

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

(PROGRAM NOTES BEGIN ON P. 7)

Translations © copyright Pamela Dellal; used by kind permission.

EVENT #1: CONCORA

BWV 119: PREISE, JERUSALEM, DEN HERRN

1. Chorus

Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn, lobe, Zion, deinen Gut! Denn er
machet fest die Riegel deiner Tore und segnet deine Kinder
drinnen, er schafft deinen Grenzen Frieden.

2. Rezitativ T

Gesegnet Land, glückselge Stadt,
Woselbst der Herr sein Herd und Feuer hat!
Wie kann Gott besser lohnen,
Als wo er Ehre läßt in einem Lande wohnen?
Wie kann er eine Stadt
Mit reicherm Nachdruck segnen,
Als wo er Güt und Treu einander läßt begegnen,
Wo er Gerechtigkeit und Friede Zu küssen niemals müde,
Nicht müde, niemals satt
Zu werden teur verheißen, auch in der Tat erfüllet hat?
Da ist der Schluß gemacht: gesegnet Land, glückselge Stadt!

3. Arie T

Wohl dir, du Volk der Linden,
Wohl dir, du hast es gut!
Wieviel an Gottes Segen und seiner Huld gelegen,
Die überschwenglich tut, kannst du an dir befinden.

4. Rezitativ B

So herrlich stehst du, liebe Stadt!
Du Volk, das Gott zum Erbteil sich erwählet hat!
Doch wohl! und aber wohl! wo man's zu Herzen fassen
Und recht erkennen will, Durch wen den Herr
den Segen wachsen lassen. Ja! Was bedarf es viel? Das Zeugnis ist
schon da, Herz und Bewissen wird uns überzeugen,
Daß, was wir Gutes bei uns sehn,
Nächst Gott durch kluge Obrigkeit
Und durch ihr weises Regiment geschehn.
Drum sei, geliebtes Volk, zu treuem Dank bereit,
Sonst würden auch davon nicht deine Mauern schweigen!

5. Arie A

Die Obrigkeit ist Gottes Gabe, Ja selber Gottes Ebenbild.
Wer ihre Macht nicht will ermessen,
Der muß auch Gottes gar vergessen:
Wie würde sonst sein Wort erfüllt?

6. Rezitativ S

Nun! Wir ekennen es und bringen dir,
O höchster Gott, ein Opfer unsers Danks dafür.
Zumal, nachdem der heutge Tage,
Der Tag, den uns der Herr gemacht,

1. Chorus

Praise the Lord, Jerusalem, praise, Sion, your Good!
For He secures the bolts of your portals and blesses your children
within; He provides peace for your borders.

2. Recitative T

Blessed land, fortunate city,
where the Lord Himself keeps His hearth and fire!
What better reward can God provide
than to send honor to dwell in a land?
With what more bounteous favor
can he bless a city
than to have goodness and loyalty greet each other,
to have righteousness and peace never tire of kissing,
never weary, never sated
with being regarded precious, even this He has fulfilled in deed?
Therefore here is the conclusion: blessed land, fortunate city!

3. Aria T

Good fortune, you people of the lindens,
good fortune, you have it good!
As much of God's blessing and graciousness together,
which fill to overflowing, can you find in your midst.

4. Recitative B

So gloriously you stand, dear city!
You people, who God has chosen as His heirs! Yet it is well!
and yet well again! when it is taken to heart and rightly perceived
through whom the Lord allows the blessing to grow. Yes!
What more do you need? The witness is already there,
our heart and awareness will expound it to us,
that the goodness we see among us,
besides God, is present through prudent authority
and through its wise governance.
Therefore be prepared, dear people, for true thanks,
otherwise even your walls would complain against you!

5. Aria A

Authority is God's gift, yes, even the very image of God.
Whoever will not submit to its power
must also forget God completely:
how else would His word be fulfilled?

6. Recitative S

Now! we acknowledge it and bring to You,
o highest God, an offering of our thanks for its sake.
In addition for these days,
the day which the Lord has made for us,

Euch, teure Väter, teils von eurer Last entbunden,
Teils auch auf euch Schlaflose Sorgenstunden
Bei einer neuen Wahl gebracht,
So seufzt ein treues Volk mit Herz und Mund zugleich:

7. Chorus

Der Herr hat Guts an uns getan,
Des sind wir alle fröhlich.
Er seh die teuren Väter an
Und halte auf unzählig
Und späte lange Jahre naus
In ihrem Regimente Haus,
So wollen wir ihn preisen.

8. Rezitativ A

Zuletzt! Da du uns, Herr, zu deinem Volk gesetzt,
So laß von deinen Frommen
Nur noch ein arm Gebet vor deiner Ohren kommen
Und höre! ja erhöere!
Der Mund, das Herz und Seele seufzet sehre.

