

A portrait of Iestyn Davies, a man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark blue cardigan over a light blue button-down shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background is a light-colored wall with vertical white lines, possibly a window frame or a decorative wall.

Haymarket
Opera company

Iestyn Davies: *From Fear to Faith*

Saturday, March 9, 2019

Old St. Patrick's Church | Chicago, Illinois

Dear Haymarket Friends,

We could hardly have dared imagine at the debut of Haymarket Opera Company that one of the world's most renowned countertenors, Iestyn Davies, would join us in a program of Bach Cantatas just eight years later. Thank you for being here tonight to listen to this great artist as he sings some of Bach's most intensely spiritual music.

Haymarket is growing fast and we are excited that you are on board with us as we build an even more vibrant artistic future. Many generous donors have partnered with Haymarket to bring timeless storytelling through music and theater directly to you, our cherished audience. We are especially grateful to David J. Rice and Suzanne L. Wagner for sponsoring tonight's concert. We simply couldn't bring such performances to you without the helping hands of arts lovers like these.

We hope we'll see you at our next fully-staged opera performance, Telemann's *Pimpinone* at the Studebaker Theater, March 30 through April 2. Haymarket favorites Erica Schuller and Ryan de Ryke reprise their critically acclaimed portrayals in an updated production of this riotous comedy.

And we look forward to celebrating with you on May 9th at our Gala Fundraiser - the Early Opera Cabaret - at the Arts Club of Chicago. Celebrate the 400th anniversary of Monteverdi's seventh book of madrigals—pure genius!—and get a preview of our ninth season.

Now we invite you to open your ears, minds, and hearts to the transcendent art of Bach, Muffat, and Telemann.

With gratitude,

—Craig Trompeter, *Artistic Director* and Dave Moss, *Executive Director*



Haymarket Opera Company enriches the musical community of Chicago and the Midwest with performances of 17th- and 18th-century operas and oratorios using period performance practices. HOC seeks to engage audiences of all ages with passionate performances of familiar as well as forgotten works, staged intimately and guided by close attention to details of the libretti and scores.

Iestyn Davies: *From Fear to Faith*
Saturday, March 9, 2019
Old St. Patrick's Church | Chicago, Illinois

Program

Widerstehe doch der Sünde Johann Sebastian Bach
BWV 54 (1685–1750)

Sonata da camera no. 5 from Armonico Tributo Georg Muffat
(1653–1704)

Bekennen will ich seinen Namen Johann Sebastian Bach
BWV 200

Intermission

Suite in D Major for viola da gamba and strings Georg Philipp Telemann
TWV 55:D6 (1681–1767)

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust Johann Sebastian Bach
BWV 170

*This performance is generously supported
by Suzanne L. Wagner and David J. Rice.*



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Program Notes

BY JESSE ROSENBERG

The vocal portions of this evening's program, all works for solo alto drawn from the extensive output of sacred music by Johann Sebastian Bach, date from widely separated periods of the composer's creative life.

Cantata BWV 54, Widerstehe doch der Sünde, with a text by the Darmstadt court poet Georg Christian Lehms, belongs to Bach's period in Weimar (1708–17), initially as an organist and from 1714 as a concertmaster. The precise chronology of Bach's church cantatas for Weimar is uncertain. Bach scholar Christoph Wolff has observed that the text of Cantata 54 is concerned with the need to resist sin, a very general religious theme which could permit the work to be heard at a number of different times in the church year, and thus advantageous for an organist; he therefore assigns a tentative date of pre-1714. It is impossible to state definitively the Sunday for which the cantata was written, though the scholarly consensus is that it was either "Oculi" (the third Sunday of Lent) or the seventh Sunday after Trinity, since on both of these days the theme of sin is taken up in the readings from the Epistles. The overall modesty of the layout, consisting of two arias separated by a recitative, is subtly belied by remarkable features, including the extraordinary instrumental opening of the first aria, marked by extended pedal points beneath unprepared dissonance—perhaps suggestive of the sin we are enjoined to reject, which the aria proceeds to do in steady, forthright eighth-note rhythms. The second aria is set as an elaborate fugue on a chromatically descending subject, accompanied throughout by a countersubject.

