

# Summer Joy: BACH



## Jesu Meine Freude BWV 227

& more...



SSO CHORUS & FRIENDS - BACH PROJECT  
Dr. Sylvia Lee Mann, conductor

**AUGUST 13, 2022**  
**AT 11 AM**



BETHEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC  
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## **Summer Joy: BACH - Program Selections**

“Air” from *Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major* BWV 1068

Duet “Mein Freund ist mein!” from *Cantata “Wachet Auf”* BWV 140

Myra Garcia, soprano and David Archibald, bass

“Arioso” from Cantata BWV 156

Sylvia Lee Mann, viola

“Gavotte” from *Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major* BWV 1068

### **INTERMISSION**

“Jesu Meine Freude”, Motet BWV 227

1. Jesu, meine Freude
2. Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches
3. Unter deinem Schirmen
4. Denn das Gesetz
5. Trotz dem alten Drachen
6. Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich
7. Weg mit allen Schätzen
8. So aber Christus in euch ist
9. Gute Nacht, o Wesen
10. So nun der Geist
11. Weicht, ihr Trauergeister

#### **Instrumentalists:**

**Oboe** – Viki Bertram, Dana Sundene

**Bassoon** – James Hohlfeld

**Violin** – Debbie Gagnon, Jenifer Aragon, Debbie Dey

**Viola** – Joseph Derthick, Kenya Nelson

**Cello** – Jocelyn Francis, Jorge Rodriguez

**Bass** – Les Woodson

**Keyboard** – Gus Gil

#### **Chorus:**

**Sopranos:** Myra Garcia, Anne Henderson, Lizbeth Fraser Lucca, Mia Noriega Searight, Andrea Townsend

**Altos:** Ruth Charloff, Maisie Dawes, Karen Tune

**Tenors:** John Dick, James Hamilton, Tom Mazur, George Osorio

**Basses:** David Archibald, John Howell, Jonathan Ivy, Will Kohnen, Edd Ridderbusch,

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **"Air" from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068**

When music scholars began sifting through Bach's long-forgotten works in the nineteenth century, they came across four orchestral masterpieces that they catalogued as "orchestral suites" because of their similarity to suites for keyboard or individual string instruments—and simply to avoid confusion. . Instrumental suites were quite common at this time, typically comprised of stylized dances, with some flexibility as to the particular dance forms chosen for a specific work. Instrumental airs, derived from song form rather than dance, were frequently included in suites and offered composers a marvelously broad palette for their melodic brush strokes. Bach, however, actually had called these works "*ouvertures*" in the tradition of his German contemporaries, who used the term for an orchestral work consisting of an overture and several dance movements in the French style.

A true masterwork in 18 concise and elegant measures, Johann Sebastian Bach's Air encompasses the full gamut of emotions, inspiring a sense of peace and tranquility. The Air was composed as the second movement of Bach's Third Orchestral Suite and likely premiered during one of the popular Collegium Musicum concerts at Zimmermann's Coffee House in Leipzig in 1730 or 1731.

The Air is written solely for strings and continuo, in marked contrast to the other movements of the suite, which include parts for two oboes, three trumpets and timpani. This oasis of reflective calm in the midst of more boisterous sections provides balance to the work as a whole but also stands alone rather eloquently.

The piece is resolutely in the key of D, begging the question why it is often called "Air on the G String." The answer is that a 19th-century violinist named August Wilhelmj arranged the work, transposing it to the key of C and indicating the first violin part should be played on the G string, the instrument's lowest string. While a bravura technical feat, it is not in keeping with Bach's composition or the character of the piece. Nonetheless, the name has endured

### **Duet for Soprano and Bass, "Mein Freund ist mein!" from Cantata "Wachet Auf" BWV 140**

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* (Awake, calls the voice to us), BWV 140, also known as "Sleepers Wake", was composed in Leipzig for the 27th Sunday after Trinity and first performed it on 25 November 1731. It is based on the hymn "*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*" (1599) by Philipp Nicolai. The cantata is actually a late addition to Bach's cycle of chorale cantatas, featuring additional poetry for two duets of Jesus and the Soul which expand the theme of the hymn. The text of the cantata speaks of Christ as the bridegroom and the soul as the bride. The text of the duet heard today, is based on Song of Solomon 6:3. This duet is a love duet between the soprano Soul and the bass Jesus and pledges eternity between the lovers (Christ and the soul), now one flesh. Alfred Dürr describes it as giving "expression to the joy of the united pair".