9. Choral

Hilf deinem Volk, Herr Jesu Christ,
Und segne, was dein Erbteil ist.
Wart und pfleg ihr' zu aller Zeit
Und heb sie hoch in Ewigkeit! Amen.

for you, dear Town Fathers, in part to release you from
your burdens, in part also to bring upon you
sleepless hours of worry with a new election,
a faithful people sigh thus with heart and mouth together:

7. Chorus

The Lord has done good things for us,
therefore we all rejoice.
He gazes upon our faithful fathers,
and supports them in untold
and long-lasting years
in the house of their government,
therefore we would praise Him.

8. Recitative A

Finally! Since You have established us as Your people,
then grant that, from Your devout ones
even a poor prayer may reach Your ears,
and hear! yes, hear!
Our mouths, our hearts and souls sigh sorely.

9. Chorale

Help Your people, Lord Jesus Christ,
and bless Your inheritance.
Look after and care for them at all times
and exalt them in eternity! Amen.

BWV 120: GOTT, MAN LOBET DICH IN DER STILLE

1. Arie A

Gott, man lobet dich in der Stille zu Zion, und dir bezahlet man
Gelübde.

2. Chor

Jauchzet, ihr erfreuten Stimmen,
Steiget bis zum Himmel nauf!
Lobet Gott im Heiligtum
Und erhebet seinen Ruhm;
Seine Güte,
Sein erbarmendes Gemüte,
Hört zu keinen Zeiten auf!

3. Rezitativ B

Auf, du geliebte Lindenstadt,
Komm, falle vor dem Höchsten nieder,
Erkenne, wie er dich
In deinem Schmuck und Pracht
So väterlich
Erhält, beschützt, bewacht
Und seine Liebeshand
Noch über dir beständig hat.
Wohlan,
Bezahle die Gelübde, die du dem Höchsten hast getan,
Und sing Dank- und Demutlieder!

1. Aria A

God, You are praised in the stillness of Zion, and vows to You
shall be fulfilled.

2. Chorus

Exult, you delighted voices,
climb all the way to heaven!
Praise God in His sanctuary
and exalt His glory;
His goodness,
His merciful bearing,
at no time ever ceases!

3. Recitative B

Rise up, o beloved city of lindens,
come, fall down before the Highest,
acknowledge how,
in your beauty and magnificence,
He has so paternally
sustained, protected, and cared for you,
and His loving hand
still continually stretches out over you.
Well then,
fulfill your vows, that you have made to the Lord,
and sing songs of thanks and humility!

Komm, bitte, daß er Stadt und Land
Unendlich wolle mehr erquicken
Und diese werthe Obrigkeit
So heute Sitz und Wahl verneut,
Mit vielem Segen wolle schmücken!

4. Arie S

Heil und Segen
Soll und muß zu aller Zeit
Sich auf unsre Obrigkeit
In erwünschter Fülle legen,
Daß sich Recht und Treue müssen
Miteinander freundlich küssen.

5. Rezitativ T

Nun, Herr, so weihe selbst das Regiment mit deinem
Segen ein,
Daß alle Bosheit von uns fliehe
Und die Gerechtigkeit in unsern Hütten blühe,
Daß deines Vaters reiner Same
Und dein gebenedeiter Name
Bei uns verherrlicht möge sein!

6. Chorale

Nun hilf uns, Herr, den Dienern dein,
Die mit deinem Blut erlöset sein!
Laß uns im Himmel haben teil
Mit den Heiligen im ewgen Heil!
Hilf deinem Volk, Herr Jesu Christ,
Und segne, was dein Erbteil ist;
Wart und pfleg ihr' zu aller Zeit
Und heb sie hoch in Ewigkeit!

Come, pray, that your city and land
may be refreshed unceasingly more and more
and that this worthy authority,
renewed today in seat and election,
may be adorned with many blessings!

4. Aria S

Prosperity and blessing
at all times must and shall
depend upon our government
in desired fullness,
so that righteousness and faithfulness must
kiss each other lovingly.

5. Recitative T

Now, Lord, dedicate the regime Yourself with Your
blessing,
so that all wickedness might flee from us
and that righteousness might blossom in our homes,
so that the pure seed of Your Father
and Your most blessed and holy name
might be glorified among us!

6. Chorale

Now help, Lord, us Your servants,
which have been redeemed by Your blood!
Let us have a portion in heaven
with Your saints in eternal salvation!
Help Your people, Lord Jesus Christ,
and bless Your inheritance.
Look after and care for them at all times
and exalt them in eternity!

BWV 71: GOTT IST MEIN KÖNIG

1. Chor

Gott ist mein König von altersher, der alle Hilfe tut, so auf Erden
geschicht.

2. Aria T und Choral S

Ich bin nun achtzig Jahr, warum soll dein Knecht sich mehr
beschweren?

