



J.S. Bach's Six Motets

Chris Shepard, Conductor
Edward Clark, Organ

Program

- Singet dem Herrn ein neues lied
(Sing unto the Lord a new song) BWV 225
- Komm, Jesu, komm (Come, Jesus, come) BWV 229
- Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf
(The Spirit gives aid to our weakness) BWV 226
- Organ: French Suite No. 5 BWV 816
Allemande • Courante • Sarabande • Gavotte
- Jesu, meine Freude (Jesus, my joy) BWV 227
Solo Trio I: Jennifer Lamson, Patricia Doyle, Ellen Gilson Voth
Solo Trio II: Margaret Tyler, Jack Pott, Edward Tyler
- Fürchte dich nicht (Do not fear) BWV 228
- Lobet den Herrn (Praise the Lord) BWV 230

Program run time is approximately 80 minutes with no intermission.

CONCORA Singers

Soprano I

Patricia Benjamin Doyle
Louise Fauteux
Jennifer Ferrand-Kelly
Jennifer Lamson

Alto

Katie Hart
Pamela Frigo Johnson
Margaret Tyler
Ellen Gilson Voth

Tenor

Kirk Bobkowski
Mark Child
Mark Mummert
Jack Pott

Bass

Stephan Barnicle
Jonathan Clune
Andrey Stolyarov
Edward Tyler

For singers' bios,
please go to

<http://www.concora.org/singers-in-bachs-motets.html>

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Chris Shepard, Conductor

Chris Shepard is in his eighth season 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 chorumaster 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; he is currently Music Director at St. John's Episcopal Church in Stamford, CT. As a pianist and keyboard continuist, Chris holds degrees from The Hartt School, Yale and 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.

Program Notes: The History of the Motet

On the CONCORA website, you will find six videos entitled MOTET MONDAYS, one for each of Bach's motets. To supplement those in-depth explorations, today's Program Notes will explore the larger context of the motet, both before and during Bach's lifetime.

The word "motet" in choral music is almost as broad as the words "poetry" or "prose" in literature. There are certainly some very specific types of motets, but in the main, from its first appearance in the 13th century, the word has referred to vocal music, both sacred and secular. (Yes—secular as well.) We tend to associate the word "madrigal" with secular vocal music, but to confuse us further, *both* motets and madrigals can be either sacred *or* secular!) But in general, Medieval and Renaissance motets were sacred vocal compositions that did not employ independent instrumental parts. Even this is a little confusing: the 20th century revivalists of early music tended to perform these works *a cappella*, since the extant scores and parts do not often include instrumental parts. But in practice, they were probably sung with the support of at least an organ, and often with instruments doubling the vocal lines.

Although the characteristics of the Renaissance motet are by no means universal, certain general aspects emerged from the origins of the motet at

Notre Dame in Paris in the 13th century to the apex of the genre in 16th-century Europe. The music was generally polyphonic—independent vocal lines interacting with one another to form shifting harmonies. There was often a *cantus firmus*, a pre-existing plainchant or even a secular song melody, sung by one part in long notes over the complex polyphony. In the hands of masters like Palestrina, Lassus, or Gesualdo, these compositions could be astonishingly intricate, and they hewed carefully to the established rules of counterpoint and harmony.

Enter Johann Sebastian Bach. The above instinct to see the broad brushstrokes of history in dichotomies—"sacred vs. secular", "*a cappella* vs. accompanied"—also threatens our understanding of the liturgy of Bach's Lutheran church, particularly in the orthodox and traditional Leipzig where he worked. Since Martin Luther emphasized the use of the vernacular German in his services, it is easy to think of "Lutheran vs. Roman Catholic" services as being "German vs. Latin". But this is simply not true. Particularly in Bach's Saxony, several portions of the service were still sung interchangeably in Latin and German, which is why we have at least four short Latin Mass settings by Bach.

Latin Renaissance motets were also an important part of the service. The *Florilegium Portense*, a collection of more than 200 motets by some of the greatest church composers of the 15th and 16th centuries, was compiled by a Lutheran cantor two generations before Bach's birth, and shows just how important this repertoire was in the Lutheran liturgy. Not only were the two volumes of motets still in use when Bach arrived at Leipzig's Thomaskirche in 1723, but he ordered more copies while serving as cantor there. His choirs regularly sang these anthems in Sunday services, referring to them as "motets".

