

J. S. BACH/E. WEITZNER  
**HEBREW PRAYER  
IN B MINOR**



Sunday, May 1, 2022 • 4:00 pm  
The Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford

**PROGRAM**

*Hebrew Prayer in B Minor, BWV 232* (ed.) Johann Sebastian Bach / Eric Weitzner

**I. K'RAVNA**

K'ravna elenu

K'ravna malkenu

—*Patricia Benjamin Doyle and  
Jennifer Lamson, sopranos*

K'ravna elenu

**II. TIFARA**

Tifara bamarom ladonai

Uva' arets tov lahasidav

Nakdish'kha, na'arits 'kha

—*Jennifer Lamson, soprano*

Node l'kha elohenu

Hu elohenu, hu avinu

—*Jennifer Ferrand-Kelly, soprano  
Mark Child, tenor*

Nose 'avon vafesha

Shome'a t'filat 'amo

—*Agnes Vojtko, mezzo-soprano*

Ki ata elohenu

—*Alexander Patrie, bass*

V'shimkha kadosh

**III. ANI MA'AMIN**

Ani ma'amin

Ani ma'amin be'emuna sh'lema

Shehabore hu yahid

—*Erica Maas Shippee, soprano*

*Pamela Frigo Johnson, mezzo-soprano*

Shehu yode a'ma'ase

Uma 'anish habore

Ken gomel tov l'shom

V'shemoshe rabenu

—*Jermaine Woodard, Jr., bass-baritone*

V'sheyavo hamashi 'ah

V'shetihye t'hiyat

**IV. KADOSH, ETC**

Kadosh

K'vodo male 'olam

Barukh haba b'shem adonai

—*Jack Pott, tenor*

K'vodo male 'olam

Adonai, nose 'avon vafesha

—*Cynthia Mellon, mezzo-soprano*

Sim 'alenu shalom

**INTERMISSION**

## CONCORA

### Soprano I

Anne Collin  
-Jennifer Ferrand-Kelly  
Erica Maas Shippee

### Soprano II

Patricia Benjamin Doyle  
Nancy Hemstreet Eaton  
Jennifer Lamson  
Katie Hart

### Alto

Pamela Frigo Johnson  
Cynthia Mellon  
Scott Reeves  
Agnes Vojtko

### Tenor

Travis Benoit  
Mark Child  
Robert Lovendale  
Mark Mummert  
Jack Pott

### Bass

Jonathan Clune  
Alexander Patrie  
Andrey Stolyarov  
Edward Tyler  
Jermaine Woodard, Jr.

**For singers' individual bios, please go  
to [www.concora.org/concora-singers](http://www.concora.org/concora-singers).**

Solo Concertato Group: Jennifer Ferrand-Kelly, Patricia Benjamin Doyle, Agnes Vojtko, Jack Pott, Edward Tyler  
Rehearsal Accompanist: Edward Clark

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### Chris Shepard, Conductor

Chris Shepard is in his seventh year as Artistic Director of CONCORA. He also leads the Worcester Chorus and the Masterwork Chorus in New Jersey, which performs Handel's *Messiah* each year at Carnegie Hall. With these choirs, Chris has performed a wide range of repertoire, collaborating with a number of major orchestras in venues that include Lincoln Center and Radio City Music Hall in New York, as well as the Royal Festival Hall in London and the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. As guest conductor, Chris has led the New Haven Symphony, Sydney's Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and the Al-Kamandjati Choir and Orchestra in Palestine; he was also a chorusmaster for the Sydney 2000 Olympics Opening Ceremony. A conductor with a particular affinity for the choral music of J. S. Bach, Chris founded the Sydneian Bach Choir in Sydney, Australia, an ensemble that has performed all of Bach's choral cantatas as well as all of his major choral works. He has taught at the Taft School, Sydney Grammar School and Holy Cross College, and he is currently Music Director at St. John's Episcopal Church in Stamford, CT. Also a pianist and keyboard continuist, Chris holds degrees from The Hartt School, Yale and the University of Sydney. His Ph.D. dissertation won the American Choral Directors Association's 2012 Julius Herford Prize for outstanding doctoral thesis in choral music.

