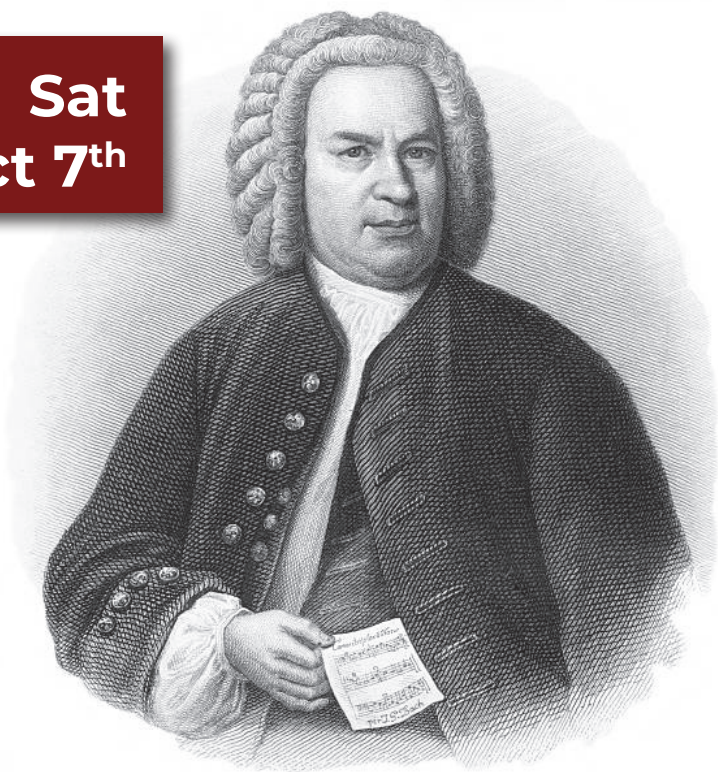


CHORAL ARTS
PHILADELPHIA
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2023-24
SEASON

IMMORTAL BACH - *Sing a New Song!*

Sat
Oct 7th



Philadelphia's Premier Choral
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2023-2024 | 41st Season

CHORAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA

Saturday, October 7, 2023, at 4PM
The Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse
1904 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Donald Meineke, Conductor
Choral Arts Philadelphia
Philadelphia Bach Collegium

Program

JOHANN S. BACH - *Singet dem Herrn*, BWV 225

KNUT NYSTEDT - *Immortal Bach*

JOHANN S. BACH - *Komm, Jesu, Komm*, BWV 229

JOHANN S. BACH - *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80



Did you know?

Choral Arts Philadelphia is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit performing arts organization and has been one of Philadelphia's leading choral ensembles since 1982.

Our dedicated board donates their time and resources without compensation. Alongside a small paid artistic and administrative staff of two, avocational musicians, and paid musicians, Choral Arts brings audiences world-class musical concerts that add to the rich tapestry of the Philadelphia cultural arts scene.

Each ticket and donation is an investment not only in this great art form but also in Philadelphia's revitalization. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to support this mission, knowing that every dollar goes toward supporting musicians and our vibrant city.

For more information on how you can **make a difference and invest in Philadelphia**, please contact Mike Hogue, Managing Director of Choral Arts Philadelphia at mhogue@choralartsphila.org.

Choral Arts Philadelphia

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About Choral Arts Philadelphia

Making music since 1982, Choral Arts Philadelphia actively participates in the region's musical community by celebrating the talents of our local professional and amateur musicians. As Philadelphia's premier chamber chorus, Choral Arts Philadelphia presents concert experiences that delight and engage the community as well as contribute to their appreciation of the repertoire. Choral Arts Philadelphia is committed to musical excellence, historically informed performance practices, and furthering the great tradition of choral music.

Under the tenure of its first artistic director, Sean Deibler, the chorus (formerly Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia) regularly partnered with the Philadelphia Orchestra in concert and on recordings. Since then, Choral Arts has built a significant reputation and artistic presence in Philadelphia as a symphonic choir, and has maintained a particularly strong commitment to exploring areas of the choral repertoire outside of the central canon.

Deibler's successor, Donald Nally, added greatly to the chorus's local and national successes that culminated in receiving the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence from Chorus America and Philadelphia Magazine's Best of Philly Award during its 20th anniversary season. In our distinguished 35 year history, the choir has performed over 300 works by more than 100 composers.