Though still living on in the sacred repertoire, these works were nonetheless considered old-fashioned, though a venerable vestige of the church's musical heritage. They sat comfortably next to the "modern" Lutheran church music—the cantatas that Bach presented each Sunday at his Leipzig churches. Unlike the earlier motets, these cantatas (also called "vocal concerti") featured independent orchestral parts, solo movements, and free poetic texts. And unlike the Renaissance motets from the *Florilegium Portense*, these fundamentally Lutheran cantatas were settings of German texts. But to confuse matters further, while the Renaissance motets were part of the Lutheran services during Bach's lifetime, the form *also* evolved into a specifically *Baroque* form of the motet—and it is this genre of motets that we sing in today's concert.

Like the Renaissance motet, the Lutheran Baroque motet didn't feature a separate orchestral part. If orchestral instruments were used, they doubled the voices—both for musical support and for contrasts of color and timbre. The Baroque motets were often settings of biblical texts (hardly surprising, given Luther's emphasis on scripture), as well as texts from verses of Lutheran chorales. This is true of all six Bach motets presented on today's program: they are largely scriptural (including psalms), and all of them feature either a chorale, or have a chorale-like section, as in the case of *Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden*.

We are less sure about the liturgical function of Bach's motets than we are about the Renaissance motets that Bach used in his weekly services. As with all of Bach's works, they are far more

complex than motets by his peers, including several of his Bach family forbears, as found in the Alt-Bachisches Archiv. We only know for sure that *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf* was composed for a funeral, though *Komm, Jesu, Komm* certainly seems appropriate for a funeral as well. Until more specific evidence is found, any other theories are conjectural.

For me, the most fascinating thing about the Bach motets is that they are such a major part of the modern choral repertoire; for many choral singers, a motet or two encompass the only Bach that they will ever sing. In fact, these motets are not especially representative of Bach's enormous choral output, the vast majority of which consists of cantatas. But because the motets do not require the considerable expenditure of an orchestra (and because they are relatively short), these works have been the backbone of Bach choral singing since their widespread publication in the 19th century. In practice, even though they are short, these works are more difficult than most of Bach's cantata movements, largely because they are almost all written for double-choir. The compositional style is highly complex, and without an independent instrumental part or solo movements, the singers never get a break. The six motets together are about an hour of choral singing, but that is the equivalent amount to how much the choir sings in Bach's major works, such as the Passions and the *B Minor Mass*. These fascinating and powerful works certainly touch the listener's heart, but they are not for singers who are faint of heart!

Chris Shepard, 2022

CONCORA gratefully acknowledges funding for today's concert from
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CONCORA (Connecticut Choral Artists) 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." For more than four decades, CONCORA has enriched the Greater Hartford area with concerts of beautiful choral music presented by its professional singers. Founded by Richard Coffey in 1974, and now in its 49th season, the ensemble enjoys an extraordinary reputation for artistic excellence throughout New England.

Under the direction of Chris Shepard, the ensemble's versatility is displayed in its wide range of repertoire and in the crafting of ensembles from among the choir's roster of singers to produce an extraordinary

range of choral color and dynamic range for each program and performance space.

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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Handel's *Messiah*: A Candlelight Concert

Friday, December 9, 2022
7:30 p.m.

Lutheran Church of St. Mark
75 Griswold Street, Glastonbury

Saturday, December 10, 2022
3:00 pm

St. James Episcopal Church
1018 Farmington Avenue
West Hartford

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, BWV 225
(Sing to the Lord a New Song)

#1 – Chorus

<i>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 Reihen; mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.</i>	Sing to the Lord a new song, The congregation of the saints should praise him. Israel rejoices in the one who made him. Let the children of Zion be joyful about their king, They should praise his name in their dances, With drums and harps they should play for him.
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#2 – Aria & Chorale

<i>Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet 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. Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen, Ein Blum und fallend Laub. Der Wind nur drüber wehet, So ist es nicht mehr da, Also der Mensch vergehet, Sein End, das ist ihm nah.</i>	As a father feels compassion For his young little child, So does the Lord for all of us, If we feel pure childlike awe, He knows how weak is our strength, God is aware that we are only dust. Like grass before the rake, A flower or falling leaf. The wind has only to blow over it and it is there no more. And so man passes away, His end is near him.
<i>Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an, Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan Mit allen unsern Sachen. Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht, Und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht, So wirst du's ferner machen. Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest Auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.</i>	God, in future take us to yourself for without you nothing is accomplished In all our affairs. Therefore be yourself our protection and light, And if our hope does not deceive us, Then in future you will do this. Happy are those who firmly and fastly Depend on you and your grace.