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## CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

### Flutes

Barbara Hopkins  
Greig Shearer

### Oboes

Libby Van Cleve,  
doubling oboe d'amore  
Oliver Homann,  
doubling oboe d'amore  
Erik Andrusyak

### Bassoons

Yeh-Chi Wang  
Scott Switzer

### Trumpets

Scott McIntosh  
John Charles Thomas  
Kenneth Piatt

### Timpani

Edward Fast

### Organ

Edward Clark

### Violins

Lisa Rautenberg,  
concertmaster  
Martha Kayser  
Candace Lammers

### Viola

Arthur Masi

### Violoncello

Katherine Kennedy

### Double Bass

Joseph Messina

*Transliteration*

*Hebrew text*

*Latin Mass*

K'RĀV-NA

קרב־נָא

KYRIE

K'rāv-na elenu.  
Draw near to us, we pray.

קרב־נָא אֵלֵינוּ.

Kyrie eleison.  
Lord, have mercy.

K'rāv-na mālkenū.  
Draw near, our King, we pray.

קרב־נָא מַלְכֵנוּ.

Christe eleison.  
Christ, have mercy.

K'rāv-na elenu.  
Draw near to us, we pray.

קרב־נָא אֵלֵינוּ.

Kyrie eleison.  
Lord, have mercy.

TIFARA

תִּפְאָרָה

GLORIA

Tifara bāmarom lādonai.  
Glory to the Lord on high.

תִּפְאָרָה בְּמָרוֹם לְאֲדֹנָי.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Glory to God in the highest.

Uva'arēts ṭov lāḥāsiday, 'oše  
r'tsono.  
And on earth good things to His  
righteous ones, who do His will.

וּבְאֶרֶץ טוֹב לְחַסִּידָיו,  
עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנוֹ.

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae  
voluntatis.  
And on earth peace to men of good  
will.

Nāḳdish'kha, nā'ārits'kha,  
n'varēkh'kha, v'nāgid gödlēkha.  
We sanctify You, we revere You, we  
bless You, and we declare Your  
greatness.

נִקְדִּישְׁךָ, נַעֲרִיצְךָ, נְבָרְכְךָ,  
וְנַגִּיד גְּדֻלָּתְךָ.

Laudamus te, benedicimus te,  
adoramus te, glorificamus te.  
We praise You, we bless You, we adore  
You, we glorify You.

Nodē l'kha ēlohenū l'mā'ān k'vod  
sh'mēkha.  
We give thanks to You, our God, for the  
sake of Your glorious name.

נוֹדֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְמַעַן  
כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ.

Gratias agimus tibi propter  
magnam gloriam tuam.  
We give You thanks for Your great  
glory.

Hu ēlohenū, hu avinu, hu mālkenū,  
hu moshi'enu. Hu yāshmi'enu  
b'rāḥāmay, shenit, l'ene kōl-ḥai,  
āni ādonai ēlohekhēm.  
He is our God, He is our Father, He is  
our King, He is our Savior. He shall  
proclaim to us, in His compassion,  
a second time, in the presence of all  
the living: "I am the Lord your God."

הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הוּא אָבִינוּ, הוּא  
מַלְכֵנוּ, הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ. הוּא  
יְשַׁמֵּעֵנוּ, בְּרַחֲמָיו, שֵׁנִית,  
לְעֵינֵי כָל־חַי, אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus  
Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili  
unigenite, Jesu Christe, altissime.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius  
Patris.  
Lord God, heavenly King, God the  
Father almighty. Lord, only-begotten  
Son, Jesus Christ most high. Lord  
God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.



Noše 'ayon yafēshā', rāhem-na  
'alenu. Noše 'ayon yafēshā',  
kābel-na ēt-t'filatenu b'ratson.  
You who forgive sin and iniquity, have  
mercy on us, we pray. You who forgive  
sin and iniquity, receive our prayer, we  
pray, with favor.

Shome'ā' t'filāt 'āmo, rāhem-na  
'alenu.  
You who hear the prayer of Your  
people, have mercy on us, we pray.

Ki āta ēlohenu, āta ādonenu, āta  
mēlēkh 'ēlyon, āta qadosh.  
For You are our God, You are our Lord,  
You are the Supreme King, You are  
holy.

