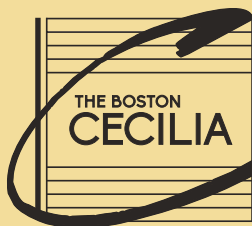


THE BOSTON CECILIA PRESENTS

Bach Illuminated



MICHAEL BARRETT, MUSIC DIRECTOR



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 | 8:00 PM

Church of the Advent | 30 Brimmer Street, Boston

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 3:00 PM

All Saints Parish | 1773 Beacon Street, Brookline

THE BOSTON CECILIA

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Ann O'Connell

Keith Glavash

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The Boston Cecilia: Past...Present...Future

The Boston Cecilia was founded in 1876 by Boston pianist and conductor **B.J. Lang**. Cecilia's history is a history of music in Boston. Antonin Dvořák led the chorus, then called the Cecilia Society, in Boston's first performance of his *Requiem* in 1892. And when the newly built Symphony Hall was inaugurated in 1900, Cecilia performed Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with conductor William Gericke and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. During the Depression and World II, Cecilia, under the direction of **Arthur Fiedler**, was the official chorus of the BSO, but the post-war years proved difficult for Cecilia. The late evolutionary biologist and historian Stephen Jay Gould sang with Cecilia for many years, and has written that it was when Cecilia recognized the need to find its own mission and style that the chorus blossomed once again.

Donald Teeters became conductor in 1968 and set a new and ambitious path. He became the first in Boston to perform Bach and Handel with period instruments. In his 44-year tenure he conducted all but two of Handel's oratorios. But he also made sure that Cecilia would be known for attention to contemporary music and Cecilia presented premieres of a number of pieces, including the American premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Phaedra*.

Nicholas White served as Music Director from 2013–2017, and brilliantly continued that tradition, exploring music of the 20th and 21st centuries while also conducting acclaimed performances of Baroque music performed on period instruments. **George Case** took up the baton in 2017 and similarly presented great works of the choral repertoire as well as contemporary pieces. Under his leadership, Cecilia commissioned composer Paul John Rudoj to write a piece with the voices of the Transcendentalist movement in the form of a Passion—an American Passion. The performance of the piece—long delayed by the COVID Pandemic- was finally presented and well received in April of 2022.

When George Case left the Boston area in the spring of 2020, Cecilia appointed **Michael Barrett** as its new Music Director. Barrett's arrival in the middle of the Pandemic did not stop him from engaging the singers and our audiences with virtual work. And by the fall of 2021, he had brought a vaccinated and masked Cecilia back to live concerts. An accomplished singer himself with particular expertise in singing and conducting early music, Barrett continues the Cecilia tradition of performing both early and contemporary music as he leads a newly invigorated Boston Cecilia toward its Sesquicentennial.

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Bach Illuminated

Friday, December 8, 2023 at 8:00 PM | Church of the Advent, Boston

Sunday, December 10, 2023 at 3:00 PM | All Saints Parish, Brookline

Michael Barrett, *conductor*

Kevin Neel, *organ*

PROGRAM

O magnum mysterium (prima pars)

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI DA PALESTRINA (ca. 1525–1594)

Hodie Christus natus est

JAN PIETERSZOOM SWEELINCK (1562–1621)

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Halt was du hast/Jesu meine Freude

JOHANN MICHAEL BACH (1648–1694)

*Solo quartet:* Jamie Chelel, Connor Vigeant, Benjamin Perry, Charlie Evett

Lieber Herr Gott

JOHANN CHRISTOPH BACH (1676–1738)

~~~

Gloria, from *Missa brevis*

DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE (1637–1707)

~~~

In dulci jubilo, BuxWV 197

Buxtehude

*Organ solo:* Kevin Neel

Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her

interpolation from *Magnificat*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Jesu meine Freude

J.S. BACH

*Small ensemble singers:* Marylène Altieri, Jamie Chelel, Grace Coberly, Charlie Evett, Deborah Greenman, Deborah Grose, Benjamin Perry, Connor Vigeant, Megan Weireter

## INTERMISSION

**Gebet in der Christnacht**

FANNY HENSEL (1805–1847), ARR. OLIVIA SPARKHALL (B. 1976)

~~~

Two motets from **Sechs Sprüche für achtstimmigen Chor**

(Six works for eight-voice choir)

Weinachten ♦ Im Advent

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

