

BACH NOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

The First Ruth Monte Memorial Bach Competition

University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

Report by Derek Stauff (Hillsdale College)

This past summer marked a very successful launch of the Ruth Monte Memorial Bach Competition. Designed for pianists ages 12 to 18 living in North America, the competition's final round gathered six performers and their families from across the United States to play at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana on June 9 & 10. The results far exceeded the expectations of the organizers, participants, and families. Across two days, we heard not just technically exceptional and thoughtful playing but also saw a cohort of young musicians growing in their interest and knowledge of Bach. All this certainly can be attributed, first, to the generosity of the competition's sponsor, the Ruth and Noel Monte Fund, as well as to the diligence of the competition organizers, Andrew Talle and Paul Walker. The ABS also enjoyed the support of our host, the University of Notre Dame, and especially Erin Taylor, a graduate student in the sacred music program. And finally, this year's competition owed its success to the goodwill of the contestants and their parents.

The Ruth Monte Memorial Bach Competition was established as part of the bequest of Dr. Noel S. Monte, a New York-based dentist, in memory of his wife Ruth, a longtime member of the ABS. His bequest asked the ABS to hold a competition built around Bach's keyboard music, particularly *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, for which his wife had a particular affinity. Trained as a pianist in her native Romania, Mrs. Monte often performed Bach's music



Photo 1. Contestants and Judges after the Final Recital and Awards Ceremony

on her recitals, a distinctive feature of which was to play the same work on the piano as well as the harpsichord or organ. As their bequest to the ABS explains, Ruth and Noel Monte were both “deeply devoted to Bach and his music, sensing its great impact on the human brain and culture throughout the world. To them, Bach represented a bright planet appearing in the sky only once, requiring centuries for the human mind to observe and fully comprehend. The Monte Fund has the goal of supporting and promoting this musical treasure for present and future generations.” For the inaugural competition, the ABS decided to devote the competition solely to piano, knowing that young players generally do not have

In This Issue:

The First Ruth Monte Memorial Bach Competition	1
Report: Bachfest Leipzig 2023	5
Call for papers: “Global Bach”	10
ABS Grants and Awards	10
Announcements	11
Member News	12



Photo 2. O'Neill Hall, University of Notre Dame.

extensive experience with organ and other historical keyboard instruments.

Before the final round at South Bend, the jury—Andrew Talle (Northwestern University), Paul Walker (University of Notre Dame), Don Freund (Indiana University), and Daniel Schlosberg (University of Notre Dame)—screened the applicants in a preliminary round. Applicants prepared video recordings of one prelude and fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I and a solo work by another composer of the contestant's choice. The six finalists along with at least one parent were then invited to South Bend for the final round in June, with travel expenses to be covered by the ABS. Some of the contestants brought along their whole families.

After the arrival of most competitors and an opening reception on Thursday, June 8, the two-day competition began with the final round itself on Friday, June 9, held in O'Neill Hall, the new music facility built directly into the south side of the Notre Dame Football Stadium (Photo 2). Each contestant received practice and warmup time in the LaBar Recital Hall, where the competition and recital would be held. The Notre Dame music department also provided quality practice space on the upper floors of O'Neill Hall. For the final round on Friday, each contestant performed one prelude and fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, three movements from a suite or partita by J.S. Bach or the complete *Italian Concerto*, BWV 971, plus a solo work or works by another composer of the contestant's choice. This round was held for the jurors alone but was recorded by professional videographers. After the competition, the finalists received private copies of these videos as well as written comments from the jurors.

Friday evening's dinner was followed by Paul Walker's lecture on the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (Photo 3). Beyond the background to the collection and exploration of Bach's fugal procedures, his lecture took a hands-on approach to tuning and temperament at the harpsichord. Walker invited the contestants to the harpsichord to observe the effects of different temperaments closeup. This element of the lecture particularly intrigued some of the finalists, who had little previous experience with either harpsichords or



Photo 3. Paul Walker lecturing on the *Well-Tempered Clavier*

temperaments.

On Saturday morning, Don Freund held a public masterclass in which each contestant played music by Bach (Photos 3 & 4). With six participants, Freund had to keep a steady pace, but I found that each player had time to respond to his feedback. Especially helpful for the audience were Freund's projections of the scores, letting everyone focus on the details under discussion and letting him engage in broader analysis of the pieces. Freund's remarks, especially at the end of his class, allowed us to see how a composer today might think about and fruitfully learn from Bach's music, and this helped generate among some of the students an added interest in matters of composition and analysis.

Following the masterclass and lunch, contestants and their families joined Paul Walker and Notre Dame graduate students in sacred music on a tour of campus (Photo 7). In between afternoon weddings at the basilica, we were able to see and hear a brief demonstration of the organ installed in 2016 by Paul Fritts & Co., followed by a tour of other notable campus landmarks. The highlight for the contestants, however, was the time spent on the



Photo 4. Don Freund with David Fu



Photo 4. Don Freund with Edie Park

organ built by Paul Fritts & Co. in Reyes Hall in the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. After a demonstration and improvisation by Notre Dame graduate student David Stultz, the participants took turns playing, usually trying out one of their keyboard pieces by Bach. Many had never played an organ, especially not of this kind, and it was fun to hear how quickly they adapted. At the back of the hall, students also had the opportunity to play an old single-manual instrument from Naples, ca. 1680, noting in particular its quarter-comma meantone temperament (Photo 5).



