



13<sup>THE</sup> THIRTEEN  
MATTHEW ROBERTSON  
{ARTISTIC DIRECTOR}

# BACH REFLECTIONS

MARCH 16-17, 2018

# 13 | THE THIRTEEN

Matthew Robertson | Artistic Director

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## CONCERT SCHEDULE

**Friday, March 16, 2018 | 7:30 PM**

First & Franklin Presbyterian Church  
210 W Madison St, Baltimore, MD 21201

**Saturday, March 17, 2018 | 7:30 PM**

St. Columba's Church  
4201 Albemarle St NW, Washington, DC 20016

## CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

Thank you so much for joining us for our yearly exploration of the music of Bach. In planning what has become our annual *Bach Reflections* concert, I am increasingly less interested in an academic tracing of Bach's musical lineage. What I look for instead is to see how values Bach championed – sincerity of communication and a sonic connection to the humanity behind music – have been fulfilled through the ages. The program I developed spans five centuries and traces its roots from the German Lutheran church, to the American Sacred Harp tradition, to a pre-English reformation work by Thomas Tallis.

Tonight's program is organized around three scenes, roughly correlated to the themes of hoping for intercession, longing, and rejoicing in a community of music. This concert moves from the darkest depths of despair to a hope in music itself. I increasingly believe in the potential of music to change the course of human events – not that it has ever directly stopped a war or changed the result of an election. But rather that great music has the capacity to change people who may then act in a way that changes the trajectory of this world. It is my hope that this concert may change you, even if in a way that you may not be able to put into words.

–Matthew Robertson

We invite you to take photographs (without flash) and to use social media during the concert.

We politely decline unauthorized audio or video recordings of our concerts.

Please silence all cell phones and other noisemaking devices.

## ROSTER

Elizabeth Bates, soprano

Julie Bosworth, soprano

Andrew Brown, tenor

Brian Ming Chu, baritone

Janna Critz, mezzo-soprano

Nathan Hodgson, tenor

Clifton Massey, countertenor

Caroline Olson, mezzo-soprano

Jacob Perry, tenor

Margot Rood, soprano

Jonathan Woody, bass-baritone

Jackson Williams, baritone

David Ellis, cello

Jacob Street, organ

Matthew Robertson, Artistic Director

Brian Mummert, Assistant Conductor

Samantha Scheff, Assistant Conductor

## PROGRAM

### BACH REFLECTIONS

I

**Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, *BWV 226***

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

**solitary**

David Lang (b. 1957)

II

**Der Gerechte, ob er gleich**

Johann Christoph Bach (1735-1782)

**Komm, Jesu, komm, *BWV 229***

J.S. Bach

**The Road Home**

Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

intermission

III

**Lobe den Herren, *SWV 39***

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672)

**Let My Love Be Heard**

Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

**Singet dem Herrn, ein neues Lied, *BWV 225***

J.S. Bach

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

### Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, BWV 226

Bach

Despite evidence that Bach used music from some of his previous works when composing *Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf*, the pairing of music and text is nonetheless exceptional. For example, an opening cascade of sixteenth notes on the word “Geist” (spirit) surrounds the listener with comfort, and the use of two-note motives in the middle section illustrates “seufzen” (to sigh). Like many of Bach’s motets, this one is scored for double chorus. In this instance, Bach uses the voicing for dramatic effect: during the second line of text the two choirs are initially staggered to convey insecurity, yet gradually become less independent throughout, eventually joining together as the audience is assured of salvation.

#### 1. Chor

Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf.  
Denn wir wissen nicht, was wir beten sollen,  
wie sich’s gebühret;  
sondern der Geist selbst vertritt uns auf beste mit unaussprechlichem Seufzen.  
Der aber die Herzen forschet,  
der weiß, was des Geistes Sinn sei,  
denn er vertritt die Heiligen nach dem,  
das Gott gefällt.

#### 1. Chorus

*The Spirit gives aid to our weakness.  
For we do not know for what we should pray,  
what is proper;  
but the Spirit itself intercedes for us in the best way with unutterable sighs.  
He, however, who examines hearts,  
He knows what the Spirit's intention is,  
since it intercedes for the saints according to  
that which pleases God.*

-Romans 8:26-27

#### 2. Choral

Du heilige Brunst, süßer Trost,  
nun hilft uns fröhlich und getrost  
in dein'm Dienst beständig bleiben,  
die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben!  
O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit  
und stärk des Fleisches Blödigkeit,  
daß wir hier ritterlich ringen,  
durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.  
Halleluja, halleluja!