In 2004, Matthew Glandorf was appointed the new artistic director, and the ensemble started building its reputation as a premier early music ensemble. Changing our name to Choral Arts Philadelphia in 2009, signaled a new direction as the ensemble has been transformed into a chamber size choir to achieve greater vocal flexibility to perform both the early and modern music repertoire.

Donald Meineke, Artistic Director



Donald Meineke is a conductor, organist, tenor, and maintains an active career as a recitalist, lecturer, conductor, and singer. Originally from Houston, TX, he studied at Indiana University and The University of Texas at Austin and has held prominent positions in Chicago, Massachusetts, and New York City. As the new Artistic Director of Choral Arts Philadelphia, he will bring his passion for choral music which transforms and inspires through musical storytelling and connection to the human condition.

An ambitious builder of programs, Dr. Meineke is the Co-founder and Artistic Director of Ensemble VIII, Austin's premier vocal ensemble for Renaissance and Baroque music. In 2021, he was appointed Director of Music and Organist for the historic Church of the Holy Trinity (Episcopal) on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, known fondly as the birthplace of the Christmas carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

He served as Cantor of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City where he led the twice Grammy®-nominated Bach Choir and Players in the internationally renowned Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity series. Hailed as a "fresh voice on New York's musical scene" (The New Yorker), his Bach Choir's recording of Samuel Capricornus' Jubilus Bernhardt, in collaboration with string ensemble ACRONYM, received critical acclaim and was on Colorado Public Radio's December 2017 "Top 5 Must Have New Recordings" list. His recordings of Capricornus and Bach Vespers have been featured on classical music stations nationally and internationally, including KMFA's Ancient Voices and WXXI's With Heart and Voice, and he has appeared as a guest artist on Columbia University-WKCR's Bachfest.

Dr. Meineke was the Co-Founder and Director of the 2014 Early Music Festival: NYC which featured over thirty concerts by dozens of local and national ensembles to critical acclaim. He served as a choirmaster for the internationally revered conductor and Bach expert, Helmuth Rilling, preparing choirs across Europe and South America for performances of the major choral and orchestral works by Bach, Mozart, and others.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

When pondering what the repertoire of the opening concert for the 41st Season of Choral Arts Philadelphia should be, the choice was clear from the start: vocal music of Johann Sebastian Bach. For nearly 20 years, Choral Arts Philadelphia (CAP) has championed the music of J. S. Bach unlike any other organization in Philadelphia with historically informed performance practices and period instruments. For many of us in this organization, Bach is the sun in which all the other musical planets and stars orbit. No matter how far out we may reach musically, it is the music of Bach that remains our central axis.

The choice of the two motets *Singet dem Herrn ein Neues Leid* (Sing to the Lord a New Song) and *Komm, Jesu, Komm* (Come, Jesus, Come) together with Bach's Cantata 80 *Ein fest Burg* (A Mighty Fortress) was a deeply personal and intentional choice for me with both obvious and more subtle meanings. It is with a great sense of responsibility and gratitude that I receive the passed torch as Artistic Director of CAP from Matthew Glandorf. Matt's leadership and vision for Choral Arts over the years has made it the fine ensemble that it is today. It is on the shoulders of this great tradition that we continue to build, grow, and reach for new heights of musical excellence.

Singet dem Herrn is perhaps one of the most vocally athletic pieces Bach composed and is undoubtedly the most impressive of the motets. We do not know the exact circumstances for which Bach composed this motet, though the second movement implies a funeral and scholars have suggested about a half-dozen worthy events around 1726. It is cast in three movements organized like a Baroque concerto: fast-slow-fast. The first movement is a prelude and fugue, which the conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner has called "the most secular, dance-impregnated vocal music Bach ever wrote." The ensemble is divided into two choirs: one presents instrumental filigree while the other proclaims repeatedly "Singet!" The fugue begins with a reference to the children of Zion ("Die Kinder Zion"). Bach praises "with dance" ("mit Reihen") with twirls and pirouettes in a long melisma of many notes on one syllable. Mention of "Pauken" (timpani) brings steady arpeggios to depict the drums. The "Singet!" chords interrupt the fugue periodically, sometimes tossed back and forth between the two choirs.

The second movement pits the two choirs in opposition in a style brought to Germany from the Venetian polychoral masters a hundred years earlier. Bach has modernized the tradition by assigning the two choirs very different types of music. One group sings a gentle harmonization of a chorale telling of God's mercy to our weak human selves. Between each phrase of that text, the other singers interrupt with music Bach called "aria" that is more rhapsodic, lyrical, and instrumentally conceived, repeating pleas of: "God, continue to care for us."

