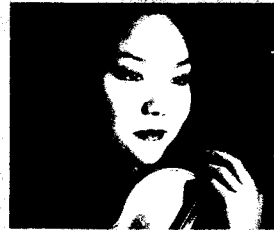




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Saturday 27 May 8pm
Trinity College Chapel
Cambridge Taverner Choir

Owen Rees *director*
Stephen Farr *organ*

Programme

J S Bach

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf (BWV 226)

Organ: Fantasia super Komm, Heiliger Geist (BWV 651)

Jesu meine Freude (BWV 227)

INTERVAL

Ich lasse dich nicht (BWV Anh. 159)

Chorale: An Wasserflüssen Babylon

Organ: An Wasserflüssen Babylon (BWV 653)

Lobet den Herrn (BWV 230)

"Motet ... is a notated musical composition, heavily adorned with fugue and imitation, based on a biblical text and purely for singing without instruments (apart from the thorough bass). However, the vocal parts can also be filled out and strengthened with all kind of instruments."

J. G. Walther's definition (in his *Musicalisches Lexicon* of 1732) of the motet of Bach's era is significant both for its clarity and its vagueness: motets are works based on biblical texts (and, incidentally) chorales) without the madrigalian elements of cantatas and their concomitant musical forms of recitative and da capo arias; all the musical lines are sung, either unaccompanied or doubled by various instruments. No details are given of the purpose or form and few references are made to the musical devices employed. Indeed a variety of works belong to the genre of the motet: both those written in the tradition of Renaissance polyphony, performed every week in the Lutheran liturgy and the

staple diet of the lesser choirs under Bach's jurisdiction, and those written for special occasions.

Bach's compositions in the second category are the only works of their kind: all elements of their style and form can be traced in various compositional traditions, but as occasional works, employing all the talented singers at Bach's disposal, they are unique and unsurpassed. Most seem connected with funerals for important figures in Leipzig, although some material may come from earlier stages in Bach's career. Only *Der Geist hift* contains a specific autograph dedication, for the funeral of J.H. Ernesti, rector of the Thomasschule, in October 1729.

Der Geist hift falls into four sections, each different in character and each with a different time signature. The opening verse, with its striking melismatic runs and contrasting, more syllabic, writing at 'denn wir wissen nicht' is lightly set for two choirs which often rapidly echo each other's words. A change of metre at 'sondern der geist...' brings a more contrapuntal texture, with some vivid word-painting at 'unaussprechlichen Seufzen'. For the second verse, the choirs join forces in a four-part fugue on two themes, heard separately and then together. It is not certain whether Bach intended the concluding hymn, by Luther, to be part of the motet. It was certainly sung at the same occasion as the motet, and it undoubtedly has an uplifting spirituality which perfectly balances the rest of the work.

It is impossible to isolate a single stylistic hallmark for Bach's motets. The exclusively vocal part-writing demands complete and satisfactory textual underlay in every voice, so no parts can be merely supportive or decorative. Chorales are an important structural influence, particularly in *Jesu, meine Freude*, based as it is on a single chorale. Bach inherits much of the declamatory vocal style from the age of Theile and Buxtehude (e.g. 'Trotz dem alten Drachen'). Many elements not normally associated with purely choral music are also present: aria-style in 'Denn das Gesetz des Geistes' and 'So aber Christus in euch ist' and much writing that is virtually instrumental in texture. Indeed the inter-change between choral and instrumental idioms is particularly well demonstrated by 'Gute Nacht' which is virtually a reworking of (or perhaps the model for) the Largo from the violin sonata in G, BWV 1021.

As a child, Bach would have been closely acquainted with his father's cousins, the brothers Johann Christoph (1642-1703) and Johann Michael (1648-1694). Christoph, as both town and court organist in Eisenach, may well have been the first organist Sebastian ever heard. Sebastian referred to him in his Genealogy of the family as a 'profound composer' and Emanuel Bach also admired him. While his organ works are indistinguishable from most of their period, his vocal works are extraordinarily expressive and are among the most striking works of their age. So closely associated with high musical quality did Christoph become that it is even possible that some of his works have become confused with early works of Sebastian. The Bach scholar Daniel Melamed has argued strongly that the motet *Ich lasse dich nicht, du segnest mich denn* is in fact the work of the younger Bach. The very problem of authorship demonstrates the point that in Sebastian's youth originality and the notion of copyright were hardly at a premium. Throughout his career, Sebastian's concern was for the highest of musical quality regardless of authorship; Christoph and Sebastian would doubtless have been more interested in the musical strength of *Ich lasse dich nicht* than in which of them actually wrote it.

