



Taipei Chamber Singers & Le Concert Francais

# **Brilliant BACH**

2024.9.22 Sun. 15:00

Weiwuying Concert Hall

Duration is 120 minutes with a 20-minute intermission.

台北室內合唱團



National Kaohsiung  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心  
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

## Program

J. S. BACH: *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren*, BWV 137 (Taiwan Premiere)

J. S. BACH: *Was willst du dich betrüben*, BWV 107 (Taiwan Premiere)

J. S. BACH: *Gelobet sei der Herr, mein Gott*, BWV 129 (Taiwan Premiere)

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Intermission  
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J. S. BACH: *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*, BWV 99 (Taiwan Premiere)

J. S. BACH: *O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe*, BWV 34 (Taiwan Premiere)

## About J.S. BACH's Cantatas

### Singing Surpasses Speaking: BACH's Religious cantatas

By CHEN Han-jin (Music Scholar)

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750), who lived and was especially active professionally in central and northern Germany, was a devout Lutheran. This Protestant denomination placed a high emphasis on musical liturgy, incorporating music at various points throughout its services. In addition to organists, choirs, and instrumentalists, an entire congregation would often join in singing simple "Choral (Chorale)," with the "Kantate (Cantata)" performance typically serving as a service's highlight. Participating in a liturgy during BACH's time was akin to attending a concert, with music playing almost continuously. Lutheran leaders have long believed that music and religion are inseparable, with music's abstract and transcendent nature fostering a spiritual experience that leads believers to contemplate the mysteries beyond ordinary reality. Martin LUTHER once stated, "Music is a gift and grace of God... Next to the word of God, music deserves the highest praise."

Like the Protestant Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church also valued the significant and unique "sense of ritual" that music creates. As early as ancient Rome's adoption of Christianity, Saint Augustine (354-430) allegedly said, "Qui cantat, bis orat (He who sings

prays twice)." However, because the lyrics of the Catholic Church's music were in Latin and the complex music was performed by professional choirs, it was often disconnected from the congregation. In response, the Lutherans implemented significant musical reforms to make music more accessible and resonant with worshipers. These reforms included replacing Latin with German and adapting or creating simple, understandable chorales for congregational singing. A chorale is actually a hymn specifically composed or adapted with German lyrics for use in the Lutheran tradition. When everyone sang, it was as though they were collectively praying through music.

While Lutheran music became more accessible, it also retained the complex polyphonic music of the Catholic tradition, allowing choirs to perform sophisticated pieces. This type of music, which originated from the Italian "motet," evolved from its Renaissance form characterized by just a few voices singing together into a Baroque-era blend of vocal and instrumental music known as the "motet concertato," or simply "concerto." Lutheran composers often used simple "chorales" as the foundation for polyphonic music, called "cantus firmus," creating "chorale motets" that could be appreciated by both connoisseurs and the general public.

Around the turn of the eighteenth century, BACH rose to prominence. Inspired by the Italian cantata, Lutheran musicians began creating larger-scale works that combined vocal and instrumental music. The compositional style established by the priest Erdmann NEUMEISTER in 1700 became a model for future works: these suites typically begin and end with a chorus. Between the polyphonic opening section in the concertato style and the simple chorale conclusion, there are several solo or ensemble recitatives and arias.

These religious musical suites only came to be commonly referred to as cantatas after BACH's time; in BACH's time, they were often called "Hauptmusik" ("main music") because they were the most significant part of the liturgical music. The German-style cantata was typically performed before and after the sermon. Most cantatas consisted of a single part and lasted about fifteen minutes, although some were divided into two parts, with a total duration of around half an hour.

Larger Lutheran churches would perform these cantatas on Sundays and important holidays, with many church musicians composing at least one new piece every week. Over time, the body of work produced was substantial. BACH composed more than 300 religious cantatas, with about 200 surviving today. In terms of sheer numbers, BACH's output was modest compared to other musicians, such as Georg Philipp TELEMANN, who

left behind 1,300 volumes, and Johann Christoph GRAUPNER, who wrote about 2,000 sets. However, while many composers wrote a large volume of music for the church, often with pieces that were similar in nature, BACH's cantatas stand out for their exceptional quality. Each piece is unique, demonstrating remarkable ingenuity and fresh ideas.

