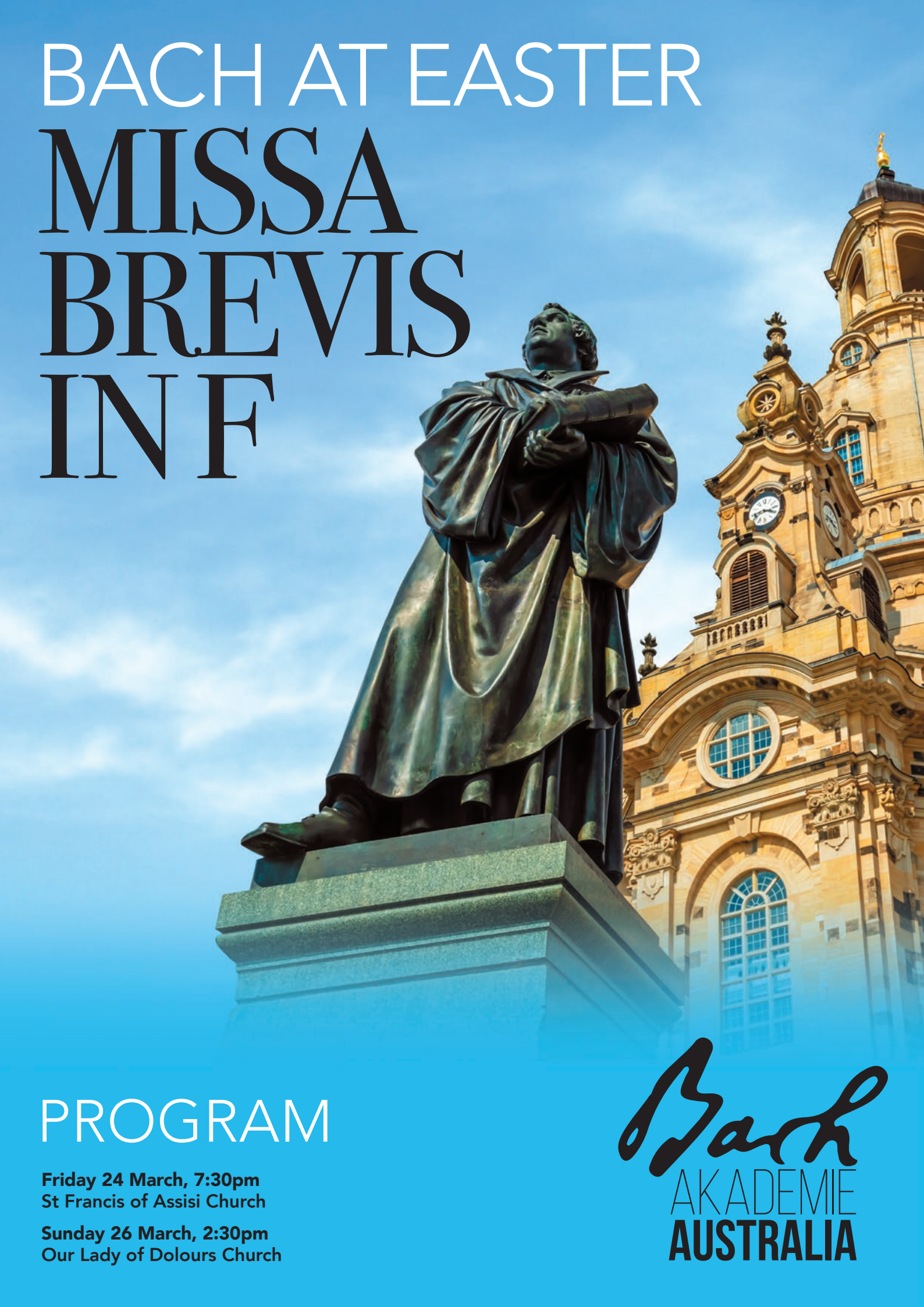


BACH AT EASTER

MISSA BREVIS INF



PROGRAM

Friday 24 March, 7:30pm
St Francis of Assisi Church

Sunday 26 March, 2:30pm
Our Lady of Dolours Church

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our first concert series of 2023! It is so exciting to be presenting an entire year's worth of music to our audiences once again, in a musical landscape which is hopefully untainted by the shadow of the pandemic.