Y'shimkha qadosh 'āl  
kōl-mā'āšēkha, qadosh. Amen.  
And Your name is holy upon all Your  
handiwork, Holy One. Amen.

## ĀNI MĀ'ĀMIN

Āni mā'āmin.  
I believe.

Āni mā'āmin bē'ēmuna sh'lema,  
shēhu hābore l'vādo 'aša, 'ošē,  
y'yā'āšē l'khōl-hāmā'āšim.  
I believe with perfect faith that the  
Creator alone made, makes and shall  
make all things.

Shēhābore hu yaḥid, en kamohu.  
Shēhu l'vādo ēlohenu,  
haya hoṣē y'yihyē.  
Shēhābore, yitbarākh sh'mo, eno guf,  
That the Creator is the only One, there  
is none like Him. That He alone is our  
God, who was, is, and shall be.  
That the Creator, may His name  
be blessed, is not a corporeal  
being,

נושא עון ופֿשֿע, רחם־נא  
עלינו. נושא עון ופֿשֿע,  
קבל־נא אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ בְּרַצוֹן.

שומע תְּפִלַּת עַמּוֹ,  
רַחֵם־נָא עָלֵינוּ.

כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אַתָּה אֲדֹנָינוּ,  
אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיוֹן, אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ.

וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ,  
קָדוֹשׁ. אָמֵן.

## אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין.

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה,  
שֶׁהוּא הַבּוֹרֵא לְבַדּוֹ עָשָׂה,  
עוֹשֶׂה, וְיַעֲשֶׂה לְכָל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים.

שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא הוּא יְחִיד, אֵין כְּמוֹהוּ.  
שֶׁהוּא לְבַדּוֹ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
הֵיחָה הָיָה וְהָיָה.  
שֶׁהוּא הַבּוֹרֵא, יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ,  
אֵינוֹ גּוֹף,

Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere  
nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
You who take away the sins of the  
world, have mercy on us. You who  
take away the sins of the world, receive  
our prayer.

Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
You who sit at the right hand of the  
Father, have mercy on us.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus  
Dominus, to solus altissimus, Jesu  
Christe.  
For You alone are holy, You alone are  
the Lord, You alone are most high,  
Jesus Christ.

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei  
Patris. Amen.  
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of  
God the Father. Amen.

## CREDO

Credo in unum Deum.  
I believe in one God.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem  
omnipotentem, factorem coeli et  
terrae, visibilium omnium et  
invisibilium.  
I believe in one God, the Father  
almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.

Et in unum Dominum Jesum  
Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum,  
et ex Patre natum ante omnia  
saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de  
lumine, Deum verum  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-  
begotten Son of God, born of the Father  
before all ages. God of God, light of  
light, true God

lo yāšiguhu māšige hāguf, v' en lo  
shum dimyon k'lal. Vā'āni  
mā'āmin shēhu, yitbarākh sh'mo,  
rishon v'āhāron.

is not subject to physical categories,  
and cannot be likened to anything at all.  
And I believe that He, may His name  
be blessed, is First and Last.

Shēhu yode'ā' mā'āše v'ne adam  
v'khol-māhsh'vot libam.

That He knows the deeds of human  
beings, and all their inner thoughts.

Umā'ānish hābore l'ov're  
mitsyotav, lahēm akhen mā'ānish.  
And that the Creator punishes those  
who violate His commandments, surely  
He punishes them.

Ken gomel tov l'shom're  
mitsyotav. V'lābore l'vādo ra'ui  
l'hitpālel, l'zulato en ra'ui  
l'hitpālel, ēla lābore, yitbarākh  
sh'mo, lo l'vādo shēgomel tov.  
So does He reward those who observe  
His commandments. And to the  
Creator alone it is fitting to pray, not to  
any other, but to the Creator, may His  
name be blessed, to Him alone, the One  
who rewards.

V'shēmoshē rābenu hu haya av  
lān'vi'im, v'shēhay'ta n'vu'ato  
āmitit. Shēhātora hām'tsuya 'āta  
v'yadenu, kūlah hi nit'na lo.  
V'ē'mēt kōl-divre n'vi'im. V'zot  
hātora lo tōhōlāf, v'tora āhērēt lo  
tihyē.