Another prelude and fugue follow as the final movement. In the prelude, the choirs are again antiphonal, taking turns with the musical material. The basses often initiate each choir's takeover with their premature entrances of "lobet" ("praise"). The two choirs merge together for the final four-voice fugue, also begun by the basses. The energy builds with increasingly demanding vocal acrobatics until the sopranos arrive to a top B-flat - the ultimate shout of ecstasy - after which Bach promptly shuts down the motet with a peremptory cadence.

While *Singet dem Herrn* opens the concert showing off the musicians athletic abilities, Nystedt's *Immortal Bach*, which quotes the first two phrases of Bach's setting of the chorale *Komm, Süßer Tod* (Come, Sweet Death), serves as an aural palette cleanser. The ethereal treatment of the text and harmonies give way to the haunting first three statements of *Komm, Jesu, Komm*. While there is no evidence of the precise occasion for which Bach composed his musical setting of Paul Thymich's *Komm, Jesu, komm*, the text and its history indicate that it was probably for a funeral service. This was Bach's only motet not based on a Biblical text or a traditional chorale. It survives to us today thanks to a single copy made by a student, Christopher Nichelmann, who left the Thomasschule in 1731 or 1732, thereby providing a latest possible date for the work's composition.

In the first verse of the text, after the opening invocations, Bach immediately employs one of the unifying features of the entire motet: a series of interlocking suspensions, in which one voice sustains a pitch from the previous chord, only belatedly falling into a pitch that fits in the

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM cont.

new chord. Bach could hardly have thought of a more apt way to depict how weary ("müde") life has become. The bitter path of life ("der saure Weg") is dramatically and dissonantly depicted in a sudden drop of a diminished seventh. For the final two lines of this stanza, the meter shifts to a lilting 6/8, a dancing depiction of the joy that Christ supplies as the right path ("der rechte Weg"). Suspensions abound as Bach tosses the music back and forth between the two choirs.

Bach's setting of the second stanza is more condensed, as the two choirs combine forces in what is essentially a chorale. Again, we see the title of "Aria", here referring to an alternate definition of that term as a strophic, homophonic choral work in which the sopranos maintain the melody. Once again Bach embellishes the word "Weg" ("path"), extending the text's final line with a joyful yet subdued optimism in an eternal rest.

So often the cantatas we come to know and love actually have their genesis as something else. Bach's *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* BWV 80 is based on his earlier Weimar cantata *Alles, was von Gott geboren* BWV 80a, which was written for the Third Sunday in Lent in 1715. Since Leipzig forbade concertized music during Lent, Bach was unable to use the original cantata. Because the original source of BWV 80a has been lost, the origin of *Ein feste Burg* can only be imperfectly reconstructed. There is evidence to suggest that the original opening chorus of *Ein feste Burg* was a simple chorale and that the thrilling opening chorus known to us today came at a much later date, possibly in the 1730's when another similar chorus was written for Cantata 14.

The adaptation of the original Lenten cantata to form the Reformation cantata was not difficult to do since two of the four stanzas of Lutheran chorale were already set in the earlier cantata: the simple 4-part chorale and the bass aria with an instrumental statement of the chorale. Thus the revised order is a newly composed opening chorus for stanza 1, the bass aria with oboe and an added soprano singing the text of the 2nd stanza, a newly composed verse for stanza 3 (movement 5), and finally a revised text of the simple chorale to form the 4th stanza. This reworked cantata now incorporates all four stanzas of Luther's chorale along with some slight adaptations of Franck's original libretto for the arias to better fit the theme of the Reformation rather than Lent.

The splendid opening chorus represents a high point of Bach's chorale based vocal music. Doubled by strings, the choir sings a chorale "motet" in a fugal exposition. The unison oboes (an octave above the choir) and low continuo instruments (and octave below the choir) form a strict canon with one another in an unaltered chorale melody. As in Cantata 77, this treatment of the chorale at the highest and lowest pitch serves as a symbol of God's orbit of power embracing the entire universe.