Soll ich auf dieser Welt
Mein Leben höher bringen,
Durch manchen sauren Tritt
Hindurch ins Alter dringen,

Ich will umkehren, daß ich sterbe in meiner Stadt,
So gib Geduld, für Sünd
Und Schanden mich bewahr,
Auf daß ich tragen mag
bei meines Vaters und meiner Mutter Grab.
Mit Ehren graues Haar.

3. Chor

Dein Alter sei wie deine Jugend, und Gott ist mit dir in allem, das
du tust.

1. Chorus

God is my King from long ago, who assists all that exist on the
earth.

2. Aria T and Chorale S

I am now eighty years old, why shall Your servant burden himself
any more?

Should I upon this earth
carry my life farther,
through many sour steps
pressing forward into old age,

I will turn back, so that I die in my city,
than grant mercy for sin
and protect me from shame
so that I might bear
near the grave of my father and my mother.
my grey hair with honor.

3. Chorus

May your old age be like your youth, and God is with you in
everything that you do.

4. Arioso B

Tag und Nacht ist dein. Du machest, daß beide, Sonn und Gestirn, ihren gewissen Lauf haben. Du setzest einem jeglichen Lande seine Grenze.

5. Arie A

Durch mächtige Kraft
Erhältst du unsre Grenzen,
Hier muß der Friede glänzen,
Wenn Mord und Kriegessturm
Sich allerort erhebt.
Wenn Kron und Zepter bebt,
Hast du das Heil geschafft
Durch mächtige Kraft!

6. Chor

Du wollest dem Feinde nicht geben die Seele deiner Turteltauben.

7. Chor

Das neue Regiment
Auf jeglichen Wegen
Bekröne mit Segen!
Friede, Ruh und Wohlergehen,
Müsse stets zur Seite stehen
Dem neuen Regiment.

Glück, Heil und großer Sieg
Muss täglich von neuen
Dich, Joseph, erfreuen,
Daß an allen Ort und Landen
Ganz beständig sei vorhanden
Glück, Heil und großer Sieg!

4. Arioso B

Day and night are Yours. You have seen to it that both sun and planets have their certain courses. You set borders to every land.

5. Arie A

Through powerful strength
You maintain our borders,
here peace must glow,
though murder and the storm of war
are raised up everywhere.
Though crown and scepter tremble,
You have caused salvation
through powerful strength!

6. Chorus

You would not give the soul of Your turtledove to the enemy.

7. Chorus

The new regime
in every course
crown with blessing!
Peace, quiet and good health,
must always stand by the side
of the new regime.

Happiness, health, and great conquest
must newly and daily
delight you, Joseph,
so that all lands and places
may constantly enjoy
happiness, health, and great conquest

EVENT #4: FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

BWV 61: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland I

1. Chor

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.

2. Rezitativ T

Der Heiland ist gekommen,
Hat unser armes Fleisch und Blut
An sich genommen
Und nimmet uns zu Blutsverwandten an.
O allerhöchstes Gut,
Was hast du nicht an uns getan?
Was tust du nicht
Noch täglich an den Deinen?
Du kömst und läßt dein Licht
Mit vollem Segen scheinen.

1. Chorus

Now come, Savior of the heathens,
known as the Virgin's child,
over whom the whole world marvels,
that God had ordained such a birth for him.

2. Recitative T

The Savior has come,
has taken our poor flesh and blood
upon himself
and claims us as blood-brothers.
O Highest Good,
what have you not done for us?
What do you not do
still daily for your own?
You come and allow your light
to shine full of blessing.

3. Arie T

Komm, Jesu, komm zu deiner Kirche
Und gib ein selig neues Jahr!
Befördre deines Namens Ehre,
Erhalte die gesunde Lehre
Und segne Kanzel und Altar!

4. Rezitativ B

Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an. So jemand meine Stimme hören wird und die Tür auftun, zu dem werde ich eingehen und das Abendmahl mit ihm halten und er mit mir.
(Revelation 3:20)

5. Arie S

Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze,
Jesus kömmt und ziehet ein.
Bin ich gleich nur Staub und Erde,
Will er mich doch nicht verschmähn,
Seine Lust an mir zu sehn,
Daß ich seine Wohnung werde.
O wie selig werd ich sein!

6. Choral

Amen, amen!
Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone, bleib nicht lange! Deiner
wart ich mit Verlangen.

3. Aria T

Come, Jesus, come to your church
and grant a blessed new year!
Support the honor of your name,
uphold the sound teachings
and bless the chancel and altar!

4. Recitative B

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Anyone that hears my voice and opens the door, to him I will enter and keep the evening meal with him and he with me.

5. Aria S

Open yourself, my whole heart,
Jesus comes and enters in.
Even though I am only dust and earth,
yet he does not scorn
to reveal his joy to me,
so that I may be his dwelling.
O how happy will I be!

6. Chorale

Amen! Amen!
Come, you lovely crown of joy, do not delay,
I await you with longing.