Photo 5. David Stultz and Paul Walker demonstrate an Italian organ

For the final recital on Saturday afternoon, each contestant played a work chosen by the jury:

Timothy Yang: Prelude and Fugue in G Major, WTC, Book I, BWV 860

Edie Park: Joseph Haydn, Sonata no. 62 in E-Flat Major, Hob XVI:52, Movement I: Allegro
 Sanjeev Belle Trichur: Prelude and Fugue in C-Sharp Minor, WTC, Book I, BWV 849
 Aidan Purtell: Johannes Brahms, Sonata in F-Sharp Minor, op. 2, movement I: Allegro non troppo ma energico
 Masanobu Pires: Prelude and Fugue in E-Flat Minor, WTC, Book I, BWV 853
 David Fu: Partita no. 4, BWV 828: Overture, Menuet, Gigue

Immediately following the recital, Daniel Schlosberg announced the winners of the competition (Photo 1):

First Prize: David Fu

Second Prize: Masanobu Pires

Third Prize: Edie Park



Photo 6. Contestants (from left to right): Masanobu Pires, Aidan Purtell, Sanjeev Belle Trichur, Edie Park, and Timothy Yang

Following the recital and announcement of winners, everyone enjoyed a final meal together (Photo 8).

One of the highlights of the whole competition was the camaraderie and goodwill shown by all participants and their families. One of the parents wrote afterwards to express the families' gratitude to the ABS for this very facet of the competition: "I think the best (and sweetest) sign of this was when all the kids 'ran away' today after dinner to hang out together by themselves. As all we parents discussed over our meals and other interactions together, being a pianist is a fairly solitary activity, and finding like-minded friends is rather difficult at school, and this was a lovely way for them to meet and hopefully strike up friendships with others in their 'tribe.' Thank you for giving them this opportunity!" The ABS has, to my knowledge, never before had the means to engage so directly with young performers by encouraging them to learn to play, understand, and value Bach's music. We can hope that the precedents set by our first Ruth Monte Memorial Bach Competition will help ensure that many more young pianists will continue to find this kind of inspiration.



Photo 7. Edie Park, Masanobu Pires, and Timothy Yang

BIOGRAPHIES:

David Fu, 14 years old, has won and performed in many prestigious competitions over his years of study. He also has performed in notable venues such as Carnegie Hall, Kimmel Center, and Lincoln Center. David has been studying with Professor Julian Martin at the Juilliard Pre-College program since 2018. He has also participated in music festivals such as the Bowdoin International Music Festival, Luzerne Music Center, and the Palmetto International Piano Festival. Aside from his music studies, he attends the Albany Academy, participating in school government and athletics.

Edie Park, 14 years old, is an upcoming ninth grader at the Latin School of Chicago. She currently studies with Dr. Christina Tio (Music Institute of Chicago) and Prof. Winston Choi (Roosevelt University) and participated in selected masterclasses from renowned pianists, Jean-Louis Haguenauer, James Giles, Jerome Lowenthal, Alan Chow, Lydia Brown, Silvia Wang, Frank Wibaut, and Don Freund. Edie enjoys participating in competitions and has regularly donated part of her prize money to Chicago's classical music radio station, WFMT. Participating in the inaugural Ruth Monte Bach Competition was especially meaningful to Edie, growing up listening to *Mr. Bach Comes to Call* every single night.

Masanobu Pires is a seventh grader at Sharon Middle School in Sharon, MA and has been studying with Bianca Oglice at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School in Boston since age eight. Masanobu has won prizes from the E-Piano Competition, Chopin Competition in Hartford, and the NEC

Preparatory School Concerto Competition and was chosen in 2022 as Outstanding Young Artist for the Musicale festivals. Masanobu appeared on NPR's *From the Top* show. He also likes to use his musical ability to give back to his community, successfully raising research funds for the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through his piano recital. In his spare time, Masanobu likes reading and playing with his younger brother and his grandmother. He is an avid fan of opera and ballet.

Aidan Purtell, 18 years old, is from Fresno, California and now studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music with Professor Kathryn Brown. Aidan has participated in music festivals and competitions such as the Philadelphia International Piano Competition, the PianoTexas International Music Festival, and the Małopolska Talent Academy in Poland. He previously studied with Roberto Plano at the Jacobs School of Music and Andreas Werz at California State University, Fresno. In his spare time, Aidan is a fan of Russian romantic literature.