Easter is a time of year that always excites me. It is so full of vibrant, life-affirming music, social events, family gatherings, and even a public holiday! It also contains a duality which I find endlessly fascinating. When one looks into the music written for Easter, one starts to discover music of endless joy and renewal, but also music of the deepest sorrow and anguish in equal

measure. Easter has been a source of inspiration for so many composers, and still is. However today we will focus on the one composer who I believe encapsulated and distilled the very essence of this duality more successfully and with more brilliance and profundity than anyone. J.S. Bach of course...

I have chosen three works of Bach that for me contain the duality of Easter that exists in all of us, and very much touches on the reality of the human condition; that of both light and dark, loss and renewal. In our opening cantata, Bach uses two allegorical characters named 'Hope' and 'Fear' who debate vigorously whether we should celebrate or mourn. The light and hope win in the end, and life triumphs over death. His motet 'Komm, Jesu, komm', is a masterclass in restrained beauty and emotion. By paring his forces back to just 8 voices *senza accompagnamento*, Bach invites us to quietly contemplate loss and the promise of an afterlife in the most poignant and intimate way.

His *Missa Brevis* in F is very sadly not often performed, most likely due to the fiendishly difficult and virtuosic writing for corni. However, we are blessed to possess world class instrumental and vocal performers here in Australia who will showcase Bach's miraculous composition for you today. This mass, although not the full Latin mass, has it all and contains all aspects of Easter: joy, contemplation, sadness and grief, and ultimately celebration.

You, our audience love this music as much as we do, of that I am certain. I very much hope you enjoy listening to it as much as we will enjoy performing it for you.

Madeleine Easton

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BACH AKADEMIE AUSTRALIA





ORCHESTRA

Madeleine Easton – Director
Simone Slattery – Violin 1
Ella Bennetts – Violin 1
James Tarbotton – Violin 1
Rafael Font – Violin 2
Isaiah Bondfield – Violin 2
John Ma – Viola
Anthea Cottee – Cello
Pippa MacMillan – Double Bass
Neal Peres Da Costa – Harpsichord
Nathan Cox – Organ
Michael Dixon – Corno 1
Jenny McCleod-Sneyd – Corno 2
Kailen Cresp – Oboe 1
Fiona McMillan – Oboe 2
Richard Fomison – Trumpet

CHOIR

Susannah Lawergren – Soprano
Brianna Louwen – Soprano
Anna Fraser – Soprano
Anna Sandstrom – Soprano
Hannah Fraser – Alto
Stephanie Dillon – Alto
Cassandra Doyle – Alto
Richard Butler – Tenor
Timothy Reynolds – Tenor
Eric Peterson – Tenor
Andrew Fysh – Bass
Jack Stephens – Bass
Phillip Murray – Bass

Bach Akademie Australia acknowledges the generosity of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra for the loan of their Klop chamber organ for this concert series.

PROGRAM

J.S. Bach Cantata 'Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen' BWV 66

1. Chorus 'Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen'
2. Recit (B) 'Es bricht das Grab und damit unsre Not'
Jack Stephens
3. Aria (B) 'Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen'
Jack Stephens
4. Recit (A/T) 'Bei Jesu Leben freudig sein'
Stephanie Dillon, Richard Butler
5. Aria (A/T) 'Ich furchte zwar/nicht des Grabes Finsternissen'
Stephanie Dillon, Richard Butler
6. Chorale 'Alleluja'