EVENT #5: BACHTOBERFEST CHOIR

BWV 62: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland II

1. Chorale (*Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*)

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.

Now come, the nations' Savior,
As the Virgin's child revealed,
At whom marvels all the world,
That God him this birth ordained.

2. Tenor Aria

Bewundert, o Menschen, dies große Geheimnis:
Der höchste Beherrscher erscheint der Welt.
Hier werden die Schätze des Himmels entdeckt,
Hier wird uns ein göttliches Manna bestellt,
O Wunder! die Keuschheit wird gar nicht befleckt.

Admire, all ye people, this mystery's grandeur:
The highest of rulers appears to the world.
Here are all the treasures of heaven discovered,
Here for us a manna divine is ordained,
O wonder! Virginitude bideth unblemished.

3. Bass Recitative

So geht aus Gottes Herrlichkeit und Thron
Sein eingeborner Sohn.
Der Held aus Juda bricht herein,
Den Weg mit Freudigkeit zu laufen
Und uns Gefallne zu erkaufen.
O heller Glanz, o wunderbarer Segensschein!

Now comes from God's great majesty and throne
His one begotten Son.
The man from Judah now appears
To run his course with gladness
And us the fallen bring redemption.
O splendid light,
O sign of grace most wonderful!

4. *Bass Aria*

Streite, siege, starker Held!
Sei vor uns im Fleische kräftig!
Sei geschäftig,
Das Vermögen in uns Schwachen
Stark zu machen!

Fight victorious, hero strong!
Show for us in flesh thy power!
Ever striving
Our own power, now so feeble,
Strong to temper.

5. *Soprano-Alto Recitative*

Wir ehren diese Herrlichkeit
Und nahen nun zu deiner Krippen
Und preisen mit erfreuten Lippen,
Was du uns zubereit';
Die Dunkelheit verstört' uns nicht
Und sahen dein unendlich Licht.

We honor this great majesty
And venture nigh now to thy cradle
And praise thee now with lips of gladness
For what thou us hast brought;
For darkness did not trouble us
When we beheld thy lasting light.

6. *Chorale (Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland)*

Lob sei Gott, dem Vater, g'ton,
Lob sei Gott, sein'm eingen Sohn,
Lob sei Gott, dem Heiligen Geist,
Immer und in Ewigkeit!

Praise to God, the Father, be,
Praise to God, his only Son,
Praise to God, the Holy Ghost,
Always and eternally!

(Translation by Z. Philip Ambrose.)

BWV 50: Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft

1. Chor

*Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft und das Reich und die Macht unsers
Gottes seines Christus worden, weil der verworfen ist, der sie
verklagete Tag und Nacht vor Gott.
(Revelation 12:10)*

1. Chorus

*Now is the salvation and the power and the kingdom and the might
of our God and of his Christ come, since he is cast down who accused
them day and night before God.*

PROGRAM NOTES: CONCORA CONCERT

All program notes for BACHtoberfest were written by Dr Chris Shepard, Artistic Director of The Complete Bach.

Bach's Council Inauguration Cantatas

When touring Leipzig, one is struck by the importance accorded to the portraits of members of the church and city councils that can be seen surrounding the altar at Thomaskirche and in the beautiful reception hall of the Renaissance town hall in the centre of Leipzig—portraits not unlike those ringing Mechanics Hall. This isn't necessarily surprising; as citizens of a free imperial city, Leipzigers were duly proud of their independence, and celebrated that freedom by placing considerable power in the hands of their representatives. The self-congratulatory celebrations didn't stop with portraiture; one of Bach's jobs was to compose cantatas to celebrate the annual election of the town council. The council was large, with three mayors presiding over ten councillors each. A new council came into power by rotation each year on St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August.



BWV 119: Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn

Although Bach famously fell out with the officials of the city, church and school later in his twenty-seven tenure in Leipzig, he must have begun his time there with great enthusiasm and hopefulness. BWV119, Bach's first town council inauguration cantata in Leipzig, was written four months after arriving in the city in 1723. It is a spectacular cantata, and gives no hint at the acrimony that would later develop between Bach and his employers. Indeed, the scale and scope of this work, as well as its musical richness, place it amongst Bach's most important cantatas. The bulk of its text is drawn from Psalm 147, casting Leipzig as a "new Jerusalem".

Bach often used the regal French overture form when referring to royalty or kingship, so the use of that form for the town council is surely a well-considered form of flattery on Bach's part! The full orchestra, expanded to include the highly irregular three oboes and four trumpets, presents the opening double-dotted *grave* section before the choir launches into the central fugue. This 12/8 section is extremely attractive, with a simple but effective contrasting lyrical theme presented after the joyful praise theme. These themes reflect the two literary themes: man praising God and God blessing the children within the gates. In typical French overture form, the pompous material from the beginning returns at the end of the movement.