Translations

Singet dem Herrn, BWV 225

Johann S. Bach (1685-1750)

1.
*Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
die Gemeinde der Heiligen sollen ihn loben.
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.
Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich über ihrem Könige,
sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihem;
mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.*

2. ARIA (Choir I); CHORALE (Choir II)

*Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet
Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
über seine junge Kinderlein,
so tut der Herr uns allen,
so wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.
Er kennt das arm Gemächte,
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.
Gleich wie das Gras vom Rechen,
ein Blum und fallend Laub.
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
so ist es nicht mehr da,
drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
so wirst du's ferner machen.
Also der Mensch vergehet,
sein End, das ist ihm nah.
Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
auf dich und deine Huld verläßt.*

3.
*Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit.
Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn.
Halleluja!*

TEXT: *Nun lob' mein Seele* by Johann Gramann (1487–1541), Psalm 149: 1-3, Psalm 150:2,6
TRANSLATION: Tobin Schmuck

Komm, Jesu, Komm, BWV 229

*Komm, süßer Tod, komm sel'ge Ruh!
Komm, führe mich in Friede.*

*Komm, Jesu, komm, Mein Leib ist müde,
Die Kraft verschwindt je mehr und mehr,
Ich sehne mich Nach deinem Friede;
Der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!
Komm, ich will mich dir ergeben;
Du bist der rechte Weg,
die Wahrheit und das Leben.*

*Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände
Und sage, Welt, zu guter Nacht!
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende,
Ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,
Weil Jesus ist und bleibt
Der wahre Weg zum Leben.*

TEXT: Paul Thymich 1684/1697 TRANSLATION: Pamela Dellal

1.
Sing to the Lord a new song,
the assembly of saints shall praise him.
Let Israel rejoice in him who made her.
Let the children of Zion be glad in their king,
they shall praise his name in the dance;
with timbrel and with harps they shall play for him.

2. (chorale is shown in **bold** text)
Just as a father has compassion
God, accept us furthermore,
for his young, little children
so does the Lord treat us, the poor,
so we fear him purely, like children.
He recognizes poor humanity,
God knows we are but dust,
for without you there is nothing done
toward any of our concerns.
Just like grass from a rake,
a blossom or a fallen leaf.
The wind simply blows it about
and it is there no more.

Thus be our shield and light,
and lest our hopes deceive us,
you will continue to do so.
So too the human passes away,
his ending is nigh.
Blessed be the one, who fast and firm
surrenders himself to you and your grace.

3.
Praise the Lord for his acts,
praise him in his great splendor!
Let all that has breath praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

Johann S. Bach

Come, sweet death, come blessed peace! Come,
lead me to tranquility.

Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary,
My strength fails me more and more,
I am longing for your peace;
The bitter way is becoming too difficult for me!
Come, I shall give myself to you; You
are the right way,
the truth and the life.

Therefore I put myself in your hands
And bid goodnight to the world!
If my life's course hastens onto the end,
My soul is then well-prepared.
It will rise up to be with its creator
For Jesus is and remains
The true way to life.

Translations cont.

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80

Johann S. Bach

1. Chorale

*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,
Ein gute Wehr und Waffen;
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Not,
Die uns itzt hat betroffen.
Der alte böse Feind,
Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint,
Groß Macht und viel List
Sein grausam Rüstung ist,
Auf Erd ist nicht seinsgleichen.*

Our God is a secure fortress,
a good shield and weapon;
He helps us willingly out of all troubles,
that now have stricken us.
The old, evil enemy
is earnestly bent on it,
great strength and much deceit
are his horrid armaments,
there is nothing like him on earth.

2. Bass Aria & Soprano Chorale (in bold)

*Alles, was von Gott geboren,
Ist zum Siegen auserkoren.
**Mit unsrer Macht ist nichts getan,
Wir sind gar bald verloren.
Es streit' vor uns der rechte Mann,
Den Gott selbst hat erkoren.**
Wer bei Christi Blutpanier
In der Taufe Treu geschworen,
Siegt im Geiste für und für.
**Fragst du, wer er ist?
Er heißt Jesus Christ,
Der Herre Zebaoth,
Und ist kein andrer Gott,
Das Feld muß er behalten.**
Alles, was von Gott geboren,
Ist zum Siegen auserkoren.*

Everything that is born of God
is destined for victory.
**Nothing can be done through our strength,
we are soon already lost.
The right man battles for us,
whom God himself has elected.**
Whoever is, with the bloody banner of Christ, sworn
into the fealty of baptism,
conquers in the spirit again and again.
**You ask, who is he?
He is called Jesus Christ,
the Lord of Sabaoth,
and there is no other God,
he must control the battlefield.**
Everything that is born of God
is destined for victory.

