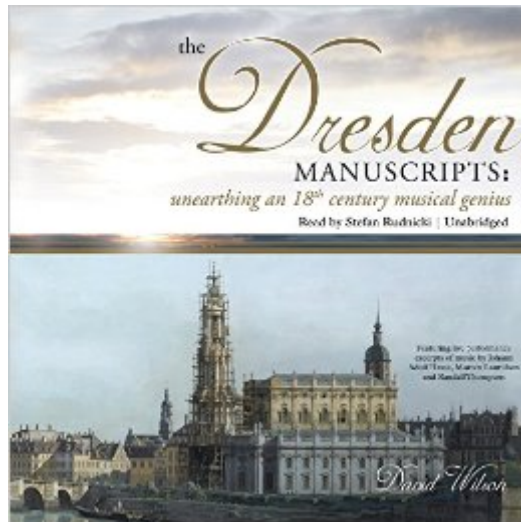


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# The Dresden Manuscripts: Unearthing An 18th Century Musical Genius



## Synopsis

[Read by Stefan Rudnicki] A fascinating journey to rediscover the music of a composer who was lauded in his day yet forgotten soon after, *The Dresden Manuscripts* chronicles David Wilson's thirty-year quest to locate, reconstruct, and perform the music of Johann Adolf Hasse, a composer who, along with his equally famous wife, mezzo-soprano Faustina Bordoni, had close personal associations with Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Gluck.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Find out what it takes to follow your curiosity and your dream. A first hand account of the hard work and dedication of truly recovering musical history for the world. A dream becomes reality for David Wilson as he painstakingly searches for clues that will unravel the mystery of a musical genius that time had forgotten. Travel with Dr. Wilson to Dresden in an era when being an American in Dresden was putting yourself in danger. Still, Wilson persevered and brought the music back to life.

Wilson's book reads like a mystery novel rather than a true story. It's difficult to put down, even for a night. Having sung under Wilson's baton in 2015 and having visited Vienna, Dresden, and Prague with a keen interest in Baroque times and composers, I was magically transformed as a bystander into his persistent and successful search for Hasse's unpublished and unheard works. A powerful summary of a most important part of his life.

David Wilson tells two compelling stories in this true story that reads like a rollicking mystery! First is

his own story steeped in his life-long love of music, fueled equally by his passion, dreams, and sheer stubbornness. The second is the story of a little-known musical genius who was a contemporary of Bach. As a very young High School vocal music conductor, Wilson was introduced to a single piece of choral music by Hasse and somehow his heart and curiosity were captured and a 30 year journey was begun. Though he ran into road blocks at seemingly every turn Wilson took the risk of traveling behind the Iron Curtain at a time when US relations were not good and it was dangerous for him to travel there. Along the way he beautifully introduces us to the people who helped him in his journey. Not only was his dream realized and brought to fruition in 1999, but he succeeded in reintroducing the exquisite music of Johann Adolf Hasse to a world that had not heard it in over 200 years. It's a great read that I couldn't put down and left me wanting more.

This book is a gem! The author has skillfully blended an intriguing mystery of his search for the music of a long-forgotten composer along with his personal travels and beautiful vignettes of Vienna contrasted with the sad misery of Soviet-occupied Dresden. It's combination of history, romance, intrigue and musical mystery that will keep you turning the pages long after bedtime! One only has to hope that Professor Wilson will produce another masterpiece like this one.

Spoiler alert! It has a happy ending. However, the reader learns that fact early in the novel, "The Dresden Manuscripts", and wants to learn more. When did Dr. Wilson first become interested in the music of Johann Adolf Hasse? How did one of the worlds most famous and prolific composer during his lifetime, one popular in the royal courts of Europe, who's time in the Dresden Court from 1731-1760 was referred to as the "Age of Hasse", fall into such obscurity today? Manuscripts are fragile documents that can easily parish from natural disasters, as well as from World Wars and their aftermath. Hasse's manuscripts suffered from both tragedies. Thanks to Dr. Wilson's scholarship and tenacity, a few more treasures have been brought to our eyes and ears. Wilson has given us a great and lasting gift, not only in uncovering these manuscripts, but in the arduous task of translating the fragments from micro film into performable editions, music not heard in over 250 years! As anyone who has had the privilege of singing in any of David Wilson's university, church, or community choirs or playing in his orchestras knows, his primary goal is to serve the music by respecting and acknowledging the composer's style and intent. David does this with enthusiasm, deep knowledge, consummate skill, and love. I have had the honor of witnessing David's remarkable journey to Hasse, as have our two sons. What a joy and delight! Camilla Wilson Scott, Canby, Oregon

A moving and educational read. The writer takes you on a decades long journey as he uncovers the history and contributions of a long-forgotten 18th Century musical genius, Johann Haase. The writer draws you in with prolific, detailed descriptions; and personal, open/honest emotions. I felt as though I was walking through the happenings, not just reading about them.. I learned so much history from the times of Haase and his illustrious contemporaries, to the devastating destruction of WWII, to the cold war world of people deprived of their freedoms. Unlike a strictly factual history account, the writer has told his story in a way that touched deep feelings of anger, of sadness, and compassion for so many. Still the book ends with the reality of so many positives. The sharing of the magnificent music of Haase (you can listen on U-tube), the evidence of the strength of people as they reach out for freedom and hope, and the determination to rebuild their beautiful cities and sacred churches. My appreciation David Wilson for your passion and perseverance that has given us the gifts of your vision.

Written by a choral conductor about doing research while he was a grad student; he eventually became a professor at the University of Southern California. The information on Johann Adolf Hasse is not very detailed, but the insight into his musical style is, since Dr. Wilson has a performer's perspective and has been deeply engaged in this long-forgotten music. The great value of this book is that it is a first-person account of an American graduate student going musicology research at a major research library behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. His detailed account of how he established contacts who helped him find the missing manuscripts is valuable to both DMA and Ph.D candidates, as the scholarly procedures he used are still in place in most large institutions in Europe today. The writing style is a bit over the top, and the copy-editing abysmal, with mistakes on nearly half the pages, but that does not detract much from the value of the book.

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