J.S. Bach Motet 'Komm, Jesu, komm' BWV 229

Choir 1: *Susannah Lawergren, Stephanie Dillon, Richard Butler, Andrew Fysh*

Choir 2: *Brianna Louwen, Hannah Fraser, Timothy Reynolds, Jack Stephens*

— INTERVAL —

J.S. Bach Missa Brevis in F major BWV 233

1. Kyrie
2. Gloria
3. Domine Deus
Andrew Fysh – Bass
4. Qui Tollis
Susannah Lawergren – Soprano
5. Quoniam
Hannah Fraser – Alto
6. Cum Sancto Spiritu

PROGRAM NOTES

Given the depth and breadth of the music composed for Easter by Bach, it was no easy task choosing exactly what we would perform this year. However, the choice became easy when I recalled one particularly wonderful performance of Bach's Cantata BWV 66 with the Melbourne Bach Choir last year. I'd never performed that cantata before, and it was a revelation! Bach's Easter music is joyful, but this truly was on another level.

Composed for the Second Day of Easter in Leipzig and first performed on 10 April 1724, it embodies entirely the jubilation and gratitude felt over the resurrection of Christ. The whole cantata was repurposed by Bach for this occasion from an earlier secular work, the *Serenata Der Himmel dacht auf Anhalts Ruhm und Glück* composed in 1718 in Köthen to celebrate the twenty-fourth birthday of his employer Leopold, Prince of Anhalt-Köthen on 10 December. Sadly only a fragment of the original work survived, but we do know that the opening chorus of this cantata was the original closing chorus of the original work. In our Leipzig version presented here, Bach employs two contrasting instrumental groups of strings and oboes who alternate with one another, crowning the ensemble with a glittering trumpet who reinforces the highest melodic line in fiendishly fast demisemiquavers. The overall effect is a true representation of virtuosic exuberance. The middle section asks for not only a reduction in tempo but also in sonority. He employs mainly the alto and tenor, who illustrate mourning and fear in a sorrowful series of heartfelt descending chromatic passages and suspensions.

The first aria, sung by a bass, is marvellously dance-like having been inspired by its earlier secular model. The words "Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen" (Let a song of thanks ring forth to the Highest) are perfectly represented in both vocal and instrumental textures, with Bach's mastery of word painting on display in the middle section where he



'Christ with two disciples on the road to Emmaus' c.1655. Workshop of Rembrandt.

The text reflects these different reactions to the news of the Resurrection of Jesus, which might be attributed to the two disciples discussing the events on their walk, and to the listener of the cantata.

contrasts a long note over six bars on "Frieden" (peace) and coloraturas on "lebe" (live).

The following recitative is extremely unusual as Bach assigns allegorical characters to his two voices, in keeping with the secular original. Here we have 'Schwachheit' (weakness), sung by the alto, and 'Zuversicht' (confidence), sung by the tenor. These became 'Furcht' (Fear) and 'Hoffnug' (hope) in an even later 1731 version. It is an extremely complex and extended movement where the two voices sing of their own hope or fear, at times arguing, but ultimately coming together in hope and faith. The two voices then join in joyful celebration in the following aria, accompanied by a wonderfully figurative solo violin line. There is much to say about the closing chorale of this cantata beginning with the fact that it employs the second part of the hymn "Christ ist erstanden". This hymn dates from the 12th century Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*, originally codified by Wipo of Burgundy around 1040. The verses were then adapted by Martin Luther. This is the only use by Bach of "Christ ist erstanden" in a vocal work, but he used the related hymn "Christ lag in Todesbanden" in his early chorale

cantata of the same name which was reworked by Bach and performed the very next day in Leipzig on the 11th of April 1724.

The motets as a collection, are some of Bach's most fascinating works. The genre was clearly dear to him, as he continued to write them despite them generally being considered an archaic form of music making, and are also among the greatest achievements of choral polyphony in the baroque period. They are also somewhat shrouded in mystery as it is unknown how many he actually wrote, and for what occasions. What we do know is that they are all singularly remarkable works, and were held in such high regard that they are the only works of Bach to have been continuously performed after his death until the great Bach revival of the early 1800's.

