

BACH NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

THE BALDWIN WALLACE BACH FESTIVAL 2024

Christina Fuhrmann
(Baldwin Wallace University)

Since 1933, musicians, students, and music lovers have gathered at Baldwin Wallace University (BW) in Berea, Ohio to celebrate the annual Bach Festival. The oldest collegiate Bach Festival in the United States was the brainchild of Albert and Selma Riemenschneider. Albert and Selma, both avid musicians, educators, and administrators, worked tirelessly to bring Bach to their students and their community. In their various roles, they wrote countless letters to business leaders in the area for financial support, organized buses for community members limited by gas rationing during WWII, and rehearsed sometimes recalcitrant choirs of students and community members—letters in the archive at the Riemenschneider Bach Institute (RBI) contain stern admonitions about attendance. Throughout, one thing remained constant: their goal of bringing Bach to everyone.

How can that goal be achieved in 2024, when some view Bach as elitist and when Bach's works, intended for devout Lutherans, fit rather uneasily into secular concert halls? "Is Bach for Everyone?," Nicholas Phan's intriguing question, probably would not even have occurred to the Riemenschneiders. ("Bach 52," <https://nicholas-phan.com/bach-52>). But it is a question relevant for today, and this year's BW Bach Festival chose to address it in various ways.

The Bach Festival in April was the third part of a "three-part invention" that began with events in October and January. "Inventions 1 and 2" featured concerts that paired



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Bach with music by Béla Bartók and Steve Reich, masterclasses with Nicholas Phan, and a lecture by Dr. Michael Marissen. In April, the Bach Festival itself ("Invention 3") featured an eclectic round of events. Bach was at the core, with concerts of his instrumental music and cantatas by baroque music band Acronym, the BWV Singers, BW's Motet Choir, and additional faculty and student performers. The festival concluded with this year's major work: the *St. John Passion* BWV 245.

Student research and creative activity is at the heart of BW's mission. Student achievement was therefore foregrounded,

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not only by the many student performers onstage in concerts and masterclasses, but also with interludes from the Festival Brass and the BW Beatles, a lecture by the RBI's Evelyn A. Gott Scholar, Katie Ritzema '25, and performances of excerpts from the new musical *Star Machine* by Gideon '25 and Hank '26 Temple. Faculty research and performances were also featured. I collaborated with my colleagues, Conservatory Librarian Paul Cary and RBI Scholar-in-Residence Dr. Danielle Kuntz, to give a lecture highlighting the RBI's archives and collections. Harpsichord professor Dr. Qin Ying Tan and Dr. Darlene Michitsch from the art department presented an appealingly eclectic concert that paired music and visual art from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

A highlight of BW faculty's creative output was the world premiere of a new cantata by composer in residence Dr. Clint Needham '04. (The performance can be heard here: "Cantata," YouTube Video, 24 April 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgzDxce4siY&t=8s>). It appeared on a concert titled "1724/2024," which contained Needham's *Cantata* alongside works from Bach's highly productive year 1724—the same year as the main work of the season, the *St. John Passion*—including *Meine Seel erhebt den Herren* BWV 10 and *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* BWV 91. Needham explained "*Cantata* draws inspiration from the emotional power found in my favorite works by Bach, as well as humanity's recurring inclination towards conflict—a theme

found in many of Bach's major works." (Clint Needham, Program Notes, The Baldwin Wallace Bach Festival 2024 Program, 29). Needham drew texts from a wide range of writers who mused on the pointless violence of war, such as Alejandro Jodorowsky, "Is religion too old in its justification of war?" and Michael D. Higgins, "Can we fear and hate each other and still love God?" The piece concluded with Needham's own text, which read, partially, "We must choose wisely as we tread, / For our steps dictate where others are led . . . Will we get this right before it's too late?" Juxtaposed with Bach's works, Needham's *Cantata* more than held its own. Since it contained nods to Bach's famed contrapuntal textures, a largely tonal harmonic language, and the same performers as the Bach pieces, *Cantata* integrated well into the sound world of 1724. Yet, Needham still created a thoroughly twenty-first-century piece. *Cantata's* shimmering dissonance, beautiful timbral effects, and direct emotional appeal elicited an immediate,

heartfelt standing ovation.

Needham's *Cantata* highlighted the difficulty of performing the *St. John Passion* amid so much war and religious hatred in the present day. Dr. Michael Marissen, in his talk in January, reminded the audience of the many ways in which the *Passion* has been considered antisemitic. Festival Music Director Dr. Dirk Garner tackled this challenge in several ways. In collaboration with the BW students in the Motet Choir who sang the *Passion*, he conducted an in-depth reading of the text, searching for places and ways where the text



Courtesy of Tim Bates and the BW Bach Festival

might be altered or mitigated. Nate Zadzilka '26 explained to me how important he felt it was that the chorus adopted the now-typical spelling and pronunciation of “Juden” rather than the older “Jüden.” While this may seem a small point, Marissen explained in his lecture that Martin Luther had deliberately used the accent to create an injurious rhyme in his 1543 antisemitic treatise *Von den Juden und ihre Lügen* (*On the Jews and Their Lies*). Garner and the students also decided to remain mute on the words “gottlose Leut”



Courtesy of Tim Bates and the BW Bach Festival

(“godless throng”) in the first chorale of Part II. Musically, their performance rendered the cries of “Crucify him!” in a soft, sweet tone. These passages have often been performed as a violent mob scene, and the students specifically wished to avoid that. As Jayden Norman '25 explained, “We chose to sing it slightly slower and softer to give a more ‘somber’ feel. This was in the hopes of showing a broader range of emotions in such a tense moment.” The result was poignant. For those who did not know the work, the music might have sounded almost pleasant. For those more familiar with it, the effect was similar to the quiet, angelic choirs that often soar above violent scenes in film: a horrific moment became at once mollified and more terrible.

The most innovative aspect of this *St. John Passion* performance was its casting: for the first time (as far as is known), a soprano, Margaret Carpenter Haigh, sang the evangelist rather than a tenor. This may not appear particularly surprising, since the evangelist is essentially a narrator, a function that transcends gender. Traditionally, however, all four evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—were male, and the usual tenor casting reinforces this. Yet, many of Jesus’s followers were women. Casting a soprano broadens the scope of the narrator’s point of view. Perhaps this narrator might be one of the three Marys present at Jesus’s crucifixion, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, or Mary of Clopas. As Garner reflected in an interview with Rebekah Franklin in *Bach Notes*, he and Haigh leaned toward a linkage between the female voice and Jesus’s mother: “I think of it in context of the *Stabat Mater* text, where the mother is watching her son be tortured to death.”

