

MOTETS

Australian Chamber Choir

Johann Sebastian

Johann Michael

Johann Christoph

directed by Douglas Lawrence

1 Motet for five-part choir:
DAS BLUT JESU CHRISTI 3'57"
Johann Michael Bach

Motet for five-part mixed choir:
JESU, MEINE FREUDE, BWV 227
Johann Sebastian Bach

- 2** Verse 1: Choral: Jesu, meine Freude 1'09"
- 3** Es ist nun nichts 2'47"
- 4** Verse 2: Choral: Unter deinem Schirmen 1'07"
- 5** Denn das Gesetz 1'03"
- 6** Verse 3: Trotz dem alten Drachen 2'15"
- 7** Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich 2'31"
- 8** Verse 4: Choral: Weg mit allen Schätzen 1'11"
- 9** Andante So aber Christus in euch ist 2'10"
- 10** Verse 5: Gute Nacht 3'30"
- 11** So nun der Geist 1'33"
- 12** Verse 6: Choral: Weicht, ihr Trauergeister 1'13"

Motet for two four-part mixed choirs:
SINGET DEM HERRN EIN NEUES LIED, BWV 225
Johann Sebastian Bach

- 13** Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied 5'15"
- 14** Aria / Choral: Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet 4'52"
- 15** Cori unisoni: Alles was Odem hat 3'59"

16 Motet for eight-part double choir:
LIEBER HERR GOTT, WECKE UNS AUF 3'54"
Johann Christoph Bach

Cantata for Easter Sunday:
CHRIST LAG IN TODESBANDEN, BWV 4
Johann Sebastian Bach

- 17** Sinfonia 1'05"
- 18** Verse 1 Allegro: Christ lag in Todes Banden 4'00"
- 19** Verse 2 Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt 3'21"
- 20** Verse 3 Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn 1'55"
- 21** Verse 4 Da Tod und Leben ringen 2'15"
- 22** Verse 5 Hie ist das rechte Osterlamm 3'46"
- 23** Verse 6 So feiern wir das hohe Fest 1'40"
- 24** Verse 7 Choral: Wir essen und leben 1'07"



*"... phenomenal:
flawless intonation,
superb uniformity,
perfect tonal balance,
astounding dynamic
range and sleek voice-
leading"*

Guido Krawinkel in
General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 23 July 2011

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER CHOIR
directed by Douglas Lawrence

SOLOISTS

Track 14 - Quartet: Erika
Tandiono, Melissa Lee,
Andrew Collyer, Thomas Healey
Track 20 - Jacob Anders
Lawrence, tenor
Track 22 - Steven Hodgson, bass

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1 DAS BLUT JESU CHRISTI

Johann Michael Bach

Baptised on 9 August 1648, Arnstadt, Germany;

died on 17 May 1694, Gehren, Germany

Johann Michael Bach has a special claim upon posterity's notice: apart from his own compositions, he was the father of JSB's short-lived first wife, Maria Barbara (1684-1720). For most of his adulthood Johann Michael worked unobtrusively in Gehren, Thuringia, as organist and town clerk. His fellow municipal officers referred to him, in print, as 'quiet withdrawn and artistically well-versed.' Stylistically he descended – as did his elder brother Johann Christoph – from Schütz and Michael Praetorius, whose polychoral techniques and fondness for straightforward declamation he found congenial. *Das Blut Jesu Christi* (written for five-voice choir with *basso continuo*) is, through its subject-matter, squarely in the introspective tradition of 17th-century Lutheran Pietism, a tradition which also produced the much better known work by Dietrich Buxtehude, *Membra Jesu Nostri*. Words are repeated a good deal in Johann Michael's piece, but purely in order to intensify the drama, not to suit a pre-existing musical structure.