And that Moses our teacher was the  
father of the prophets, and that his  
prophecy was true. That the Torah we  
now possess was given to him in its  
entirety. That all the words of the  
prophets are truth. And that this Torah  
shall not be changed, and there shall  
never be another Torah.

לא ישיגוהו משיגי הגוף, ואין לו  
שום דמיון כלל. ואני מאמין  
שהוא, יתברך שמו, ראשון  
ואחרון.

שהוא יודע מעשה בני אדם  
וכל מחשבות לבם.

ומעניש הבורא לעוברי מצותיו,  
להם אכן מעניש.

כן גומל טוב לשומרי מצותיו.  
ולבורא לבדו ראוי להתפלל,  
לזולתו אין ראוי להתפלל,  
אלא לבורא, יתברך שמו, לו לבדו  
שגומל טוב.

ושמשה רבנו הוא ה' אב  
לנביאים, ושהיתה נבואתו  
אמתית. שהתורה המצויה  
עתה בידינו, כלה היא נתנה לו.  
ואמת כל דברי נביאים. וזאת  
התורה לא תחלו, ותורה  
אחרת לא תהיה.

de Deo vero, genitum, non factum,  
consubstantialem Patri, per quem  
omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos  
homines et propter nostram salutem  
descendit de coelis.

of true God, begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father, by  
whom all things were made. Who for  
us men and for our salvation came  
down from heaven.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria virgine, et homo factus  
est.

And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit,  
of the Virgin Mary; and was made man.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub  
Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus  
est.

And was crucified also for us under  
Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried.

Et resurrexit tertia die secundum  
scripturas, et ascendit in coelum,  
sedet ad dextram Dei Patris, et  
iterum venturus est cum gloria  
judicare vivos et mortuos, cujus  
regni non erit finis.

And on the third day He rose again,  
according to the Scriptures. And  
ascended into heaven, and sits at the  
right hand of God the Father. And he  
shall come again with glory to judge  
the living and the dead; His kingdom  
shall have no end.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum  
et vivificantem, qui ex Patre  
Filioque procedit, qui cum Patre et  
Filio simul adoratur et  
conglorificatur, qui locutus est per  
Prophetas. Et unam sanctam  
catholicam et apostolicam  
Ecclesiam.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and  
giver of life, who proceedeth from the  
Father and the Son, who together with  
the Father and the Son is worshiped  
and glorified; who has spoken by the

Ṿ'shēyavo hāmashi'āh, Ṿ'āf  
shēyitmāhme'āh, āhākē lo.  
That the Messiah shall come, and  
though he tarry, I shall expect him.

Ṿ'shētiyhē t'hiyāt hāmetim min  
hābore, Ṿ'zikhro yit'ālē lanētsāh.  
Amen.

And that there shall be a resurrection of  
the dead by the Creator; and His  
remembrance shall be exalted for  
eternity. Amen.

### ḲADOSH

Ḳadosh, ḳadosh, ḳadosh ādonai  
ts'va'ot, m'lo khōl-ha'arēts  
k'vodo.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts,  
the whole earth is filled with His glory.

K'vodo male 'olam.  
His glory fills the world.

Barukh hāba b'shem ādonai.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the  
name of the Lord.

K'vodo male 'olam.  
His glory fills the world.

### NOŠE 'AṾON

Ādonai, noše 'aṾon Ṿafēshā',  
rāḥem-na 'alenu.  
Lord, You who forgive sin and iniquity,  
have mercy on us, we pray.

### ŠIM SHALOM

Šim 'alenu shalom.  
Grant us peace.

וְשִׁיבָא הַמְּשִׁיחַ, וְאִף  
שְׁיִיטְמַחְמֵהּ, אַחֲכָהּ לוֹ.

וְשִׁתְּהִיָּה תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים מִן  
הַבּוֹרָא, וְזִכְרוֹ יִתְעַלֶּה לְנֶצַח.  
אָמֵן.

### קְדוֹשׁ

קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ אֲדֹנָי  
עֲבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

כְּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם.