#3 – Chorus

<i>Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten, lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit! Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn, Halleluja!</i>	Praise God in his works, Praise him in his great glory! Let all that has breath praise the Lord, Hallelujah!
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Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229
(Come, Jesus, Come)

Chorus

<i>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.</i>	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; Thou are the right way, the truth and the life.
<i>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.</i>	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.

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf, BWV 226
(The Spirit Gives Aid to Our Weakness)

#1 – Chorus

*Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf,
denn wir wissen nicht,
was wir beten sollen,
wie sich's gebühret;
sondern der Geist selbst vertritt
uns aufs beste mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen.
Der aber die Herzen forschet, der weiß,
was des Geistes Sinn sei;
denn er vertritt die Heiligen nach dem,
das Gott gefällt.*

The spirit comes to help our weakness,
For we do not know
What we should pray,
As we ought to pray;
But the spirit itself pleads
For us in the best way with inexpressible groans.
But he who searches our hearts knows
what the Spirit means
since he pleads for the saints
In the way that pleases God.

#2 – Chorale

*Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost
Nun hilf uns, fröhlich und getrost
In deinem Dienst beständig bleiben,
Die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben.
O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit
Und stärk des Fleisches Blödigkeit,
Dass wir hie ritterlich ringen,
Durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.
Halleluja, halleluja.*

You sacred warmth, sweet consolation,
now help us joyful and comforted
in your service, always to remain,
do not let sorrow drive us away!
O Lord, through your power make us ready
and strengthen the feebleness of our flesh
so that we may bravely struggle
through life and death to reach you!
Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesu, meine Freude, BWV 227
(Jesus, My Joy)

#1 – Chorale

*Jesu, meine Freude,
Meines Herzens Weide,
Jesu, meine Zier,
Ach wie lang, ach lange
Ist dem Herzen bange
Und verlangt nach dir!
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,
Außer dir soll mir auf Erden
Nichts sonst Liebbers werden.*

Jesus, my joy,
pasture of my heart,
Jesus, my adornment
ah how long, how long
is my heart filled with anxiety
and longing for you!
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
apart from you on the earth
there is nothing dearer to me.

#2 – Chorus

*Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen,
die in Christo Jesu sind,
die nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln,
sondern nach dem Geist.*

There is now no condemnation in them
who are in Christ,
and who walk not according to the flesh,
but according to the spirit.

#3 – Chorale

*Unter deinem Schirmen
Bin ich vor den Stürmen
Aller Feinde frei.
Laß den Satan wittern,
Laß den Feind erbittern,
Mir steht Jesus bei.
Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,
Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:
Jesus will mich decken.*

Beneath your protection
I am free from the attacks
of all my enemies.
Let Satan track me down,
let my enemy be exasperated
Jesus stands by me.
Even if there is thunder and lightning,
even if sin and hell spread terror
Jesus will protect me.

*Denn das Gesetz des Geistes,
der da lebendig macht in Christo Jesu,
hat mich frei gemacht
von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes.*

#4 – Trio

For the law of the spirit,
which makes me living in Christ Jesus,
has made me free
from the law of sin and death.

*Trotz dem alten Drachen,
Trotz des Todes Rachen,
Trotz der Furcht darzu!
Tobe, Welt, und springe,
Ich steh hier und singe
In gar sichrer Ruh.
Gottes Macht hält mich in acht;
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,
Ob sie noch so brummen.*

#5 – Chorus

I defy the old dragon,
I defy the jaws of death,
I defy fear as well!
Rage, World, and spring to attack:
I stand here and sing
in secure peace.
God's might takes care of me;
earth and abyss must fall silent,
however much they rumble on.

*Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich, sondern geistlich,
so anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnt.
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,
der ist nicht sein.*

#6 – Chorus

But you are not of the flesh, but of the Spirit
so God's spirit dwells in you in a different way.
But whoever does not have Christ's spirit
is not Christ's.