### **“Arioso” (Sinfonia) from Cantata No. 156**

Bach was especially fond of this justly famous slow movement. He used it as the opening Sinfonia of his Cantata 156: *“Ich steh mit einem Fuss im Grabe,”* scored for oboe, strings, and continuo, which was first performed in Leipzig on January 23, 1729. Then around 1738 he used it again as the slow movement of his Keyboard Concerto in F minor, BWV 1056. Both, however, are thought to be reworkings of the slow movement of an earlier oboe concerto in G minor that is now lost, (though scholars have reconstructed it).

This exquisite Sinfonia, also known as “Arioso,” presents a favorite Vivaldi-like slow-movement texture—a singing melody over a simple accompaniment, though not a repeating bass pattern as both Vivaldi and Bach often employed. The beautiful piece has been claimed and performed by many different performers, on many different instruments. The melody, whether for oboe, violin, viola, cello or right hand of the keyboard part, provides a perfect example of Bach’s ornamentation technique. His embellishments, simple at first and more extensive when the opening section returns, complement the melodic line without disrupting it. Today’s version is an arrangement created by our conductor for viola solo, with accompaniment by strings and continuo.

### **“Gavotte” from Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D major, BWV 1068**

Following the Air in this suite (heard at the opening of today’s performance) are the “courtly” dances. Today’s performance includes the lively set of Gavottes. Gavotte 1, which has a forceful, rhythmic drive, is interrupted in the middle by a more flowing Second Gavotte, after which the opening returns. The Gavotte originated in France in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and Bach often used it in his writing. The Gavotte is in duple meter and moderate in tempo. Like many of the dance forms Bach used, it is in binary form – structured in two main sections, each of which is traditionally repeated. Here, however, Bach wrote a double Gavotte, which changes the pattern of the repeats, making the overall form ABA. For a listening challenge, notice the mordents (partial trills) that Bach has notated in the second Gavotte. Such ornamentation is usually found in Baroque era keyboard music, but is also present in other instrumental works. Enjoy the dance!

## MOTET: Jesu, meine Freude

Translation of the German text and concise notes corresponding to each movement are below. In depth background notes for the cantata can be found on pages 11 and 12.

### 1. Chorale

Jesu, meine Freude,  
**Jesus, my joy,**  
Meines Herzens Weide,  
**My heart's pasture,**  
Jesu, meine Zier,  
**Jesus, my adornment,**  
Ach wie lang, ach lange  
**Ah, how long, so long**  
Ist dem Herzen bange  
**Has my heart been anxious**  
Und verlangt nach dir!  
**And longed for you!**  
Gottes Lamm, mein Bräutigam,  
**Lamb of God, my bridegroom,**  
Außer dir soll mir auf Erden,  
**Besides you, for me on earth,**  
Nichts sonst Liebers werden.  
**Nothing could be dearer.**

The motet begins with a straightforward, yet touching four-part harmonization of stanza 1 of the chorale.

### 2. Chorus

Es ist nun nichts Verdammliches an denen, die in Christo Jesu sind,  
**There is now no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus,**  
die nicht nach dem Fleische wandeln, sondern nach dem Geist.  
**who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)**

The scripture text is set in a contrasting 3/2 meter. Repetitions of the word *nichts* (nothing) are separated by crucial silences, emphasizing Paul's declaration that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Walking in the ways of the flesh is depicted with long contrapuntal melismas (a series of notes sung to just one syllable) on the word *wandeln* (walking). The better way—*nach dem Geist*—is a short and simple statement at the cadence in the middle of the movement and again at the end.

### **3.Chorale**

Unter deinem Schirmen

**Under your protection**

Bin ich vor den Stürmen

**I am free from attacks**

Aller Feinde frei

**By all enemies.**

Laß den Satan wittern,

**Let the devil sniff around,**

Laß den Feind erbittern,

**Let the enemy rage on;**

Mir steht Jesus bei.