3. Bass Recitative

*Erwäge doch, Kind Gottes,
die so große Liebe,
Da Jesus sich mit seinem Blute
dir verschriebe,
Womit er dich zum Kriege wider Satans Heer
Und wider Welt, und Sünde Geworben hat!
Gib nicht in deiner Seele
dem Satan und den Lastern statt!
Laß nicht dein Herz,
Den Himmel Gottes auf der Erden,
Zur Wüste werden!
Bereue deine Schuld mit Schmerz,
Daß Christi Geist mit dir sich fest verbinde!*

Only consider, child of God,
the greatness of that love,
which Jesus himself with his blood
signed over to you,
through which he, in the war against Satan's host
and against the world and sin, has won you!
Do not make a place in your soul
for Satan and depravity!
Do not let your heart,
God's heaven on earth,
become a wasteland!
Repent your guilt with pain,
so that Christ's spirit may firmly bind itself to you!

4. Soprano Aria

*Komm in mein Herzenshaus,
Herr Jesu, mein Verlangen!
Treib Welt und Satan aus
Und laß dein Bild in mir erneuert prangen!
Weg, schnöder Sündengraus!*

Come into my heart's house,
Lord Jesus, my desire!
Drive the world and Satan out
and let your image, shine forth renewed in me!
Away, contemptible horror of sin!

Translations cont.

5. Chorale

*Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär
Und wollten uns verschlingen,
So fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr,
Es soll uns doch gelingen.
Der Fürst dieser Welt,
Wie saur er sich stellt,
Tut er uns doch nicht,
Das macht, er ist gericht',
Ein Wörtlein kann ihn fällen.*

And if the world were full of the devil
and would devour us,
even then we would not be so fearful,
we should even then succeed. T
he prince of this world,
however harsh he might be,
yet can do nothing to us, s
ince he is already judged,
a little word can topple him.

6. Tenor Recitative

*So stehe dann bei Christi blutgefärbten Fahne,
O Seele, fest
Und glaube, daß dein Haupt dich nicht verläßt,
Ja, daß sein Sieg
Auch dir den Weg zu deiner Krone bahne!
Tritt freudig an den Krieg!
Wirst du nur Gottes Wort
So hören als bewahren,
So wird der Feind gezwungen auszufahren,
Dein Heiland bleibt dein Heil!*

Then stand with Christ's bloodstained flag,
O soul, firmly
and believe that you will not lose your Leader,
indeed, that his victory will
also pave the way to your crown!
March joyfully to war!
If you only keep God's word
as you hear it,
then the enemy will be driven out forcibly,
your Savior remains your treasure!

7. Alto and Tenor Duet

*Wie selig sind doch die,
die Gott im Munde tragen,
Doch selger ist das Herz,
das ihn im Glauben trägt!
Es bleibt unbesiegt
und kann die Feinde schlagen
Und wird zuletzt gekrönt,
wenn es den Tod erlegt.*

How happy are they,
who bear God in their mouths,
yet happier is the heart
that bears him in faith!
It remains unconquered
and can strike at the enemy
and will be crowned at last,
when it conquers death.

8. Chorale

*Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn
Und kein' Dank dazu haben.
Er ist bei uns wohl auf dem Plan
Mit seinem Geist und Gaben.
Nehmen sie uns den Leib,
Gut, Ehr, Kind und Weib,
Laß fahredahin,
Sie habens kein' Gewinn;
Das Reich muß uns doch bleiben.*

They shall put his word aside
and have no consideration for it.
He is indeed beside us in the field
with his spirit and his gifts.
If they take our bodies from us,
possessions, honor, child, wife,
let them take them away,
they have no spoils;
The realm must still remain ours.

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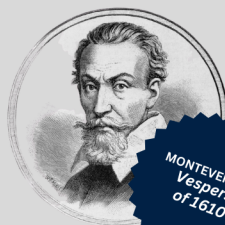
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A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

Choral Arts Philadelphia would like to extend a warm thank you to Kevin Fischer, Ken Levy, and Mike Hogue who through their work on our technology committee have paved a way for the future of Choral Arts Philadelphia!

Please note, this list includes any gift given between May 1 - October 1, 2023. If something is inaccurate, please email mhogue@choralartsphila.org immediately!

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