Sanjeev Belle Trichur, 13 years old, is an eighth grader at Congressional School in Falls Church, VA and studies piano with Dr. Hyun-Sook Park at the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. He receives additional coaching from Dr. Lambert Orkis of the National Symphony Orchestra and Ms. Marian Hahn of the Peabody Institute. Sanjeev began exploring the piano at age three and has been writing his own music since he was six, studying composition with Sam Post at Levine Music in Washington, D.C. for four years. He also studied violin and theory for four years at Levine and played in a chamber trio. Sanjeev loves Baroque music, J.S. Bach being his favorite composer. He hopes to "keep the torch alive" and bring his love for Bach to his generation and beyond.

Timothy Yang, 13 years old, is a four-time US National Gold Medalist from the Royal Conservatory of Music. He performed at Carnegie Hall three times. Most recently, he took First Prize at the Radda Rise International Piano Competition in March 2023. Timothy won a scholarship to play at a Concerto Festival in Portugal in July 2023. Timothy studies with Dustin Gledhill and resides in Palos Verdes Estates, California.



Photo 8. All of the contestants at the final dinner

REPORT: BACHFEST LEIPZIG 2023

YO TOMITA
(Queen's University, Belfast)

The Bachfest Leipzig 2023 was held from Thursday, June 8 to Sunday, June 18 with the motto “BACH for Future.” In addition to the motto, there was an overarching theme: the tercentenary celebration of Bach’s appointment as Thomascantor, which began in effect on the first Sunday after Trinity, May 30, 1723, which fell on June 11 this year. Altogether 160 events were presented in 34 venues within the city of Leipzig itself, plus seven outside Leipzig (including excursions to Altenburg, Dresden, Köthen, Naumburg, Störmthal, Zeitz, and Zschortau). The motto was explored from various new and exciting angles by setting Bach’s works in new contexts, formats, and adaptations. While many of these were experimental in nature, the newly commissioned work for the final piece of the opening concert in the Thomaskirche, the *Cantata for Soloists, Choir and Orchestra* by Jörg Widmann, stood out as the most original and deeply moving (Photo 1). Together with the opening Prelude and Fugue, BWV 552, performed stylishly by Johannes Lang on the Gerald Woehl Bach organ, Thomas Leininger’s imaginative arrangement of Bach’s double-choir motet *Singet dem Herrn*, BWV 225, in the style of Mozart (premier) and



Photo 2. Chorus and Orchestra of the J.S. Bach-Stiftung, directed by Rudolf Lutz
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

Bach’s dramatic cantata *Die Elenden sollen essen*, BWV 75 (Bach’s first cantata as Thomascantor), performed by the Thomanerchor Leipzig and Gewandhausorchester directed by Andreas Reize, created an immensely satisfying concert, which firmly set a positive tone and direction for this year’s 11-day festival.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Among a number of highlights in this year’s Bachfest, the most important was a series of four concerts on the theme of “the best of the first annual cycle of cantatas.” Spread over the first four evenings of Bachfest, each concert was given by a different group under the baton of their world-famous director. As part of seeking “new formats,” each began with Q-&A-style “conversations” between Michael Maul, the festival director, and each ensemble director attempting to elucidate their approaches, which, on occasion, lasted a little too long to be really appreciated by the audiences. The first concert, performed at the Nikolaikirche, was presented by director Rudolf Lutz with the Chorus and Orchestra of the J. S. Bach-Stiftung who presented four cantatas composed from the 8th to the 11th Sundays after Trinity: *Erforsche mich, Gott, und erfahre mein Herz*, BWV 136, *Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht*, BWV



Photo 1. Thomanerchor Leipzig and Gewandhausorchester, directed by Andreas Reize
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes



Photo 3. *Les Passions de l'Ame* and soprano, Hana Blažikova, directed by Meret Lüthi
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

105, *Schauet doch und sehet, ob irgendein Schmerz sei*, BWV 46, and *Siehe zu, dass deine Gottesfurcht nicht Heuchelei sei*, BWV 179 (Photo 2). The second night, also at the Nikolaikirche, was Hans-Christoph Rademann and Gaechinger Cantorey's performance, for which they selected four cantatas plus one movement from a lost cantata (torso) from the second period of Trinity: *Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft*, BWV 50, *Christus, der ist mein Leben*, BWV 95, *Ich elender Mensch, wer wird mich erlösen*, BWV 48, *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort*, BWV 60, and *Es reiſet euch ein schrecklich Ende* BWV 90. The third night was at the Thomaskirche, where Philippe

Herreweghe with Collegium Vocale Gent covered cantatas written from the New Year to the end of Epiphany in January 1724: *Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen*, BWV 65, *Herr, wie du willst, so schicks mit mir*, BWV 73, *Jesus schläft, was soll ich hoffen*, BWV 81, and *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, BWV 190.1. And finally, on the fourth night, again at the Thomaskirche, Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir covered cantatas for Easter and Pentecost: *Christ lag in Todes Banden*, BWV 4.2, *Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen*, BWV 66.3 (the revised version performed in 1735), *Wer da gläubet und getauft wird*, BWV 37, and *Du Hirte Israel, höre*, BWV 104. It was an absolute treat to hear such a good representation of cantatas Bach wrote in his first year in Leipzig in the venues in which they were originally performed 300 years ago. The variety of approaches taken by each group of performers definitely enhanced the audience's appreciation, which was impressive given that the listeners were already expecting a magical experience. From Lutz's presentation of Bach's four sequential cantatas I gained a deeper understanding of Bach's ambitions as well as his exceptional abilities to explore such a rich variety of compositional techniques and stylistic ideas from the very start of his Thomascantorate.