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם אֲדֹנָי.

כְּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם.

### נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן

אֲדֹנָי, נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן וְפָשַׁע,  
רַחֵם-נָא עָלֵינוּ.

### שִׁים שְׁלוֹם

שִׁים עָלֵינוּ שְׁלוֹם.

prophets. And in one holy catholic and  
apostolic Church.

Confiteor unum baptisma in  
remissionem peccatorum.  
I confess one baptism for the remission  
of sins.

Et expecto resurrectionem  
mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi.  
Amen.  
And I await the resurrection of the  
dead, and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

### SANCTUS, OSANNA, BENEDICTUS

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus  
Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et  
terra gloria ejus.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of  
Hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with  
His glory.

Osanna in excelsis.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit in nomine  
Domini.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the  
name of the Lord.

Osanna in excelsis.  
Hosanna in the highest.

### AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Lamb of God, who take away the sins  
of the world, have mercy on us.

### DONA NOBIS PACEM

Dona nobis pacem.  
Grant us peace.



## PROGRAM NOTES FROM THE LIBRETTIST

My early religious upbringing instilled in me a deep feeling for the language of the traditional Jewish prayerbook. I learned to recite the Hebrew prayers and heard them chanted at the synagogue in the Eastern European cantorial style of my ancestors. When I went off to college and started listening to classical music; the work that attracted me the most was Bach's *Mass in B Minor*.

Many years later, while rediscovering the biblical and rabbinic literature of my youth, and still listening to my beloved *Mass in B Minor*, I developed a strong desire to hear Bach's music with a Hebrew liturgical text, reflecting Jewish theology, in place of the Latin Mass. I regretted that Judaism had no tradition of sacred music analogous to the Mass tradition in Christianity, and that no classical setting of Jewish prayer approached Bach's music in beauty and grandeur.

In 2005 I began imagining a Hebrew liturgical text that could be wedded to Bach's sublime music. Each movement of the Hebrew version would have to resemble the corresponding Latin one in rhythm and in emotional tone, and would have to express Jewish theological ideas that mirrored the corresponding Christian ones. I spent a year developing an initial version, another year inserting the Hebrew words into the score, and subsequent years correcting and refining the text and its musical setting. I did not make any changes in Bach's music, except where it was necessary to split a note in two, or tie two notes together, to accommodate the new text.

In writing the text for the *Hebrew Prayer in B Minor*, I adapted liturgical formulas from the prayerbook whenever I could. If I needed to invent something new, I turned to Hebrew scripture, especially the book of Psalms, for inspiration. For the Gloria, Agnus Dei, and Dona nobis pacem, it was surprisingly easy to find Hebrew expressions that closely resembled the Latin expressions of praise and thanksgiving and requests for mercy and peace. The Sanctus and Benedictus were translated back to their original biblical Hebrew. The Osanna was replaced by the biblical verse that follows the Sanctus in the Kedushah, or Holiness blessing, as it is read responsively during the Amidah prayer of the Sabbath Musaf service. The Kyrie was a special case: I wanted the *Prayer* to open with the same percussive sound as the Mass, which demanded a Hebrew word beginning with the letter *kof*. I chose the imperative form of the Hebrew verb *karav*, "draw near."

For the Jewish Credo, I naturally turned to the thirteen principles of faith formulated by Maimonides in his twelfth-century commentary on the Mishnah. Although he composed them in Judeo-Arabic, in highly technical

philosophical language, I was able to use the more poetic Hebrew version that appears in some editions of the prayerbook, and to fit the thirteen principles into the nine movements of Bach's Credo. The Latin Credo and its Hebrew counterpart both begin with the belief in one Creator, and end with the belief in the resurrection of the dead. The Christian belief in the Trinity corresponds to the Jewish belief in the radical unity and transcendence of God, who is First and Last. The Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of the Christian faith correspond to the Jewish belief in an omniscient God who punishes and rewards. The Christian doctrines of the Holy Spirit and Church correspond to the Jewish belief in the prophets and in the Torah of Moses. And the Christian confession of baptism corresponds to the Jewish expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