~~~

**Es ist das Heil uns kommen her**

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

~~~

Immortal Bach

KNUT NYSTEDT (1915–2014)

~~~

**A Christmas Canticle**

ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK (B. 1941)

~~~

Ecstatic Expectancy

ZANAIDA ROBLES (B. 1979)

Soloists: Gina Marie Falk, Deborah Grose

In consideration of your fellow concert-goers, please put your electronic devices on silent mode. Also please note that all photography and audio-visual recording are strictly prohibited. Thank you.

ARTS
BROOKLINE
A SEASON OF ARTS

PROGRAM NOTES

If you visit The Netherlands on Good Friday, the most somber day on the Christian liturgical calendar, you might manage to get a ticket to a certain annual performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's setting of the Passion according to St. Matthew. Joining you will be members of the Dutch government, including the Prime Minister. The tradition is unusual, but also telling: that an entire government may be expected to sit through a three-plus-hour often somber work by a composer long dead, and in a style that, even at its writing, was out of fashion.

The more we like something, it seems to me, the more likely we are to ascribe to it some quality of universality or transcendental quality. ("*The Godfather* is a timeless classic." "Beethoven's music speaks to every generation.") To put it another way, we tend to decontextualize these beloved artistic endeavors from their time and place.

Yet I would argue that by learning about the occasionally mundane aspects of context, we will more often than not find deeper meaning in the art we admire. I would more strongly argue that the art itself could not possibly have come into being without that context. Even for artists who seem to break existing molds, that very breakage means that the molds are something to which we, and probably the artist, compared the new directions.

Such, in my view, is the case with Johann Sebastian Bach, our main *dramatis persona* for today's performance. While I doubt that many disagree with the assertion that Bach's life and times are useful in understanding his music, there is, I think, still the temptation to lift Bach above the fray of the everyday artisan's life. I would argue for the use of the same tools of investigation that we might with other composers to find deeper understanding of his music through the context of his life and times.

Let us begin, therefore, with some pre-Bach context. In the 15th century, Johannes Tinctoris, one of Europe's most renowned music theorists could claim that nothing written more than 40 years ago was worth hearing. Art music of any worth was new music, the one major exception being the venerated body of church monophony known as Gregorian chant. For Tinctoris, the art of composition was reaching a state of perfection, but of course tastes changed, and later generations of writers could claim the same thing for their own time.

The idea of a "canon" of polyphonic music, a set of pieces by dead composers that were still worth knowing and performing, took hold in a limited fashion during the period eventually known as the Baroque, as the new style of Monteverdi and his followers, focused on declamation and rhetoric, began to supplant the older international polyphonic style. That older, "Palestrina" style still had its place in conservative contexts like the church, and that style of writing, in which Baroque-era composers were thoroughly trained, could be employed in new works for symbolic effect.

The Dutch composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck is a prime example of a musician with one foot in the old style and the other in the new. His organ

playing and teaching were highly influential, especially on north German musicians, and thus there is a direct connection to the organ music of Bach, through composers like Reincken and Buxtehude (see below). Sweelinck was also a fine composer of ensemble vocal music, both Latin motets and French polyphonic settings of Genevan Psalter tunes (works that, incidentally, could only be performed in homes, since the Calvinists of Sweelinck's world forbade polyphony of any kind during the service.) Sweelinck draws on the old polyphonic style, but his music is energized with a keen rhetorical sense of pacing and expression, the marriage of word and music that was central to the emerging Baroque aesthetic. In his setting of **Hodie Christus natus est**, Sweelinck deftly toggles between triple and duple meter to vary the mood, while his motivic material is tailored to the word or phrase that is set. Each section of text begins with "hodie" ("today"), which Sweelinck sets as a tenor call with an ensemble response.