According to the 1754 obituary notice on J.S. Bach published by his son C.P.E. Bach together with J.F. Agricola, Bach completed five cycles of cantatas for all the Sundays and principal feasts of the church year. If this is true—as Bach scholars have always assumed—then over one hundred of Bach's church cantatas are lost, perhaps irretrievably. The aria *Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200* is an example of his technique of reworking music by other composers, in this case a tenor aria from a passion setting by Bach's almost exact contemporary Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690–1749). Stölzel, several of whose works were present in Bach's music library, was also the author of the charming song "Bist du bei mir," long attributed, and still often misattributed, to Bach. Stölzel's passion oratorio, originally heard in 1720, enjoyed a wide reception, with performances taking place in Gotha, Rudolstadt, and Nuremberg, aside from the one which Bach himself supervised in Leipzig in 1734. In his reworking, Bach transposed Stölzel's aria from G major to E major to accommodate the higher alto range, rewrote an oboe part for the violin, and integrated an independent bassoon part into the basso

continuo, thus drastically simplifying an instrumentation which had originally featured contrasting timbres. At the same time he scrapped the *da capo* form of Stölzel's aria, a change made necessary by the fact that Bach was now setting a six-line poem (the original text had only four lines). Handwriting and watermark evidence point to the period 1741–43 for Bach's arrangement. The fact that the work consists of a single movement was for many years regarded as grounds for viewing it as a surviving fragment of a larger work, a position still sustained by some scholars. More recently, however, Bach scholar Peter Wollny has pointed out that this is far from proven, arguing that it might well have been an independent work, perhaps intended as a devotional song for private worship—and thus not even to be classed with the church cantatas.

Vernügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170 is one of two solo alto cantatas composed by Bach in the summer of 1726 to a text by Georg Christian Lehms, the Darmstadt court librarian. Part of Bach's third annual cantata cycle, it was written for the sixth Sunday after Trinity. The text of the cantata, which alternates between arias and recitatives, is closely connected to the assigned liturgical readings for that day. The dance-like opening aria effectively depicts the "Himmelseintracht" (heavenly harmony or concord) referenced in the third line—the spiritual peace to which the heart aspires. The ensuing recitative, with its paraphrases from the liturgical readings from that day (Matthew 5 and Romans 6) effects a transition to F sharp minor, the key of the second aria. Bach provided this aria with a fully notated organ part in place of the more common *basso continuo* accompaniment—the so-called "bassetchen" texture which here serves, according to the interesting interpretation of John Eliot Gardiner, a symbolic purpose: the missing *continuo* suggests that the ground has fallen out from beneath the "verkehrten Herzen" (perverted hearts)—those who reject God. The cantata ends with a brisk *da capo* aria expressing the confident hope of being removed from the world of sin, with a notated organ part independent of the continuo.

Georg Muffat, *Sonata da camera* No. 5

The first of the two instrumental works sandwiched among the cantatas on this evening's program is by a composer of the generation preceding Bach's, Georg Muffat (1653–1704). For all his importance, Muffat has never been the subject of a full-length biographical monograph; the closest we have to this is an extended survey of the available documentation by the German organist, conductor, and scholar Markus Eberhardt (2008). The broad outlines of Muffat's career, however, have long been known from the prefaces he provided for several of his musical publications, including the *Florilegium Primum* (the first of two sets of dance suites, published in 1695) and the *Auserlesene Instrumental-Music* ("Choice Instrumental Music," 1701). Born in Megève, then a part of the Duchy of Savoy,

