

# Eastman Bach Cantata Series

Jonathan Mott and Henry Griffin, *conductors*

Sunday, October 27, 2024

Hatch Recital Hall

3:30 PM



EASTMAN  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

## ~ PROGRAM ~

**BWV 108: Es ist euch gut, daß ich hingeh**  
Cantata for the Fourth Sunday after Easter (1725)

**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
(1685-1750)  
16'

- I. Es ist euch gut, daß ich hingeh (Bass Aria)
- II. Mich kann kein Zweifel stören (Tenor Aria)
- III. Dein Geist wird mich also regieren (Tenor Recitative)
- IV. Wenn aber jener, der Geist der Wahrheit kommen wird (Chorus)
- V. Was mein Herz von dir begehrt (Alto Aria)
- \*VI. Dein Geist, den Gott von Himmel gibt (Chorale)**

**\*The audience is invited to stand and sing**

Patrizia Pfauth, soprano  
Sofia Martinez, mezzo-soprano  
Lucas Mann, tenor  
Jack Leslie, baritone

Ingrid Buschkopf, violin I  
Sedona Kmen, violin II  
Keon Sagara, viola  
Amarilli Severa, cello  
Lauren Smith, oboe d'amore I  
Payton Brown, oboe d'amore II  
Jonghee Yoon, organ  
Jonathan Mott, conductor

~ BRIEF PAUSE ~

~ PROGRAM ~

**BWV 121: Christum wir sollen loben schon**

Christmas Cantata for the Second Day of Christmas (1724)

**J. S. Bach**

19'

- I. Christum wir sollen loben schon (Chorus)
- II. O du von Gott erhöhte Kreatur (Tenor Aria)
- III. Der Gnade unermesslich's Wesen (Alto Recitative)
- IV. Johannis freudenvolles Springen (Bass Aria)
- V. Doch wie erblickt es dich in deiner Krippe (Soprano Recitative)

**\*VI. Lob, Ehr und Dank sei dir gesagt (Chorale)**

**\*The audience is invited to stand and sing**

Sarah Cao, soprano  
Hannah Yan, mezzo-soprano  
Andrew Puschel, tenor  
Nathaniel Peets, bass-baritone

Ingrid Buschkopf, violin I  
Sedona Kmen, violin II  
Keon Sagara, viola  
Amarilli Severa, cello  
Jiayan Yang, double bass  
Payton Brown, oboe d'amore  
Henry Griffin, harpsichord

~ PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS, AND TRANSLATIONS ~

**BWV 108: Es ist euch gut, daß ich hingehe**

*It is good for you that I leave—*

These are challenging words for anyone to hear. And one can imagine how they came across to Jesus's disciples as he insisted it really is best if he goes (i.e. dies) so that the Spirit can come and guide them in his place. The six movements of J.S. Bach's *Es ist euch gut, daß ich hingehe* paint a musical picture both of the difficulty of hearing this statement from Jesus and resolution that might be found. The opening aria features these words sung somewhat joyfully by a bass—the traditional purveyor of Jesus's words in Bach's vocal music—and set under virtuosic webs of melody spun by the oboe d'amore. Extended melismatic phrases on “hingehe” and “sende” depict Jesus “going” and “sending” (the Spirit) all within a warm, confident A-major tonality. Jesus is ready to leave, and the Spirit, depicted by the oboe d'amore's highly ornamented and somewhat unpredictable gestures, is ready to follow in his stead. In the movement that follows, the tenor, an earth-dwelling human with a different sort of confidence, asserts through extreme leaps and jagged turns of melody that can no doubt disturb him. Sustained pitches on “ich glaube” (“I believe”) in the latter half of the aria give image to enduring belief; rapid ascending scales on “gehst du fort” (“you depart”) depict where Jesus is to go.

A complex fugue follows, employing for the first time all of the cantata's forces. Here, Bach returns to images of the Spirit, depicting it in key moments of the text with melodic figuration. In the first section, he employs melismas to illustrate the Spirit leading the listener to truth (“in alle Wahrheit leiten”). In the second section, Jesus speaks (“er reden”) not of himself but of what he has heard will come, that is, he speaks of the Spirit. The final section adorns the word “verkündigen” (“foretell”) with figuration, showing us that the Spirit is his prophecy. The music of the final section also reflects the music of the first, adding another layer of symbolism: what has come was foretold.

The aria for alto offers a lyrical prayer that steps outside of the complexities of Jesus and the Spirit. Like the rest of the cantata though, this aria is filled with imagery: ascending scales depict God's “ways,” and the violin “showers” the singer with blessing as she sustains “eternity” on a pitch for seven beats.