To provide balance to our program and represent the other side of Easter, I have chosen one of Bach's most beautiful motets, 'Komm, Jesu, komm', first performed in Leipzig in 1732. It is one of Bach's motets written for a funeral, however the specific occasion is not known. It is staggering in complexity, being written for 8 voices. Bach utilises the first and last verses of Leipzig poet Paul Thymich's text, a paraphrase of John 14, verse 6 ('I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me') beautifully in a traditional polychoral style before transitioning into a simple four-part minuet-like section to finish. We have decided to perform the motet acapella, as we believe it is not only the most historically accurate way, but also a wonderful contrast in sonority for our listeners. We can provide a fantastic quote from a St Thomas' school ordinance from 1723 regarding the students singing for a funeral. It reads that the students are:

Expected to wear the time-honoured black garments, to keep them neat and clean as much as possible, to walk in a processional manner ahead

of the body; and furthermore, not to be up to the least bit of mischief, chatter, to get out of or even leave altogether their line, but rather to sing sedulously together the lieder from the songbooks they have with them and, furthermore, to observe a proper consonance, and to remain quiet in their respective places during the funeral sermon, as well as in the cemetery.

To conclude our Easter celebration, I have chosen Bach's Missa Brevis in F. I first discovered this piece about 6 years ago when it appeared as part of a program that the English Baroque Soloists and Monteverdi Choir toured with. I was immediately struck by the sheer brilliance of it, especially the use of the two Corni. I remember thinking, I thought I knew Bach's style, and then of course, along comes a piece which utterly surprises and delights you! I am absolutely delighted to be presenting this work to you. All four of the Missa Brevi were composed in the 1730's, contain only the Kyrie and Gloria of the Latin mass, and are all 6 movements each. Of the 24 movements of the four Missa Brevi, 19 have been linked to pre-existing cantata movements,

Lysa Castle in what is now Poland where the first performance of the Missa Brevis possibly took place.



however the F major mass contains a relatively large amount of new material.

In this mass, the opening Kyrie is almost Palestrina-like in its simplicity, with the strings exactly doubling the vocal lines. It is unique amongst these masses in its tri-part structure, and due to his use of not one but two Cantus firmi – the Kyrie melody of the Gregorian litany sung by the basses, and the Lutheran Agnus Dei 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes' played by the Corni and oboes. In complete and wonderful contrast, the Gloria explodes with glorious polyphonic and contrapuntal complexity and is on such a scale as to completely dwarf the following movements. The sheer joy of this movement makes it a jewel amongst all of Bach's compositions. The Domine Deus is sung by a bass and employs a rich, C major sonority throughout. The Qui Tollis has its origins in Cantata BWV 102, but here is transformed into a heartbreaking aria sung by a soprano accompanied by a poignant oboe obbligato. The Quoniam follows, with its original also in Cantata 102, sung by an alto and given a serious D minor slant reinforced by a chromatic and jagged obbligato violin line. The concluding 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' returns to a tutti choir and orchestra texture with the strings, oboes and corni at times doubling the vocal lines for emphasis, whilst decorating the polyphony with vibrant decorative figures. Returning to the home key of F, a pervading mood of comfort and joy ensues, guiding us home.

The term 'Missa Brevis' does in no way do these works justice, as they are all masterpieces in their own right, and utterly encapsulate the inherent duality of the Easter story and experience.

– Notes by Madeleine Easton





A UNIVERSE OF

ONE

THE SOLO SONATAS AND PARTITAS

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CONCERT 2: Friday 16th June, 7pm, Paddington Uniting Church, Paddington

CONCERT 3: Saturday 17th June, 7pm, Paddington Uniting Church, Paddington

CONCERT 4: Sunday 18th June, 2:30pm, Our Lady of Dolours, Chatswood

BOOKINGS

www.bachakademieaustralia.com.au 1300 785 377

J.S. Bach Cantata 'Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen' BWV 66

1. Coro

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen,
Entweicht, ihr Schmerzen,
Es lebet der Heiland und herrschet in euch.
Ihr könntet verjagen
Das Trauren, das Fürchten, das angstliche Zagen,
Der Heiland erquicket sein geistliches Reich.