(Rebekah Franklin with Dirk Garner and Margaret Carpenter Haigh *Bach Notes* 40 (Spring 2024), 6). This lens imbued the performance with additional emotional force. For instance, the lengthy, tortured melisma on “weinete” (wept) technically refers to Peter’s tears, but in Haigh’s voice seemed to resonate with the tears Mary shed for her son. In a similar way, Haigh delivered the word “Mörder” (murder) when identifying Barrabas with intense hatred, and the melisma that follows on “geisselte” (scourged) resonated with a particularly human sense of panic and revulsion. As Haigh described, the role is “about a tone too high for a soprano,” and she did not alter any of the music to compensate for this (Franklin, “A Female Evangelist,” 6). The uncomfortable leaps to high notes in this passage and others emphasized the raw pain of the Passion in a way that is newly meaningful in today’s troubled world.

Haigh reflected “what better way to keep this music alive”? (Franklin, “A Female Evangelist,” 8). Keeping Bach alive—present, relevant, accessible—was the main aim of Albert and Selma Riemenschneider when they founded the festival almost a century ago. Doubtless, they could not have imagined what this might have meant in practical terms and may have found this performance baffling. They understood, however, that keeping Bach alive meant actively seeking ways to make this music important and uplifting to their audience. The 2024 BW Bach Festival demonstrated how this time-honored tradition can remain meaningful in the twenty-first century.

BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN
BACH SOCIETY

“GLOBAL BACH”
EMORY UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA, GA
SEPTEMBER 26–29, 2024

Schedule

Thursday, September 26

Hotel check in available (4:00 p.m.)

Opening reception (4:30–6:30)

Location: Hickory Room, Emory Conference Center Hotel

Concert: The Sebastians (7:30)

Location: Performing Arts Studio, Emory University

Friday, September 27

Location: Performing Arts Studio

Check-in with coffee and light refreshments (9:00)

Location: Burlington Road Building Reception Area - Adjacent to Performing Arts Studio

Welcome (9:15)

Session I: Interpreting Bach (9:30)

Mary Greer, “Anomalies in ‘Hercules at the Crossroads’ (BWV 213): Implications for the Christmas Oratorio”

William Fischer, “‘Bring your Bärenreiters’: The Colorful and Checkered History of a Major Music Publisher”

Daniel R. Melamed, “How Not to Analyze a Bach Cantata”

Lunch on your own (12:00)

ABS Board Meeting I (12:00) [Location TBD]

Session II: Fresh Fruits (2:30) [Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, room 360]

Stephen Crist, “The Roots of Bach’s Music in the Treasures of Lutheran Hymnody”

Sashi Ayyangar, “‘Angewandtes eigenes Nachsinnen erlernen’: The Influence of Nicolaus Bruhns on J. S. Bach’s Early Cantatas”

Annika Fabbi, “‘What’s in a Score?’: Exploring the Publication History of J. S. Bach’s Capriccio, BWV 922”

Dinner on your own (5:00 p.m.)

Concert: Jack Mitchener, Organ Recital (8:00)

Location: The Schwartz Center

Post-concert reception at the hotel (9:30)

Saturday, September 28

Location: Performing Arts Studio

Coffee and light refreshments available (9:00 a.m.)

Location: Burlington Road Building Reception Area]

Session III: Bach and Politics (9:30)

Kailan Rubinoff, “From Authenticity to LGBTQ+ Empathy: Queering the St. John Passion”

George Stauffer, “Bach and Democracy”

Andrew Talle, “Bach’s Cello Suites in Global Politics”

Derek Stauff, “Bach and Early Music in Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*”

Lunch [provided] (12:45)

Location: Burlington Road Building Patio or Lobby

ABS Board Meeting II (Location: Burlington Road Building, 204)

Session IV: Screening and Keynote (2:00)

Screening: Living Bach

Keynote Address: Michael Maul: “Three Years of Bach: We Are Family!”

Dinner on your own (5:00)

Concert: Atlanta Baroque Orchestra (7:00)

Location: Glenn Memorial Auditorium

[TBD: Post-concert reception at the hotel]

Sunday, September 29

Location: Emory Conference Center Hotel

Business Meeting and breakfast buffet (9:00 a.m.)

Session V: Bach in Social Media (10:00)

Steven Zohn, “Bach in Friendly Remembrance: Album Incriptions as Reception History”

Nicholas Phan, “Bach 52”

BACHFEST LEIPZIG 2024

YO TOMITA

(Queen's University, Belfast)



1. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

The Bachfest Leipzig 2024 was held from Thursday, June 7 to Sunday, June 16, with the motto “CHORal TOTAL.” This most bizarre and cryptic slogan—which was printed in white letters against a bright-red background—was seen everywhere from program booklets to banners in town. It took me a while to decipher its meanings and implications, which I shall explore later.

The core concept of this year’s Bachfest originates from the Bachfest 2020 that was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic, when all the chorale cantatas belonging to the second annual cycle were to be performed by Bach choirs from across the world. This ambitious project was not incorporated in the 2022 program “BACH—*We Are Family*,” but postponed instead to 2024 as it seemed to perfectly coincide with the cantata cycle’s tercentenary anniversary. Another work that fell under the same anniversary was the *St. John Passion*, Bach’s first Oratorio Passion premiered

on Good Friday 1724, which received varied treatments in this year’s program. Also acknowledged was the 500th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther’s first Protestant hymnal *Etlich Cristlich lider, Lobgesang und Psalm* (Wittenberg, 1524), which added both depth of appreciation and variety of treatment as manifested in the works of the featured composers.

During the ten-day festival, 160 events were presented in over thirty venues in and around the city of Leipzig. The program offered a huge variety of events, sometimes running parallel in different venues. Since the maximum number of events one could physically attend was six per day, I had to be highly selective. I decided to focus on those events that were closely related to the motto or the concerts by world-renowned artists. Below is my review of a few, broadly in chronological order, although there will be exceptions when dealing with the events that are related to the shared theme.

Following tradition, the opening concert was held in the Thomaskirche on June 7 by the hosting musicians—Thomasorganist Johannes Lang, Thomanerchor with the Gewandhausorchester directed by Thomaskantor Andreas Reize—to present a program designed to expound on the festival motto’s meaning. With interwoven welcome speeches by the Mayer of Leipzig and the festival director, we heard Bach’s organ Prelude in C Minor, BWV 546/1, organ chorale “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam” BWV 684, cantata *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort* BWV 60, Alban Berg’s Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy’s psalm setting “Wie der Hirsch schreit nach frischem Wasser” op. 42, MWV A 15, exploring the rich tradition of the chorale and how it was valued and appropriated by Berg and Mendelssohn in their own ways. Particularly noteworthy was Berg’s Violin Concerto (1935) written “to the memory of an angel,” which quotes Bach’s chorale “Es ist genug” from Cantata 60 (featured previously on the program). The Bach chorale suddenly appears blissfully after a stormy climax in the last movement, as if to depict the acceptance of painful agony and death. The way the first four notes of Bach’s chorale seem derived from the initial twelve-tone sequence, how Bach’s harmonization intersects with Berg’s, and how wondrously everything is set within Berg’s musical world full of refreshing orchestral colors and textures: all this was magically fused. Berg’s appropriation of Bach was beautifully glossed by the soloist, Chouchane Siranossian, who was the Artist in Residence of the Bachfest 2024, and who appeared frequently throughout the festival. (Photo 1.)