he moved when still young to the Alsatian town of Sélestat. He spent his teenage years in Paris, studying with Jean-Baptiste Lully, from whom he absorbed the French style as exemplified in the dance suites, which make up the two volumes of *Florilegium*. Following his studies Muffat returned to Sélestat and soon (1671) obtained a post as organist in nearby Molsheim. By 1674 he had begun legal studies at the university in Igolstadt, Bavaria. Later in the 1670s he was active in Vienna (where he married) and Prague, before settling in 1678 as organist and chamberlain at the court of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg—the same court for which W.A. Mozart worked a century later. During the period of his employment in Salzburg Muffat was able to spend two years in Rome studying with the celebrated harpsichordist, organist, and composer Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). Muffat is thus a thoroughly international figure who contributed to the integration of French and Italian styles into German musical life, and whose prose writings constitute an important source of information about performance practice in the second half of the 17th century. His best-known works are probably the chamber sonatas collected in the *Armonico Tributo* (“Harmonic Offering”) of 1682, the preface of which lays out in detail the various ways in which they can be performed: as a trio, as a quartet, and as a “concerto grosso,” i.e. with solo parts distinguished from *ripieni*. The *Sonata da Camera* no. 5 is from this collection. Muffat’s indications for the five movements (Allemande Grave, Adagio, Fuga, Adagio, Passacaglia Grave) reveal a sort of hybrid between the *sonata da camera* genre as conventionally defined, consisting of dance pieces such as the Allemande, and the *sonata da chiesa*, with movements indicated simply by tempo. All movements are in the same key of G major, though two of them avoid tonal closure by concluding on the dominant. An emphasis on mellifluous utterance and exquisite workmanship, rather than profundity, prevail throughout, culminating in a remarkably free passacaglia in which the repeating theme not only supports a series of variations in the other parts, but is itself subjected to a series of rhythmic, melodic, and chromatic manipulations.

The **Suite in D Major TWV 55:D6** is one of well over a hundred surviving orchestral suites (many others are lost) by Georg Philipp Telemann. Only a limited number of these suites were published in Telemann’s lifetime, making it difficult to date the bulk of those which remained in manuscript, including the present one. It has been tentatively assigned to the early 1720s, around the time of Telemann’s relocation from Frankfurt to Hamburg. The D major suite has notable elements of the concerto, owing to the prominent solo part for viola da gamba in most of the movements, placed in contrast to the *tutti* sections. The tripartite overture has two stately sections flanking the central allegro, in which the gamba writing is especially virtuosic, adumbrating the trumpet motifs of the following movement. The solo viola da gamba dominates the middle section of the energetic,

martial second movement (“La Trompette,” a nice example of the poetic monikers that Telemann was fond of giving to certain of his instrumental movements), again in clear imitation of trumpet writing, as well as the central *minore* section of the ensuing sarabande movement. The Rondeau is the only movement of the suite in which the solo instrument merely plays along with the ensemble throughout, rather than having an independent solo line. A Bourée after the French manner features a rapid question-and-answer exchange between the soloist and the ensemble. The Courante also evinces French taste through the inclusion of a *double* variant, with rapid figuration for the soloist, and the Gigue brings the suite to a close on a jaunty note.

A Note on the Viola da Gamba

BY CRAIG TROMPETER

The erroneous myth that the viola da gamba is the predecessor to the cello seems to persist, but the two instruments are from completely different families. The cello is the bass member of the violin family, whose characteristics include 4 strings tuned in 5ths, sound holes in the shape of the letter “f,” rounded backs and shoulders, and an overhand bow technique. The members of the viola da gamba family (often shortened to “viol” or “gamba”) most often have six strings tuned in 4ths with a 3rd in the middle, “c” holes, frets, and sloping shoulders and flat backs. The viol is played with the bow held underhand. All members of the viol family rest on the legs (hence the name *da gamba*—“for the leg”), whereas the smaller members of the violin family are held on the arm (*da braccio*). The viol’s upright playing position is deeply rooted in history. The medieval fiddle (or “vielle”) was held on the legs as far back as the 11th century. By the late 15th century, the viol as we now recognize it became popular on the Iberian peninsula. With the help of the powerful (and corrupt) Borgia family, the instrument quickly spread to Italy, and from there to France, England, and Germany. From roughly 1500 to 1730, the viol was the “workhorse” instrument, second in popularity only to the lute. It was championed by the likes of Byrd, Purcell, Couperin, Bach, Telemann, and Rameau. Its popularity began to wane in the mid-18th century when it was overshadowed by the violin and cello (for an amusing read, see Hubert Le Blanc’s 1740 polemic *Défense de la basse de viole contre les entreprises du violon et les prétentions du violoncel*). Thankfully, a viol revival began in the late 19th century when curious cellists began to play it. Auguste Tolbecque, a distinguished French cellist, played the virtuoso viol part in one of Rameau’s *Pièces de claveçin en concerts* with none other than Camille Saint-Saëns at the piano in 1870. Tolbecque probably played the viol like a modern cello, with an endpin but no frets and a heavy cello bow held over-hand. In the 1890s, Arnold Dolmetsch, the so-called