The content of each cantata was intricately connected to the theme of the worship service, as conveyed through Bible readings and sermons. BACH masterfully used music to elevate the Bible's message into a profound and transcendent artistic experience. The simple chorale at the end of the cantata was familiar to the congregation, who often hummed along with the choir, creating a powerful collective resonance within the church. A specific type of cantata, the "Chorale Cantata," was based on an existing chorale. The lyrics of each section were drawn from different verses of the same chorale, while the composition incorporated that chorale's melody as a foundational element. Some of BACH's chorale cantatas fully integrated lyrics and music, vividly expressing the theme of the worship service through the music.

Whether in the concerto-style polyphonic chorus at the beginning, the solo or ensemble sections in the middle, or the chorale-style chorus at the end, BACH masterfully controlled the music's layers, sound, rhythm, and tone, reflecting the situation and mood of the lyrics and embodying Lutheran musical aesthetics. Thus spake BACH, "Where there is devotional music, God is always at hand with His gracious presence."

## About the Artists



### Taipei Chamber Singers

Founded in 1992, Taipei Chamber Singers (TCS) has made its name as one of Asia's topmost choral groups through 30 years of professional vocal experiences. Under the leadership of former artistic director and conductor Ms. Yun-Hung CHEN, as well as previous conductors Ms. Chia-Fen WENG and Serene LIANG, TCS has demonstrated artistic excellence and professionalism in genres ranging from early music to contemporary works, while evolving from a vocal ensemble, chamber choir, to a symphonic choir.

TCS won the Grand Prix and the 1st Prize in the Chamber Choir Category at the 22nd Béla Bartók International Choir Competition in 2006. Later, the group was invited to perform at the Europe Grand Prix (2007) and the IFCM 8th World Symposium on Choral Music in Copenhagen (2008), as a designated group for performing commissioned works at the events. Since its establishment, TCS has toured the world extensively to places including Denmark, England, France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Slovenia, the United States, Japan, China, Macao, and Hong Kong.



## Le Concert Français

Linked by a shared passion for Baroque music and the musicological research associated with it, a group of friends came together in the 1980s around the HANTAÏ brothers to explore the repertoire to which they were so attached. The year 1986 saw the official birth of Le Concert Français, which honed its performing skills with the help of Frans BRÜGGEN. Alongside Pierre HANTAÏ, Marc and Jérôme HANTAÏ were the musicians François Fernandez, Florence Malgoire, Ryo TERAKADO, Ageet ZWEISTRA, Simon HEYERICK and Jean-Marc FOREST, all of them acknowledged in the Baroque world as brilliant interpreters.

Le Concert Français, a flexibly sized ensemble, devoted its activities chiefly to the eighteenth-century concertante repertoire, ensuring transparency of texture and individual eloquence through the use of reduced forces. The ensemble soon met with success: regarded as bringing together some of the finest musicians of their generation, it was invited to the principal festivals and venues where Baroque music is celebrated.

This activity also led to a series of recordings, quickly singled out for attention by the specialized press, which acclaimed the group's interpretations of MOZART harpsichord concertos and concertos by Arcangelo Corelli (on the Opus 111 label) and confirmed its reputation with the release of a CD of Bach harpsichord concertos on AstréeAavidis.



Conductor

**Pierre HANTAÏ**

Pierre HANTAÏ was born in 1964 into a family of artists. When he was a child, his parents taught him how to paint, which he pursued with passion. However, it was the encounter with the music of BACH that was to determine his further path. The harpsichord recordings of Gustav LEONHARDT played an important role here. HANTAÏ undertook his initial musical steps at the age of ten. He played a great deal of chamber music with his brothers. He at first self-taught (on a small spinet) the repertoire that interested him, and later took lessons with the American harpsichordist Arthur HAAS. Ultimately, he was invited by Gustav LEONHARDT to participate in his lessons in Amsterdam for two years. He was still very young when he collaborated with the authoritative personalities of the small world of early music, with the KUIJKEN brothers, Gustav LEONHARDT, Philippe HERREWEGHE, and Jordi SAVALL.