Anniversary celebration (1): Annual Cycle of Chorale Cantatas

Doubtless the most important feature of this year’s program was the presentation of all sixty-six cantatas—fifty-three that were composed during Bach’s second year in office, plus thirteen that were written in later years—that belong to the annual cycle of chorale cantatas. They were performed in the order of the liturgical calendar in a series of sixteen concerts that were spread over eight days in four venues: the Thomaskirche, Nikolaikirche, Peterskirche, and Paulinum. Of these concerts, three were presented by world-renowned professional artists, which are reviewed separately below; the remaining were taken by amateur choirs from around the world: five from the USA (Emanuel Music Boston, The Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Bach Cantata Choir Portland, Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus of Grace Lutheran, and Bach Collegium San Diego); two from Germany (Bachisches Collegium Bremen, and Concerto Vocale Frankfurt); and one each from Japan (Bach-Kantaten-Verein Ostjapan), Australia (Canberra Bach Ensemble), Switzerland (Berner Bach Chor), UK (Southport Bach Choir), Malaysia (Malaysia Bach Festival Singers and Orchestra), and Spain (Bach Collegium Barcelona). It is also worth adding that

outside this series, an additional fourteen choirs from across the world participated in liturgical services. Their presence proved one of the main contributors to the increased international atmosphere throughout this year’s festival.

The performance of all the chorale cantatas in this series took the following form: before listening to each cantata, we first heard an organ prelude that was based on the featured chorale; the audience was then asked to sing the hymn together; after listening to the cantata, the audience joined in singing the final chorale movement with the performers. For this, a special edition (Carus 31.397) containing all these chorales and the texts of the hymns was handed out to the audience. The whole experience of actively participating in the concert was intriguing, certainly awkward at first but gratifying. Having attended many of these concerts, I developed a feeling for the motto: while “Choral” is a superimposition of *Chor* (chorus/choir) with *Choral* (chorale), “Total” refers to all of Bach’s chorale cantatas being performed by the choirs from all continents across the world. It includes the involvement of the audience as participants. It was an ambitious assertion that was met well.

The series was kicked off by Christoph Spering with Chorus Musicus Köln and Das Neue Orchester together with Nikolaikantor Markus Kaufmann as organist in the Nikolaikirche on June 7 at 8:00 pm. The program consisted of the first four chorale cantatas of the cycle covering the first to third Sundays after Trinity and the feast of St. John. *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort* BWV 20, which Bach premiered on June 11, 1724, was the first cantata on the program, preceded by Sigfrid Karg-Elert’s improvisation for organ on the same chorale, op. 65, no. 42. The rest of the program was as follows: *Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein* BWV 2, preceded by Bach’s organ chorale BWV 741; *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam* BWV 7, preceded by Bach’s organ chorale BWV 685; and *Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder* BWV 135, preceded by Bach’s organ chorale BWV 742. Listening through the four cantatas in this sequence, I felt that Spering carefully guided us to appreciate how Bach explored individuality in each cantata, manifested in many



2. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

different forms, scorings, textures, and instrumental colors adding to the expression of the text and its meaning.

With Nikolaikantor Markus Kaufmann as organist, Ton Koopman directed his Amsterdam Baroque Choir and Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra in two concerts in this series: first on June 12—which was the thirteenth on the series—to cover cantatas written for the second, third and fourth Sundays after Epiphany, and second on June 14—the sixteenth and last on the series—to cover Easter Sunday, which is the last day in the cycle, and the remaining cantatas that either fill gaps in the cycle or are for as-yet unidentified occasions. Both events were held at the fully-packed Nikolaikirche. Here I shall comment on the latter. For the first cantata, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* BWV 4.2 (preceded by Bach’s organ chorale BWV 625), which is well known for its rich colors and intensity, Koopman chose a small chamber setting, allowing the first violin to speak with a penetrating tone. The performance of movement 5 (versus 4) was particularly gripping, with immaculately polished details. For the second cantata, *Nun danket alle Gott* BWV 192 (preceded by BWV 657 from the Great Eighteen Chorales), the orchestra was expanded to 4.4.2.2, which was great for the outer movements, but not so for movement 2, the duet for soprano and bass, resulting in the ensemble becoming untidy. The third cantata, *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* BWV 100 (preceded by BWV 1116 from the Neumeister Chorales), was presented with joy and appreciation. Particularly noteworthy were the delightfully played flute obbligato part in the soprano aria and the alto aria, expressively and engagingly sung by Maarten Engeltjes. The fourth and last cantata, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* BWV 140, made use of a violin piccolo, adding variety to the instrumental colors. The joy of performing was evident among the musicians from the outset. Movement 3 was particularly delightful: the violin piccolo obbligato was fantastically colorful and expressive, and the dialogue between the soprano and the bass made my heart melt. Movement 4 was the model for BWV 645 from the Schübler Chorales, which we heard as the organ prelude for congregational singing earlier. It was nice to hear it again in the original form as well—wonderful programming, making us aware of what Bach had done in his life. The opening movement was repeated as an encore for the ecstatic audience. In reflection, chorale singing at the end of each cantata was a really nice feature this year. Being directed and treated by Koopman like his own choir, with his beaming smiles, even though it was challenging to catch up with his uncompromising pace, was one of the unforgettable experiences of the festival. (Photo 2.)

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION (2): *ST. JOHN PASSION*

This was also a tercentenary year for Bach’s *St. John Passion*, which was first performed on Good Friday, April 7, 1724 at the Nikolaikirche. Three events were held to commemorate the work. The first one was held on the first day of the festival as part of free, open-air event called *BachStage* in Markt, which I was unable to

attend. However, I was in the audience for the other two, which are reviewed here.