Thanks to musical innovations in Italy, Italian musicians and style came to dominate many European musical circles, with French dance music traditions as an important secondary influence. Since the early decades of Baroque practice, German musicians combined Italian musical models with long-established German contrapuntal practices, in order to modernize sacred and secular musical practices without abandoning older styles and pieces. So it is no surprise to see that Bach's musical language is an amalgamation of these several threads of style and practice, albeit wielded with uncommonly powerful effect. (Perhaps this is one way to explain the impression of Bach's "universal" appeal: the very nature of musical style in his orbit was one of adoption and adaptation across select national boundaries.)

In the early 18th century, artisanal crafts like music were family affairs. Male children were expected to follow in the family business, and JS Bach was no exception. Through close relatives he gained musical experience, directly and by example, and in his adulthood he expressed reverence for this family profession through his preservation of music from his Bach family tree, a collection known as the Altbachisches Archiv, or "old Bach archive." It is from this fascinating collection of primarily 17th-century music that we perform Johann Christoph Bach's **Lieber Herr Gott** and Johann Michael Bach's **Halt was du hast/Jesu meine Freude**.

Both motets are settings for double choir, a practice more common in the 17th century and partly an adaptation of early Venetian Baroque practices. JC Bach deploys his forces more or less equally, with both choirs calling and responding to one another to heighten the rhetorical effect of each line of text, and sometimes engaging in full-fledged eight-part counterpoint. One of the more striking effects happens near the beginning of the work, where JC Bach abruptly changes meter from a slow duple to a fast triple, in order to heighten the setting of "wake us up." We hope we wake you up as well! JM Bach's setting is a chorale gloss: one choir (arranged here for the full Cecilia ensemble) sings a straightforward setting of the chorale "Jesu meine Freude" phrase by phrase (the same chorale that Bach uses in his motet setting), while the other choir (here sung by four soloists) enjoins the listener to hold on to what they have in order to gain eternal happiness.

JS Bach had many teachers and models, but perhaps the most consequential in his early professional life was Dietrich Buxtehude. Buxtehude was the preeminent church musician and organist in Lübeck, the north German Hanseatic free city, and an eminent figure of the “middle” Baroque period in Germany. Bach was so eager to learn from Buxtehude that he walked about 250 miles from his home in Arnstadt to Lübeck, and conveniently failed to return to his post until long after the requested leave of absence had expired.

Like nearly all his contemporaries, Buxtehude was primarily composing new music, in the latest hybridized German Baroque style. But like his colleagues, he was thoroughly trained in the Palestrina style, as his old-style setting of the *Missa brevis* makes plain. The Lutheran *Missa brevis* or German Mass was distinct from the full Mass Ordinary in that the only two movements are Kyrie and **Gloria**, the latter of which we perform today. (This was how the Kyrie and Gloria of JS Bach’s B minor Mass were first presented; only later did he add the remaining movements.) The Palestrina-like points of imitation are flavored at times by chromatic passagework, most poignantly when the speaker asks for God’s mercy.

We now turn to examples from JS Bach himself. My hope is that, by this point in the notes and in our program, you will have a sense of the multi-generational “baggage” of style and non-musical circumstances into which JS Bach was born and in which he continued to ply his trade. The first example of his work is a brief one, and not even a stand-alone piece: it is a movement from one version of a larger sacred work, Bach’s setting of the Magnificat, the Song of Mary. **Vom Himmel hoch** is not from the Magnificat proper, but rather served as one of several interpolations for a performance in 1723. Indeed the text (“From heaven on high I come down / I bring you good tidings) is a gloss, or prelude, on the Magnificat text. In the style of an organ chorale prelude, Bach places the tune prominently in the top part and in relatively long note values, while the other voices sing the chorale phrases in shorter note values and proceed in polyphonic texture. Beyond all the traditions on which Bach is building, it is also worth noting that the long-note cantus firmus technique was a centuries-old practice by Bach’s time, one of the original techniques to, for example, give structure and coherence to the earliest polyphonic settings of the Mass Ordinary.

A much longer-winded essay on a chorale tune, and the most substantial work of our program, is Bach’s motet **Jesu meine Freude** (Jesus my joy). What we call the motets of Bach are a set of works that lack the independent instrumental parts of the cantatas or Passion settings, though there is evidence that in practice instruments may have doubled the vocal lines in performance. While written in Bach’s own late Baroque idiom, they recall in their vocal scoring (with or without instrumental doubling) the Venetian motets of the late Renaissance and early Baroque. Like so much of Bach’s and other Lutheran composers’ sacred music, Bach grounds his eleven-movement composition in a Lutheran chorale tune, the Protestant analogy to the Gregorian chant melody. Some movements are straightforward chorale harmonizations, though even some of these movements see Bach fitting in an unusual degree of text “painting” into the chorale form, as when the thunder cracks and lightning