2-12 JESU, MEINE FREUDE, BWV 227

Johann Sebastian Bach

Born at Eisenach, Germany, 31 March 1685;

died at Leipzig, 28 July 1750

Bach wrote at least six motets – the authenticity of a seventh is disputed – between 1723 and 1727; all were intended for the Thomaskirche (St Thomas' Church), Leipzig, where he had been Cantor since 1723. *Jesu, Meine Freude*, for five-part choir – first sopranos, second sopranos, altos, tenors, basses – is the third work in the set, and the one most often performed as a free-standing piece without the others. Bach intended it for the funeral of a prominent Leipzig lady, Johanna Maria Käsin, whose husband was the city postmaster. The motet's main chorale melody, which dominates the thematic argument, did not originate with Bach. It comes from a 1653 collection called *Praxis pietatis melica*, by an earlier Lutheran composer, Johann Crüger. Some of the words originate with mid-seventeenth-century German hymn-writer Johann Franck, for whose lyrics Bach had a special esteem, since he used

them several times in his cantatas. The remaining words are adaptations of the eighth chapter from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and would have been recognised as such by Bach's original hearers, given this epistle's particular importance in Lutheran theology. Two versions exist of Bach's score: one entirely unaccompanied, the other with instrumental ensemble.

13-15 SINGET DEM HERREN EIN NEUES LIED, BWV 225

Johann Sebastian Bach

This motet derives its words partly from Psalms 149 and 150 in the Lutheran Bible, and partly from a hymn by the 16th-century Protestant writer Johannes Poliander (alias Johann Graumann).

We do not know the precise occasion for which Bach envisaged the piece, but it has been conjectured that he meant it – despite its joyous sound, most obvious in the exuberant setting of words like 'Reigen [dances]' – for, of all things, a royal funeral. Christiane, Queen of Poland, died (at Pretzsch, Saxony) in 1727, having refused to renounce her original Lutheranism even when her husband, King Augustus II, cynically sought to appease the Poles by ostentatiously proclaiming himself to be a Catholic. (Augustus owed his fundamental allegiance not to any branch of Christianity but to sex-addiction; his womanising, which resulted in 365 illegitimate progeny, earned him Thomas Carlyle's immortal description 'eupeptic son of Belial'). Each choir in *Singet dem Herrn* has four parts (SATB). As with the other five canonical motets, Bach allowed for the possibility of instrumental accompaniment, but did not insist on it. The work became a special favourite of Mozart, who might well have had its counterpoint in mind when he wrote the *Jupiter Symphony*. Note the curious – and much discussed, although accidental – resemblance between the melody which Bach employs for the words 'Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet,' and the melody which English-speaking church-goers will recognise as *The Old Hundredth*.

16 LIEBER HERR GOTT, WECKE UNS AUF

Johann Christoph Bach

Born at Armstadt, Germany, 6 December 1642;

died at Eisenach, Germany, 31 March 1703

Johann Christoph Bach, brother of Johann Michael (see above), enjoyed a remarkably high reputation as a composer. This reputation persisted long enough for JSB to revive some of his relative's liturgical music, as he also revived Johann Ludwig's. The skill which Johann Christoph demonstrated as organist brought him most of his income, although little of his own organ music survives, and he proved a poor manager of the family's finances, dying in debt despite the musical esteem which he had enjoyed. *Lieber Herr Gott* – another double-choir composition, dating from 1672 and using a text based on Matthew 25:1-13 – is rather less declamatory than much of this program's other music, and rather more inclined to indulge in melismas on words like 'Freude,' even if there is little outright word-painting. Note, again, the switches between duple and triple rhythm.

17-24 CHRIST LAG IN TODESBANDEN, BWV 4

Johann Sebastian Bach

Since the early 20th century, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* has been among the most popular and frequently performed of Bach's vocal creations. Well before complete sets of Bach cantatas started appearing in the 1970s, this work had already been released in numerous performances on disc. For innumerable radio-listeners and record-collectors, accordingly, it has been the first Bach cantata they have ever heard. (Its first known commercial recording was made as early as 1931, in Barcelona and sung, improbably enough, in Catalan; Nadia Boulanger followed with a Parisian interpretation six years afterwards.) The piece was written – for Easter Sunday – pretty early in Bach's life, but, despite what might be expected from its low BWV number, not spectacularly early. Some say it comes from 1709; the date 1707 has also been suggested. Bach must have had a particular fondness for this cantata, because in 1725 he did something unusual for him: he went back to it and amplified its orchestration, adding brass parts to what was hitherto a strings-only ensemble. (He also made use of the melody – another Luther adaptation of a Catholic original – in the *Orgelbüchlein*.) There are eight movements in all, written in such a way that soloists can be used if available, or else sections of the ensemble can sing throughout.