**Jesus stands by me.**

Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitzt,

**Though now it cracks and flashes,**

Ob gleich Sünd und Hölle schrecken:

**Though sin and hell both terrify,**

Jesus will mich decken.

**Jesus will cover me.**

This third movement is another chorale harmonization – and is slightly more adventurous than the first, as stanza 2 of the chorale offers opportunities for text-painting in the crack of thunder, the flash of lightning, and the terror of sin and hell.

### **4.Chorus**

Denn das Gesetz des Geistes, der da lebendig macht in Christo Jesu,

**For the law of the Spirit, which makes me alive in Christ Jesus,**

hat mich frei gemacht von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes.

**has made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)**

The gentle, lighter, higher character of the trio for first and second soprano and alto may suggest life in the Spirit and freedom from sin and death. The two soprano parts move in parallel motion with the first words of the text, but all three parts move independently at the words *frei gemacht* (made free)

## 5.Chorale

Trotz dem alten Drachen,  
**Despite the ancient dragon,**  
Trotz des Todes Rachen,  
**Despite the jaws of death,**  
Trotz der Furcht darzu,  
**Despite the fear they cause,**  
Tobe, Welt, und springe,  
**Rampage, world, and pounce,**  
Ich steh hier und singe  
**I stand here and sing**  
In gar sichrer Ruh.  
**In quite secure rest.**  
Gottes Macht halt mich in acht;  
**God's power holds me in his care;**  
Erd und Abgrund muss verstummen,  
**Earth and abyss must fall silent,**  
Ob sie noch so brummen.  
**However much they grumble.**

The sweetness of the previous movement is brought to an abrupt halt with the initial chord of this movement. Defiant, dissonant exclamations of *Trotz* (defiance) sweep away fears of death and Satan in a free treatment of the stanza 3 of the chorale, with frequent juxtapositions of the voices: high v. low, two sopranos v. altos and tenors, even basses v. everyone else. *Ich steh hier und singe* receives a more lyrical treatment. Many words are set expressively, for example, *tobe* (rampage) with a fast-rising passage in the bass and *verstummen* (fall silent) with notes moving downward. *Brummen* (grumbling) goes on for four and a half measures before the final cadence. Overall, it has the effect of a prelude to the sixth movement's fugue.

## 6. Chorus

Ihr aber seid nicht fleischlich, sondern geistlich,  
**But you are not of the flesh, but of the Spirit,**  
so anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnet.  
**and so God's Spirit dwells differently in you.**  
Wer aber Christi Geist nicht hat, der ist nicht sein.  
**But, whoever does not have Christ's Spirit is not his. (Romans 8:9)**

The central message of the work—"you are not of the flesh, but of the Spirit"—is set to a five-voice double fugue in G major. It has been described as an "organ fugue for the voice." Even in this complex texture, Bach pays careful attention to the text, contrasting the earthbound *fleischlich* (flesh), which sustain notes dissonantly across the barline in a yearning gesture, with *geistlich*, the freedom of the Spirit, which takes off in graceful sixteenth notes. The second fugal subject appears first in the tenor on the words *so anders Gottes Geist in euch wohnet*, with a new tune, beginning with the leap of a fourth and a descending scale, thus contrasting with the first melody. The movement concludes with voices joining in a homophonic minor-key setting of the warning that those who do not have Christ's Spirit do not belong to him.

## 7. Chorale

Weg mit allen Schätzen!  
**Away with all treasures!**  
Du bist mein Ergötzen,  
**You are my delight,**  
Jesu, meine Lust!  
**Jesus, my desire!**  
Weg ihr eitlen Ehren,  
**Away, all you vain honors,**  
Ich mag euch nicht hören,  
**I wish not to hear you;**  
Bleibt mir unbewusst!  
**Remain unknown to me!**  
Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod  
**Suffering, need, the cross, shame and death**  
Soll mich, ob ich viel muss leiden,  
**Shall not, whatever I must suffer,**  
Nicht von Jesu scheiden.  
**Divide me from Jesus.**

In this four-part chorale setting the intensity continues with its repeated cries of "Weg!" ("Away"), shooing away the vain treasures of life in favor of Jesus' comforts. The sopranos sing the tune over moving imitative figures in the lower voices that add color to ideas such as *weg* (away!) and the misery of *Elend, Not, Kreuz, Schmach und Tod*.