flashes in the third movement. (In these moments the chorale almost resembles the chorale prelude texture of **Vom Himmel hoch.**)

Elsewhere, Bach employs a range of musical textures, from delicate movements that suggest the trio sonata of two treble instruments and an active bass line, to those that emphatically dramatize the messages of the text in the most overt musical-rhetorical language of the day. This motet has much the effect of a Bach cantata—a much more richly-scored affair—or even a solo cantata or opera scene. The modest scoring for just five voice parts seems not to deter Bach the consummate musical dramatist.

By JS Bach's death in the middle of the 18th century, his late Baroque style, heavily adorned with counterpoint, was largely out of fashion, having been supplanted by an easier-listening style known as *galant*, a set of aesthetic priorities that led in just a few decades to the style of Mozart and Haydn. Soon after, musical Romanticism emerged as an ever-changing dialect of the musical practices of the late 18th century, with the boundary-pushing figure of Beethoven as the almost universally acknowledged founding father.

While Beethoven's shadow loomed over the period (and not always in healthy ways, if we consider the pressure of living up to this quasi-mythologized figure), Bach's influence was less direct and grew in stages. As in his own lifetime, Bach's achievements were at first known primarily through his organ music. But with the arrival of the second generation of Romantics, especially the precocious duo of Felix Mendelssohn and Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, German musical society was (re)introduced to Bach the composer of grand sacred music. The key event was a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (see above), arranged (in two senses, i.e. musically and logistically) and conducted by Felix Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn's own choral music owes much to Bach and to the Lutheran sacred musical tradition more generally. We see many echoes of 17th-century practice in his set of six motets written for various days or periods of the Christian liturgical calendar. From these we have selected the two appropriate to the season, **Im Advent** and **Weinachten**.

Fanny Hensel lived in the shadow of her brother, and under the weight of societal misogyny more generally. Both her father and brother put obstacles in the way of Fanny realizing her full potential and celebrity as a professional musician, including arranging for Fanny's music to be published under her brother's name. Yet she found her artistic voice when she could, as in her setting of a Christmas prayer, **Gebet in der Christnacht**, here arranged for chorus (and further arranged by us for high, low, then tutti ensemble) by Olivia Sparkhall. The seemingly straightforward tunefulness of Fanny's setting belies a sophisticated structure of pacing, repetition, and sequencing that builds each verse to its climax before receding.

A generation or so later, Johannes Brahms was adorned with the albatross-like label of "heir to Beethoven" by his mentor Robert Schumann. By this period, the idea of a musical canon had taken firm hold, informing the nature of (at least more conservative) notions of "classical music" to this day. Brahms himself loved old music, and not just the famous figures like Bach and Palestrina. He had a collection of music from more obscure figures from

the 16th and 17th century, and the influence of these composers is evident throughout a great deal of his output, particularly the choral music. In his setting of **Es ist das Heil uns kommen her**, he takes a page directly out of the playbook of many Lutheran composers, Bach among them, in setting a chorale tune with a long-note cantus firmus technique, with the other voices singing quicker-note points of imitation using the chorale phrases. This is just what happens in Bach's **Vom Himmel hoch**, except that in the case of Brahms, the cantus firmus is somewhat "hidden" in the baritone part.

Knut Nystedt's **Immortal Bach** is not an original composition, but rather something that resembles an arrangement. The raw material is the first portion of a chorale setting by JS Bach, "Komm süßer Tod." Nystedt instructs the performers to first sing the chorale excerpt in its unaltered version, a four-part harmonization of what to Lutherans of the day would have been a familiar tune. Then the arrangement begins: Nystedt asks the performers to sing each individual note for one of several durations, such that each part, and the entire chorale, becomes sonically "smeared" and considerably extended in time. Apart from a soprano anticipation in the second phrase, this scheme obtains for the remainder of Nystedt's arrangement.