He became known to a wider audience with his recordings of J.S. BACH's Goldberg Variations, a work that he has since played over hundred times throughout the world. He has often performed and recorded the ELIZABETHAN repertoire (Bull, Byrd, Farnaby), as well as BACH and COUPERIN, and has devoted himself profoundly to the works of Domenico SCARLATTI, which he has already recorded numerous times and that he wants to make even more familiar to audiences. Today he gladly joins together with his musical friends on the concert stage, with Jordi SAVALL, his brothers Marc and Jérôme HANTAÏ, flutist Hugo REYNE, violinist Amandine BEYER, harpsichordists Skip SEMPÉ, Olivier FORTIN, Aapo HÄKKINEN, and Maude GRATTON.

Pierre HANTAÏ's recordings for various labels (Adda, Astrée-Auvidis, Opus III, Virgin, Mirare) have been honored with numerous prizes by the critics, including the Gramophone Award, Grand Prix du Disque, Prix de 'Académie Charles Cros, and the Diapason 'Or de l'année. He has given master classes for various academies. He directs his instrumental ensemble Le Concert Français and has likewise been invited to conduct various chamber orchestras.



Soprano

**Dorothee MIELDS**

Dorothee MIELDS is one of the leading interpreters of 17th- and 18th-century music and is admired for her unique timbre and moving interpretations.

She currently participates in projects with the Collegium Vocale Gent, Netherlands Bach Society, Freiburger Barockorchester, Bachakademie Stuttgart, Dresdner Kammerchor, Freitagsakademie Bern and G.A.P. Ensemble. She appeared at the Musikfest Berlin, Heinrich-Schütz-Fest, Bachfest Arnstadt, Bachfest Leipzig, with Alte Musik St. Gallen and at the Ittinger Pfingstfestspiele.

Dorothee MIELDS is a welcome guest at international festivals such as Boston Early Music Festival, Festival van Vlaanderen, Wiener Festwochen, Händel-Festspiele Halle, Musikfestspiele Potsdam, Styriarte Graz, Niedersächsische Musiktage, Musikfest Bremen, Mainzer Musiksommer, Heinrich Schütz-Musikfest, Thüringer Bachwochen and Mosel Musikfest.

An important area of her artistic work is chamber music projects, of which "Duft und Wahnsinn" with Hille PERL and Lee SANTANA, "Birds" and "Inspired by Song" with Stefan TEMMINGH and Luigi BOCCHERINI "Stabat mater" with the Salagon Quartet have been particularly successful.





Mezzo-soprano

**Margot OITZINGER**

Margot OITZINGER was born in Graz (Austria) and studied voice at the University of Music in her hometown, graduating with distinction. Already during her studies she decided to specialize in early music. She attended master classes and seminars with Emma KIRKBY, Peter KOOIJ and Jill FELDMAN.

Margot OITZINGER is in great demand both as a concert singer and as an interpreter of opera from the Renaissance to the early Classical period.

Polyphonic as well as early baroque ensemble singing ("Les solistes de Collegium Vocale Gent" under Philippe HERREWEGHE, "Abendmusiken in der Predigerkirche" under Jörg-Andreas BÖTTICHER, "sette voci" under Peter KOOIJ etc.) are as much a part of her agenda as the works of high baroque masters as a soloist.

She sings at the most important concert venues, such as the Vienna Musikverein, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Palau de la musica Barcelona, Concertgebouw Brugge, Suntory Hall Tokyo, Arsenal Metz, Prinzregententheater Munich, Thomaskirche Leipzig, Eglise Saint-Roch Paris, Muziekcentrum Utrecht, Frauenkirche Dresden, Alte Oper Frankfurt under renowned conductors such as Philippe HERREWEGHE, Jordi SAVALL, Philippe PIERLOT, Philippe ROUSSET, Masaaki SUZUKI, John BUTT, Andrea MARCON, Michi GAIGG, Lorenzo GHIELMI, Christoph PREGARDIEN, Konrad JUNGHÄNEL or Rudolf LUTZ. Under the direction of the latter, she is involved in the complete recording of the vocal Bach works on DVD Furthermore, her work in oratorios, operas and ensembles is documented on numerous CD recordings (Harmonia Mundi, PHI, CPO, etc.).