The final chorale affords one final reference to the Spirit, here allowing the community to affirm its trust in it. Subtly, or perhaps not so, the congregation gets its chance to wrestle with the Spirit in navigating leaps and chromaticism before arriving where “blessing is to be found.”

Jonathan Mott

**I. Bass Aria**

Es ist euch gut, daß ich hingehe;  
Denn so ich nicht hingehe,  
Kömmt der Tröster nicht zu euch.  
So ich aber gehe,  
Will ich ihn zu euch senden.

*It is good for you that I leave;  
For if I did not go,  
The Comforter would not come to you.  
Since I go, however,  
I will send him to you.*

## II. Tenor Aria

Mich kann kein Zweifel stören,  
Auf dein Wort, Herr, zu hören.  
Ich glaube, gehst du fort,  
So kann ich mich getrösten,  
Daß ich zu den Erlösten  
Komm an gewünschten Port.

*No doubt can disturb me  
When I listen to your word, Lord.  
I believe, although you depart,  
That thus I can be comforted,  
Since I shall draw near to the redeemed ones  
In the desired haven.*

## III. Tenor Recitative

Dein Geist wird mich also regieren,  
Daß ich auf rechter Bahne geh;  
Durch deinen Hingang  
Kommt er ja zu mir,  
Ich frage sorgenvoll:  
Ach, ist er nicht schon hier?

*Thus your Spirit will guide me,  
So that I walk on the right path;  
If through your departure  
He comes indeed to me,  
I ask with concern:  
Ah, is he not already here?*

## IV. Chorus

Wenn aber jener,  
Der Geist der Wahrheit,  
Kommen wird,  
Der wird euch in alle Wahrheit leiten.  
Denn er wird nicht von ihm selber reden,  
Sondern was er hören wird,  
Das wird er reden;  
Und was zukünftig ist,  
Wird er verkündigen.

*But when that one,  
The Spirit of Truth,  
Shall come,  
He shall lead you into all truth.  
For he will not speak of himself,  
Rather what he has heard,  
That will he speak of;  
And what is to come,  
He will foretell.*

## V. Alto Aria

Was mein Herz von dir begehrt,  
Ach, das wird mir wohl gewährt.  
Überschütte mich mit Segen,  
Führe mich auf deinen Wegen,  
Daß ich in der Ewigkeit  
Schau deine Herrlichkeit!

*What my heart desires from you,  
Ah, that will be well cherished by me.  
Shower me with blessing,  
Lead me along your ways,  
So that in eternity  
I shall behold your glory!*

## VI. Chorale

Dein Geist, den Gott vom Himmel gibt,  
Der leitet alles, was ihn liebt,  
Auf wohl gebähntem Wege.  
Er setzt und richtet unsren Fuß,  
Daß er nicht anders treten muß,  
Als wo man findet den Segen.

*Your Spirit, which God sends from heaven,  
Leads everything that loves him,  
Upon well-paved roads.  
He places and aligns our feet,  
So that they will not step amiss,  
Beyond where blessing is to be found.*

Christiane Mariane von Ziegler 1728; John 16:7 (mov't. 1);

John 16:13 (mov't. 4);

“Gott Vater, sende deinen Geist,” verse 10: Paul Gerhardt 1653 (mov't. 6)

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## BWV 121: Christum wir sollen loben schon

Bach's BWV 121, *Christum wir sollen loben schon*, ingeniously bookends this cantata's textual fabric with the first and eighth verses, respectively, of Martin Luther's German translation of *A solis ortus cardine*. Translating to “we should praise Christ highly,” this cantata was written for the second day of Christmas and premiered on December 26, 1724 in Leipzig. The first movement uses a cantus firmus as the soprano melody with counterpoint in the lower voices (strings doubling) and continuo. With larger choral forces, the vocal lines would typically also be doubled by sackbuts and a single cornett; however, modern instruments call for balance considerations, so these four doubling parts in today's performance will be omitted. Interestingly, the first movement ends a whole step higher — F sharp Major — than from where it begins — E minor — creating the effect of a rather sudden and unexpected piccardy third. Oh how I love a piccardy third!

The tenor aria is in da capo form, full of harmonic surprises, and with its prominent oboe d'amore part it should be considered more of a duet with the oboe part and tenor clearly conversing throughout. Possibly the most unexpected and harmonically thrilling measure of the entire cantata occurs at the end of the alto recitative when a C-sharp dominant chord in first inversion suddenly functions similarly to a Neapolitan. Within a split second, it abruptly leads into a cadence in, of all keys, C Major! Yes, we promise we didn't play any wrong notes there. This leads directly into the boisterous and highly evocative bass aria which includes many intervals leaping up, depicting the Visitation of Mary when John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb. I have added even more rising and leaping figuration into my harpsichord realization to further magnify the effect.