Although Bach intended the structure of his Latin *Mass* and its musical figures to represent various aspects of Christian theology, it is possible to hear in the Hebrew *Prayer* representations of Jewish theology instead. For example, in the Christian version, the three movements of the Kyrie represent the three persons of the Trinity. In the Jewish version, we can associate each movement with one of the three Patriarchs. The first *K'ra'v-na elenu* corresponds to Abraham, the first person to bring God close to humankind. Its music reflects the gravity of Abraham's personality, and portrays the wandering, and anxious reaching upward towards God, that characterized his life. The *K'ra'v-na mal'kenu* can be heard as a love duet between God and Israel: the lower voice represents the Daughter of Zion; the upper voice represents the Shekhinah; and the violin represents the divine emanations that descend from heaven. This movement corresponds to Isaac, who shares with the Shekhinah a feminine quality. The second *K'ra'v-na elenu*, which completes the trilogy of the Jewish Kyrie, is darker and more dissonant than the first one. It portrays the life of Jacob, who strove with God and humans, and prevailed.

In addition to the Sanctus, three movements of the Gloria—*Laudamus te, Domine Deus, and Quoniam tu solus sanctus*—resemble parts of the Jewish Holiness blessing of the Sabbath Musaf Amidah; this blessing may have been a source of early Christian liturgy. And the essence of the final blessing of the Hebrew Amidah is identical with the final plea of the Latin Mass: Grant us peace.

*Eric Weitzner, 2022*



CONCORA gratefully acknowledges major support for today's concert from



## PROGRAM NOTES FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I was conducting the Desoff Choirs in New York City when Eric Weitzner first approached me about his Hebrew version of the *B Minor Mass* a decade ago. I was immediately intrigued by the creativity of his project—and then, after spending time with this fascinating “new” work, I was deeply impressed with Eric’s intelligent and sensitive refashioning of Bach’s summa composition.

I wasn’t only drawn to this reimagining of Bach’s Mass on its own merits; I was also struck by how Eric’s work reflects a range of compositional practices from many centuries of western music. First, those of you who are familiar with the music of Solomone Rossi (ca 1570-1630) will know that it was not unknown for Jewish composers to write in the prevailing style of the Catholic church in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. With Eric’s Hebrew text, the *stile antico* compositions from Bach’s Mass such as the Credo and Confiteor (now the *Ani ma'amin* and *V'sheyavo hamashi 'ab*) fit snugly into Rossi’s heritage and soundscape.

Second, there is a rich tradition in the modern era of setting Hebrew liturgical texts to classical compositions, whether originally instrumental or vocal. In his biography of Leonard Bernstein, Humphrey Burton recounts that the Russian-born and Vienna-trained music director of the

conservative Temple Mishkan Tefila of Bernstein’s youth would refashion music by such composers as Schubert, Mendelssohn and Verdi for services. It is fascinating to think that one of the most gifted conductors in history first encountered some of the pieces for which he would later be famous by hearing them sung in Hebrew in his synagogue.

Finally, although the idea of setting his music to Hebrew would be entirely foreign to Bach, the idea of using new texts for older compositions was a very common Baroque practice. In fact, nearly all of the *B Minor Mass* used this practice of “parody” composition. By choosing an earlier composition with the same emotional content, theological message, and musical imagery, Bach was able not only to be economical in his recycling of previous material, but he was also able to draw on his lifetime of extraordinary musical works. Eric’s project honors that same tradition, in his choice of Hebrew texts that track closely to the Latin original, while at the same time expressing the same *Affekt* as Bach’s movements.

For all of these reasons, it is such a privilege and thrill for CONCORA to present the world premiere of Bach/Weitzner’s *Hebrew Prayer in B Minor* in the beautiful setting of The Emanuel Synagogue.

*Chris Shepard, 2022*

Founded by Richard Coffey in 1974, CONCORA enjoys an extraordinary reputation for artistic excellence throughout New England. The ensemble has been praised as “one of the premier musical forces in the state,” “one of our region’s priceless musical assets,” and “a model of choral artistry.” Choral music has the power to cross cultural boundaries and to move hearts, and CONCORA’s mission to reach a broad and diverse audience extends not only to the choral aficionado, but also to those who may be touched by the beauty of the choral art for the first time.



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