1 DAS BLUT JESU CHRISTI

Johann Michael Bach

*Das Blut Jesu Christi,
des Sohnes Gottes,
Machet uns rein von allen Sünden.
Dein Blut, der edle Saft,
Hat solche Sterk und Kraft,
Das auch ein Tröpflein kleine
Die ganze Welt kann reine
Ja, gar aus Teufels rachen
Frei, los und ledig machen.*

The blood of Jesus Christ,
the Son of God,
Makes us clean from all sins.
Your blood, the noble drop
Has such strength and potency
That even a small drop
Can cleanse the whole world
Yes, even from Satan's revenge
Can it set us free.

2-12 JESU, MEINE FREUDE, BWV 227 – Johann Sebastian Bach

*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,
pasture of my heart,
Jesus, my adornment
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.

*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 blitzt,
Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:
Jesus will mich decken.*

Beneath your protection
I am free from the attacks
of all my enemies.
Let Satan track me down,
let my enemy be exasperated –
Jesus stands by me.
Even if there is thunder and lightning,
even if sin and hell spread terror:
Jesus will protect me.

*Trotz dem alten Drachen,
Trotz des Todes Rachen,
Trotz der Furcht darzu!
Tobe, Welt, und springe,
Ich steh hier und singe
In gar sichrer Ruh.*

I defy the old dragon,
I defy the jaws of death,
I defy fear as well!
[If you] rage, world, and spring to attack,
I stand here and sing
in secure peace.

*Gottes Macht hält mich in acht;
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,
Ob sie noch so brummen.*

God's might takes care of me;
earth and abyss must fall silent,
however much they rumble on.

*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 honours,
I'm not going to listen to you,
remain unknown to me!
Misery, distress, affliction, disgrace, death,
even if I must endure much suffering,
will not separate me from Jesus.

*Gute Nacht, o Wesen,
Das die Welt erlesen,
Mir gefällt 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.*

Good night, 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 splendour,
once and for all, sinful existence,
I bid you good night.

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

Go away, mournful spirits,
for my joyful master,
Jesus, now enters in.
For those who love God
even their afflictions
become pure sweetness.
Even if here I endure shame and disgrace,
even in suffering you remain,
Jesus, my joy.



**13-15 SINGET DEM HERRN EIN
NEUES LIED, BWV 225**
Johann Sebastian Bach

*Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
Die Gemeine 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
Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
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,
Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
Mit allen unsern Sachen.
Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
Ein Blum und fallend Laub.
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
So ist es nicht mehr da,
Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
Und trägt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
So wirst du's ferner machen.*

*Also der Mensch vergehet,
Sein End, das ist ihm nah.
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!*

Sing ye the Lord a new song;
the assembly of saints should be telling
His praises. Israel, be joyful in Him who
hath made thee. Let Zion's children
rejoice in Him who is their mighty
king; let them be praising His name's
honour in dances; with timbrels and with
psalteries unto Him be playing.

As does a father mercy show

To his own little children dear,
So doth the Lord to all of us,
If as pure children we Him fear.
He sees our feeble powers,
God knows we are but dust;
For, lacking Thee, nought shall we gain
From all of our endeavours.
Just as the grass in mowing,
Or bud and falling leaf,
If wind but o'er it bloweth,
It is no longer there,
So be Thou our true shield and light,
And if our hope betray us not,
Thou wilt thus henceforth help us.

Even so is man's life passing,
His end to him is near. Blest be he whose
hope, both strong and firm,
On Thee and on Thy grace can rest.

Praise ye the Lord in all His doings,
praise ye Him in all His might and
majesty! All things which have breath,
praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah!

**16 LIEBER HERR GOTT, WECKE
UNS AUF** Johann Christoph Bach

*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.*

Dear Lord God, waken us now
that we may be ready,
when your Son comes,
to greet Him with joy,
and to serve You with pure heart,
through the same dear Son of Yours,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**17-24 CHRIST LAG IN
TODESBANDEN, BWV 4**
Johann Sebastian Bach

(Sinfonia)

*Christ lag in Todesbanden
Für unsre Sünd gegeben,
Er ist wieder erstanden
Und hat uns bracht das Leben;
Des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
Und singen halleluja,
Halleluja!*

*Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
An unser Statt ist kommen
Und hat die Sünde weggetan,
Damit dem Tod genommen
All sein Recht und sein Gewalt,
Da bleibt nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
Den Stach'l hat er verloren.
Halleluja!*

*Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg,
Da Tod und Leben rungen,
Das Leben behielt den Sieg,
Es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
Wie ein Tod den andern frass,*

(Sinfonia)

Christ lay in death's bonds
given over for our sins,
He has risen again
and brought us life;
therefore we should be joyful,
praise God and be thankful to Him
and sing Hallelujah,
Hallelujah!

