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# Bach Beat

The Newsletter of the Bach Cantata Choir



February 2019

[www.bachcantatachoir.org](http://www.bachcantatachoir.org)

Vol. 12, No. 4

**Special announcement!**  
**All Classical Portland, Thursdays @ Three**  
**January 31, 2019 3:00 pm**

On January 31, a small group from the Bach Cantata Choir will be at the KQAC 89.9 studio singing several pieces during the live broadcast of *Thursdays @ Three*. Artistic Director Ralph Nelson will be making a very special announcement at this time.

Be sure to listen to All Classical Portland (89.9 FM) at 3:00 pm on January 31. The broadcast is also available worldwide at <https://www.allclassical.org>.

***Super Bach Sunday***  
***Sunday, February 3, 2019 at 2:00 pm***

George F. Handel: Concerto Grosso Opus 3, No. 2

Claudio Monteverdi: Cantate Domino

Felix Mendelssohn: Neujahrslied

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel: Im Wald

Anton Bruckner: Locus Iste

Johann Sebastian Bach: Solo Cantata #51 "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!"  
- Vakaré Petroliūnaitė, soprano

Johann Sebastian Bach: Cantata #171 "Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm"

All Bach Cantata Choir concerts are held at the Rose City Park Presbyterian Church at the corner of NE 44th & Sandy (office address 1907 NE 45th Ave) in Portland, Oregon ([map](#)).

*Admission is free. Free-will offerings gratefully accepted.*

## Meanwhile, in the Age of Enlightenment...

By John Chilgren, Bass

*But let the seeds of peace, still more and more increase,  
let truth with virtue meet and merry justice greet;  
let friendship reign with love as joined the reign above.*

From the Grub Street Journal, London, January 15, 1750

In the early to mid-18th century, Germany was at the peak of cultural excellence, having produced world-class leaders in philosophy, mathematics, science and music, such as Goethe, Schiller, Leibnitz, Kant, Bach, Handel,

and Beethoven. Though gone from sight, they have never left us and the Bach Cantata Choir continues to illuminate an often dim-lit world with the fruits of the geniuses of Bach, Bruckner, the Mendelssohn family, Monteverdi, and Handel. While Super Bowl contenders are battling out the right to rule the NFL, the Bach Cantata Choir will elevate you to a realm of auditory delight, bringing you some of the best of Baroque and beyond.

### **George F. Handel (1685-1759)**

Several countries could rightly claim **George F. Handel** as their own. They include his birth country of Germany, where proudly stands his statue in the Market Square in his home city of Halle (Saale); then Italy (Florence, Rome, and Venice) where he spent four years honing his skill in composing opera, thanks to his collaborations with Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti; and finally England where he spent his last 50 years. Here he produced the bulk of prodigious output that included 42 operas, 29 oratorios, more than 120 cantatas, trios, duets, arias, much chamber music and concerti, among others.

Handel's *Concerti grossi*, Opus 3, first appeared as a collection of six concertos in 1734, published by the English printer/publisher John Walsh who eventually established a monopoly on publishing Handel's music. Walsh apparently had decided to capitalize on the success of Arcangelo Corelli's *Concerti Grossi*, published posthumously in 1714. Corelli (1653-1713), the celebrated Italian composer and violinist, who inspired a generation of Italian violinists/composers and who performed for popes, cardinals, and the queen of Sweden, influenced both Bach and Handel, the former composing an organ fugue based on a Corelli work and the latter composing his own concerti grossi using Corelli's as models.

The concerto grosso was a common Baroque type of orchestral music in which the music alternated between a small group of instrumentalists (*solì*, *concertino*) and a larger group (*ripieno*).

Handel's Opus 3 was an immediate success. Like Bach's use of parody in the B-minor Mass, Handel too used existing material in the Opus 3 construction. His use of the concertino varied among all six concertos. Only one of them has the usual four movements, the others having two, three, or six movements, and the oboe is the usual solo instrument as opposed to the violin. There is a flute solo in the third concerto and an organ solo in the sixth. Performed in this concert is the second concerto in B flat major, probably composed around 1715-18, the instrumentation for the concertino being oboe and strings, while for the ripieno the bassoon and continuo are added.

### **J. S. Bach (1685-1750)**

Bach wrote only a handful of solo cantatas but Cantata 51, *Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen* (Praise Ye God throughout all Creation) is both brilliant and unique, not only for its daring soprano solo requiring unusual virtuosity but for the trumpet as well. No wonder it is the second most recorded cantata, there being more than 81 available. Originally Bach indicated in the manuscript *in ogni tempo*, meaning it was written to be performed at any time during the year. Its original performance was the 15th Sunday after Trinity, presumably in September 1730, and most likely in Leipzig. Experts have surmised that, given the technical demands of the cantata, it may have been performed by an Italian trained professional singer or perhaps even a trained castrato. Conjectures abound regarding this issue but for purposes here, the soloists, vocal and trumpet, are unknown as well as the musical setting in which it was performed. Nevertheless, Cantata 51 is glorious music and demonstrates Bach's skill in composing a work using the Italian model that was much admired in the Dresden court.