*Weg mit allen Schätzen!
Du bist mein Ergötzen,
Jesu, meine Lust!
Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,
Ich mag euch nicht hören,
Bleibt mir unbewusst!
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod
Soll mich, ob ich viel muss leiden,
Nicht von Jesu scheiden.*

#7 – Chorale

Away with all treasures!
You are my delight,
Jesus, my joy!
Away with empty honours,
I'm not going to listen to you,
remain unknown to me!
Misery, distress, affliction, disgrace and death,
even if I must endure much suffering,
will not separate me from Jesus.

*So aber Christus in euch ist,
so ist der Leib zwar tot um der Sünde willen;
der Geist aber ist das Leben
um der Gerechtigkeit willen.*

#8 – Trio

If Christ is in you,
then the body is dead because of sin,
but the spirit is life
because of righteousness.

*Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
Das die Welt erlesen,
Mir gefällst du nicht.
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
Bleibet weit dahinten,
Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,
Gute Nacht gegeben.*

#9 – Chorale

Good night, existence
chosen by the world,
you do not please me.
Good night, you sins,
stay far behind me.
Come no more to the light!
Good night, pride and splendour,
once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you good night.

*So nun der Geist des,
der Jesum von den Toten auferwecket hat,
in euch wohnt, so wird auch derselbige,
der Christum von den Toten auferwecket hat,
eure sterbliche Leiber lebendig machen um des willen,
dass sein Geist in euch wohnt.*

#10 – Chorus

Now the spirit
that has raised Jesus from the dead,
dwells in you, the very same spirit
that has raised Jesus from the dead,
gives life to your mortal bodies,
so that his spirit may dwell in you.

#11 – Chorale

<i>Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,</i>	Go away, mournful spirits,
<i>Denn mein Freudenmeister,</i>	for my joyful master,
<i>Jesus, tritt herein.</i>	Jesus, now enters in.
<i>Denen, die Gott lieben,</i>	For those who love God
<i>Muß auch ihr Betrübten</i>	even their afflictions
<i>Lauter Zucker sein.</i>	become pure sweetness.
<i>Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,</i>	Even if here I must endure shame and disgrace,
<i>Dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,</i>	even in suffering you remain,
<i>Jesu, meine Freude.</i>	Jesus, my joy.

Fürchte dich nicht, BWV 228
(Do Not Fear)

#1 – Chorus

<i>Fürchte dich nicht, ich bin bei dir;</i>	Do not fear, I am with you
<i>weiche nicht, denn ich bin dein Gott;</i>	Do not give way, for I am your God;
<i>ich stärke dich, ich helfe dir auch,</i>	I strengthen you, I also help you
<i>ich erhalte dich durch die rechte Hand meiner Gerechtigkeit.</i>	I uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.

#2 – Chorus & Chorale

<i>Fürchte dich nicht, denn ich habe dich erlöst;</i>	Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
<i>ich habe dich bei deinem Namen gerufen, du bist mein.</i>	I have called you by your name, you are mine.

<i>Herr, mein Hirt, Brunn aller Freuden!</i>	Lord, my Shepherd, source of all joys!
<i>Du bist mein, ich bin dein,</i>	You are mine, I am yours,
<i>Niemand kann uns scheiden.</i>	No one can separate us.
<i>Ich bin dein, weil du dein Leben</i>	I am yours, since by you your life
<i>Und dein Blut, mir zu gut,</i>	And your blood, for my benefit,
<i>In den Tod gegeben.</i>	Have been given in death.
<i>Du bist mein, weil ich dich fasse</i>	You are mine, since I seize you
<i>Und dich nicht, o mein Licht,</i>	and, O my light, never
<i>Aus dem Herzen lasse!</i>	Shall I let you leave my heart!
<i>Laß mich, laß mich hingelangen,</i>	Let me, let me come
<i>Da du mich und ich dich</i>	where you by me and I by you
<i>Liebtlich werd umfassen.</i>	Shall be embraced in love.

Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden, BWV 230
(Praise the Lord, All Ye Nations)

Chorus

<i>Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden,</i>	Praise the Lord, all ye nations
<i>und preiset ihn, alle Völker!</i>	And celebrate him, all the peoples!
<i>Denn seine Gnade und Wahrheit</i>	For his grace and truth
<i>waltet über uns in Ewigkeit.</i>	Reign over us for ever.
<i>Alleluja!</i>	Alleluia!