A historical reconstruction of this first version was presented on June 13, 2024, by Andreas Reize directing the Thomanerchor Leipzig and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin in the venue where Bach originally planned to perform, the Thomaskirche, though he actually performed the premiere in the Nikolaikirche. As far as we know, Bach performed the *St. John Passion* four times during his time in Leipzig—1724, 1725, 1732, and 1749—making alterations every time. Due to the substantial loss of the original source material for this version, we do not know exactly what instruments were used. Reize’s solution was to take cues from the scoring of the cantatas of the first annual cycle: four-part string settings were reinforced by oboes; flutes were restricted to arias. He also used the Bach organ, played by Thomasonorganist Johannes Lang, in the north gallery as the main continuo instrument in the performance, and gathered his musicians around it. And this choice indeed defined the character of Reize’s rendition. The opening chorus “Herr, unser Herrscher” started promisingly, powerfully capturing the fact that God’s glory prevailed. At the da capo, we heard a short interlude by the organist, which was unexpected but interesting. Elsewhere, however, these interludes sounded excessive and even intrusive. Occasionally the use of the Bach organ for continuo felt questionable in recitatives and arias, as it overpowered the other musicians, creating imbalance in ensemble. Elsewhere, Reize’s attempts to control tensions and energy through bold dynamics and tempi contributed well to the overall flow of the Passion narrative. Even within single movements such as chorales, Reize added a sense of urgency or provided a calming effect; in the final chorale, this was overdone to the extent that it sounded somewhat artificial. Finally, one of the most distinct features of the first version, as far as I am aware, is the text of movement 33, recitative, which makes use of Mark 15:38 (“Und der Vorhang im Tempel zerriss in zwei Stücke von oben an bis unten aus”); but instead, Reize took the longer description of the same scene in Matthew 27:51–52, as found in the other, more commonly heard versions of the work. Despite this, Reize’s reconstruction of the first version of the *St. John Passion* was interesting, providing much food for thought on what Bach might have done with it if he was permitted to perform in the Thomaskirche on his first Good Friday as Thomaskantor. (Photo 3.)

Another *St. John Passion* concert featured a modern theatrical rendition of the fourth version (1749) by Vox Bona and BonnBarock directed by Karin Freist-Wissing on June 15 in the Peterskirche. Upon arrival, the audience witnessed some of the musicians lying on the stage in the middle of the nave, pretending to be dead even before the concert began. The performance proper began with a tenor aria “Bleibt, ihr Engel” from *Es erhub sich ein Streit* BWV 19. The theatrical enhancement was refreshing and interesting to see; the changes of scene in the Passion story were articulated clearly with the help of bangs, shouts, smoke, and



3. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

lighting, and the musicians performed choreography coming on and off the stage to depict the fast-changing mood in the Passion narrative. Roles were occasionally swapped among musicians, e.g. the evangelist's part might be sung by the choir, or the ensemble would repeat a movement using different performers. Setting aside the visual gains, the actual musical performance was inevitably compromised, as most of the singers were not facing the director and instrumentalists who were all gathered around one corner of the stage. Yet it must be stressed that all the soloists sang their roles superbly, all from memory. A huge round of applause came for Benedikt Kristjánsson who commendably replaced Sebastian Kohlhepp in the role of evangelist on short notice. (Photo 4.)

NOTEWORTHY CONCERTS

On June 8 in the Thomaskirche we heard Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, presented by Václav Luks directing Collegium Vocale 1704, Collegium 1704, and the Thomaneranhänger der Anna-Magdalena-Bach-Schule and Grundschule forum thomanum. It was a superbly polished rendition of the work, which was already clear from the opening chorus "Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir



4. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

klagen." With sensitive handling of textural, dynamic, and tempo changes, each phrase was so carefully characterized that it led one to imagine various participants—together with their varying emotional states from orderly to chaotic, or from peaceful to unsettling—who appear at the scene of Jesus carrying the cross to Golgotha. The cantus firmus "O Lamm Gottes" sung by the Thomaneranhänger—which sounded so sweet and heavenly that I now come to a firm understanding as to why a boys' choir has so often been called for—added another layer to the picture, completing the dogmatic message of Christ's crucifixion. With Luks' tactful use of dynamics, flexible tempo changes, and varying the length of pauses between movements, each scene of the Passion narrative was clearly depicted. During this musical journey of Christ's Passion, we encountered many moments of Luks' magical craftsmanship and compelling musical delivery. This was, for me, the most unforgettable concert this year. (Photo 5.)

Leonidas Kavakos performed all of Bach's violin solos in two late-night concerts: Partita in E Major BWV 1006, Sonata in A Minor BWV 1003, and Sonata in C Major BWV 1005 on June 8 in the Nikolaikirche, and Sonata in G Minor BWV 1001, Partita in B Minor BWV 1002, and Partita in D Minor BWV 1004 on June 10 in the Thomaskirche. On the first evening, he positioned himself deep in the sanctuary of Nikolaikirche, which was quite unexpected given the great distance between performer and audience. Yet he projected his sound so well into the nave that it turned out to be a powerful and commanding performance. His technical security seemed unmatched, and he appeared in total command on the stage. Even though it may displease HIP believers, particu-



5. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

larly with regard to phrasing and articulation, the overall control of tones at all registers in the broadest sense was awe-inspiring. For an encore, he played BWV 1002/7. On the second evening, he played again from deep in the sanctuary, just beside the grave of J. S. Bach, almost as if conversing with and playing for the composer. The opening movement of BWV 1001 was taken thoughtfully and



6. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

reflectively with good projection in all registers of the instrument. The encore was BWV 1005/3. (Photo 6.)

The “Ausgezeichnet” is a long-established series that offers a platform for emerging young artists. I went to one on June 9 in Alte Börse where gambist Vanessa Hunt Russell, winner of the Köthen International Viola da gamba Competition Bach Abel 2021, presented a program of chamber music with two friends, Stephen Moran (viola da gamba) and Rafaela Salgado (harpsichord, portative organ). It comprised Bach’s three Gamba sonatas BWV 1027–1029, two by Telemann TWV 41: e5 and 41: a6, and a pair of pieces entitled “Following Bach” by Rodney Sharman, which is based on a four-note motif “Gute Nacht” from Bach’s motet *Jesu meine Freude*, exploring that work’s melancholic mood, colors, and textures. Russell shined with Bach’s slow movements, which she executed cleanly and communicated lovingly. Both of Telemann’s sonatas were played delightfully with expressivity and intelligence.