Lobet den Herrn is something of a black sheep among Bach's motets: surviving in no sources that can be remotely associated with J.S. Bach, many have questioned its position among the authentic works. It is certainly atypical in presenting only four vocal parts; moreover, it cannot be performed without organ accompaniment as the vocal bass part does not provide the complete bass line necessary to support the upper parts. There are no choral verses and no firm division into individual movements (although the final 'Hallelujah' does stand somewhat apart by introducing triple time). A recent discovery of a late 18th century manuscript which ascribes the work to 'Signor Bach' perhaps makes the authenticity of *Lobet den Herrn* more secure than it might otherwise have been. Certainly it is not impossible that the work may come from Bach's immediate family or student circle, but no-one has yet come up with a more plausible composer than Sebastian himself. Apart from the general skill of its workmanship and its incredible density of notes, it contains several turns of phrase that seem to relate it to the 'true' Bach motets.

Notes by John Bull

1. Jesu, meine Freude,
meines Herzens Weide,
Jesu, meine Ziel.

ach wie lang, ach lange
ist dem Herzen bange,
und verlangt nach dir!
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,
außer dir soll mir auf Erden
nichts sonst Liebbers werden.

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

3. Unter deinem Schirmen
bin ich vor den Stürmen
aller Feinde frei.
Laß den Satan wüthen,
laß den Feind erhitern,
mir steht Jesus bei.
Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,
ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:
Jesús will mich decken.

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

1. Jesus, my joy,
my heart's pasture,
Jesus, my jewel.
Oh, for how long
has this anxious heart
longed for You!
Lamb of God, my Bridegroom,
apart from You, no one on Earth
will be my lover.

2. There is therefore now no
condemnation to them
who are in Christ Jesus,
who wander not after the flesh,<
but after the Spirit.

3. Under your shelter,
I am free from the storms
of all the devils.
Let Satan threaten,
let the fiend rage.
Jesus stays by me.
Even though lightning cracks and flashes,
even though sin and hell scream,
Jesus will protect me.

4. For the law of the Spirit
which gives life in Christ Jesus
has set me free from the law
of sin and death.

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.

5. Defy the old Dragon,
defy the jaws of death,
defy fear as well!
Rage, oh world, and quake,
here I stay,
singing in perfect peace!
The might of God holds me;
earth and abyss shall be silent,
however much they growl.

5. Trotz dem alten Drachen,
Trotz des Todes Rachen,
Trotz der Furcht dazu!
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.

1. The Spirit helps us in our weakness,
since, when we do not know
what we should pray for,
then the Spirit personally makes our
petition for us in sighs that cannot be
put into words.

1. Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf,
denn wir wissen nicht,
was wir beten sollen, wie sichs gebühret;
sondern der Geist selbst vertritt uns aufs
beste mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen

2. But He who can see into all hearts
knows what the Spirit means, because
the prayers the Spirit makes for God's
holy people are in accordance with the
mind of God.

2. Der aber die Herzen forschet,
der weiß, was des Geistes Sinn sei;
denn er vertritt die Heiligen,
nach dem das Gott gefällt

3. Holy Fire, Sweet Trust,
now help us, so that joyously and con-
fidently

3. Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost,
nun hilf uns, fröhlich und getrost
in deinem Dienst beständig bleiben,
die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben.
O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit
und stärk des Fleisches Blödigkeit,
daß wir hie ritterlich ringen,
durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.

we can remain in your service
and not be driven away by misery.
Lord, through your power prepare us,
and strengthen our stupid human
nature
so that we can valiantly battle and
force our way through death and life to
You.

Ich lasse dich nicht, du segnest mich denn
Weil du mein Gott und Vater bist,
dein Kind wirst du verlassen nicht,
du väterliches Herz!
Ich bin ein armer Erdenklob
auf Erden weiss ich keinen Trost.

I will not let you go unless you bless
me
Since You are my God and Father,
this child of yours hopes
You don't forget your Fatherly heart!
I am a clod of earth,
I do not trust earthly things.

Lobet den Herren, alle Heiden
Und preiset ihn, alle Volker
Denn sine Gnade und Wahrheit
Waltet über uns in Ewigkeit
Alleluja! (*Psalms 117*)

Praise the Lord, all you heathen
And praise him all you people
For his grace and truth
Reign over us for ever
Alleluia

8. But when Christ is in you,
the body is dead because of the will of sin;
but the Spirit is alive
because of the will of righteousness

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.

9. Good night, oh reality,
which has chosen the world,
you do not please me!
Good night, you sinner,
stay far behind me,
do not come into the light!
Good night, haughtiness and splendour!
And to you, life of iniquity,
a special good night!

9. Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
das die Welt erlesen,
mir gefällst du nicht!
Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,
bleibet weit dahinten,
kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!
Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!
Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,
gute Nacht gegeben.

10. And if the Spirit of Him
who raised Jesus from the dead
has made His home in you,
then He who raised Christ Jesus from the
dead will give life to your own mortal bodies
through His Spirit living in you.

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.

11. Give way, you spirits of sadness,
for Jesus, my master of joy

11. Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,
denn mein Freudenmeister,

Cambridge Taverner Choir
Owen Rees director

'Sheer musicianship' (Gramophone) 'An absolute revelation' (Early Music)

The Choir

The Cambridge Taverner Choir emerged from the Oxford and Cambridge choral tradition and has, over twenty years, built a reputation for powerful and expressive performances of Renaissance polyphony. Since reaching the shortlist for the Gramophone Early Music Award in 1994, the choir has received acclaim for its concerts and recordings in Britain and abroad. In recent years, the choir has performed at the York Early Music Festival and the Oslo Church Music Festival, and released its fourth CD, *Music from Renaissance Portugal II*. The choir regularly performs to enthusiastic audiences in the beautiful and resonant medieval environments of Jesus College Chapel and Little St Mary's Church in Cambridge. For further information, please see the Choir's website at www.cambridge-tavernerchoir.org.uk.