Firmly related to the tercentenary celebrations was a mini-series entitled "A Contest of Candidates in 1723," which consisted of two imaginative programs to reappraise the compositional skills and imaginative power of the three candidates competing



Photo 4. Julia Sophie Wagner, Jakob Lehmann, and Eroica Berlin
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

for the post of Thomascantor, viz. Telemann, Graupner, and Bach. The first was a late-night concert on June 11 at Bundesverwaltungsgericht, where harpsichordist Pieter Dirksen performed the keyboard works of Telemann (Suite in G Major, TWV 32:13, and Concerto in B Minor, TWV Anh. 33:1), Graupner (Prelude and Chaconne from the Suite in D Major, GWV 115, and Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, GWV 855), and Bach (French Suite in G Major, BWV 816, and Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903). To me, Bach was absolutely matchless! The second trial consisted of vocal works, presented in a hypothetical setting of the three men performing their own works in their own towns on the second Sunday after Trinity in 1723—Bach performing *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, BWV 76, in Leipzig, Graupner performing *Meine Kindlein, lasset uns nicht lieben mit Worten*, GWV 1143/23, in Darmstadt, and Telemann performing *Viel sind berufen, aber wenig sind auserwählt*, TWV 1:1478, in Hamburg—but all were transported in time and space to the Michaeliskirche on June 14, 2023, where their pieces were performed by Vox Luminis, world-renowned as an autonomous and engaging ensemble. To me, again, Bach was clearly the supreme composer.

The theme of “contest” was extended to the instrumental works with the series “Concerts Avec plusieurs Instruments,” the wording which Bach used for the title of *Six Brandenburg Concertos*. Under this title five programs were offered to explore the world of virtuoso-musical competitions. These highlighted various combinations of instruments and voices and featured not only works by Bach but also those by his contemporaries. The first of these was on June 10 at the Paulinum, with Les Passions de l’Ame directed by Meret Lüthi performing a program comprised of Telemann’s Concerto in D Major, TWV 53:D5, Bach’s Concerto in C Minor, BWV 1060R (for oboe, violin, strings and continuo), Bach’s secular cantata *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, BWV 202, Concerto in E Minor, BWV 1042, concluding with Bach’s sacred cantata *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, BWV 51. Telemann’s concerto was distinctly Vivaldian, presented with lots of risk taking and energetic solo violin—a really exciting opening number. Bach’s C-Minor Concerto, more distinctly contrapuntal in character, contrasted well in the program. With great forward drive



Photo 5. The Thomanerchor in St. Thomas Church
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

and a contrast of instrumental colors, this reconstruction sounded so much more enjoyable and wonderfully exciting than the extant versions for two harpsichords. For the two vocal numbers, we were blessed by the wonderful soprano, Hana Blažíková, whose voice was stunningly blissful, marked with delicate and affectionate diction (Photo 3). I also attended two more concerts on this series: *Europa Galante*, directed by Fabio Biondi, performed a program on the mixture of concertos by Vivaldi and Bach in the Haus Leipzig on June 15, and Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum directed by Reinhard Goebel performed works by Telemann and Bach in the Michaeliskirche on June 16. They respectively delivered wonderfully colorful performances full of exciting exchanges between instruments.

There were five concerts labelled “original / originality,” each supposedly seeking something that had not been explored in the past. One of these was a work entitled *Et Lux*, a requiem for soprano, alto, tenor, bass

and chamber orchestra, produced by Julia Sophie Wagner and Jakob Lehmann, who were also among the performers as soprano and conductor respectively. This concert was presented on June 11 at the Großer Hörsaal of the Institut für Anatomie, a spectacular lecture hall where Bach’s remains were examined in 1894 (Photo 4). I had never been to this place before, and to my surprise it had great acoustics. The composition was a compilation of Bach’s cantata movements with new texts written by Thomas Kunst (b. 1965) based on what he imagined Bach might have written as a requiem text in the modern day. The work may be regarded as parody, but strictly speaking the approach is fundamentally different from Bach’s own practice, since no changes were made to the music itself, which meant that there were several uncomfortable mismatches between the words and Bach’s musical idioms. The chorale “Wer nur den lieben Gott läßt walten” was used as an underlying tune to unify the work. The performance itself was carefully and beautifully crafted by both singers and Eroica Berlin, a group of young instrumentalists from Berlin, and was received rapturously by the audience. It was a concert which will be remembered for many years to come.