Cecilia recently performed Adolphus Hailstork's settings of the Rubiyat, and here we turn to the piece he calls **A Christmas Canticle**. Like Bach and like many late Renaissance composers, Hailstork balances unity and variety by laying out his musical motives as points of imitation that vary from nearly canonic to only loosely related. Also like many predecessors, Bach included, Hailstork carefully chooses his rhetorical moment to switch from polyphony to homophony, or one-versus-three call and response. This flexibility yields a sort of rhapsodic approach to counterpoint, which feels fitting as he sets the prophecy from Isaiah about the birth of Jesus.

According to the composer's website, the compositional style of Zanaida Stewart Robles "can be described as energized, soulful, contrapuntal, harmonically colorful, rhythmically driven, heavily modal, occasionally with African elements and touches of progressive rock." Every one of those elements, in fact, can be discerned in Robles's hypnotic **Ecstatic Expectancy**. Melodic and textual cells overlaid in various patterns, with an irregular and often contravened meter of 7/4, together with percussion accompaniment, combine to create an atmosphere of mystical expectation.

We thus conclude our performance with these two examples of more modern musical voices that in various ways draw on, or at least echo, the musical world of JS Bach. This is not to say that Bach is a necessary influence on these composers or their works, but that there appears a commonality in practice, kindred spirits relying on similar building materials. Indeed, the story of JS Bach as being part of a community of broadly shared artistic practices, either by direct influence or shared materials, is much the point of today's program: to place his music in a broader context that—we hope—only enriches the experience of hearing his remarkable music.

— MICHAEL BARRETT

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

O magnum mysterium
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent
Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepe.
Natum videmus et choros angelorum,
collaudantes Dominum. Alleluia.

O great mystery
And wonderful sacrament,
That animals should see the
Lord born
Lying in a manger.
We see him born, and the choirs
of angels,
Praising the Lord. Alleluia.
— FROM THE MATINS
OF CHRISTMAS DAY

Hodie Christus natus est:
Hodie Salvator apparuit:
Hodie in terra canunt Angeli,
laetantur Archangeli:
Hodie exsultant justi, dicentes:
Gloria in excelsis Deo. Alleluia.

Today Christ is born:
Today the Savior appeared:
Today on Earth the Angels sing,
Archangels rejoice:
Today the righteous rejoice, saying:
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia.
— FROM THE VESPERS OF
CHRISTMAS DAY

1. **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 liebers werden.

Jesus, my joy,
My heart's pasture,
Jesus, my desire,
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.

4. 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, wenn ich schon
muß leiden,
Nicht von Jesu scheiden.

Away with all treasures!
You are my delight,
Jesus, my joy!
Away with empty honors,
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.

5. Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
das die Welt erlesen,
Mir gefallst du nicht.
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
Bleibet weit dahinten,
Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du stolze Pracht!
dir sei ganz, o Lasterleben,
gute Nacht gegeben.

Halt, was du hast,
daß Niemand deine Krone nehme,
Und sei getreu bis in den Tod,
so wirst du empfangen,
ein herrliches Reich und eine
schöne Krone
Von der Hand des Herren.

Lieber Herr Gott, wekke uns auf,
Dass wir bereit seyn, wenn dein
Sohn kommt.
Ihn mit Freuden zu empfangen
Und dir mit reinem Herzen zu dienen,
durch denselbigen deinen
lieben Sohn
Iesum Christum, Unsern Herren,
Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Et in terra pax hominibus
bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te. Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te. Glorificamus te.
Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam
gloriam tuam.
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris,
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nostri.
Suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Good night, Oh 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 splendor!
Once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you goodnight.

— JOHANN FRANCK (1618-1677)

Hold, what you have,
That no one takes your crown,
And be faithful in death,
Then you will receive
A glorious kingdom and a
beautiful crown
From the hand of the Lord.

— THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Dear Lord God, wake us up,
That we will be ready when your
son comes.
To receive him with joy
And to serve you with a
pure heart,
Through your dear son
Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

— MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

Glory to God in the highest
And on Earth peace and good will
towards men.
We praise you. We bless you.
We adore you. We glorify you.
We praise you for your great glory.
Lord God, Heavenly King,
God the Father almighty.
Lord, only begotten Son,
Jesus Christ.
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father.
You who take away the sins of
the world, have mercy on us.
Receive our prayers.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nostri.
Quoniam tu solus sanctus.
Tu solus Dominus.
Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.
Cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Who sits at the right hand
of the father,
Have mercy on us.
You alone are the holy one.
You alone are the Lord.
You alone are the most high,
Jesus Christ.
With the Holy Spirit, in the
Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her,
Ich bring' euch gute neue Mär,
Der guten Mär bring' ich so viel,
Davon ich sing'n und sagen will.

I come from Heavens high,
I bring you all good news,
Of good news I bring so much,
That I want to sing and speak on it.
— MARTIN LUTHER

1. **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 liebers werden.

Jesus, my joy,
My heart's pasture,
Jesus, my desire,
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. Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches
An denen, die in Christo Jesu sind,
Die nicht nach dem Fleische
wandeln,
Sondern nach dem Geist.

Now there is nothing damnable
about it
To those who are in Christ Jesus,
Who do not walk according
to the flesh,
But according to the spirit.

3. 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 blitz,
Ob gleich Sünd' und Hölle schrecken:
Jesus will mich decken.

Under your protection
I am free from the raging
Of all enemies.
Let Satan sniff around,
Let the enemy become embittered,
Jesus supports me.
Even though thunder cracks and
lightning flashes, Regardless of
whether sin and hell terrify,
Jesus wants to protect me.

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

For the law of the spirit,
Which makes me living in
Christ Jesus,
Has made me free
From the law of sin and death.

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

I defy the ancient dragon
I defy the jaws of death,
I defy the fear they cause.
Rage, World, and leap upon me.
I stand here and sing
In the calm of certainty.
God's power takes care of me;
Earth and hell's abyss must fall silent,
However much they roar.

6. Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich,
Sondern geistlich,
So anders Gottes Geist in
euch wohnet.
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat,
Der ist nicht sein.

But you are not of the flesh,
But of the spirit,
And so God's spirit dwells in you,
But whoever does not have
Christ's spirit
Is not his.

7. 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.

Away with all treasures!
You are my delight,
Jesus, my joy!
Away with empty honors,
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.

8. 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.

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

9. Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
Das die Welt erlesen,
Mir gefällst du nicht.

Good night, Oh Existence,
Chosen by the world,
You do not please me.

Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
Bleibet weit dahinten,
Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du stolze Pracht!
dir sei ganz, o Lasterleben,
gute Nacht gegeben.

Good night, you sins,
Stay far behind me.
Come no more to the light!
Good night, pride and splendor!
Once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you goodnight.

10. So nun der Geist des,
Der Jesum von den Toten
 auferwecket hat,
In euch wohnet, so wird
 auch derselbige,
Der Christum von den
 Toten auferwecket hat,
Eure sterbliche Leiber lebendig
machen um des willen,
Dass sein Geist in euch wohnet.

So now that the Spirit
Has thus raised Jesus from the dead,
Dwells in each of you.
The very same that raised Jesus from
 the dead,
To your mortal bodies
Makes them have live,
So that his spirit dwells in you.

11. Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,
Denn mein Freudenmeister,
Jesus, tritt herein.
Denen, die Gott lieben,
Muß auch ihr Betrübten
Lauter Zucker sein.
Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,
Dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,
Jesu, meine Freude.

Vanish, spirits of gloom,
For my joyful master,
Jesus enters in.
For those who love God
Even their grief
Must become pure delight.
Here I may have scorn and derision,
But even in the midst of suffering
 you remain,
Jesus, my joy.

— FRANCK AND ROMANS 8:1-2; 9-11

Gebet in der Christnacht

O Liebe, die am Kreuze rang,
O Liebe, die den Tod bezwang
Für alle Menschenkinder,
Gedenk'in dieser heil'gen Nacht,
Die dich zu uns herabgebracht,
Der Seelen, die dir fehlen!
O Liebe, die den Stern gesandt
hinaus in's ferne Morgenland,
die Könige zu rufen;
Die laut durch ihres Boten Mund
sich gab den armen Hirten kund,
wie bist du still geworden?

O Love, that struggled on the cross,