#### 2. Choral

*You holy fire, sweet comfort,  
now help us joyfully and confidently  
to remain constantly in Your service,  
although trouble is not driven away from us!  
O Lord, through Your strength prepare us  
and sharpen the dullness of the flesh,  
so that we might battle here nobly,  
pressing to you through death and life.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah!*

-Martin Luther

## solitary

About *solitary*, Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer David Lang writes, “solitary is a setting of my rewriting of a portion of the Book of Lamentations. I have always been a big fan of the Book of Lamentations - it seems to see deep inside the weaknesses of people, into the darkest places in our souls, and it is very clear about the punishments we deserve for not being better people. Some biblical texts are much softer encouragements for us to try to do better, but Lamentations is hardcore. I wanted to look closely at just how much more hardcore it is, so I made my lyrics by compiling a list of all the horrible things that will happen to us if we don't change ourselves, in the order that these horrible things are mentioned in the original text.”

Lang

solitary  
bereaved  
enslaved  
bitter  
weeping  
comfortless  
betrayed  
exiled  
oppressed  
endlessly enslaved  
restless  
overtaken  
mourning  
deserted  
crying out  
grief stricken  
brought low  
suffering  
alone  
captive  
without relief of any kind  
like deer  
pasture-less  
running on  
exhausted  
in flight from the hunter  
I remember

the life that was mine  
now  
there is no one left to help me  
grievous  
unclean  
despised  
naked  
moaning  
ashamed  
filthy  
endlessly downfallen  
with no one to console me  
the life that was mine  
is now someone else's  
crying out  
starving  
despised  
seared by fire  
deep into my bones  
entangled  
turned back  
desolated  
endlessly in misery  
chained  
weighed down  
weakened  
powerless

rejected  
crushed  
like grapes in a winepress  
my crying eyes  
streaming with tears  
comfortless  
courageless  
shocked  
beaten  
unconsoled  
surrounded  
an unclean, filthy thing  
abandoned by my lovers  
distressed  
churning  
restless  
bereaved  
inside me, it is like death  
comfortless  
troubled  
wicked  
crying out  
sick at heart  
enveloped in darkness  
cast down  
forgotten  
pitiless

swallowed up  
broken  
brought down to the ground,  
cut off  
powerless  
without protection  
caught in a flaming fire  
devoured  
the aim of every arrow  
swallowed up  
destroyed  
mourning  
moaning  
wrecked  
destroyed  
forgotten  
ruined  
dejected  
sunk into the ground  
destroyed and broken  
lawless  
blind  
eyes all cried out  
everything churning  
empty of emotion  
wounded  
fainting away in the streets of the city  
starving  
fainting away in the streets of the city  
gasping my last breath  
comfortless  
downfall as vast as the sea  
unhealed and unhealable

futile  
guilty  
mocked  
hissed  
jeered  
destroyed without pity  
gloated over  
my tears stream down  
in rivers  
day and night!  
no rest for me  
no rest for my eyes  
crying out  
my heart poured out  
like water  
fainting from hunger  
tormented  
starving  
slaughtered  
lying on the ground  
in the middle of the streets  
fallen by the sword  
killed in anger  
slaughtered without pity  
my terrors  
from every direction  
inescapable  
destroyed  
afflicted  
beaten  
walking in darkness and not in light  
alone  
again and again, all day

skin rubbed raw  
flesh worn away  
bones broken  
besieged and surrounded  
bitter and hard  
living in darkness  
like the dead  
walled in  
no escape  
weighed down with chains  
when I cry out  
when I plead for help  
no one can hear  
my way is blocked  
there's no way forward  
hunted  
broken  
torn to pieces  
stunned  
every archer aims at me  
every arrow finds me  
pierced  
mocked  
taunted, all day long  
filled with bitterness  
drunken on bitterness  
teeth broken  
pressed down into the ashes  
so far from peace  
I have forgotten what it is  
my strength is gone  
my only hope is you

-David Lang

## Der Gerechte, ob er gleich

During his lifetime, Johann Christoph Bach was regarded as one of the finest composers of the Bach family, despite later being overshadowed by his first cousin once removed, Johann Sebastian Bach. *Der Gerechte, ob er gleich* presents a dichotomy between sections, creating an atmosphere of rest and contentment, interspersed with faster, speech-like sections illustrating an existential longing.