For many visitors, the most curious event this year must have been the collaboration between the Monteverdi Choir with members of the English Baroque Soloists and Isabelle Faust as solo violinist. They presented a joint program entitled “Motets and Partitas in Dialogue” on June 9 at the Nikolaikirche. Originally, the Monteverdi Choir was to be directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, but we were notified in late April that he was to be replaced by Jonathan Sells, and that the advertised program was to be expanded. The concert was split in two sessions with an hour-long break in between. In the first half of the concert, we were presented with two independent and alternating strands tracing the roots of Bach’s work in the motet and partita. The Monteverdi Choir kicked off with the motet *Unser Leben ist ein Schatten* by Johann Bach (1604–1673), for six-part choir and three-part echo choir. Some of the melodic lines included complex ornamental figures which the choir executed exquisitely. Faust responded with Nicola Matteis Jr’s Fantasy in A Minor, which she played from the middle of the sanctuary, about ten meters behind where the Monteverdi Choir was stationed. From this position, her sound for me was too distant to be appreciable. (But she moved around

the building between her pieces, so the audience had a fair chance to hear some of her offerings clearly.) In this manner, the performers took turns presenting their own programs. The rest of the Monteverdi Choir’s offerings were: Johann Michael Bach’s motets *Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr* for five-part choir and continuo and his *Halt, was du hast* for two four-part choirs and continuo; Johann Christoph Bach’s motets *Der Gerechte, ob er gleich zu zeitlich stirbt* for five-part choir and continuo, *Fürchte dich nicht* for five-part choir and continuo, and *Ich weiß, dass mein Erlöser lebt* for five-part choir and continuo; J. S. Bach’s motets *Ich lasse dich nicht* BWV 1165 for two four-part choirs and continuo; *Komm, Jesu, komm* BWV 229 for two four-part choirs and continuo, and *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf* BWV 226 for two four-part choirs and continuo. The remainder of Faust’s program included the prelude from Johann Georg Pisendel’s Sonata in A Minor; *Preludio – Passagio rotto – Fantasia* from Nicola Matteis’s *Arie diverse, libro secondo*; *Passacaglia* in G Minor from H. I. F. von Biber’s *Rosary Sonatas*; J. S. Bach, *Adagio and Fugue* from Sonata in G Minor BWV 1001. After moving around the space, Faust positioned herself in the center of the nave for Bach’s music as if symbolically completing her journey.

For the second half of the concert, Faust first stood with the Monteverdi Choir and led off with pairs of movements from Bach’s Partita in B Minor BWV 1002. The Monteverdi Choir responded with *Jesu, meine Freude* BWV 227 broken into thirds and performed in alternation with Faust. For the final dialogue, Faust performed the Partita in D Minor BWV 1004 in entirety from the middle of nave again, projecting her delicate and deeply moving rendition of it. The Monteverdi Choir responded with *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* BWV 225, again in its entirety, which the ecstatic audience appreciated immensely. The encore was Johann Christoph Bach’s *Es ist nun aus mit meinem Leben* with Faust joining the second and fourth verses, a poignant close to this unique adventure. (Photo 7.)



7. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

Andreas Staier was this year's recipient of the Bach Medal of the City of Leipzig. The award ceremony took place in the Altes Rathaus on June 14, which immediately followed the recipient's recital there. After playing D'Anglebert's *Prélude non-mensuré* in D Minor, *Chaconne en Rondeau* and *Tombeau de M. de Chambonnières*, and Georg Muffat's *Passacaglia* in G Minor, Steier chose Bach's *Partita* in D Major BWV 828, the brightest and most colorful set within *Clavierübung I*, to mark the occasion. Following the presentation of the Bach Medal, Steier's note of thanks seemed too short; but he quickly turned to his instrument to express his 'thank you' with the sarabande from the fifth French Suite. It was a wonderful occasion acknowledging his contributions to our appreciation of Bach's music.

The Goldberg Variations BWV 988 is an annual feature, this year presented by harpsichordist Christine Schornsheim on June 14 in the Salles de Pologne. Before playing the variations proper, she played the first eight bass notes as appearing in BWV 1087, then with added chords with an improvised tune. After playing the set of variations, she resumed the improvisation, this time reversing the process, first she arpeggiated eight chords, then played eight notes in the bass. This makeshift symmetrical frame in fact provided an elevated platform for Schornsheim to establish a natural flow in her performance, which was filled with elegance, with each phrase gracefully finessed. It was like feeling a gently flowing stream.

On June 15 at the Paulinum, I attended a concert of solo cantatas for soprano with Elisabeth Breuer as soloist and Reinhard

Goebel directing the Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum. The main items on the program were Bach's cantatas for soprano *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut* BWV 199.1 and *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* BWV 51; but we also heard four instrumental works featuring chorale melodies (or psalm tunes) that were treated in various ways. They were arranged in chronological order so that we might be able to trace how the genre of chorale variations evolved. The concert opened with Johann Sommer's *Der 8. Psalm* for three violins and continuo, which was serene and sounded most distant from Bach's compositional idioms and styles. It was followed by Johann Schelle's canon on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* for six instruments and Johann Fischer's *Lamento* on *Herzlich tut mich verlangen* for strings and continuo, each work showing the temporal progress made towards Bach's complex chorale preludes. The second half was occupied by Bach's works. Between Bach's two cantatas, we heard the sinfonia to part two of *Die Elenden sollen essen* BWV 75, which is a recomposition of the chorale that concludes part one of the same cantata. With the last number, Cantata 51, Breuer completely stole the concert. In the opening movement, she demonstrated how to 'shout for joy to God!' by singing with breathtaking power and conviction. In the following recitative, the narrative of story was delivered with greater nuance. The next aria became a masterclass in how to tackle long melismatic passages with tactful breath control. And finally, the "alleluia" section of the final chorale firmly sealed Breuer's reputation as one of the most



8. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes



9. Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

sought-after sopranos today. This was a memorable performance, and one of the highlights of this year's Bachfest for me. (Photo 8.)

The most memorable chamber music concert was presented at a late-night event on June 15 in the Bundesverwaltungsgericht. Chouchane Siranossian (violin – Artist in Residence), Daniel Rosin (violoncello), and Leonardo García Alarcón (harpsichord) presented a varied program of violin sonatas by Georg Muffat, Carlo Farina, Andreas Anton Schmelzer, Johann Jakob Walther and J. S. Bach, which was entitled “Bach before Bach.” It opened with Muffat’s Sonata in D Major, which was approached boldly. They took risks openly; but still the ensemble remained incredibly tight while taking tempi that fluctuated naturally and maintained a graceful atmosphere throughout. With Schmelzer’s “Victori der Christen” from the Sonata in A Minor, boldness and even roughness were tactfully exploited as expressive idioms, and in Walther’s Passacaglia in D Minor I was overwhelmed by their delicate handling of fieriness and calmness. The program ended with Bach’s Sonata in G Major BWV 1021 in which the harpsichord’s graceful delicacy in the Adagio and the breathtaking ensemble in the Vivace were of particular note.

