, and *Discantista* (boy soprano).<sup>116</sup> Hans Iwe, Buxtehude's assistant at the large organ, was the principal singer of Buxtehude's soprano parts in Lübeck. Iwe was also listed in the pay records as a sopranist, though he once appeared as a violist. In 1677, Johann Albrecht Schop was the second sopranist who was paid for the year. Boy sopranos from St. Catherine's school also made

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<sup>115</sup> Snyder, 370.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

up a large portion of the participants. In Stockholm, boys regularly sang the soprano parts. The range for soprano parts in Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* is not very extensive. In one example, approximately half of both the first and second soprano parts extend to a high B♭5. The alto parts do not extend any higher than D5, well within the reach of an adult male alto.

Conductors are faced with three questions: what is the meaning of the score, what does the text originally mean, and what does it mean to listeners today? Conductors may name them respectively as observation, interpretation, and application. First, Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* should be carefully studied to gain an understanding of the basic principles of the piece, including harmony, structure and textual pronunciation. Following that is the necessary step for understanding the message that is conveyed in the music. Lastly, an interpretation of what it means today. Applications may be different to performers and conductors, depending on their own contexts. A common understanding of what Buxtehude tries to express concerning religious self-consciousness through his passion music should be evident. In order to fully understand his intentions, a critical observation and interpretation of his music is required, which includes the full expression of his interminable faith. The devotional passion, *Membra Jesu Nostri*, was intended as a personal statement of faith, musical and religious, as opposed to church or performance use in the *Abendmusiken*.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Cox, 233.

The role of the conductor is to help audiences, or at least choral members, understand Buxtehude's belief in the *Membra Jesu Nostris* as the meditation of Christ's body on the cross. Conducting involves communicating artistic directions. To better communicate, the conductor must possess a thorough knowledge of the music (knowing/head) and inner intuition (feeling/heart) in order to share (doing/hands) the power of the music. To most effectively communicate with the audience, it would be important to explain the nature of the music either through a pre-performance lecture, program notes, or both.

Of course, it is imperative to analyze each individual movement, while maintaining focus on the work as a whole, in order to effectively communicate the meaning of the text. Although each cantata may be performed independently, when taken as a whole, Buxtehude creates unity and harmony. In support of this idea, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D), also known as St. Augustine, writes in his book *The Confessions*, "a part which fails to harmonize with the whole is a source of mischief."<sup>118</sup> He also adds "a whole may exist comprised of all its parts, though a lowly whole indeed."<sup>119</sup> St. Augustine alludes to the harmony of all the members of a whole when he states "in their entirety (the whole) they give us greater pleasure, provided we can perceive them all together, than they do separately (parts)."<sup>120</sup> Each of the body parts that are highlighted in *Membra Jesu*

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<sup>118</sup> St. Augustine, *the Confessions* (New York: New City Press, 1997), 86.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*.

*Nostri* do not stand alone but are mystically connected to the whole body of Christ. First, each individual body part of Jesus is observed, while reflecting on their meanings, followed by a study on how they are interrelated with each other.

This piece exhibits many aspects of Buxtehude's religious background - a background with which most listeners are not familiar. Listeners will better understand the context of *Membra Jesu Nostri* and the work itself by investigating the religious controversies of the era, the overall structure of the work, the translation of the text, and its intention. It is the author's philosophy that in knowing (Lutheran theology), feeling (Pietism), and doing (mysticism), a conductor is able to better perform the music.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND THE MUSICAL VALUE

Dieterich Buxtehude composed his *Membra Jesu Nostri* as a passion meditation, expressed through music and poetry. Each cantata begins with a sonata followed by setting of scripture and three arias based on poetry. Mysticism, Lutheran devotion, and German Pietism serve as inspirations for the text and music that is consistent with Jesus' passion on the cross. Christ's suffering is expressed through the text and music to inspire as much devotion in the listener as possible. One of the main differences between the Lutheran community and the Catholic Church is the belief in a personal relationship with God. After the Reformation, *sola fide* (the belief in justification by faith alone) became the prime emphasis of Lutheran religious theology. Luther emphasized the importance of an active involvement of affect in the devotional passion. During this time, the Lutheran church emphasized the individual's relationship with the Triune God. Lutheran theologians discussed the emotional purpose behind the passion, and required active religious participation of each individual believer. In Germany during the early to mid-seventeenth century, there was a rise in interest in mysticism. This was carried over from the medieval concept of the *unio mystica* (mystical union) with Christ. Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* is an example of the emotional and affective response to music in the seventeenth century devotional passion. *Membra Jesu Nostri* is based on the medieval passion poem "*Salve mundi salutare*" which portrays themes of spiritual love. The cycle

is filled with text painting and symbolism that conveys the sacrifice and redemption that Christ bore on the cross. *Membra Jesu Nostris* is a perfect example of the spiritual zeal represented in Christ's passion.

Furthermore, the instrumental sections are quite expressive, but the instances in which the instruments play are generally limited to the *sonatas* and *ritornello* sections. During the seventeenth century, there was a ban of the use of wind instruments during Holy Week because of their semantic associations with lordship.<sup>121</sup> As a result, in the case of *Membra Jesu Nostris*, Buxtehude employs only stringed instruments. The five viola da gambas that are present in No. 6, *Ad Cor*, are unique to the entire piece as it represents the very heart of the cantata.

*Membra Jesu Nostris* may be viewed as one large cantata, and may be observed as a series of related cycles. Each cantata begins with an instrumental sonata that is followed by a *tutti* choral section. A series of several arias with *ritornelli* follows with the same bass (*continuo*) line. Aside from numbers one and seven, each cantata concludes with an exact reiteration of their respective opening *tutti* section. Therefore, the text remains the focus of the piece, so the delivery and articulation are the highest priority.

Based on the *Rhythmica oratio*, Buxtehude emphasizes the seven body parts to convey the meaning of Christ's sacrifice and believer's response to the crucified body. Each body part is interpreted allegorically and graphically to convey a sense of shared worship in the suffering on the Cross. Buxtehude's

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<sup>121</sup> Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostris*, ed. Straeten, VII.

*Membra Jesu Nostris* is one of the most well-conceived and well-constructed pieces from the composer's collection of works. It is my belief that Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris* deserves a place in the standard "Passion" repertoire for choral musicians.

Buxtehude composed a cycle of seven cantatas in his *Membra Jesu Nostris*, which may have been inspired by the biblical creation that occurred over six days, with the seventh day representing the day of rest, peace, and grace. Buxtehude includes six movements in each. This symbolic importance of the number "seven" is important to Christ's death and resurrection, especially in regards to Holy Week, leading up to Easter. Through the study of *Membra Jesu Nostris*'s texts and music, the reader sees Buxtehude's use of personal religious sentiments, which are manifest in each cantata. *Membra Jesu Nostris* is the complete and personal absorption of the suffering of Christ as well as the uplifting of religious devotion. Buxtehude's conception of *Membra Jesu Nostris* may be a personal statement of his faith, starting with "*In nomine Jesu*" and ending with "*Soli Deo Gloria.*" With the culmination of his musical brilliance, his adaptation of mystic elements and the utmost devotion to God, Buxtehude creates a masterpiece that is worthy not only of renown, but also of performance.

## CHAPTER 6

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