

Cape Consort

LUDWIG, CHRISTOPH & SEBASTIAN BACH

Motets by three members of the Bach family

Wednesday, 24 August, 20:00

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CAPE TOWN

Sunday, 28 August

11:00

ST. NORBERT'S PRIORY
KOMMETJIE

16:00

WELGELEGEN CHURCH
STELLENBOSCH

Tickets at the door: R 120

(R 100 pensioners / R 80 students)

The Joan St Leger
Lindbergh
Charitable Trust

enquiries@mucavi.com



Concert presented by the South African Early Music Trust (SAEMT)

Sunday, 28 August: 11h, St. Norberts Priory, Rubbi Road, Kommetjie

Johann Ludwig, Christoph & Sebastian Bach

Motets by three members of the Bach family

Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703)	Mit Weinen hebt sichs an <i>Chorale for SATB & bc</i>
Johann Christoph Bach	Fürchte dich nicht <i>motet for SATTB & bc</i>
Johann Christoph Bach	Lieber Herre Gott, wecke uns auf <i>motet for double choir & bc</i>
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	Liebster Jesu wir sind hier <i>Chorale Prelude for organ, BWV 731</i>
Johann Sebastian Bach	Komm Jesu, komm <i>motet for double choir, BWV 229</i>
Johann Sebastian Bach	Sarabande <i>from Cello Suite in c minor, BWV 1011</i>
Johann Ludwig Bach (1677-1731)	Unsere Trübsal <i>motet for six voices & bc</i>
Johann Sebastian Bach	'Dorian' Toccata & Fugue in d minor, BWV 538
Johann Sebastian Bach	Singet dem Hern ein neues Lied, <i>motet for double choir, BWV 225</i>



Antoinette Blyth, Elsabé Richter – soprano
Lente Louw, Monika Voysey – alto
Willem Bester, Warren Vernon-Driscoll – tenor
Reinhardt Liebenberg, Patrick Cordery – bass
Diederick Basson, Bill Robson – organ
Hans Huyssen – Baroque cello, musical direction

Programme Notes

In an obituary on his father JS Bach, CPE Bach notes that, without exception, every member in six generations descending from progenitor Veit Bach were musical ('surrendered to music') and – with very few exceptions – even took up musical professions. He describes the family as a lineage 'onto all of whose members nature has seemingly bestowed a love and deftness for music as a general gift.' Reflecting on this remarkable musical pedigree himself, Sebastian, in his 50th year, compiled a genealogy titled *Ursprung der musicalisch-Bachischen Familie*. Indeed it seems apt to equate being musical with being a Bach as this document turns out to chronicle the biographical dates of no fewer than 53 musicians. A recent musicological survey has added another 30 musicians to the list, corroborating the fact that the Bach clan must be considered a singularly outstanding musical family.

Though born in close proximity – on a map of Thuringia, their respective hometowns of Eisenach, Arnstadt and Meiningen form the corners of an equilateral triangle ca. 45 km apart from each other – the three composers in this program represent three different 'lines' of the Bach family. Sebastian belongs to the Franconian line, Christoph to the Arnstadt line and Ludwig to the Meiningen line. As with most of the Bachs, extant biographical data is scant and may in each case aptly be summarized by CPE Bach's phrase: 'surrendered to music'.

Johann Ludwig Bach was an oboe player and director of the court orchestra in Meiningen for 20 years (1711-31).¹ Although he must have composed a large amount of music in his capacity as orchestral director, all but two instrumental works – an Overture and a Concerto for 2 violins – have been lost. That a number of his cantatas, masses and motets have survived we owe to JS Bach, who copied and edited several of these works in preparation for performing them in Leipzig.

Johann Christoph Bach (Sebastian's cousin once removed) was organist at the court chapels in Arnstadt and Eisenach, as well as harpsichordist of the court orchestra in Erfurt. Though these positions straddled the realms of sacred and secular music, only a handful of sacred compositions have survived and, once again, arguably only because of JS Bach's collector's zeal. All of them are contained in what has become known as the 'Altbachisches Archiv', a collection of some 200 manuscript pages with about 20 works that Sebastian held in special esteem, studied and performed, even though the taste of the time (in which only contemporary music counted) considered them outdated.

Perhaps this deliberate cognisance of his predecessors' works offers a clue to explaining Johann Sebastian Bach's singular position within this gifted family. Prior to the relatively well-documented 27 years as Thomaskantor in Leipzig, his biography is just as shrouded as that of all his relatives. In effect, here was just another Bach musician working in a local Thuringian musical tradition. However, from his on-going practical engagement with the older family member's compositions, it is clear that he was not collecting them as souvenirs, but studied them to gauge his own historical and artistic position. Johann Sebastian must have had a very clear understanding of his native musical tradition to then exceed its boundaries in a way that is immediately apparent from the very outset of his compositional activity. Strongly rooted in local traditions, his music never questions venerated genres such as suites, chorale preludes, cantatas, motets etc. but on the contrary, expands their scope and thinks of them as universal forms. What comes over as most charming, but perhaps somewhat narrow and dutifully pious interpretations of Lutheran, German and Baroque concepts in the works of his predecessors, has quite a different air in JS Bach's output. The same content is conveyed, but now in a far more vigorous, enlightened and cosmopolitan manner. Striving for the perfect harmony and formal balance within existing genres, he time and again achieves – one hesitates to use this clichéd phrase, but for once it is justified – musical perfection.