Der Gerechte,  
ob er gleich zu zeitlich stirbt,  
ist er doch in der Ruhe.  
Er gefällt Gott wohl  
und ist ihm lieb,  
und wird weggenommen  
aus dem Leben unter den Sündern  
und wird hingerücket,  
daß die Bosheit  
seinen Verstand nicht verkehere,  
noch falsche Lehre  
seine Seele betrübe,  
ist er bald vollkommen worden,  
und hat viel Jahr erfüllet.  
Denn seine Seele gefällt Gott wohl,  
Darum eilet er mit ihm  
Aus dem bösen Leben.

*The righteous,  
even when they may die too soon,  
nevertheless find rest.  
They do please God  
and receive his love,  
and are taken away  
from life among sinners  
and removed,  
so that wickedness  
does not twist their minds,  
nor false teaching  
distress their souls –  
they are soon enough perfected  
and achieve many years,  
for their souls do please God:  
that's why he hurries them  
out of this wicked life.*

*-Wisdom of Solomon 4:7-14*

## Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229

Of all the motets, it is perhaps in *Komm, Jesu, komm* where we hear Bach at his most human: from the opening bars of increasingly anguished pleas of “Komm” (come), to the dissonant intervals of a half step and a diminished seventh of “der saure weg” (the wrong path). Yet is the final and longest section of the motet where the composer’s faith is most evident as he focuses on the extended repetition of a joyful setting of “du bist der rechte Weg” (you are the true path).

1. Chor  
Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde,  
die Kraft verschwindt je mehr und mehr,

*1. Chorus  
Come, Jesus, come, my body is weary,  
my strength wanes more and more,*

ich sehne mich nach deinem Frieden;  
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!  
Komm, komm, ich will mich dir ergeben,  
du bist der rechte Weg,  
die Wahrheit und das Leben.

## 2. Choral

Drum schließ ich mich in deine Hände  
und sage, Welt, zu guter Nacht!  
Eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende,  
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.  
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,  
weil Jesus ist und bleibt  
der wahre Weg zum Leben.

*I long for your peace;  
the sour path becomes too difficult for me!  
Come, come, I will yield myself to you;  
you are the true path,  
truth and life.*

## 2. Chorale

*Therefore, I enclose myself in your hands  
and say goodnight to you, world!  
Even though my lifetime rushes to its end,  
my spirit is nevertheless prepared.  
It shall soar with its Savior,  
since Jesus is and remains  
the true path to life.*

-Paul Thymich

## The Road Home

While doing research for a commission to write a “folk” style choral composition, Stephen Paulus was drawn to the Southern Harmony folk tune *The Lone Wild Bird*. Paulus explains, “It is pentatonic and that is part of the attraction. Pentatonic scales have been extant for centuries and are prevalent in almost all musical cultures throughout the world. They are universal.” Just like the universality of the pentatonic scale, Browne’s text explores the fundamental human nature of longing for home.

Paulus

Tell me, where is the road I can call my own, that I left, that I lost, so long ago?  
All these years I have wandered, oh when will I know there’s a way, there’s a road that will lead me home?

After wind, after rain, when the dark is done. As I wake from a dream in the gold of day,  
Through the air there’s a calling from far away, there’s a voice I can hear that will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me, come away, is the call, with the love in your heart as the only song;  
There is no such beauty as where you belong, rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

-Michael Dennis Browne



### Lobe den Herren, SWV 39

Schütz

Credited with bringing musical ideas from Italy to Germany, Schütz is often considered the most important German composer before J.S. Bach. In this piece, Schütz uses the Italian polychoral style associated with Monteverdi and Gabrieli to highlight the rejoicing nature of the text. These exuberant, polychoral refrains are interspersed with more personal sections for soloists. Later in his career, Schütz would have to forgo this extravagant style of composition due to a shortage of musicians caused by the devastation of The Thirty Years' War.

Lobe den Herren, meine Seele,  
und vergiß nicht, was er dir Guts getan hat.  
Der dir alle deine Sünde vergibt  
und heilet alle deine Gebrechen.  
Der dein Leben vom Verderben erlöst,  
der dich krönet mit Gnad und Barmherzigkeit.