The same theme of "justice and peace kissing each other" that we found in the soprano aria in BWV120 returns in the tenor recitative in BWV119, where the unidentified librettist extols Leipzig's good fortune in having "God's glory reside in the land". The tenor aria continues the same theme, celebrating the fact that God's blessing manifests itself in Leipzig. Set for a pair of *oboes da caccia*, Bach's bucolic instrument the triplet rhythms seem to represent the swaying of the linden tree, referred to in this aria.

We shift from the Leipzig's general good fortune towards the purpose of the day—the inauguration of the city government—in the next recit-aria pair. We might cringe a bit at the syncophantic

nature of the second half of the cantata, but we should keep in perspective that this was the age of the patronage system, and take it at face value. But the modern reader is certainly put off by the bass' sentiment that "whatever good we experience, next to God, comes through intelligent authorities and their wise governing"! This text is set with fanfare-like bursts from the trumpets. The beautiful alto aria expands on this idea, suggesting that government is the image of God on earth. The use of the flute (originally recorders), which we know from the aria "Ich folge dir gleichfalls" in the *St John Passion*, is often associated with leading and following. But here the flute seems to represent the same idea in reverse. In the text, the alto sings that whoever doesn't understand the godly might of earthly government must also be oblivious of God. In so many phrases, the flute seems to move cheerfully, oblivious of the alto's more profound statements.

The outsized scope of the cantata is truly reflected in the final chorus, introduced by a soprano recitative. The image of sighing introduced by her is taken up by the trumpets, with a slurred, dotted repeating figure in the chorus. The main body of the chorus is a fugue on the text "the Lord has done good to us; therefore we are all joyful." The blessing declamation is presented in a straightforward subject, but Bach introduces much more spritely articulation and melismas for the rejoicing figure. As we find in the chorus of BWV120, Bach uses the B section for contrasting more lyrical material; in this section, we encounter the sighing figure more often. One nice touch is the long notes for the text "advanced long years", referring to the councillors' wisdom and in some cases, their old age.

Rather than ending with this chorus, Bach adds a short recitative and chorale. The text for the chorale is the same as BWV120's final chorale, though it is set here to a different section of the German *Te Deum* chorale melody.



BWV 120: Gott, man lobet dich in der Stille

As is true of many of Bach's congratulatory cantatas—the cantatas written for special events like patrons' namedays, university celebrations and elections—BWV120 is almost certainly a parody, or reworking, of an earlier cantata. Musicologists are still unsure of the definite date of its composition, but this cantata could not have been performed before the council elections of 1742, only eight years before Bach's death. As we have found so often before in our cantata journey, the fact that Bach is drawing on pre-composed material in no way affects the quality and theological specificity of this cantata. Indeed, it is a particularly beautiful and meaningful cantata.

Unusually, the cantata opens with an aria rather than a chorus. Bach sets this text from Psalm 65, "God, one praises Thee in the stillness of Zion" in an ingenious fashion. He manages to combine both the idea of Zion's stillness, represented through staccato chords and long notes, with the idea of praise, depicted by the highly ornate oboe double concerto writing and the equally florid alto solo. From here, Bach launches into one of his most glorious

choruses of praise. It is clear that the composer knew the high value of this movement: he reworked it in the Credo of the *B Minor Mass* later in the 1740s for the text “and we expect the resurrection of the dead.” In the case of this earlier version, the upward-reaching arpeggios and scalar motives (on the word “rise”) represent humans “shouting for joy” from earth to heaven. Unlike the *B Minor Mass* chorus, this movement is in a large ABA *da capo* form, with a contrasting middle section praise God’s compassion and kindness.

It is in the bass recitative that we find the most specific reference to the cantata’s municipal purpose. The bass commands the residents of Leipzig, the “city of linden trees”, to pay the vows they have made to God. He also prays for blessing upon the new government. The exquisite soprano aria takes up this theme of blessing; specifically, for two pairs of words: “well-being and blessing” and “justice and faithfulness”. Perhaps these textual twins provided the impetus for the duet between the soprano and solo violin, who dance around each other’s lines before coming together in unison at major cadential points. The soprano line is *cantabile*, where the violin has more Italianate figurations throughout the aria.

Following a second recitative asking for God’s blessing, this time sung by the tenor and accompanied by strings, the choir sings a rather sober setting of Luther’s German *Te Deum*. Again, this chorale continues the theme of blessing for God’s people, a major theme of all of the election cantatas.



BWV 71: Gott ist mein König

Only two cantata scores were ever published in Bach’s lifetime: BWV 71, performed in 1708 for the inauguration of the Town Council in Mühlhausen, and another inauguration cantata written for the same occasion the following year. Accordingly, this work has assumed great importance among Bach’s cantatas, not least because Bach gives so many clues about performance practice in a very clear fashion. But the work is important for many reasons. It reflects a fascination that Bach had with the music of Dietrich Buxtehude (c.1637-1707), the important organist from the northern port city of Lübeck. Like his contemporary Handel, Bach made a special trip to see Buxtehude and his advanced choral programme at St Mary’s Church. During his trip, Bach would certainly have seen one of Buxtehude’s *Abendmusik* concerts, an early example of musical entrepreneurship. The key importance of Buxtehude’s musical style to Bach’s own developing musical style was the older composer’s ability to infuse the sober North German technique with elements of French and Italian music, an amalgamation that J.S. Bach would go on to perfect.