O Love, that conquered death
For all children of men,
Remember us on this holy night,
Who brought you down to us,
Of the souls you miss!
O Love, that send the star
Out into the distant East,
To call the kings;
That loudly through their
 messenger's mouth
Made itself known to the
 poor shepherds,
How did you become quiet?

Noch eine fromme Hirten liegt
in blinden Schlummer eingewiegt,
und träumt von grünen Bäumen.
Singt night vor ihrem Fensterlein
ein Engel: Esther, Laß mich ein,
der Heiland ist geboren?

Another pious shepherd lies
Lulled into blind slumber,
And dreams of green trees.
Sings outside her little window
at night
An angel: Esther, let me in,
Is the savior born?

— WILHELM MÜLLER (1794-1827)

Weihnachten

Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden,
und preiset Gott!
Der Heiland ist erschienen,
den der Herr verheißen.
Er hat seine Gerechtigkeit der
Welt offenbaret.
Halleluja!

Christmastime
Rejoice, ye people of the earth, and
praise God!
The redeemer is come,
whom the Lord has promised.
He has revealed his justice to
the world.
Hallelujah!

Im Advent

Lasset uns frohlocken, es nahet der
Heiland,
Den Gott uns verheißen.
Der Name des Herrn sei gelobet
in Ewigkeit.
Halleluja!

In Advent
Let us rejoice, the redeemer is coming,
Whom the Lord has promised.
The name of the Lord be
praised forever.
Hallelujah!

— FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her

Aus Gnad und lauter Güte.
Die Werk, die helfen nimmermehr,
Sie mögen nicht behüten.
Der Glaub sieht Jesum Christum an,
Der hat g'nug für uns all getan,
Er ist der Mittler worden.

Now unto us Salvation comes,
By grace and purest favor;
Our works, they offer help no more:
They cannot give protection.
But faith shall Jesus Christ behold;
Who for us all enough hath done:
He is our Intercessor.

— PAUL SPERATUS (1484-1551)

Immortal Bach

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

Come, sweet Death. Come,
blessed rest.
Come, guide me in Peace.

— ANONYMOUS

A Christmas Canticle

A Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,
And shall call his name Immanuel.
And he shall refuse evil; And he shall choose good.
Amen.

— ISAIAH 7:14-15

Ecstatic Expectancy

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!
Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Desire of nations,
Dayspring;
Key of David;
Branch of Jesse's tree;
Lord of might;
Wisdom from on high.

— PSALM 85:10

AND JOHN MASON NEALE TRANS. 1861

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MICHAEL BARRETT

Michael Barrett is a Boston-based conductor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, and teacher who has served as music director of The Boston Cecilia since 2020. He also served as Music Director of Convivium Musicum, a chamber choir specializing in Renaissance music, from 2007 until 2022. Michael is an Assistant Professor at the Berklee College of Music, where he teaches courses in conducting and European music history, and until recently served as Interim Director of the Five College Early Music Program in western Massachusetts.

Michael has performed and recorded with many professional early music ensembles, including Blue Heron, the Boston Camerata, the Huelgas Ensemble, Vox Luminis, the Handel & Haydn Society, Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Netherlands Bach Society), Seven Times Salt, Schola Cantorum of Boston, and Nota Bene, and can be heard on the harmonia mundi, Blue Heron, Coro, and Toccata Classics record labels.



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KEVIN NEEL

Kevin Neel enjoys a versatile career as organist, collaborative pianist, conductor, and singer. He has been heard at the organ in numerous venues including Symphony Hall (Boston), Old South Church, Trinity Church Copley Square, Old West Church, Methuen Memorial Music Hall, as well as numerous venues in the Southeast. He also has appeared as organ and piano accompanist for multiple choral ensembles in the New England area. In December 2016 he co-founded “et al.,” a choral ensemble whose mission is to tell stories through diverse, thoughtful programming performed

at the highest level. As a singer, he has sung with Emmanuel Music, Cantata Singers, Marsh Chapel Choir, and VOICES 21C. He is Director of Music and Organist at All Saints Episcopal Church in Worcester, where he directs the All Saints Choir (choristers and adults), manages the Music Series, oversees music education programs, plays the Rice Memorial Organ (IV /132 Aeolian Skinner Op. 909), and collaborates with Worcester-area music and arts organizations. He previously served as Organist and Chapel Choir Director at Emmanuel Church in Boston. He was named in the Diapason Magazine’s 2019 Class of “20 under 30” which recognizes young talents in the fields of organ and harpsichord performance, organ and harpsichord building, carillon, and church music. He holds degrees from Boston University in Choral Conducting and Indiana University in Organ Performance and is originally from the Charlotte, NC area.



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