A concert presented by Capricornus Consort Basel directed by Péter Barczy on June 11 at the Michaeliskirche was another



Photo 6. Solomon's Knot - Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

notable concert in this cycle. The core items on the program were Bach's organ works—*Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542*, *O Mensch, beweine deine Sünde groß, BWV 622*, *Vivace* from the *Trio in G Major, BWV 530*, and the *Fantasia in G Major, BWV 572*—all arranged for string ensemble. These were sandwiched between Graupner's and Bach's settings of the cantata for the 11th Sunday after Trinity, *Mein Herz schwimmt im Blut, GWV 1152/12b* and *BWV 199.1*. Miriam Feuersinger served as soloist for both and was absolutely commanding on the stage. Graupner's sensitive style contrasted well with Bach's adventurous tendencies, pushing the boundaries of musical drama and technical challenges, while Bach's organ works were rendered both attentively and affectionately as the warm sound of strings was nuanced with subtle articulations, dynamics, and colors. The chorale from the *Orgelbüchlein* showcased the strength of the stringed instruments as its penetrating sound melted the listener's heart. It was another concert to be remembered.

Placed as a counterpart to "the first annual cycle of cantatas" was a series entitled "Boy's Choirs Summit," which took place near the end of Bachfest from June 15 to 18. This series consisted of four concerts, each given by some of the most reputable boy's choirs in Germany—the Thomanerchor Leipzig, the Dresden Kreuzchor,

the Knabenchor Hannover and the Windsbacher Knabenchor—on programs consisting of motets by Schein, Schütz, Bach, and Mendelssohn which were interspersed with Bach's organ chorales. The Thomanerchor, the recipient of this year's Bach Medal, kicked off the series in the Thomaskirche on June 15, singing from the north gallery where the Bach organ is located (Photo 5). Their program was entitled 'Jauchzet dem Herrn', which included the following pieces: J. S. Bach: *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf*, BWV 226, *Allein Gott in der Höch sei Ehr*, BWV 662; Schütz: *Das ist je gewisslich wahr*, SWV 388, *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, SWV 386, *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*, SWV 387, *Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock*, SWV 389, *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt*, SWV 380; J. S. Bach: *Trio super Allein Gott in der Höch sei Ehr*, BWV 664.2; Mendelssohn: *Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt*, op. 69, no. 2, MWV B 58; Bach: *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, BWV 653; Schein: *Herr, lass meine Klage, Was betrübt du dich, meine Seele*, and *Ich freue mich im Herren*, all from *Israelsbrunnlein*; Bach: *Allein Gott in der Höch sei Ehr*, BWV 663, and *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, BWV 225. Of these numbers, my favorite was Mendelssohn's motet on Psalm 100, which was sung beautifully *a cappella*. With very effective dynamics, their voices sounded like angels singing. The series continued with the Dresden Kreuzchor on June 16 in

the Nikolaikirche with the program “Selig sind die Toten,” the Klabenchor Hannover on June 17 in the Peterskirche with “Ich lasse dich nicht,” and the Windsbacher Knabenchor on 18 June in the Nikolaikirche with “Jesu, meine Freude.” They were all well-trained choirs, and each concert was deeply satisfying. I will never forget how the last group left me with a profound impression of their well-crafted rendition of *Jesu, meine Freude*, BWV 277, especially at the final strain of the chorale where they inserted a tiny gap before “meine,” providing a moment at the end of their musical journey to focus on the importance of Jesus’s love.

ON THE BACHFEST REGULARS

Solomon’s Knot returned to Bachfest to perform the *St. Matthew Passion* on June 12 in the Nikolaikirche (Photo 6). Having heard their *St. John Passion* in 2019 in the same venue, returning audience members had heightened expectations as to how the ensemble would match that performance with the longer and more theatrically explicit Passion. And they did not disappoint us. As predicted, their theatrically enhanced rendition came with plenty of imaginative and refreshing surprises from beginning to end. But it was not just the theatrical staging—articulating scene changes by reconfiguring the musicians’ placement on the stage—that made their rendition appealing. While there were untidy moments here and there, among the numbers were some highly impressive gems, most notably two soprano arias, “Blute nur” and “Ich will dir mein Herze schenken,” sung by Zoë Brookshaw, and the chorale “Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden,” which was beautifully sung *a cappella*.

This year’s Goldberg Variations concert was performed by Sergei Babayan on the piano on June 13 in the Mendelssohn-Saal of the Gewandhaus. Starting the program with the Bach-Busoni Chaconne, which was colourful, imaginative, and commanding, Babayan then gave us a Goldberg that was even more impressive. He attentively explored fresh characters in each variation by “discovering” the lines hidden in the dense texture, which was done so tastefully, even in the Quodlibet, that it did not sound eccentric or obsessive but entirely convincing. With delightfully crisp articulation and tastefully controlled gradation of colors, his musical discourse remained very eloquent and refreshing throughout.