The galleries in Buxtehude’s St Mary’s Church, not unlike Monteverdi’s San Marco Basilica, were perfect for antiphonal writing. *Gott ist mein König* uses this technique explicitly, leading most musicologists to believe that Bach must have heard one of Buxtehude’s now-lost oratorios. There are six “choirs” in BWV71: trumpets and timpani; flutes and cello; oboes and bassoon; strings; vocal soloists (“concertists”) and tutti singers (“ripienists”). Bach uses various combinations of these instruments throughout the entire cantata, though only the opening and closing movements feature all of the instruments.

The alternation of vocal concertists and ripienists throughout the cantata gives some indication as to what might have been a commonplace practice for Bach. In fact, the concertists sing the bulk of the work (including a fugue without ripieno at all), suggesting that he thought of the tutti choir in a very different way than we do in post-19th century choral music. The first movement is triumphant hymn of praise to God, whereas the finale is a text more specific to the inauguration, asking for a blessing for the new government. In this *tour de force* final movement, Bach offers a large range of contrasts, from vocal-instrumental forces to tempi and meters to musical forms. The climax of the movement is a beautiful chaconne-like fugue that builds in texture and dynamics throughout.

In the other two “choral” movements, Bach uses the concertists for the first and the tutti choir for the second. For the text “May your old age be like your youth,” Bach uses a self-consciously old-fashioned fugue form, the permutation fugue. Although the reference to old age seems a bit odd at first glance, Malcolm Boyd points out that the new principal burgomeister was eighty-three years old, so the antique reference is clearly meant as a respectful homage. The other choral movement is one of the most curiously beautiful in all of Bach’s output. The singers implore that God not give “the soul of His turtle-dove” to their enemies. They implore this through the use of leaning appoggiaturas and slurs, while the timorous bassoon and cello parts represent their anxiety. This is another characteristic learned from Buxtehude: Bach sets up a range of rhythmic *ostinati* that continue throughout the movement as Bach layers new material above those undulations. The turtle-dove itself is represented in the impossibly lyrical soprano melody.

The other three movements in the work are for solo voices. The first is a tenor-soprano duet accompanied by continuo, representing the aged servant who sings a rather morbid text asking that God allow him to die in his own city, buried with his parents. To the modern eye, such words seem very odd, but in a culture which featured the veneration of the elderly as well as a healthy respect of death, the words would seem less harsh. In a form that Bach would later use to great advantage in Leipzig, the soprano sings an embellished chorale melody, *Soll ich auf dieser Welt*, asking for God’s protection into our old age. The bass arioso features an instrumental ritornello by the flute and oboe choirs, with a central section accompanied only by continuo, breaking the reverie of the A section. This is followed immediately by a similarly multi-part alto aria, accompanied by trumpets and timpani. We are afforded another glimpse of the majesty of the cantata’s opening in this short aria.

PROGRAM NOTES: CELLO SUITES

Please note that have something of an “embarrassment of riches” of resources for the Cello Suites concert. In addition to these general notes, there are two podcast episode in BACH101 that delve into Baroque suites in some detail, including Episode 7, in which many examples of each dance type are played for you. We also have a ChatJSB interview with Zlatomir Fung on the Podcast page of the website.

When discussing the works of Bach, two aspects often hold great interest: the history and background of the music itself—when it was written and for whom; and its “reception history,” which details when it entered the performing repertoire and its importance to later generations. Given Bach’s significance to all of music history, this latter aspect can be particularly fascinating.

In the case of the *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*, it is perhaps the reception history that stands out the most. Indeed, we are not entirely sure of their composition history in any case, although it is believed that these pieces were composed for a cellist at the court in Cöthen between 1717 and 1723. The only extant score is in the handwriting of Anna Magdalena Bach, Johann Sebastian’s second wife, who was herself a fine musician. Beyond these few details, not much is known about the suites during Bach’s lifetime.

What we do know is that it wasn't until the performances and later recordings by the great Catalan cellist and humanitarian Pablo Casals that these difficult but beautiful works entered the cello repertoire. Once established, they became absolutely foundational to the development of cello technique, remaining essentially *sui generis* unaccompanied works.

Casals discovered a score for the suites in a Barcelona bookstore in 1889, at the age of 13. At that time, these works were considered études—studies in technique—and were not regarded as suitable for concerts. This view was partly because the various dance forms from Baroque suites had long fallen out of fashion, and there was

little understanding of how to convey the unique character of each movement. Casals single-handedly brought these works into the mainstream performance tradition, where they have remained ever since. He practiced them on his own for decade before even performing them, and he waited until the late 1930s to record them, fifty years after he first discovered the works.