2. Recitative

Es bricht das Grab und damit unsre Not,
Der Mund verkündigt Gottes Taten;
Der Heiland lebt, so ist in Not und Tod
Den Gläubigen vollkommen wohl geraten.

3. Aria

Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen
Vor sein Erbarmen und ewige Treu.
Jesus erscheinet, uns Friede zu geben,
Jesus beruft uns, mit ihm zu leben,
Täglich wird seine Barmherzigkeit neu.

4. Recitative

Tenor:
Bei Jesu Leben freudig sein
1st unsrer Brust ein heller Sonnenschein.
Mit Trost erfüllt auf seinen Heiland schauen
Und in sich selbst ein Himmelreich erbauen,
1st wahrer Christen Eigentum.
Doch weil ich hier ein himmlisch Labsal habe,
So sucht mein Geist hier seine Lust und Ruh,
Mein Heiland ruft mir kräftig zu:
Mein Grab und Sterben bringt euch Leben,
Mein Auferstehn ist euer Trost.
Mein Mund will zwar ein Opfer geben,
Mein Heiland, doch wie klein,
Wie wenig, wie so gar geringe
Wird es vor dir, o großer Sieger, sein,
Wenn ich vor dich ein Sieg- und Danklied bringe.

Tenor:
Mein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,

Alt:
Kein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,

Tenor:
Es hält ihn nicht der Tod in Banden.

Alt:
Es hält ihn noch der Tod in Banden.

Tenor:
Wie, dort noch Furcht in einer Brust entstehn?

Alt:
Läßt wohl das Grab die Toten aus?

1. Chorus

Rejoice, you hearts,
Run away, you sorrows,
the saviour lives and rules in you.
You can chase away
the mourning, the fear, the anxious trembling,
the saviour refreshes his spiritual kingdom.

2. Recitative

The grave is broken and with it our distress,
the mouth proclaims God's deeds;
the saviour lives, so in distress and death
all turns out perfectly well for believers.

3. Aria

Let a song of thanks resound to the highest
for his pity and everlasting faithfulness.
Jesus appears to give us peace,
Jesus calls us to live with him,
every day his compassion is made new.

4. Recitative

Tenor: (Hope)
To be joyful in Jesus' life
is a bright ray of sunshine in our breast.
Filled with comfort to look upon their saviour
and to build within themselves a heavenly kingdom
is the possession of true Christians.
But since I have here a heavenly refreshment,
my spirit seeks here its delight and rest.
My saviour calls powerfully to me:
"My grave and dying bring you life,
my resurrection is your comfort."
My mouth will indeed give an offering,
my saviour, yet how little,
how small, how very slight
will it be before you, oh great conqueror,
if I bring before you a song of victory and
thanksgiving.

Tenor: (Hope)
My eye sees the saviour arisen,

Alto: (Fear)
No eye sees the saviour arisen

Tenor: (Hope)
Death does not hold him in its bonds.

Alto: (Fear)
Death still holds him in its bonds.

Tenor: (Hope)
How can fear still arise in any breast?

Alto: (Fear)
Does the grave then give up the dead?

Tenor:

Wenn Gott in einem Grabe lieget,
So halten Grab und Tod ihn nicht

Alt:

Ach Gott! der du den Tod besieget,
Dir weicht des Grabes Stein, das Siegel bricht,
Ich glaube, aber hilt mir Schwachen,
Du kannst mich stärker machen;
Besiege mich und meinen Zweifelmuth,
Der Gott, der Wunder tut,
Hat meinen Geist durch Trostes Kraft gestärket,

Dass er den auferstandnen Jesum merket.