Tenor

**Florian SIEVERS**

German tenor Florian SIEVERS was born in Hamburg and gained his first singing experience as a soprano in Uetersen Boys' Choir. He later studied with Berthold SCHMID at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater 'Felix MENDELSSOHN Bartholdy' in Leipzig, where he graduated with distinction in 2021.

A sought-after concert soloist in Germany, he is rapidly establishing himself on the international stage. Highlights in 2024 include concerts with Formosa Baroque in Taiwan, BACH cantatas with Vox LUMINIS in Wigmore Hall, London and performances at the Rheingau Musik Festival and the Bachfest Leipzig. Furthermore, he will be performing the role of the evangelist in BACH's St. John Passion with the Rias KAMMERCHOR and the Akademie für Alte Musik in Berlin and Paris under the baton of Justin DOYLE, and with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony under Alain ALTINOGLU in the Alte Oper Frankfurt. As a guest, he will sing the tenor solos in John NEUMEIERS ballet Dona Nobis Pacem at Hamburg State Opera.

In early 2024, Florian SIEVERS returns back to the opera stage in the leading role of Jan van Leyden in J. S. BACH - The Apocalypse, a work based on music by Johann Sebastian BACH, created by Opera2Day in collaboration with the Nederlandse BachVereniging.



Baritone

**Matthias VIEWEG**

Matthias VIEWEG, born in Sonneberg/Thuringia, began piano lessons at the age of five. His musical education led him to Wernigerode, where he became a member of the Radio Youth Choir and completed his high school education. After initially studying mathematics and history, he transferred to the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin to study singing with KS Prof. Günther LEIB, piano with Prof. Renate SCHORLER, and song accompaniment with Prof. Walter OLBERTZ. He completed his studies in 1999 with a concert examination. Matthias VIEWEG furthered his studies with Hans HOTTER, Dietrich FISCHER-DIESKAU, George FORTUNE, Rudolf PIERNAY, and Peter SCHREIER.

He achieved success in several competitions, winning the first prize at the Richard-STRAUSS-Gesellschaft München competition in 1997 and being awarded the BACH Prize at the International BACH Competition in Leipzig in 1998, where he also received a special prize from MDR.

As a baritone, Matthias VIEWEG has been engaged as a guest artist at venues such as the Staatsoper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, Theatre du Capitole Toulouse, Hans-Otto-Theater Potsdam, and in Tokyo, as well as at numerous international music festivals including the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music, HANDEL Festival Halle, Folle Journée in Nantes and Tokyo, Dresden Music Festival, Potsdam Sanssouci Music Festival, Bach en Vallée Mosane Festival, and Bachfest Leipzig.

## **Artistic and Production Team**

Conductor : Pierre HANTAÏ

Soprano : Dorothee MIELDS

Mezzo-soprano : Margot OITZINGER

Tenor : Florian SIEVERS

Baritone : Matthias VIEWEG

### **[ Le Concert Français ]**

Baroque Violin : Luis Otavio SANTOS, Michiyo KONDO, Marie TORIU, Sakura GOTO, Mika AKIHA,  
Tatsuya HATANO, Guya MARTININI

Baroque Viola : LIN Wen-chuan, Judy HUNG

Baroque Cello : Rainer ZIPPERLING, CHIANG Chia-hua

Baroque Double Bass : Margaret URQUHART

Baroque Flute : Marc HANTAÏ, CHEN Yi-fen

Baroque Oboe : Emmanuel LAPORTE, Rodrigo GUTIÉRREZ

Baroque Bassoon : Eyal STREET

Trumpet : Guy FERBER, Emmanuel MURE, Xavier GENDREAU

Timpani : Thomas HOLZINGER

Organ : Francis JACOB

Harpsichord : Dirk BÖRNER

### **[ Taipei Chamber Singers ]**

Soprano : CHONG Wei-min, FANG Su-jen, Alexandra Katya, YEN Shih-jung

Alto : CHUANG Hao-wei, HSIEH Chu-ching, HO Chia-yu, CHEN Pei-yin, Cherly Susanti

Tenor : LEE Chun-ping, PAN Guo-ching, HOU Tsung-yu, KOH Tuan-hoe, HUANG Yu-nung

Bass : TU Wei, CHENG Yu-hsi, CHANG Wen-pin, CHANG Ting-hao