Owen Rees

Owen Rees is both scholar and performer; his work as a scholar has consistently informed his work as a performer. As director of the **Cambridge Taverner Choir**, **Capella Portuguesa** and the Choir of the Queen's College, Oxford, he has, for instance, brought to the concert hall and the recording studio substantial repertoires of magnificent, and previously unknown, music from Renaissance Portugal—the fruits of his research in such cities as Coimbra and Lisbon. His interpretations of this repertory have been acclaimed as 'rare examples of scholarship and musicianship combining to result in performances that are both impressive and immediately attractive to the listener', and he has been described as 'one of the most energetic and persuasive voices' in this field.

As well as his pioneering work in the music of Renaissance Portugal, Rees has also specialised in the music of Tudor England and of Spain in the 'Golden Age'. Over the twenty years of its existence, he has directed the **Cambridge Taverner Choir** in a wide survey of Renaissance music not only from these countries, but also from Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. As director of the **Cambridge Taverner Choir** and other groups, he has performed Renaissance, Baroque, and contemporary choral music; he has conducted at festivals in the UK, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Norway, and the Netherlands; and he has broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and 4, and on Portuguese and Spanish National Radio. He has released CD recordings on the Herald, Hyperion, Guild, and Unicorn Kanchana labels, to consistently high critical acclaim.

Owen Rees began his academic career as Organ Scholar at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. After a spell as College Lecturer in Music at St Peter's College and St

Edmund Hall, Oxford, he taught at the University of Surrey, and in 1997 returned to Oxford as Fellow in Music and Organist at The Queen's College. Lecturer in Music at Somerville College, and Lecturer in the Faculty of Music.

For further information about the choir please contact the Administrator, Christian Rutherford,

on Cambridge (01223) 352542

Recognised as "one of the brightest and most active young English recitalists" who "plays with immaculate finish and buoyancy" (Classic CD), Stephen Farr is widely regarded as one of the finest organists of his generation, with a virtuoso technique and an impressive stylistic grasp of a wide-ranging repertoire.

In 1984 he became Organ Scholar of Clare College Cambridge, where he obtained a double first in Music and a Masters degree in Musicology. Sub-organist posts at Christ Church Oxford and Winchester Cathedral preceded his appointment in 1999 as Organist of Guildford Cathedral, a position which he now combines with a busy freelance career. Since winning the Royal College of Organists Performer of the Year in 1988 and further prizes at the international competitions in Odense, St Alban's and Paisley, he has enjoyed recognition at international level, with performing tours to North and South America, Australia – including a concerto performance in Sydney Opera House – and throughout Europe.

He maintains a regular broadcast presence, and as a recitalist has featured in the main series of the major venues in the UK – among them St Paul's Cathedral (where he has appeared twice in the Celebrity Series), Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, King's College Cambridge, St David's Hall Cardiff, St John's Smith Square, Symphony Hall Birmingham, the Bridgewater Hall, the St David's Festival, and the Fairfield Halls. He recently gave a solo recital in the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. His concerto work has included engagements with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and the London Mozart Players; he recently made his debut in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with the Slovenian Radio Symphony Orchestra. He has also worked with other leading ensembles including Florilegium, the Bach Choir, BBC Singers, English Concert, London Baroque Soloists, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Wallace Collection, Endymion Ensemble and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Cambridge Taverner Choir

Owen Rees, director

Stephen Farr, organ

Sopranos: Diana Baumann, Andrea Blakesley, Josie Dixon, Rachel Godsill,
Hester Higton,
Bernadette Nelson, Caroline Preston Bell, Sally Terris, Tanya
Wicks

Altos: Suzanne Aspden, Simon Godsill, Rachel Howells, Nick Perkins,
Debbie Steele

Tenors: Paul Baumann, Mark Dourish, Nick Marston, Edwin Simpson, David
Thomson

Basses: Kieran Cooper, James Durran, Stephen Jones, Gary Snapper. Paul
Watson

Cambridge Taverner Choir recordings:

Music from Renaissance Portugal Vol 1: Lobo - Requiem

'Sheer musicianship – the very highest standards of ensemble and intona-
tion' (Gramophone)

Music from Renaissance Portugal Vol 2: Lobo – Missa Cantate Domino

'Beautiful music superbly performed' (Gramophone)

The Song the Virgine Soong: Music for a Tudor Christmas

'*****' (BBC Music); 'Immaculate performances' (Cathedral Music)

What is our Life? Renaissance laments and elegies

'Passionate singing' (Early Music Review) 'The sheer beauty of the voices
is a delight' (Choir and Organ)