5. Aria – Duetto

Tenor:

Ich fürchte nicht des Grabes Finsternissen

Alt:

Ich fürchte zwar des Grabes Finsternissen

Tenor:

Und hoffete mein Heil sei nicht entrissen.

Alt:

Und klagete mein Heil sei nun entrissen

Beide:

Nun ist mein Herze voller Trost,
Und wenn sich auch ein Feind erbost,
Will ich in Gott zu siegen wissen.

6. Choral

Alleluja! Alleluja! Alleluja!
Des solln wir alle froh sein,
Christus will unser Trost sein.
Kyrie eleis.

Tenor: (Hope)

If God lies in a grave,
then the grave and death do not hold him.

Alto: (Fear)

Ah God! you who conquer death,
for you the tombstone yields, the seal breaks.
I believe, but help my weakness,
you can make me stronger
Conquer me and my doubtful spirit.
The God, who works wonders,
has strengthened my spirit through the might
of his comfort
so that it perceives the risen Jesus.

5. Aria – Duet

Tenor: (Hope)

I do not fear the grave's darkness

Alto: (Fear)

I fear indeed the grave's darkness

Tenor: (Hope)

and hoped that my saviour should not be torn away.

Alto: (Fear)

and mourned that my saviour should be torn away.

Both:

Now my heart is full of comfort,
and if an enemy is infuriated
I shall know how to conquer in God.

6. Chorale

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
For this we should all be joyful
Christ will be our comfort
Lord, have mercy.

English Translation by Francis Browne

J.S. Bach Motet 'Komm, Jesu, komm' BWV 229

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.

English Translation by Francis Browne

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.

J.S. Bach Missa Brevis in F BWV 233

1. Chor

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison

2. Chor

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.

3. Arie

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.
Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe.
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.

4. Arie

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Miserere nobis.
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
Suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

5. Arie

Quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus,
Tu solus altissimus, Jesu Christe.

6. Chor

Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris,
Amen.

1. Chorus

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

2. Chorus

Glory to God in the highest,
And peace on earth to men of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
We worship you, we glorify you.
We give you thanks for your great glory.

3. Aria

Lord God, King of Heaven,
God the Father Almighty.
Lord only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

4. Aria

You who take away the sin of the world,
Have mercy on us.
You who take away the sin of the world,
Hear our prayer
You who sit at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

5. Aria

For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ.

6. Chorus

With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father,
Amen.



Bach Akademie Australia is dedicated to performing the works of J.S. Bach. It was established in late 2016 by Australian violinist Madeleine Easton who has recently returned after 19 years of living and working in Europe. Its aim is to enrich and enhance the musical life of Australia. The ensemble's focus on mastery of performance, authenticity and originality of interpretation brings the music of J.S. Bach to life. Bach Akademie Australia is also focused on forging close links with academic institutions around the country in order to establish educational and learning opportunities for young musicians.

Having been inspired by the world's leading Bach exponents, Bach Akademie Australia aims to give audiences the very best experience of J.S. Bach's music. Bach Akademie Australia gave its first public performance in April 2017, which sold out in Sydney, and later that year at the Canberra International Music Festival. These concerts were met with glowing reviews in *Limelight Magazine* and *Canberra City News*. The orchestra also made its debut recording for ABC Classic FM of Bach's Cantata BWV 4 'Christ lag in Todesbanden' and Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, both of which have been broadcast nationwide.

The subsequent years saw Bach Akademie Australia consolidate its growing reputation as one of Australia's outstanding period instrument ensembles by further sold out performances in Sydney and Canberra to critical acclaim. 2019 saw the formation of the Bach Akademie Australia Choir which performed to great acclaim with the orchestra in their debut performance of Bach's 'Ascension Oratorio' in March of that year.

Bach

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Charles Manning
Libby Manuel
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Dr John Phillips
Victor Pigott
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Emmet and Patricia Schluter
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