The closing concert was reserved for the Mass in B Minor BWV 232. This year it was given by Philippe Herreweghe with his

Collegium Vocale Gent. His approach was a natural dialogue with the music—neither meddling artificially with phrasing, tempi or dynamics, nor allowing excessive egos from performers. The building and releasing of tension were managed innately at sequential passages with terraced dynamics. Little was done to enhance the colors and shades of Bach’s bold and quirky chromatic harmonies at both the end of the “Crucifixus” and the early section of “Et expecto,” which I felt left something missing. There were moments of occasional untidiness in choral numbers, such as the fast melismatic lines in the “Gloria,” as well as a lack of power and energy in “Cum Sancto Spiritu” and “Et resurrexit;” both, incidentally, are driven by the polonaise rhythm. But after the *Credo*, I felt I was totally at home in the acoustic space and Herreweghe’s rendition. In the “Sanctus” I clearly sensed a vision of angels flying around in the textural layers of sound. The dialogue between the tenor (Guy Cutting) and flute obbligato (Patrick Beuckels) in the “Benedictus” was heart-melting. Alex Potter sang “Agnus Dei” beautifully. Then came the most memorable “Dona nobis pacem,” gradually and assuredly unfolding a prayer for peace. Here Herreweghe did exploit the power of the harmony, using this to express the message of the Mass blissfully and so movingly. But

overall, it was a clean and sincere rendition to remember. (Photo 9.)

SCHOLARLY SESSIONS

The researchers of the Bach-Archiv Leipzig gave a series of lectures in the Blauer Salon from Monday, June 10 to Thursday, June 13, which were well attended. Peter Wollny took the first slot on Monday. Entitled “Hymns—A Springboard for Experimentation: The Chorale in Protestant Church Music from Luther to Bach,” the lecture took us through a musicological journey to examine a selection of composers and their works from Johann Walter to J. S. Bach, to see how the musical style of liturgical vocal works developed, and how Bach seemingly found an idea to make a new cycle of chorale cantatas while composing BWV 73 in January 1724. On Tuesday, Christine Blanken explored the theme “The Chorales in Bach’s Keyboard Music,” examining the history of pedalboards to contextualize Bach’s pedal parts, one of the most important characteristics of his organ works. On Wednesday, Bernd Koska spoke on “Bach’s Original Performance Material of the Chorale Cantatas Cycle—and What We Can Learn From It.” And on Thursday, Wolfram Enßlin and Nadine Quenouille did a presentation on “Forschungsportal BACH—Innovative Documentation of the Life and Work History of the Bach Musical Family from the Beginning until 1810,” their new twenty-five-year-long project to create a comprehensive online resource for Bach research for the future.

Bach Network also presented three panel discussions on June 15 in the same venue. The first, chaired by Noelle Heber, explored the theme “Analytical Perspectives on the Bach Cantatas (or, How We Got into this Kind of Analysis, and How to Get out)” from the angles of music analysis (Daniel R. Melamed), theology (Ruth Tatlow), and performance practice (John Butt). They collectively highlighted some fascinating issues for us to reconsider and explore further. The second session, chaired by Susan McCormick, focused on “Church Cantatas after Bach” with four panel members: Stephen A. Crist focusing on the cantatas of Johann Ludwig Krebs; Andrew Frampton on cantatas of Johann Friedrich Agricola; Gregor Richter on Georg Anton Benda’s cantata cycles; and Magdalena Auenmüller on the cantatas of Wilhelm Friedrich Ernst Bach. Through their respective reports we felt a sense of continuity from Bach to the next generation, as well as how their research would help us to broaden our understanding of Bach, his works, and his legacy.

My overall experience with this year’s Bachfest was very positive. I particularly enjoyed those programs which so excellently and imaginatively explored the themes relating to the chorale and its legacy. It also seems incredible that the entire annual cycle of Bach’s chorale cantatas was presented without stifling the traditional events or thwarting other innovative features that comprise the heart of Bachfest Leipzig. Next year’s Bachfest takes place from June 12 to 22, 2025, with the motto “Transformation.”

BACH:

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Special Issue: Essays in Honor of Joshua Rifkin

Guest Editors: Ellen Exner, Michael Marissen,
Daniel R. Melamed

Journal Editor: Christina Fuhrmann

Bettina Varwig: Bach’s Hand(s)

Derek Stauff: The Organ in J. S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*

Markus Rathey: Always Problems with the Passion: A Contested Passion Performance in 1739 and the History of the Donkey

Daniel R. Melamed: The “Continuo: pro Bassono e Violoncello” Part for *In allen meinen Taten* BWV 97

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Bach in the World: Music, Society, and Representation in Bach’s Cantatas by Markus Rathey
Review by Mary Greer

Bach’s Art of Fugue and Musical Offering by Matthew Dirst
Review by David Ledbetter



REVIEW: BACH, GOLDBERG VARIATIONS REIMAGINED

BRIAN HODGES
(Boise State University)

Bach, Goldberg Variations Reimagined, Rachel Podger, Chad Kelly, Brecon Baroque. Channel Classics, CCSSA44923, 2023, 1 compact disc.

Often considered a high mark among J.S. Bach's oeuvre, the Goldberg Variations BWV 988, is a towering achievement. Consisting of an aria and thirty variations, in true Bach fashion it covers the full spectrum of keyboard technique, style, and ingenuity. Its origin is shrouded in mystery, inflated somewhat by an extravagant story told by one of Bach's first biographers, Johann Nikolaus Forkel. To this day, this work remains a standard for keyboardists, and has shown up in all manners of pop culture in addition to the classical concert hall.

In the centuries following its publication in 1741, there have been numerous transcriptions for varying combinations of instruments—for two pianos, organ, marimba, harp, accordion, woodwind ensemble, saxophone ensemble, string trio, and string orchestra, to name but a few. Did the world need one more reimagining of this work? The answer, as it turns out, is a resounding yes. In her new recording, baroque violinist Rachel Podger, with the help of harpsichordist/composer Chad Kelly and her ensemble Brecon Baroque, have created a version for chamber ensemble, and it is well worth the listen.

In lockdown during the pandemic, Podger began dreaming of new projects, and had the idea to look at the Goldberg Variations anew. As a violinist, she had played the string trio version, and had dabbled at playing the original keyboard part. Wanting a deeper understanding of the work, she dreamt up a fresh new version, but not one that simply relied heavily on the violin. Because she had performed many of Bach's cantatas and other large-scale choral works throughout her career, she was able to think of the work beyond its initial construct, to involve multiple instruments. "I always imagined a kind of version where you could explore different colors and different qualities of different



instruments" (Martin Cullingford, host, "Bach's Goldberg Variations Reimagined with Rachel Podger and Chad Kelly," Gramophone Classical Music Podcast, Oct. 27, 2023).

For further assistance, she reached out to Kelly, who most recently had done a transcription for her of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor for solo violin, which can be found on her stellar *Tutta Sola* album from 2022. Through a series of conversations, they worked out a vision for the work, which encouraged Kelly to think outside the box. He said that he was interested in "getting to the heart, the essence of the music, being respectful to the music, but shedding new light on it."