## 8. Chorus

So aber Christus in euch ist, so ist der Leib zwar tot um der Sünde willen;

**But if Christ is in you, then the body is surely dead for the sake of sin;**

der Geist aber ist das Leben um der Gerechtigkeit willen.

**but the Spirit is life for the sake of righteousness. (Romans 8:10)**

This second trio is for alto, tenor and bass. Here the death of the body comes in a lilting 12/8 time, but life through God's spirit is a steadily running, seemingly eternal melisma.

The opening phrase, "If Christ is in you," is in the warm, glowing key of C major. The words Spirit (Geist) and life (Leben) are celebrated with sixteenth-note runs.

## 9. Chorale

Gute Nacht, o Wesen,

**Good night, oh being,**

Das die Welt erlesen,

**That the world chooses;**

Mir gefällst du nicht.

**You do not please me.**

Gute Nacht, ihr Sünden,

**Good night, you sins,**

Bleibet weit dahinten,

**Stay far away from here;**

Kommt nicht mehr ans Licht!

**Come no more to the light!**

Gute Nacht, du Stolz und Pracht!

**Good night, you pride and splendor!**

Dir sei ganz, du Lasterleben,

**To all of you, sinful living,**

Gute Nacht gegeben.

**Good night is bidden.**

The ninth movement is an oasis in time, like a quiet evening stroll. This beautiful setting of stanza 5 of the chorale is for first and second soprano, alto, and tenor. The absence of the bass gives the movement a weightless quality appropriate for bidding farewell to the world's cares. There are three elements of the texture: a duet of sopranos, a steady walking tenor line, and the alto's chorale-like interruptions. The singers repeatedly lullaby a soothing farewell ("Gute Nacht", i.e., "Good night") to worldly life, sin, pride, and glory. The chorale tune appears in the alto, while the sopranos' duets on the words gute Nacht are sung over the steady, walking tenor line.

## **10. Chorus**

So nun der Geist des, der Jesum von den Toten auferwecket hat, in euch wohnet,

**Now the Spirit that has raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in you;**

so wird auch derselbige, der Christum von den Toten auferwecket hat,

**the very same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead,**

eure sterbliche Leiber lebendig machen um des willen, dass sein Geist in euch wohnet.

**gives life to your mortal bodies, so that his Spirit may dwell in you. (Romans 8:11)**

The second-to-the-last movement opens with a new text set to music similar to that of the second movement, and shares two crucial characteristics of both the second and fifth movements: occasional, prominent silences and a fugal melody that begins with quick, repeated notes. . The first soprano has a final solo burst of joy on the word Geist immediately before the cadence.

## **11. Chorale**

Weicht, ihr Trauergeister,

**Vanish, you spirits of gloom,**

Denn mein Freudenmeister,

**For my master of joy,**

Jesus, tritt herein.

**Jesus, enters in.**

Denen, die Gott lieben,

**To those who love God,**

Muss auch ihr Betrüben

**Must even their distress**

Lauter Zucker sein.

**Be pure sweetness.**

Duld ich schon hier Spott und Hohn,

**Though here I suffer scorn and taunting,**

Dennoch bleibst du auch im Leide,

**Yet you remain, even in suffering,**

Jesu, meine Freude.

**Jesus, my joy.**

The motet closes with Bach bringing the whole motet full circle. The curtain falls on the same words with which it raised, and indeed with the same chorale harmonization.

These words emphasize the relationship between the speaker and God, which has been at the core of every verse, whether chorale or biblical: Jesu, meine Freude—“Jesus, my joy.”

## BACKGROUND OF THE MOTET

*"Jesu Meine Freude"* is a Bach motet rather than a cantata. What's the difference between the two? A motet, in general, is strictly vocal music. The singers may be accompanied by continuo instruments (organ and cello or other bass instrument) and other instruments may also double the singers' parts, as is common historical performance practice, but there is no independent role for an orchestra. Also, the typical libretto for a Bach cantata contains free poetry along with chorales and scripture. The text of a motet is usually limited to a portion of a psalm or other scripture, though today's motet, *Jesu, meine Freude* (BWV 227), combines Bible verses with the stanzas of a well-known chorale.