Jesus Christ, God's Son,
has come in our place,
and has done away with sin,
thereby taking from death
all his rights and power;
nothing remains but death's form;
he has lost his sting.
Hallelujah!

It was a strange battle,
that death and life waged,
life claimed the victory,
it devoured death.
The scripture had prophesied this,
how one death gobbled up the other,

*Ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Halleluja!*

*Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
Davon Gott hat geboten,
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
In heisser Lieb gebraten,
Das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür,
Das hält der Glaub dem Tode für,
Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Halleluja!*

*So feiern wir das hohe Fest
Mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
Das uns der Herre scheinen lässt,*

a mockery has been made from death.
Hallelujah!

Here is the true Easter-lamb,
offered up by God,
which was, high on the cross' stalk
roasted in hot love,
the blood marks our door,
faith holds it against death,
the murderer can no longer harm us.
Hallelujah!

So we celebrate the high festival
with joy of heart and delight,
which the Lord radiates upon us,

*Er ist selber die Sonne,
Der durch seiner Gnade Glanz
Erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz,
Der Sünden Nacht ist verschwunden.
Halleluja!*

*Wir essen und leben wohl
In rechten Osterfladen,
Der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
Sein bei dem Wort der Gnaden,
Christus will die Koste sein
Und speisen die Seel allein,
Der Glaub will keins andern leben.
Halleluja!*

He Himself is the sun,
that through the splendour of his grace
illuminates our hearts completely,
the night of sin has disappeared.
Hallelujah!

We eat and live well
on the true Easter bread,
the old leaven shall not
exist next to the word of grace,
Christ will be our food
and nourish the soul alone,
faith will live in no other way.
Hallelujah!

Sopranos: Taya Annable, Felicity Bolitho,
Cailin Howarth, Bronwyn Jones, Kim Tan,
Erika Tandiono, Sylvia Tiet, Ailsa
Webb, Nina Wellington-Iser

Altos: Elizabeth Anderson, Zoe Gannon,
Melissa Lee, Linda Lin, Myfanwy
McIndoe, Helen Seymour

Tenors: Andrew Collyer, Robin
Czuchnowski, Thomas Dalton, Tom
Kristof, Jacob Lawrence, Benjamin Owen

Basses: Rhys Boak, Simon Gannon, Tom
Healey, Steven Hodgson, Andrew Moffat,
Kieran Macfarlane

The players:

Briar Goessi (violin 1)
Christine Ruiter (violin 2)
John Quaine (viola)
Rebecca Diederich (cello)
Ruth Wilkinson (violone)
Rhys Boak (organ)

Recorded at Our Lady of Mount Carmel,
Middle Park, Melbourne



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in Todesbanden)
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Douglas Lawrence as either choir director
or organist

www.auschoir.org

The Australian Chamber Choir was founded by Douglas Lawrence in July 2007. During its first five years, the choir undertook three concert tours of Europe and three Australian national tours. Those tours included 48 engagements in established concert series and festivals in Germany, France, Denmark and Poland. In 2011, the ACC gave the opening concert of the Bach Organ Festival in the church where JS Bach

was Cantor for 27 years, St Thomas, Leipzig, followed by a Sunday morning Motet service.

The choir has received high praise for its performances of Bach from audiences and critics alike.

"Conductor Douglas Lawrence has created an ensemble that sings with utmost precision and utmost sensitivity, possessing a perfectly balanced choral sound".
Schwäbischer Zeitung, Ravensburg, 11 July 2011

The choir's 2013 European concert tour includes

several return invitations, Leipzig among them: they perform in Berlin and Hamburg, in the cathedrals of Meissen, Freiberg and Riga, and at five festivals in Denmark and Poland.

In addition to performing historical masterworks, the choir is committed to performance of new work by Australian composers, which are included in most of its concert programs.





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