*Praise the Lord, my soul,  
and do not forget the good He has done for you;  
He who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your transgressions,  
He who redeems your life from destruction,  
who crowns you with grace and mercy.*

-Psalm 103: 2-4

### Let My Love Be Heard

Runestad

One of America's most beloved choral composers, Jake Runestad states that he is "steeped in a belief that music has the power to initiate positive change." In this piece, it is the transcendent harmonic language that conveys grief and suffering, offering the conclusion that it is through singing that we let our "love be heard."

Angels, where you soar up to God's own light,  
Take my own lost bird on your hearts tonight;  
And as grief once more mounts to heaven and sings,  
Let my love be heard whispering in your wings.

- Alfred Noyes

### Singet dem Herrn, ein neues Lied

Bach

Out of all the motets, the melismatic passages in *Singet dem Herrn, ein neues Lied* show Bach at his most technically demanding. The opening embellished repetitions of the word "singet" (sing) create a jubilant atmosphere. In contrast, the simpler middle section is more reflective, featuring freely composed text interspersed between verse 3 of the chorale *Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren*. The final section begins with the second choir imitating the first, before both choirs unite triumphantly for the final and florid four voiced fugue.

1. Chor  
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!  
Die Gemeine der Heiligen sollen ihn loben,  
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.

*1. Chorus  
Sing to the Lord a new song!  
The congregation of the saints shall praise Him,  
Israel rejoices in Him, who has created it.*

Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich über ihrem Könige.  
Sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reichen,  
mit Pauken und Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.

## 2. Aria

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an!  
Denn ohne dich ist nichts getan  
mit allen unsern Sachen.  
Dum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,  
und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,  
so wirst du's ferner machen.  
Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest  
auf dich und deine Huld verläßt!

## Chorale

Wie sich ein Vat'r erbarmet  
Üb'r seine junge Kindlein klein:  
So tut der Herr uns Armen,  
So wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.  
Er kennt das arme Gemächte,  
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub.  
Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,  
Ein Blum und fallendes Laub,  
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,  
So ist es nimmer da:  
Also der Mensch vergehet,  
Sein End, das ist ihm nah.

## 3. Chorus

Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,  
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit.  
Alles was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn, Halleluja!

*Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.  
Let them praise His name in dances,  
with drums and harps let them play to Him.*

*-Psalm 149: 1-3*

## 2. Aria

*God, take us to Yourself from now on!  
For without You we can accomplish nothing  
with all of our belongings.  
Therefore be our protection and light,  
and if our hope does not deceive us,  
You will make it happen in the future.  
Happy is the person who strictly and tightly  
abandons himself to You and Your mercy!*

*-Johann Gramann*

## Chorale

*As a father has mercy  
upon his young children:  
so the Lord does with us poor ones,  
when we fear Him with pure and childlike hearts.  
He knows his poor creatures,  
God knows we are but dust.  
Just as the grass that is mowed,  
a flower or a falling leaf,  
the wind only blows over it,  
and it is no longer there;  
So also man passes away,  
his end is near to him.*

## 3. Chorus

*Praise the Lord in His works,  
praise Him in his great glory.  
Everything that has breath, praise the Lord, Hallelujah!*

*-Psalm 150:2-6*

# HOST A MUSICIAN!

Did you know that many of The Thirteen's musicians are drawn from around the country and come to Washington for rehearsals and concerts? When they come to D.C. they need a place to stay! To help save costs and interact with our community, The Thirteen asks you, our audience members, to consider opening your homes to our wonderful musicians. Hosts are asked to provide a private bedroom for a full concert week and are offered two free tickets to our concert!

For more information please speak with Operations Manager, Valerie Simonsen, at tonight's concert, or send her an email at [valerie@thethirteenchoir.org](mailto:valerie@thethirteenchoir.org). Thanks for your support of The Thirteen!



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Described as having “a tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (American Record Guide), the D.C.-based, all-star professional choir **THE THIRTEEN** is quickly becoming known for inspired and powerful live performances and growing discography. Since its founding in 2012, the choir has been at the forefront of bringing invigorating performances to the American choral community in repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the Romantic, from Bach to Bruckner; and from Gregorian chant to the world premieres of new American composers.