“father” of the modern early music revival, researched the viol’s historical construction and playing techniques. The Dolmetsch family concertized extensively, playing music for viol “consort”—treble, tenor, and bass sizes. The revival gained momentum towards the close of the 20th century. In 1991, the French film *Tous les matins du monde* pushed the viol into popular consciousness when Gérard Dépardieu and his son Guillaume portrayed a fictionalized version of Marin Marais. Today, the Viola da Gamba Society of America has more than 2,000 members and one can major in viol performance at numerous music conservatories worldwide.

Texts and Translations

Widerstehe doch der Sünde, BWV 54

ARIA

Widerstehe doch der Sünde,
Sonst ergreift dich ihr Gift.
Laß dich nicht den Satan blenden;
Denn die Gottes Ehre schänden,
Trifft ein Fluch, der tödlich ist.

*Just resist sin,
lest its poison seize you.
Don't let Satan blind you;
for those who defile God's honor will incur
a curse that is deadly.*

RECITATIVE

Die Art verruchter Sünden
Ist zwar von außen wunderschön;
Allein man muß
Hernach mit Kummer und Verdruß
Viel Ungemach empfinden.
Von außen ist sie Gold;
Doch, will man weiter gehn,
So zeigt sich nur ein leerer Schatten
Und übertünchtes Grab.
Sie ist den Sodomsäpfeln gleich,
Und die sich mit derselben gatten,
Gelingen nicht in Gottes Reich.
Sie ist als wie ein scharfes Schwert,
Das uns durch Leib und Seele fährt.

*The appearance of vile sin
is indeed outwardly very beautiful;
however one must
afterwards with trouble and frustration
experience much hardship.
On the outside it is gold;
yet, going further in,
it shows itself as only an empty shadow
and a whitewashed grave.
It is like the apples of Sodom,
and those who engage themselves with it
will not achieve God's Kingdom.
It is like a sharp sword,
that pierces through body and soul.*

ARIA

Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel,
Denn dieser hat sie aufgebracht.
Doch wenn man ihren schnöden Banden
Mit rechter Andacht widerstanden,
Hat sie sich gleich davongemacht.

*Whoever sins is of the devil,
since he has brought it forth.
Yet if one is able, with virtuous devotion,
to withstand its contemptible bonds,
it is already done away with.*

Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200

Bekennen will ich seinen Namen,
Er ist der Herr, er ist der Christ,
In welchem aller Völker Samen
Gesegnet und erlöset ist.
Kein Tod raubt mir die Zuversicht:
Der Herr ist meines Lebens Licht.

*I will acknowledge His name,
He is the Lord, He is the Christ,
in whom the seed of all people
is blessed and redeemed.
No death robs me of this confidence:
the Lord is the light of my life.*

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170

ARIA

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust,
Dich kann man nicht bei Höllensünden,
Wohl aber Himmelseintracht finden;
Du stärkst allein die schwache Brust.
Drum sollen lauter Tugendgaben
In meinem Herzen Wohnung haben.

*Delightful rest, beloved pleasure of the soul,
you cannot be found among the sins of hell,
but rather in the concord of heaven;
you alone strengthen the weak breast
Therefore the pure gifts of virtue
shall have their dwelling in my heart.*

RECITATIVE

Die Welt, das Sündenhaus,
Bricht nur in Höllenlieder aus
Und sucht durch Haß und
Neid Des Satans Bild an sich zu tragen.
Ihr Mund ist voller Ottergift,
Der oft die Unschuld tödlich trifft,
Und will allein von Racha! sagen.
Gerechter Gott, wie weit
Ist doch der Mensch von dir entfernt;
Du liebst, jedoch sein Mund
Macht Fluch und Feindschaft kund
Und will den Nächsten nur mit
Füßen treten. Ach! diese Schuld ist
schwerlich zu verbeten.