Immediately following is the soprano recit which has a surprisingly wide range for a recit and a fairly arioso-like quality throughout. The final chorale sets the text to a Doxology and, most interestingly, ends on an imperfect cadence in B minor. If you've made it this far reading, what makes this cadence imperfect? Enjoy this performance, and find out for yourself!

Henry Griffin

## I. Chorus

Christum wir sollen loben schon,  
Der reinen Magd Marien Sohn,  
So weit die liebe Sonne leucht  
Und an aller Welt Ende reicht.

*We should already be praising Christ,  
The son of the pure girl Mary,  
For as long as the dear sun shines  
And reaches to the end of the entire world.*

## II. Tenor Aria

O du von Gott erhöhte Kreatur,  
Begreife nicht, nein, nein, bewundre nur:  
Gott will durch Fleisch  
Des Fleisches Heil erwerben.  
Wie groß ist doch der Schöpfer aller Dinge,  
Und wie bist du verachtet und geringe,  
Um dich dadurch zu retten  
Vom Verderben.

*O you exalted creature of God,  
Do not understand, no, no, just marvel:  
God will earn the salvation  
Of the flesh through flesh.  
How great then is the Creator of all things,  
And how pitiful and insignificant you are,  
That through these means are saved  
From damnation.*

### III. Alto Recitative

Der Gnade unermesslich's Wesen  
Hat sich den Himmel nicht  
Zur Wohnstatt auserlesen,  
Weil keine Grenze sie umschließt.  
Was Wunder,  
Daß allhie Verstand und Witz gebricht,  
Ein solch Geheimnis zu ergründen,  
Wenn sie sich in ein keusches Herze gießt.  
Gott wählet sich den reinen Lieb  
Zu einem Tempel seiner Ehren,  
Um zu den Menschen sich  
Mit wundervoller Art zu kehren.

*The unfathomable Being of Grace  
Has not chosen heaven  
As His dwelling-place,  
Since no boundaries can contain him.  
What a miracle,  
Which defeats knowledge and wisdom  
Seeking to divine such a mystery,  
When it seeps into a chaste heart.  
God chooses this pure body  
As a temple to his honor,  
In order to convert mankind  
In miraculous fashion.*

### IV. Bass Aria

Johannis freudenvolles Springen  
Erkannte dich, mein Jesu, schon.  
Nun da ein Glaubensarm dich hält,  
So will mein Herze von der Welt  
Zu deiner Krippe brünstig dringen.

*John's joyful leaps  
Already acknowledge you, my Jesus.  
Now where an arm of faith embraces you,  
Then, away from the world,  
My heart will fervently hasten to your manger.*

### V. Soprano Recitative

Doch wie erblickt es dich in deiner Krippe?  
Es seufzt mein Herz:  
Mit bebender und fast geschloßner Lippe  
Bringt es sein dankend Opfer dar.  
Gott, der so unermesslich war,  
Nimmt Knechtsgestalt und Armut an.  
Und weil er dieses uns zugutgetan,  
So lasset mit der Engel Chören  
Ein jauchzend Lob- und Danklied hören!

*Yet how can it behold you in your manger?  
My heart sighs:  
With lips trembling and almost closed shut  
It brings its thankful offering there.  
God, that was so immeasurable,  
Takes on poverty and the form of a servant.  
And since he has done this for our sake,  
Then with the angel choruses  
Let us hear a jubilant song of praise and thanks!*

### VI. Chorale

Lob, Ehr und Danke sei dir gesagt,  
Christ, geboren von der reinen Magd,  
Samt Vater und den Heiligen Geist  
Von nun an bis in Ewigkeit.

*Praise, honor, and thanks be said to you,  
Christ, born from the pure maid,  
Together with the Father and the Holy Spirit  
From now on to eternity.*

“Christum wir sollen loben schon,” Martin Luther 1524  
(verses 1 and 8, mov'ts. 1 and 6; source for the other movements)  
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## Upcoming Choral Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Sunday, November 17, 2024

### Bach Cantata Series

*BWV 41 & BWV 129*

Jiabao Guo and Jonathan Thomas Madden, conductors  
Hatch Recital Hall • 3:30pm

Sunday, November 24, 2024

### Eastman Chorale

music of Dunphy, Brahms, Kodaly, Vaughan Williams, and Schoenberg  
William Weinert, conductor  
Kilbourn Hall • 3:30pm

Friday, December 6, 2024

### Eastman-Rochester Chorus and Eastman Philharmonia

Mendelssohn *Lobgesang* and Elgar *The Music Makers*  
Jonathan Mott and William Weinert, conductors  
Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30pm



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