The second Passion this year was the *St. John* presented on June 17 by Vox Luminis in the Thomaskirche. It was staged as a reconstruction of Good Friday Vespers, which meant that we were expected to participate actively as a congregation, i.e. singing hymns during the service and remaining seated in pews to hear a long sermon (which was actually not a reconstructed hour-long sermon, but a “reflection on the *St. John Passion*” by

Dr. Norbert Lammert, which only lasted for 20 minutes) between the two parts of the Passion. There was even a practice session of singing hymns just before the Vespers proper started to ensure that the audience was prepared for this experiment. Performers were placed at two locations: Vox Luminis performed from the main balcony, while the Evangelist was placed at the north gallery with the Bach organ as the continuo instrument; in addition, we also had Vokalensemble Klanggewandt who assisted with the congregational singing, also from the north gallery. From start to finish, the whole experience was edifying. Every bit of the performance was thoughtfully conceived and executed. Before each congregational hymn, we heard the matching organ preludes by Bach, so rare to hear nowadays in their original liturgical context. Each of the two parts of the *St. John Passion* were introduced respectively by the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 542, and the chorale prelude *Christus, der uns selig macht*, BWV 620, which not only connected everything seamlessly but set a tone for the Passion proper. Jacobus Gallus’ *Ecce quomodo moritur justus*, which was sung blissfully by Vox Luminis after the *St. John Passion*, sealed for me this magical musical journey to Bach’s Good Friday Vespers.

Placed as the last of the “Original / Originality” series was a program called “Judas – A Pasticcio” created by Elina Albach and performed by Benedikt Kristjánsson (tenor), Clara Blessing (oboe), and Sergey Malov (violin) with CONTINUUM on June 17 in the Paulinum (Photo 7). The work was comprised of a selection of movements from eleven cantatas by Bach, which were interspersed with readings from Amos Oz’s *Judas* (2014) with the goal of tracing the psychological ambivalence of Judas Iscariot. To depict and link the two distant worldviews of Oz and Bach, and to mix modern instruments such as oboe, marimba and xylophone as well as an ordinary set of Baroque continuo instruments, was a tactful storytelling strategy. With violent acting involved—slapping, smacking



Photo 7. Benedikt Kristjánsson, Clara Blessing, and Sergey Malov, with CONTINUUM
Bachfest Leipzig/Gert Mothes

and kissing—this powerful and profound late-night performance might have been too challenging for some, but it was certainly one of most original and unforgettable events.

“Ausgezeichnet” is a well-established series that showcases emerging young artists who have recently won international competitions. Among the five ensembles chosen, one was truly outstanding: on June 18 in Alte Börse, Charlotte Spruit, a violinist from England, and her friends Jonny Byers (cello), Sergio Bucheli (lute), and Tom Foster (harpsichord), presented a program of violin music seen from Bach’s perspective, first exploring music of the past, then that of his contemporaries. Starting with the Sonata in E Minor, BWV 1023, they explored the works by Westhoff, Johann Jakob Walther, Georg Muffat, and finally Nicola Matteis—a nice touch to feature a fellow talent from Spruit’s home country. She was fully at home with the Baroque style of violin playing and brought out a wide range of styles, characters and colors with panache.

The final concert, which has always been the Mass in B Minor, BWV 232, performed in the Thomaskirche, was given this year by the Bach Collegium Japan directed by Masaaki Suzuki, who produced a well-polished performance in a modest but dignified manner. A feeling of deep appreciation was evident amongst the audience while listening to the Mass, and this lingered for a long time afterwards. Arguably it was the most memorable performance of the Mass in recent years, as it became a popular topic of conversation among the Bachfest visitors on their way home.

Besides the concerts, there were lectures and seminars given by researchers of the Bach-Archiv Leipzig on various strands of topics relating to both the motto and the tercentenary celebrations of Bach’s appointment as Thomascantor. The Bach Network also contributed to this motto by offering three panel discussions on the future of Bach performance, the future of Bach sources, and the future of Bach research on June 14 at the Blauer Salon, which were well attended. In addition to the festival, there was also an academic conference on the new appointment of the Thomascantor in 1723 and the history of the Protestant church cantata around 1720, which ran from June 15 to 17 at the university library. Altogether 21 papers were presented, including two papers in English by our ABS colleagues Steven Zohn and Daniel R. Melamed.

The overall impression of this year’s Bachfest was one of “full recovery.” Compared with last year, the attendance at each event increased noticeably. In retrospect, the exploration of new approaches to Bach as captured in this year’s motto was symbolic and highly appropriate. I thoroughly enjoyed this year’s Bachfest. I have learned a lot, too.

Next year’s Bachfest will run from June 7 to 16, 2024 with the motto ‘CHORal TOTAL’.

CALL FOR PAPERS: “GLOBAL BACH”

EMORY UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA, GA

SEPTEMBER 26–29, 2024

For its biennial meeting in Atlanta, GA, the American Bach Society invites papers and presentations on the topic of “Global Bach.” Bach’s music has long since transcended the local uses for which it was originally created to become a global phenomenon. It has inspired performances, adaptations, reinterpretations, and new compositions in many styles, genres, and mediums across the world. Although Bach’s music serves for some as fuel for the imagination and a standard of artistic perfection, for others it has been a lever of exclusion.