*The world, that house of sin,
erupts only in bellish songs,
and attempts, through hatred and envy,
to carry Satan's image upon itself.
Its mouth is full of adder's venom,
which often mortally attacks the innocent,
and will only utter Vengeance!
Righteous God, how far
has humanity distanced itself from You;
You love, yet its mouth
proclaims curses and enmity
and wishes only to trample a neighbor
under its feet. Alas! this crime is difficult
to atone for.*

ARIA

Wie jammern mich doch die
verkehrten Herzen,
Die dir, mein Gott, so sehr zuwider sein;
Ich zittre recht und fühle tausend
Schmerzen, wenn sie sich nur an Rach
und Haß erfreun.

Gerechter Gott, was magst du doch
gedenken, wenn sie allein mit rechten
Satansränken dein scharfes Strafgebot
so frech verlacht.
Ach! ohne Zweifel hast du so gedacht:
Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten
Herzen!

RECITATIVE

Wer sollte sich demnach
Wohl hier zu leben wünschen,
Wenn man nur Haß und Ungemach
Vor seine Liebe sieht?
Doch, weil ich auch den Feind
Wie meinen besten Freund
Nach Gottes Vorschrift lieben soll,
So flieht mein Herze Zorn und Groll
Und wünscht allein bei Gott zu leben,
Der selbst die Liebe heißt.
Ach, eintrachtvoller Geist,
Wenn wird er dir doch nur sein
Himmelszion geben?

ARIA

Mir ekelt mehr zu leben,
Drum nimm mich, Jesu, hin!
Mir graut vor allen Sünden,
Laß mich dies Wohnhaus finden,
Woselbst ich ruhig bin.

*How the perverted hearts afflict me,
which are so sorely,
my God, set against You;
I truly tremble and feel a thousand pangs,
when they rejoice only in vengeance and
hate.*

*Righteous God, what might You be
thinking, when they, with the very
intrigues of Satan, only scorn
Your sharp proscriptions so boldly.
Alas! Without a doubt You have thought:
how the perverted hearts afflict me!*

*Who should hereafter
wish, indeed, to live here,
when only hatred and hardship is the
answer to love?
Yet, since even my enemy,
like my best friend,
I should love according to God's
commandment, thus my heart flees from
anger and bitterness, and wishes only to
live with God, who is Love itself.
Ah, spirit filled with mildness,
when only will He grant you His heavenly
Zion?*

*It sickens me to live longer,
therefore take me away, Jesus!
I shudder before all sins,
let me find this dwelling-place
where I myself shall be at peace.*

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In 2017 Iestyn Davies was awarded a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by the Queen for his services to Music. A former Cambridge choral scholar, he went on to study singing at the Royal Academy of Music. An esteemed Handelian, he has astounded audiences globally with his vocal agility in roles such as Orlando, Rinaldo, Ottone/*Agrippina* and David/*Saul*. This year he will make his role debut as *Giulio Cesare*. His intelligent and considered interpretations have led to fruitful collaborations with Thomas Adès, George Benjamin and Nico Muhly. An engaging recitalist, with repertoire ranging from Dowland to Clapton, he has twice been awarded the Gramophone Recital Award for his recital recordings. His outstanding London West End theatre project, *Farinelli and the King*, with Mark Rylance, was staged on Broadway this season.

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Camille J. Zientek
Peter Zimmerman
John Zimmie
Teodora Zlatkova

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ryan Bennett Photography
Church of the Atonement
Lynn B. Donaldson
and Cameron Avery
Karen Fishman
Sarah Harding and Mark Ouweleen
Garry Grasinski, Grayson Media, Inc.
Chase Hopkins
Jamerson & Bauwens Electrical
Contractors, Inc.
Susan and Richard Jamerson
Katherine Lynch
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