(Channel Classics, "Bach: Goldberg Variations Reimagined" by Rachel Podger, Brecon Baroque and Chad Kelly [Video], October 12, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cUAH6iTdc8>). His transcription involves violin, harpsichord, cello, viola, violone, flute, a pair of oboes, and a bassoon.

Even after finishing the work, during rehearsals, Kelly would hear something, become freshly inspired, and make changes on the spot. He kept a quote from musicologist Bruce Haynes in mind throughout the process, "Bach valued the distinctive qualities of each instrument [and] wrote with friendship and affection for all of them." (Chad Kelly, liner notes for *Bach, Goldberg Variations Reimagined*)

For those who are familiar with the solo keyboard version, hearing this music played on this variety of instruments may create the feeling of hearing the piece for the first time. Set within the varying timbres of the respective instruments, the musical lines reveal themselves and come alive in ways not possible on a keyboard.

We begin, of course, with the famous Aria, with the violin playing the melody, accompanied only by the harpsichord. Podger effortlessly spins out the gorgeous cantabile melody, adding subtle, unobtrusive ornaments on the repeats. It is simple, elegant, and sets us off on a beautiful journey.

In the jaunty first variation, the thematic material is split

between the violin and cello, each voice essentially taking over one hand of the original keyboard part, chasing each other around in the counterpoint. Cellist Alex Rolton more than matches up to Podger's bravura playing here.

Variation 2 has the woodwinds join in with a lovely duet between the oboe and bassoon, the violin playing bits of encouraging and supporting descant throughout. Immediately, we go into Variation 3, which Bach subtitles *canone all'unisono*, the first of the canons he sprinkles throughout, taking the form of a lovely trio between the flute, cello, and violin. The cello dovetails with the final cadence and charges energetically into Variation 4, with an ensemble of cello, viola, oboe, bassoon, and violin. This then leads into Variation 5, with a virtuosic Podger taking on the perpetual-motion-like melody, accompanied by an impish bassoon. In the second phrase, the violin switches to the accompanimental role, with the oboe taking the melody.

After the breathless sixteenth notes of the previous variation, we get the second canon in Variation 6. Heavier forces are at play here, with the violins in one duet, with the cello, bassoon, and harpsichord forging the other line. We're suddenly whisked off into Variation 7, which is a world away, in the form of a buoyant gigue performed by the flute and bassoon, mordents volleying back and forth. The strings are back for Variation 8, in a small trio for violin, viola and basso continuo.

The third canon follows in Variation 9 in a charming contrapuntal dance between violin, oboe, and cello. Without pause, we go directly into Variation 10 Fughetta, with the instruments paired off for each voice: cello and violone; bassoon and viola; violin and flute; and a pair of oboes.

Variation 11 takes the form of a duet between the violin and flute, the two dancing lightly and gracefully around each other. It's a beautiful choice of instruments to render this variation. The fourth canon arrives next, in Variation 12, with a viola partnering with the violin against the basso continuo. It's a particularly striking effect, having the darker viola sound and the bass instruments come in after their absence in the eleventh variation.

Now, with Variation 13, we are in somewhat of a plaintive, pastoral scene, with the flute back in, set against the viola and cello, the bassoon sneaking in to fill out the sound.

Variation 14 brings the energy back up with a vigorous duet between the two violins, almost like two dragonflies darting to and fro among the reeds.

Canon 5 arrives in Variation 15 with the added title of *In Moto Contrario, Andante*. Flute, oboe, and cello take the various lines. The whole character of this variation, despite the presence of the three players, feels lonely and questioning, the flute drifting off into the ether in the final notes.

Variation 16 lunges in a different direction, in the form of a French overture with the whole ensemble weighing in. The swung rhythms in the second half add a joyous and ebullient spirit to the proceedings. Variation 17 is another contrast with sparse strings

flying around without the net of the basso continuo. It's a sweet and magical rendition of this variation.

The sixth canon arrives in Variation 18 and continues the cantabile mood from the previous variation, here with oboe, flute, cello, and harpsichord.

Variation 19 has a dance-like swing to it, brought out by the two violins, cello, bassoon, and harpsichord.

It's a fuller ensemble on deck for Variation 20, with the entire group passing around the triplets back and forth in a dizzying array. It is incredibly impressive and exhilarating, with virtuosic playing from everyone.

The clouds come out for Variation 21, which is the seventh canon. The viola and oboe trade off mournful lines accompanied by the dark basso continuo. They segue immediately into Variation 22 titled *alla breve* with the bassoon, oboes, cello, violin, and flute overlapping each of the lines. Listen carefully as Kelly adds some wonderful harpsichord flourishes on the repeats.

Variation 23 has the quality of a Vivaldian storm from his *Quattro Stagioni* with ferocious outbursts from the strings flying up and down like flashes of lightning. It's a fantastic and stunning effect. The calm after the storm comes in Variation 24 in the eighth canon, with lilting woodwinds and viola accompaniment.

Variation 25, marked *Adagio*, is the emotional center of the work, with aching chromaticisms lamenting throughout. Kelly sets this for just the strings. Even with the group of strings—senza harpsichord—the variation still feels set in a desolate, vulnerable landscape. As balm for the mournful, Variation 26 comes with rays of sunshine in soaring triplets. They prod and urge the music and mood ever upwards, pulling us out of the depths of the preceding *Adagio*.

A playful cello and violin take over in Variation 27, trading good-natured mischievous gestures back and forth in the form of the ninth canon. Heading directly into Variation 28, the instruments sustain passages of trills, while the woodwinds add punctuation above and below. It's a fun, jocular pairing of variations.

With an introduction of quavering strings, Variation 29 soon gives way for Kelly to take center stage on the harpsichord in cascading passages. This is followed by the famous quodlibet with everyone joining in the rousing folk-tune gathering. We then come full-circle to the reprise of the opening aria, only this time, it's performed by the entire ensemble.

This chamber version, with different instruments taking on different lines and roles throughout, brings out novel and exciting aspects to this well-worn piece. Some might hesitate at the word "reimagining" so prominently displayed in the title of this recording, but rest assured, in the hands of these magnificent players, not to mention the inventive transcription by Kelly, the Goldberg Variations sound fresh and alive in an unexpected way.

Throughout, the playing is of the highest quality. As to be expected, Podger is a phenomenal leader and soloist, but she

generously allows the stellar musicians of Brecon Baroque (Huw Daniel, violin; Jane Rogers, viola; Alexander Rolton, cello; Jay Spencer, violone; Katy Bircher, flute; Daniel Lanthier and Leo Duarte, oboes; and Inga Klaucke, bassoon) to have their moments and shine. This is a top-notch ensemble.

Despite the fact that Bach may never have intended this work for anything but a solo keyboard, it's exciting to hear this well-traveled work presented in a new way. Highly recommended.