In recent years, recordings by Yo-Yo Ma, Janos Starker, and the period cellist Anner Bylsma have become especially influential, with the first two winning Grammy Awards. While it is common for cellists to include one of the suites in a concert program, it is much rarer to hear all six performed in one sitting. Each suite has its own particular affect and distinctive character, making a complete performance a unique and extraordinary experience. The sixth suite brings a special set of technical challenges, particularly before the advent of period instruments and all the research that accompanied the movement. It is believed that the suite was originally written for the five-string *violoncello piccolo*; as the term suggests, this was a slightly smaller cello. Bach used this instrument in a handful of cantatas, exploiting its wider and higher range. It is possible to play the suites on the four-string modern cello, but as is true of other shifts to modern instruments (such as playing the *Goldberg Variations* on the single-keyboard versus the original two-keyboard harpsichord), what was already a difficult piece of music becomes a fiendishly difficult one, ensuring that only the very best professional cellists can truly do justice to these extraordinary works.

PROGRAM NOTES: FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

BWV 61: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland I

Although Bach’s cantatas are almost synonymous with his work in Leipzig, he actually wrote nearly thirty cantatas before moving to Leipzig in 1723. Twenty of these cantatas were written in Weimar, where Bach served two branches of the ducal family. He worked as a court musician from 1708-1717, but it was his promotion to *Konzertmeister* in 1714 that required him to compose a cantata each month for the court chapel.

The first setting of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* dates from this period in Weimar, where it was first presented on 2 December 1714. This is the first known Bach setting of a libretto by the pastor Erdmann Neumeister, a collaboration that would transform the genre of the sacred cantata. Bach would reuse the cantata for his first Advent Sunday in Leipzig in 1723. The archaic quality of the chorale, reflected in its small range, scalar movement and asymmetrical phrasing, reflects its origins in the Roman Catholic plainchant tradition. As part of his drive to translate many hymns from Latin into the vernacular German, Martin Luther turned to the hymn *Veni, Redemptor Genitium* in 1524. This ancient hymn dates from the end of the 4th century, written by the church’s first great hymnodist, St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.

The use of the French *ouverture* in the opening of the cantata emphasises the coming of the saviour as King, while at the same time heralding the start of the new church year. In music redolent of Lully,

the double-dotted rhythms in the strings accompany a straightforward setting of the first line of the chorale tune shared among the vocal parts, before launching into a lively fugue for the words “des sich wundert alle Welt”—a musical depiction of the world’s wonderment and celebration.

The scale of this cantata is smaller than that of most of the Weimar cantatas, many of which require large forces. The original orchestration is a standard “French quintet”—two violins, two violas and continuo. The Weimar court only employed up to eight singers, so the vocal forces were also limited. The scope of the solo movements is also modest, with shorter arias than we find in later cantatas, accompanied either by a single instrumental line or by continuo. In many ways, this cantata occupies a crossroad between the north German cantatas, which consisted more of sections than of free movements, and the later largescale works that Bach composed.

There are a couple of wonderful examples of text-painting in this cantata. The bass recitative, a *vox Christi* quotation from Revelation 3:20, features pizzicato strings representing the knock on the door. And in the final chorale, a polyphonic setting of half of *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, we find the same use of high sixteenth-note violin writing that can be found in BWV1, both represent the shimmering of the morningstar.

PROGRAM NOTES: BACHTOBERFEST CHOIR

BWV 62: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland II

This second setting of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* dates from 1724, Bach's second annual cycle (*Jahrgang*) of sacred cantatas. If the first setting still shows influences from the north German school, then this version is an excellent example of the typical Leipzig cantata, with its opening chorale-prelude, middle recitatives and arias, and closing chorale in cantional (straight four-part harmony) style.

One of the themes that we find throughout Bach's musical language in his Advent cantatas is that of God meeting man. Man's prayers ascend to God in upward musical figures, while God descends to earth in downward musical figures. We find this in particular in the opening chorus of BWV 62, in which we find the joyful, running oboe figure reaching upwards, and the string parts (in the key of B minor, which Bach uses to symbolise Christ's humanity), coming down in arpeggios and appoggiaturas. Bach then presents the four phrases of the hymn in four distinct sections, lending each its own affect. As we will see in each setting this afternoon, he gives particular energy to the "des sich wundert alle Welt" phrase, with semi-quavers representing the world's wonderment this time. Bach's love of the ABA form, in which the initial material is repeated to close a movement, is present here in an organic way, since the chorale itself repeats the first phrase as the last phrase, with different words.