We welcome papers that explore Bach’s music in twenty-first century contexts as well as those that consider Bach within his own sphere, from the perspectives of historical musicology, ethnomusicology, performance, cultural studies, and other fields of study. Please send your proposal as an abstract of up to 300 words that emphasizes the results of research as a Word document [last name_first name.docx] to vicepresident@americanbachsociety.org by 1 February 2024. Please include your name, institutional affiliation or city of residence, and email address, and indicate any audio, visual, or other needs for the presentation. Applicants will be notified of the program committee’s decision by March 2024. The American Bach Society plans to offer subsidies for travel for scholars without institutional support.

ABS Grants and Awards

Financial support for research projects on music-historical topics related to J. S. Bach have been made possible by generous donors to the ABS whose love for the composer has inspired gifts designed to build, sustain, and reward scholarly engagement with all things Bach-related. We warmly encourage readers of *Bach Notes* to spread the word about these grants to students and colleagues so that we can put these funds to good use in securing a future for Bach Studies. All of our grants are described in more detail on our website (<https://americanbachsociety.org>), along with the names of past winners. Please write to our Vice President, Ellen Exner, with any questions or to apply: vicepresident@americanbachsociety.org.

The Frances Alford Brokaw Grant

Open to: Undergraduates in the US and Canada

Application date: February 15, 2024

This grant provides a \$1000 stipend to support undergraduate research. Research must make use of the extraordinary materials housed at the Riemenschneider Bach Institute (RBI) at Baldwin

Wallace University (Berea, OH). As part of this grant, students will also receive expert guidance from a faculty advisor. Research must be completed within a calendar year of award.

Conference Travel Stipend

Open to: Any graduate or doctoral student currently enrolled in a North-American Ph.D. program in musicology who is writing a dissertation related to J. S. Bach (broadly construed). These funds are also available to any student or independent scholar whose paper has been accepted for presentation at an upcoming ABS conference.

Language Study Grant

Open to: Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs in the US and Canada who require language training in German (or in old German script) in order to undertake Bach-related projects.

Application date: Grants are awarded on a rolling basis until the year's funds have been dispersed.

There are a number of excellent language study programs designed to rapidly build language competency (Middlebury Language Schools, The Goethe Institute, etc.). This grant will fund up to \$6000 toward tuition and other directly related participation expenses.

William H. Scheide Research Grant

Open to: Ph.D. candidates, junior faculty, independent scholars, and those without sufficient institutional support. Scheide Grant recipients must be citizens or permanent residents of the US or Canada whose primary residence is in North America.

Application date: Nov. 15, 2023

Scheide Research Grant stipends range from \$500 to \$2000. The amount is tailored to the request. These grants usually help pay for research and publication expenses such as travel to archives, high-resolution copies of primary sources, and music encoding.

The American Bach Society Diversity Grant

Open to: Performers and scholars working in the US or Canada. Preference is given to those at the early stages of their careers.

Application date: Nov. 15, 2023

This grant is designed to encourage projects and people that explore or embody diversity in the teaching of, approach to, and/or performance of Bach's music. Diversity is defined broadly to include race, gender, ability, identity, socio-economic status, or any other axis that expands the welcome of Bach's music and its study.



Announcements



The Packard Humanities Institute is pleased to announce the completion of *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* (CPEB:CW). It was initiated in 1999, and the first volumes were published in 2005. The last volume (VIII/8, *Addenda*) of more than 130 will be published in early 2024. The project, in cooperation with the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, and Harvard University, has involved dozens of contributing editors, including many ABS members. The managing editor, Paul Corneilson, would like to thank the Editorial Board the Editorial Staff, and everyone else involved in this massive undertaking for their dedication, perseverance, and scholarship. Additional information can be found at the website: cpebach.org.

"Bach Talk," presented by **The Bach Society of Saint Louis**, invites you to join classical music radio veteran Ron Klemm on a monthly podcast, delving into a vibrant community that keeps Bach's music alive. Beyond the concert stage, he uncovers fascinating stories, offers musical insights, and presents profiles of the people that breathe life into Bach's compositions. Visit <https://bachsociety.org/bach-talk-listen> to hear the episodes.

The sixth in a series of seminars on the music of J. S. Bach is scheduled to begin Jan. 9, 2024, in Roseville MN. **Prof. Paul Westermeyer** and **Rev. John Setterlund** will lead a 6-week discussion of the *Mass in B Minor* and *The Art of Fugue*.

Rochelle Sennet's latest recording, *Bach to Black: Suites for Piano, Vol. II* was released in October 2022 on Albany Records (TROY 1910-12). In addition to featuring the complete Partitas of J.S. Bach, this 3-disc recording also features works by Ulysses Kay, Harry Thacker Burleigh, George Walker, as well as three Black women composers: Florence Price, Montague Ring, and Joyce Solomon Moorman.

On April 12–14, 2024, the **Baldwin Wallace Bach Festival** will feature soprano Margaret Carpenter Haigh as the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion*. Historically, the story of Christ's Passion has been relayed by a man, usually a tenor. Recasting this role as a soprano allows the listener to imagine the story from a different viewpoint, theatrically at least. This telling of the traditional story will take some small steps to reflect our evolving view of it in the twenty-first century. See <https://www.bw.edu/schools/conservatory-music/bach-festival/> for more information.