Announcements

AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY ELECTION RESULTS:

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ABS Virtual Book Club

The ABS is pleased to announce the launch of a members-only virtual book club in Fall 2024, hosted by Carrie Tipton. Our first book club pick is David Schulenberg's recent Bach biography for Oxford University Press (<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/bach-9780190936303/>), enriched by its companion website (<https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780190936303/>). The book club will meet twice late this fall via Zoom: once, on **Friday October 25 at 1 p.m. Eastern**, with Dr. Schulenberg, a conversation that will include pre-screened questions from book club members, and once on our own to wrap up our discussion of the book. Both meetings will be hosted/moderated by Carrie Tipton. Zoom meeting links will be sent later this fall, along with the date and time for our second meeting; to get these updates and to participate in the meeting, email tipton@americanbachsociety.org.

There are several ways to obtain the book. Borrow it from a university or public library, or ask the librarian to purchase the book or get it on loan from another institution. The book is also available for purchase in hardback from Oxford University Press, from other online vendors such as Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and Abebooks, or from your local bookseller. Some online vendors also offer it in ebook format.

Although not necessary, while reading Schulenberg's biography participants might consider getting a copy of Robert and Traute Marshall's *Exploring the World of J. S. Bach: A Traveler's Guide* (<https://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/?id=p081767>) to see images of places where Bach lived, worked, and visited.

Xiaoyu Liu is a third year PhD student in the Music Department at Queen's University Belfast writing a dissertation on J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Her research aims to explore new perspectives on the performance of this music, combining postmodern theory with early music interpretation.

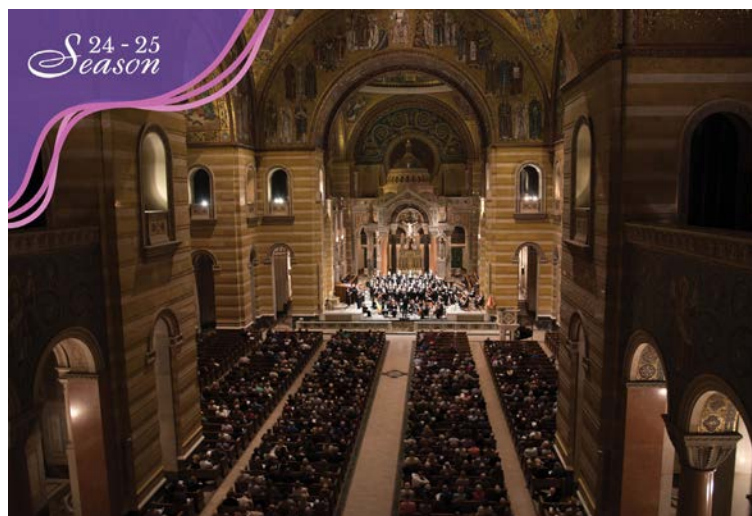
To advance this research, Liu is looking for volunteers who are willing to participate in an interview. By conducting interviews, she hopes to discuss issues around the performance practice of the WTC, focusing on how different musicians interpret this composition today. Volunteers will have the opportunity to share their interpretations and performance approaches, contributing to a deeper understanding of this work from different perspectives.

Each interview lasts about one hour. Performers can also complement their explanations of the WTC with an optional short performance. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed, but the performance will be video-recorded. Also, the interview can be conducted face-to-face or online as each interviewee chooses.

This project has already been approved by the university's ethics committee. If you have any further questions or are interested in this topic, please feel free to contact Liu at (xliu66@qub.ac.uk).

Thank you for your time and interest.

The Bach Society of Saint Louis (BSSL) Executive Director **Melissa Payton** announces its 84th concert season. The highlights include the opening concert, Rachmaninoff *Vespers*, presented in collaboration with St. Louis Cathedral Concerts; the annual Christmas Candlelight Concert, a St. Louis tradition since 1951 at 560 Music Center; Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, a powerful concert that evokes a profound sense of peace and reflection; and Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, one of the most celebrated works in classical music. Tickets for Rachmaninoff *Vespers* are available online at bachsociety.org.



Member News

Ruta Bloomfield contributed works by Tisdale, Byrd, and Peerson from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book to the opening Gala Board Concert at the June 2024 annual conference of the Historical Keyboard Society of North America in Williamsburg, VA. She also presented a lecture-recital called “Bach’s Bible: Cultural, Spiritual, and Musical Impact,” illustrated by performances of the Fugue in C-sharp Minor from WTCI and *Dies sind die heil’ge zehn Gebot’* from *Clavier-Übung* III.

The open access comprehensive digital edition of **Jim Brokaw’s** translation of **Hans-Joachim Schulze’s** book on Bach’s cantatas is now live.

Rebecca Cypess has begun a new position as the Mordecai D. Katz and Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences at **Yeshiva University**.

Kinuyo Hashimoto’s Japanese ensemble, the Soft Bach Society Yamaguchi, was featured in the documentary film “Living Bach.” The film, a musical journey around the world that explores the unifying power of Bach’s music and features the Bachfest motto, “Bach – We are Family,” was shown in a movie theater in Germany at the Bachfest Leipzig 2024, and first shown in Yamaguchi, Japan on the anniversary of Bach’s death in 2024.

Robin Leaver is the editor of the new book: *A New Song We Now Begin: Celebrating the Half Millennium of Lutheran Hymnals 1524–2024*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024.

Mary Oleskiewicz and **David Schulenberg** participated with Georgina McKay Lodge in performances of C. P. E. Bach’s three quartets for flute, viola, and fortepiano as part of the summer 2024 Society for Historically Informed Performance series in Boston. The pro-

gram, accessible online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJRKR84X3aA>, also included W. F. Bach’s Keyboard Fantasia in E Minor (F. 20) and the first modern performance of the original four-movement version of Quantz’s flute sonata QV 1:Anh.43.

Russell Stinson delivered a lecture titled “The Afterlife of Bach’s Organ Works: Three Centuries of Reception” at the Eastman School of Music and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Ruben Valenzuela led the Bach Collegium San Diego (www.bachcollegiumsd.org) and the Pauliner Barockensemble at Bachfest 2024 (Leipzig). The ensemble performed three cantatas (BWV 62, 91, 121) at the Paulinum (University of Leipzig) as part of the Chorale Cantata Cycle featured at this year’s festival. Additionally, the ensemble performed two concerts of music by Schein and the Bach family in nearby Naumburg and Arnstadt.

Channan Willner’s latest publication “On Hemiolic Resonance,” which is relevant to Bach’s music, is available on his website at <http://www.channanwillner.com/online.htm>.



DIRECTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Bach Notes is published twice yearly (fall and spring) and mailed to all members and subscribers. Submissions for the Spring issue are due by 1 March. Submissions should be sent to Rebekah Franklin at bachnotes@americanbachsociety.org.

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