The coming Christmas season is foreshadowed in the tenor aria with the use of a lilting Siciliano rhythm, just as we saw in *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, BWV1, in the first BACH 2010 concert. The bass aria provides an enormous contrast; if the tenor aria represents the beauty and mystery of the Incarnation, then the bass aria reminds us that the baby becomes a conqueror when he grows up. Bach uses a unique sound here, with all of the strings (including cello and bass) playing the same line, stretching over three octaves.

The intimate accompanied duet recitative represents the congregation in the manger, contemplating the arrival of the light in the darkness. The closing chorale is a very simple setting of the final verse of *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, essentially a trinitarian doxology.



BWV 122: Das neugeborne Kindelein

Like BWV 28, this cantata was written for the Sunday after Christmas. Its text uses the Christ-child as a mechanism for renewal on two levels: he ushers in the new year; and his birth brings reconciliation and renewal to the believer's relationship with God. All of the movements are either directly from the chorale "Das neugeborne Kindelein" or are free interpretations of verses. Typical of Lutheran incarnation theology, the text points towards the celestial warfare surrounding Christ's birth. In this cantata, the angels (representing by recorders, an ancient musical tradition) are able to rejoice again, having had to shun sinful man until Christ's appearance on earth.

The opening chorus certainly reflects this rejoicing: though it is a bit muted in G minor, the dance-like triple metre provides a gently rocking *Affekt* for the chorale-prelude setting for the first verse of the chorale. The soprano sings the melody throughout as a *cantus firmus* above the three other parts, while the instruments play the ritornello-based accompaniment in concerto form.

The extreme chromaticism and tightly conceived melodic material of the bass aria represent sinful man's condition before salvation; this is transformed into Eb major, Bach's key of consolation, when the angels rejoice over the reconciliation. This is explained further in the soprano recitative, where we hear of a paradise lost. Over the complex recitative, Bach sets the chorale in block harmonies played by the three recorders, one of the loveliest effects in any of his recitatives.

Many elements converge in the deceptively simple trio that follows. The alto, doubled by the strings, sings a verse of the chorale, asserting that we have nothing to fear with God on our side. The soprano and tenor echo this sentiment, summoning up images of Satan and hell which are reflected in the vocal melismas that swirl around the sturdy chorale tune. The whole structure is set as a *siciliano*, the pastoral dance form that Bach uses to tell the Nativity story.

Following the accompanied bass recitative, which offers thanks for the fulfilled promise, the chorale appears in yet another dance-like movement. Alluding again to the coming year, this verse has a distinctly joyful feel, with many hemiolas and the text's exhortation to "rise up" and sing. We are reminded yet again that in the Baroque period, minor keys did not yet have the association with sadness that so many modern ears have been trained to hear.



BWV 50: Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft

The Feast of St Michael, or Michaelmas, 29 September, celebrates the victory of the forces of good over the forces of evil in the earth's final days. The angels, led by St Michael, defeat "the dragon" (Satan), who is thrown down from heaven. At the point of victory in Revelation, John writes that he heard a loud voice in heaven saying "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."

It is a powerful scene, and the single extant movement from what was most likely a longer cantata captures all of the sense of victory and perfidy inherent in the biblical text. Like the other two opening movements in today's concerts, it is a grandly conceived piece; indeed, this single movement stands alongside the greatest movements in all of Bach's choral output. To represent the victory, Bach sets the series of "and" statements with a gradually rising fugue subject, always returning the tonic note as if returning to the word "and". After we have gone through the fugal exposition from bass up to soprano, the surprise of the piece comes: rather than being set for the usual four-part chorus, we discover that it is set for *two* SATB ensembles. The effect is breathtaking. Based on the much simpler homophony of the second chorus, we have opted today to follow the example that we learned earlier this year in BWV 195, and use a quartet of vocal soloists for the more florid Choir I part, creating another colour contrast between what is ultimately six blocks of sound—the trumpet choir, oboe choir, string choir, vocal soloists, choral tutti and continuo.

The piece is divided into two nearly equal sections, both of which are based largely on the fugue subject. In the second half of the movement, Bach expands the fugue subject further by converting the earlier quaver-two semiquaver fanfare pattern into a more extended countersubject. In addition to the countersubject, Bach grafts a mirror image line onto the fugue subject, descending where the original ascends—Satan descending while God ascends triumphant.

There are two other important musical effects in this text setting. For “the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,” Bach alternates the two vocal choruses antiphonally in very short,

accented sequences. Finally, the text “who accuses them day and night before our God” is set as Bach often sets words about Satan—with slithering polyphony and diminished harmonies that resolve once we return to God’s victory.

It is little wonder that this single movement has remained in the choral repertoire even as other cantatas have lain forgotten for so long. In fact, Mendelssohn himself, the subject of this year’s Bach Festival, included BWV50 in a compilation “Ascension Cantata” that he performed in Cologne in early June 1838. Such is the power of the work that it even withstood Mendelssohn’s “Romanticisation”—the performance involved seven hundred musicians!