The Bloomington Bach Cantata Project, directed by **Daniel R. Melamed**, is presenting its fourteenth season of Bach cantatas in performances modeled on Bach's own. Upcoming concerts are listed on the ensemble's [Facebook page](#), and past concerts are available on their [YouTube channel](#).

The Cantata Trail, an online community devoted to the exploration of Bach's cantatas, has restarted its bi-weekly virtual meetings after our summer break. Join us if you're interested in discovering, or revisiting, the Thomascantor's great music in an informal environment, in the virtual company of fellow Bach enthusiasts. Learn more at <https://cantatatrail.net/about>.

Five American ensembles are honored to announce their invitation to perform cantatas at **BachFest Leipzig** in June 2024. The ensembles are **Bach Collegium San Diego**, **Bethlehem Bach Choir** (Bethlehem, PA), **Bach Cantata Vespers** (Chicago, IL), **Bach Cantata Choir** (Portland, OR), and **Emmanuel Music** (Boston, MA). In collaboration with early music ensembles from across the world, these five American ensembles will demonstrate how music transcends divisions and times in this celebration of art and history.

Member News

Bach's St. John Passion for the 21st Century: Musical and Theological Perspectives by **Michael Fuchs** and **Bradley Jenson** (foreword by **Christoph Wolff**), has been published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Beverly Jerold announces her book, *Equal Temperament in the Eighteenth Century: The Ear versus Numbers* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), and article, "Equal Temperament and Johann Sebastian

Bach's Music," *Ad Parnassum* 21 (April 2023): 1–31.

At the 20th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music in Geneva (June 28–July 2, 2023), **Elisabeth Kotzakidou Pace** delivered her paper "Voice-type, Embodiment, and the Symbolic Representation of the Archetypal Feminine in J. S. Bach's Sacred Works."

Michael Marissen and **Daniel R. Melamed** are continuing their annotated historically-informed translations of Bach's vocal music, with more than 75 works now freely available at BachCantataTexts.org.

Robert L. Marshall gave a talk in June at the First International Carl Friedrich Abel Fest in Köthen entitled "Johann Christian Bach und Carl Friedrich Abel: Gedanken über eine intime Freundschaft."

Russell Stinson's latest book, *The Afterlife of Bach's Organ Works: Their Reception from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, will be published in November by Oxford University Press. To receive a 30% discount order directly from the OUP website using the discount code AAFLYG6.

Channan Willner published his latest article, "The Split *Anstieg*: Initial Ascents Involving the Bass, and Their Consequences," on his website, at www.channanwillner.com/online.htm. The essay analyzes a dance from Bach's Partita in G Major, BWV 829.

DIRECTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Bach Notes is published twice yearly (fall and spring) and mailed to all members and subscribers. Submissions for the Spring issue are due by 1 March. Submissions should be sent to Rebekah Franklin at bachnotes@americanbachsociety.org.

THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Daniel R. Melamed, President (Indiana University)
Ellen Exner, Vice President (The Philadelphia Orchestra)
Reginald L. Sanders, Secretary-Treasurer (Kenyon College)

ADVISORY BOARD

Term ending 2024

Stephen Crist (Emory University)
Mary J. Greer (Cambridge, MA)
Dana Marsh (Indiana University/Washington Bach Consort)
Paul Walker (University of Notre Dame)

Term ending 2026

Christina Fuhrmann (Baldwin-Wallace University/Riemenschneider Bach Institute)
Tanya Kevorkian (Millersville University)
Andrea Moore (Smith College)
Derek Stauff (Hillsdale College)

Rebekah Franklin (Oklahoma Baptist University), Editor, *Bach Notes*, *ex officio*
Steven Zohn (Temple University), General Editor, *ex officio*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Steven Zohn, General Editor
Rebekah Franklin, Editor, *Bach Notes*
Evan Cortens, Web Editor
Rebekah Franklin, Social Media Editor
Daniel R. Melamed, President, *ex officio*

Term ending 2024

Daniel Boomhower (Dumbarton Oaks)
Laura Buch (Packard Humanities Institute)
Ellen Exner (The Philadelphia Orchestra)
Ruth Tatlow (Gothenburg University)

Term ending 2026

Matthew Dirst (University of Houston)
Andrew Talle (Northwestern University)
Carrie Allen Tipton (Vanderbilt University)
Bettina Varwig (Cambridge University)

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Founded in 1972 as a chapter of the Neue Bachgesellschaft, the American Bach Society supports the study, performance, and appreciation of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Annual dues are \$50 (\$25 for students). Membership information and application materials are available online at the website listed below. Interested persons may also contact Reginald L. Sanders, Kenyon College Music Department, Storer Hall, Gambier, OH 43022, USA, or sandersr@kenyon.edu.

© 2023 by The American Bach Society
All rights reserved

Please visit the ABS website
www.americanbachsociety.org
for concert and festival listings