The Thirteen draws its artists from among the finest ensembles in the world, including Chanticleer, Seraphic Fire, Apollo's Fire, Conspirare, I Fagiolini, Edvard Grieg Octet, Opera Philadelphia, Boston Early Music Festival and Trinity Wall Street. The choir's peerless singers are best described by National Public Radio commentator M.D. Ridge: “to talk about the remarkable abilities and sound of the individual singers would... be like trying to say which whitecaps on the ocean reflect the sun most beautifully, or which leaves on a tree dance most gracefully with the wind... I stand in awe.”

The Thirteen's growing discography includes “Voice Eternal,” which was recently submitted for a Grammy® award, the critically-acclaimed Christmas album “Snow on Snow,” “**RADIANT DARK**,” which features the finest works of

the late Tudor period and reached #28 on the iTunes Classical Charts, as well as The Thirteen's debut recording "...to St. Cecilia."

In past seasons, The Thirteen has performed and been in residence at Yale University, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Illinois University, the University of Central Oklahoma, York College, The University of Tampa, Virginia Wesleyan University, St. Ambrose University, Southern Illinois University–Carbondale, Guilford College, as well as concerts throughout the United States.

The Thirteen is committed to educating and inspiring the next generation of musicians, and frequently coaches students at the high school and collegiate levels in masterclass, workshop and collaborative performance sessions. For more information about The Thirteen, please visit [www.TheThirteenChoir.org](http://www.TheThirteenChoir.org).



**MATTHEW ROBERTSON**, praised for his "sensitive and nuanced" conducting, is noted as the driving force behind the all-star professional choir, The Thirteen. As Founder and Artistic Director of The Thirteen, he has conducted the ensemble throughout the United States and on multiple recordings.

Robertson's 2017-2018 season with The Thirteen sees twelve performances in seven states, repertoire spanning more than half of a millennium, and numerous world and regional premieres. Robertson will lead residencies at Yale University, Virginia Wesleyan College, and Campbell University. Highlights of his 2017-2018 season include performances of Handel's Messiah, Brahms' Requiem, and much of J.S. Bach's oeuvre. Mr. Robertson will serve as a guest clinician throughout the East Coast and collaborate with many of the finest musicians of his generation, including members of the Metropolitan Opera, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seraphic Fire, Apollo's Fire, Trinity Wall Street, Opera Philadelphia, Washington National Opera and more.

Robertson served as Assistant Conductor for the Westminster Symphonic Choir, conducting the choir in performance and assisting in preparation for concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, for such conductors as Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Peter Schreier, Alan Gilbert and Jacques Lacombe.

Mr. Robertson was the Robert P. Fountain Scholar at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, earning a degree in Organ Performance. While at the Oberlin Conservatory he conducted the Oberlin College Choir, College Singers, Musical Union, Conservatory Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. In 2008, Mr. Robertson founded and conducted the Oberlin Bach Society – an elite group of instrumentalists and singers who performed the music of Bach and his contemporaries throughout Ohio. In January 2007 and 2009, he served as Music Director of the Oberlin Winter Term Orchestra and Choir, performing full-length choral-orchestral concerts.

Robertson received his M.Mus. in conducting from Westminster Choir College where he studied with Andrew Megill and Joe Miller. He has also worked with such luminary conductors as Norman Scribner, Stan Engebretson, Robert Spano, Joseph Flummerfelt, Gary Graden and JoAnn Falletta.

A native Washingtonian, Robertson serves as Director of Music at Bradley Hills Church, in Bethesda, MD. Additionally active as an organist, Mr. Robertson has performed throughout the United States and in Western Europe.

## SUPPORT US

The Thirteen's supporters receive unparalleled access to the ensemble's music-making with the best seats at performances and other exclusive opportunities. Above all, supporters breathe life into The Thirteen's season, providing incredible music to audiences across the Washington, D.C. area and the United States.

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John Clewett & Cynthia Speas  
Tad Czyzewski  
Judith Dodge  
Virginia Elgin  
Stan Engebretson  
Gary Faulkner  
Cathy Harr  
Naomi Kettler  
Jerry & Joanne LaRusso  
Felice Li  
Margaret A. Mangan  
Nancy Palmerino  
Laurie Robertson-Lorant  
Howard Spendelow  
Kristina Thurin  
Jeanne Tustian  
Carol Wade  
Carol R. Weingart  
Amy Windt  
Robert L.G. White  
Dana Whitley

# 13 THE THIRTEEN

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## FROM THE THIRTEEN

When the concert is over, enjoy The Thirteen wherever you go.  
Recordings, t-shirts, travel mugs and more are available after today's concert.