Cantata 171, *Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm* (According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise) from Psalm 48 was composed for New Year's Day and probably first performed in Leipzig in 1729. The librettist was Christian Friedrich Henrici who went by the pseudonym Picander. Picander was born near Dresden and died there but began his career as a poet in Leipzig after studying law first in Wittenberg (1719) and later in Leipzig (1720) where he began to write satirical poems. By 1725 he was working with J. S. Bach, who had moved to Leipzig in 1723. They collaborated for many years not only with Bach's cantatas but on dramatic works as well, including the St. Matthew and St. Mark Passions. The opening chorus of this cantata is the source of the second chorus of the Credo (*Patrem Omnipotentum*) in Bach's *B minor Mass* written over a period of time between 1725 and 1748 (an example of parody frequently employed by Bach). Following the chorus is a brilliant tenor aria followed by a warm and gentle alto aria, a bass recitative, and a soprano aria, itself an adaptation of a soprano aria from Bach's secular cantata BWV 205 (*Zerreibet, zersprenget, zertrümmert die Gruft*) written for a professor at Leipzig University. The cantata ends with a joyous setting of the chorale "*Jesu, nun sei gepreiset*" (Jesus, now be praised) with trumpet and timpani fanfares between the phrases.

### Fanny (Mendelssohn) Hensel (1805-1847)



Often missing from history books of classical music are the lives and works of women pianists and composers who were equal to or more formidable than their male counterparts. One of these unsung geniuses is the eldest sister of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. **Fanny Mendelssohn** (married name **Hensel**) was born in Hamburg in 1805. Brother and sister formed a close relationship based on having similar interests and talents, while being taught by the same piano teachers. By the age of 13, she had memorized Bach's 24 preludes of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Like her brother she became a member of the Berlin *Singakademie*, the private musical society that eventually became a public institution with leaders such as **Carl Friedrich Zelter**, Felix's piano teacher. Fanny began composing at age 14. By the time she assumed the role of wife and mother, she had produced over 400 compositions, most of them unpublished and now in private hands. She was a prolific correspondent and assiduous diarist,

attributes that mirrored Berlin's cultural life and provided insight into social and intellectual history of the 19th century. She was said to be more expressive than brother Felix, who was the better technician. Like the rest of her family, she studied the music of the masters – Bach, Handel, Beethoven, and Mozart. Piano and lieder works formed the bulk of her output. Typical of the works of women in the Romantic period, most are written for voice or piano. *Im Wald* is one of six lieder songs from her collection *Gartenlieder*, Op. 3 and will be performed in this concert. Image: Portrait of Fanny Hensel, 1842 by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (German, 1800–1882)

### Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847)

The work by **Felix Mendelssohn** (see *Bach Beat Vol 11, No. 4* for a brief bio) titled *Neujahrslied* is from Op. 88 written three years before the composer's tragic death in 1847. The New Year's Song is the first of six *a cappella* songs for mixed chorus. The listener can note stylistic similarities between *Neujahrslied* and *Im Wald*. Felix's teacher, Carl Zelter, passed his ardor for J. S. Bach along to Felix, his most prized student, who helped to revive awareness of old Bach to his and future generations. Devastated by the loss of his muse Fanny, Felix lost his zest for life and passed away from a stroke six months later on November 4, 1847.

### Claudio Monteverdi (1547-1653)

Italian composer **Claudio Monteverdi** was a trailblazer in the development of modern music, being credited as the principal figure in ending the Renaissance and initiating the Baroque era. He published eight books of madrigals that, upon analysis, detail the three epochs of his life: youthful works (Books 1-3) written in Cremona; the more mature compositions (Books 4-6) while he was in the service of the Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga; and his more audacious concertato style (Books 7-8) written after he became *maestro di cappella* of the Basilica of Saint Marks in Venice, revitalizing the music there as well. A composer of hundreds of sacred works (he entered the priesthood after the death of his wife), he also helped to transform opera from a private performance affair to that enjoyed by the public.

His polyphonic sacred motet *Cantate Dominum* (1615, published in 1620) is an example of the Monteverdi's earlier style. The text is liberally adapted from Psalm 98, celebrating God's victory over the enemies of Israel. In it Monteverdi condenses the text into two groups of three verses, ending each with the phrase "for he has done wonderful things."

### Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

More than 200 recordings exist of the *Locus Iste* composed by **Anton Bruckner** in 1869, specifically for the dedication of the Votive Chapel in the newly constructed *Neuer Dom* (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception) where he had been organist for many years in the Old Cathedral. Called a gradual, a hymn or chant in celebration of the Eucharist, *Locus Iste* was Bruckner's first motet composed in Vienna where he had been teaching. The text reads "This place was made by God. . ."

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*John Chilgren sings with the Bach Cantata Choir and for many years with the Portland Symphonic Choir and Choral Arts Ensemble. He plays clarinet with a Portland marching band.*

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**Thank you!**

We appreciate the generosity of all who support the Bach Cantata Choir.

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### Bach Cantata Choir

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## Concert Notes

### Admission:

- Tickets are not required at this concert. A free-will offering will be taken.

### Parking:

- The church's parking lot is very small and fills up quickly. Please allow time to find on-street parking.
- Do not park in the Grocery Outlet lot!

### Accessibility:

- The church has an elevator accessible from its parking lot, facing Sandy Blvd.

The Bach Cantata Choir's mission is to sing the entire set of cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach over a period of 30 years.

The Bach Cantata Choir is a legally organized non-profit corporation under Oregon law, and is a registered 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS. Donations to the choir are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law and regulation.

The *BachBeat* newsletter is published cyclically by the Bach Cantata Choir.

Emily Rampton, Editor

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