In 18th century German churches, a motet was often sung at the beginning of the morning service and the afternoon vespers. Very likely Bach drew on two centuries of established repertory when selecting the motets sung at weekly worship services during his time in Leipzig (1723–50). Traditionally, motets were conducted by school prefects, not the Cantor, an indication that simpler works from the 16th and 17th century filled this slot in the worship service. Bach does not seem to have composed many motets; and the complexity of these suggests that they were not used regularly in Sunday worship services. Some of Bach's motets are known to have been composed as special music for funerals, for example, *Fürchte dich nicht* (Fear not, BWV 228) and *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf* (The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness, BWV 226). The purpose and occasion for others, such as *Jesu, meine Freude*, is less clear.

No complete autograph score for *Jesu, meine Freude* has survived, though manuscript parts for the chorale settings in movements 1, 3, 7 and 11 survive from the 1730s. The motet was published early in the 19th century in an edition by Johann Gottfried Schicht, one of Bach's successors as cantor at the Thomasschule in Leipzig. A scholar early in the 20th century believed he had found evidence that *Jesu, meine Freude* was composed in 1723 for the funeral of the Leipzig postmaster's wife, but half a century later another researcher took a closer look at the documents and the theory fell apart. Scholars now believe that the composer assembled the motet at a later date, in the late 1720s or 1730s, re-working material from earlier in his career. One indication of this is that the variation of the chorale tune that appears in the fifth movement is from the hymnal used in Weimar during the time Bach worked there, first as court organist, then as concertmaster (1708–1717).

*Jesu, meine Freude* consists of 11 movements. Settings of the six stanzas of Johann Franck's 1650 hymn of the same name alternate with five passages from scripture, Romans 8:1, 2, 9, 10 and 11. Some of the melodic material used in the settings of the scriptural texts is derived from the shape of the chorale tune. Bach varies the sound by using different combinations of voices and different meters from movement to movement.

The motet has a symmetrical, palindromic, arch-type structure, an organizing principle Bach also used when he put together the Credo of the B minor mass from previously composed music. Movement 6, the climax of the work, is a five-part double fugue—exactly what you'd expect from J. S. Bach, for whom a fugue was the highest form of music-making. The outline of the motet looks like this:

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1. Chorale, stanza 1, four-part harmonization
2. *Romans 8:1, five-part dramatic chorus*
3. Chorale, stanza 2, five-part harmonization with flourishes
4. *Romans 8:2, trio for soprano 1 and 2 and alto.*
5. Chorale stanza 3, five-part free treatment
6. *Romans 8:9, five-part double fugue*
7. Chorale stanza 4, four-part harmonization with flourishes
8. *Romans 8:10, trio for alto, tenor, and bass*
9. Chorale stanza 5, four-part free treatment
10. *Romans 8:11, five-part dramatic chorus (music repeats #2)*
11. Chorale stanza 6, (music repeats #1)

**(Fun activity – turn this document 90 degrees counter-clockwise to see the arch!)**

**Fun fact: The 5 movements of each side of the climactic 6<sup>th</sup> movement fugue are almost identical in length! Movements 1 – 5 total 209 bars; movements 7-11 total 208 (the fugue is 48 bars long).**

Johann Franck's chorale text, a poetic first-person love song to Jesus, was written in 1650, at the end of the Thirty Years War, in which mercenary armies on the march had pillaged German cities, towns, villages and farms. The hymn describes relying on Jesus especially in the face of external dangers, such as storms, the ancient dragon Satan, and the jaws of death. These and other dramatic images give Bach (and his singers) plenty of room for expressive vocal text-painting.

In contrast to Franck's hymn, the scripture verses from Romans 8 are part of a core text of orthodox Lutheran theology. Martin Luther is known to have said, "Romans is really the chief part of the New Testament, and the very purest gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it by heart, but occupy himself with it every day." The theology thus emphasizes that "Life in Christ and in the Spirit", described in winding dependent clauses by St. Paul, brings a freedom from the spiritual dangers of sin and mortality.

Bach's music unites the contrasting texts to more fully describe the believer's joyful reliance on Jesus through whatever life may bring and ultimately when facing death. He uses the astounding arch-like construction to describe a developing, strengthening faith—a faith which comes full circle, back to its source.