¹ Incidentally this orchestra has been in uninterrupted existence for 326 years and even trades under its original name of Meiningen Hofkapelle again. Venerated as one of Europe's oldest orchestras, it boasts a glamorous history for having premiered works by Liszt, Wagner, Grieg, Brahms and Richard Strauss under the baton of the composers themselves. One is hardly surprised to learn that it is currently directed by a young Swiss conductor with the name of Philippe Bach.

Texts & Translations

Mit Weinen hebt sich's an, dies jammervolle Leben,
es muss das kleinste Kind
der bittern Tränen Schar sich weinend untergeben,
eh' es sich noch besinnt.
Wenn's kaum geboren ist, so höret man doch schon,
dass sich bei ihm erhebt der schmerzenvolle Ton.

Das Mittel unsrer Zeit ist überschwemmt mit Sorgen,
wir sind des Glückes Spiel.
Der weinet durch die Nacht bis an den lieben Morgen,
und hilft ihm doch nicht viel.
Der Furcht- und Hoffnungsstreit zerquälet unsern Sinn
und nimmt, eh man es denkt, die besten Jahre hin.

Das Alter kömmt herbei, die kummervollen Jahre,
die uns gefallen nicht,
und führen uns den Weg zur trüben Totenbahre.
Wann dieses dann geschieht,
so ist es aus mit uns; der tränenvolle Lauf
hat nun das Ziel erreicht und hört mit Weinen auf.

Fürchte dich nicht, denn ich hab' dich erlöst,
ich hab' dich bei deinem Namen gerufen,
du bist mein.
Wahrlich, ich sage dir:
Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.

O Jesu du, mein Hilf und Ruh,
ich bitte dich mit Tränen:
Hilf, dass ich mich bis ins Grab
nach dir möge sehen.

Jes 43:1; Luk 23:43; Johann Rist

Lieber Herr Gott, wecke uns auf,
dass wir bereit sein, wenn dein Sohn kommt,
ihn mit Freuden zu empfangen
und dir mit reinem Herzen zu dienen,
durch denselbigen, deinen lieben Sohn
Jesum Christum, unsern Herren. Amen

nach Matth. 25, 1-13

Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde.
Die Kraft verschwind't je mehr und mehr,
ich sehne mich nach deinem Friede;
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!

Komm, 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.

Paul Thymich

It begins with weeping, this wretched life;
the smallest child must
submit, weeping, to the host of bitter tears
before he is yet aware.
He is scarcely born, but already one hears
the anguished sound rising from him.

The mid-time of our life overflows with tribulation,
we are the playthings of fate.
He who weeps all night until the welcome morning
finds little relief.
The struggle of fear and hope torments our minds,
and takes from us, before we know it, our best years.

Old age approaches, the sorrowful years,
that hold no pleasure,
and lead our way to the dismal funeral bier.
When this comes to pass,
then it is ended for us; the tear-filled course
has attained its goal, and ends its weeping.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by your name:
You are mine.
Truly, truly I say to you:
This day will you be with Me in Paradise.

O Jesus, You my aid and rest,
I beseech you with tears:
Help me, that even unto the grave
I might yearn for You.

Isaiah 43:1; Luke 23:43; Johann Rist

Dear Lord God, awaken us
so that we should be ready,
joyously to receive your son when he returns,
and to serve you with pure hearts
through him, your dearest son,
Jesus Christ, our saviour. Amen.
paraphrase on Matth. 25, 1-13

Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary.
My strength fails more and more,
I long for your peace;
the bitter path becomes too hard.

Come, come, I will yield to You;
You are the right path, the truth and life.

Hence I submit myself into Your hands
and say: World, good night!
As my life's course runs towards its end,
my spirit is fearless.
It shall linger with its creator,
as Jesus is and remains the true way to life.

Unsere Trübsal, die zeitlich und leicht ist,
schaffet eine Ewige und über alle Maß
wichtige Herrlichkeit uns,
die wir nicht sehen auf das Sichtbare,
sondern auf das Unsichtbare.

2. Kor. 4:17 & 18

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 Reigen;
mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.

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.

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
Mit allen unsern Sachen
Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
Und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
So wirst du's ferner machen.
Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
Auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.

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

Ps 149:1-3, Johann Gramman, Ps 150:2, 6

For our light and momentary troubles
are achieving for us an eternal glory
that far outweighs them all.
So we fix our eyes not on what is seen,
but on what is unseen.

2 Cor. 4, 17 & 18

Sing to the Lord a new song.
Let the communion of saints praise him.
Let Israel rejoice in him who made them.
Let the children of Zion take joy in their King.
Let them praise his name in the dance.
Let them play to him on the timbrel and harp.

As a father is merciful
To his dear little children,
So is the Lord to us all,
As long as in purity like a child we fear him.
He knows our frailty;
God knows we are but dust,
Like raked grass,
A flower, and falling leaves:
Once the wind blows over them
They are gone,
Thus we fade away,
Our end is near.

God, continue to have mercy on us,
For without you
All our affairs come to nothing.
Therefore be our shield and light,
And if our hope does not deceive us,
You shall continue to be so.
Happy are those who firmly insist
On putting their trust in you and your favor.

Praise the Lord for his acts.
Praise Him for his great splendor.
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

Ps 149:1-3, Johann Gramman, Ps 150:2, 6

Upcoming Performance

Sunday, 25 September 2016, 16h00, Lutheran Church, 98 Strand Street, Cape Town

Polychoral Splendour

Spatially distributed performance of works by
Lassus, Gabrieli, Praetorius & Schütz

Collaborative concert with the
Cape Consort

Stellenbosch High School Senior Choir – directed by Xander Kritzinger

Cape Town Chamber Choir – directed by Marijke Roos

an ensemble of recorders, violins, viol, cornetto, sackbuts, dulcian & bc

overall direction: Hans Huysen