



TUE-SAT MARCH 4-8

HELSINGIN 2025 URKUFESTIVAALI

Helsingfors orgelfestival • Helsinki Organ Festival



ORGANUM
-AURUM

WELCOME TO THE HELSINKI ORGAN FESTIVAL!

This year, the Helsinki Organ Festival delves especially into Baroque music and improvisation, which are also closely connected. This connection was powerfully evident already in Tuesday's opening concert, when Sietze de Vries took the audience on a journey through the ages of music using improvisation. On Friday, Olli Saari continues this journey, combining improvisation, works by Dietrich Buxtehude, and his own compositions into a fascinating whole. Is it possible to compose Baroque music in modern times?

In Saturday's closing concert, we focus on written music as Bach Collegium Helsinki performs cantatas and organ works by Johann Sebastian Bach. The ensemble is an excellent example of how Baroque music, sometimes perceived as heavy, can be performed seriously yet without unnecessary stiffness. Meanwhile, on Thursday, Professor Timo Kiiskinen from the Sibelius Academy's Church Music Department will present a concert exploring the application process for the position of St. Thomas Cantor in Leipzig, involving J. S. Bach and his competitors.

The Helsinki Organ Festival is more than just a concert series. As part of the festival, Sietze de Vries has also led a masterclass on improvisation and liturgical playing. The aim of the Organum Society is to develop Finnish organ artistry as broadly as possible within its resources. The festival also includes a member meeting and an annual general meeting. After all, the organ festival itself originated from concerts that expanded the society's annual meetings. By becoming a member of the Organum Society, you can also meet other organ enthusiasts—both amateurs and professionals.

A warm thank you to all our partners, especially the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, with whom we organized Sietze de Vries' concert at the Music Centre, as well as the Helsinki Cathedral Parish and Kallio Parish, which made it possible to hold our concerts in their magnificent venues.

Let's enjoy the art of organ music together at the Helsinki Organ Festival—Welcome!

Arttu Selonen

Chairperson of the Organum Society, Artistic Director of the Festival

Festival's planning team:

Arttu Selonen, Lasse Mäki, Kristian Saarinen,
Marianne Gustafsson Burgmann, Ismo Hintsala,
Jaakko Tyni and Timo Tuuliniemi

Helsinki
Helsingfors



The Helsinki Organ Festival is being held in its current form for the fourth time, but it is preceded by decades of tradition. The Organum Society, which organizes the Helsinki Organ Festival, was hosting organ music weeks as early as the 1980s, and the series of regular March Helsinki Organ Days began in 1996. Even earlier, concerts were organized around the same time in connection with the association's annual meetings.

Founded in 1964, Organum Society is a nationwide association that promotes and develops organ art. We organize concerts, training sessions, and seminars, publish literature on organ-related topics, and bring together all who are interested in organ music.

With a history spanning nearly 60 years, the Organum Society has played an important role as a forum for discussion and a cultural influencer in the development of Finnish organ music. Our members include professional organists, organ students, organ composers, organ builders, as well as researchers and enthusiasts of organ music.

The Organum Society is open to everyone interested in organ music and, according to its statutes, is independent of any denominations or music institutions. We advocate for the preservation of historically significant organs and offer our expertise for various organ-related projects.


As a member of the Organum Society, you will receive the Organum magazine, published three to four times a year, which features a wide range of articles on current topics in organ music, organ building, and organ performance. The society also sells publications and recordings, which you can explore in more detail on the Publications page.

Joining the society is easy: simply fill out the membership form at www.organum.fi/jaseneksi and pay the current year's membership fee to the society's account.

The 2025 membership fee is €45. Students, retirees, and family members of existing members can pay a discounted membership fee of €25. A lifetime membership can be obtained by paying ten times the current membership fee (€450). Payment instructions can be found alongside the membership form.

ORGANUM.FI





Leipzigin pruuvit 1722–1723



**A description of the application process for the cantor
position related to the City of Leipzig's quality
initiative, as well as an evaluation of the final outcome
in the crypt of Helsinki Cathedral on Thursday,
March 6, Anno Domini 2025, at 19:00**

In cooperation with Helsinki Cathedral Parish



KIRKKO HELSINGISSÄ
TUOMIOKIRKKOSEURAKUNTA

Leipzig's Audition 1722–1723

– Compositions and Arrangements for Organ by the Candidates for the Cantor Position

On the fifth of July, 1722, the Leipzig congregation received sorrowful news:

Johann Kuhnau, who had faithfully served as cantor for over 20 years, suddenly exchanged his earthly organ for a heavenly harp. St. Thomas Church and St. Thomas School had to search for a new cantor.

There was no shortage of applicants this time. None other than Georg Philipp Telemann from Hamburg had already given his audition in August 1722. Other candidates for the position included Christoph Graupner from Darmstadt, Johann Friedrich Fasch from Zerbst, and Johann Sebastian Bach from Köthen. The application process took unexpected turns—what happened?

The Leipzig consistory has decided, as part of the congregation's quality initiative, to hold an event in the crypt of Helsinki Cathedral, where Sibelius Academy's Professor of Church Music, Timo Kiiskinen, will provide a presentation and an explanation of the events to the gathered congregation.



1. First Candidate:

G.Ph. Telemann,

b. 1681 in Magdeburg.

Music director from Hamburg, previously employed in Frankfurt. Studied law in Leipzig from 1701 to 1703, after which he worked as a full-time musician. During his studies, he founded Collegium Musicum in Leipzig, where musicians included Ch. Graupner and J.D. Heinichen.



2. Second Candidate:

Ch. Graupner,

b. 1683 in Hartmannsdorf.

Kapellmeister from Darmstadt. Studied law and music in Leipzig from 1702 to 1705 under J. Kuhnau, after which he moved to Hamburg to work as a musician due to uncertain political circumstances. Secured a position in Darmstadt in 1712.



3. Third Candidate:

J.S. Bach,

b. 1685 in Eisenach.

Kapellmeister from Köthen, serving Prince Leopold's court. Previous positions as organist and concertmaster in Arnstadt, Mühlhausen, and Weimar. Known as an excellent organist and violinist.



4. Fourth Candidate:

J.Er. Easch,

b. 1688 in Buttelstedt.

Kapellmeister from Zerbst. After his years as a choirboy, he studied music in Leipzig under J. Kuhnau. Founded a competing Collegium Musicum in Leipzig. Also studied under Ch. Graupner in Darmstadt and worked as a violinist in various parts of Germany before securing his position in Zerbst in 1722.



Additional Candidate and Auditor: T.A. Kiiskinen,

b. 1960 (1690?) in Lahti.

Professor of church music in Helsinki, previously a cantor in Lahti and Kotka. Founded a Collegium Musicum named Galantina. Due to a late application, he was not accepted into the official selection process, but with the consistory's permission, he will present a performance of his compositions for comparison at this event.



Friday, March 7

Kallio Church at 19:30

CONCERT
Olli Saari

Olli Saari (1990–):

Partita (2024–2025):

Choral Melody

Cantus firmus in soprano

Cantus firmus in alto

Cantus firmus in soprano

Cantus firmus in alto

Cantus firmus in tenor

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707):

Toccata in d, BuxWV 155

Olli Saari:

Organ Sonata:

I Energico

II Vivace

III Lento

IV Allegro Assai

Improvisation



In cooperation with Kallio Parish



KIRKKO HELSINGISSÄ
KALLION SEURAKUNTA

The partita is a collection of cantus firmus chorales that I have built around a modal melody of my own composition. The pieces reflect my interest in the mechanics of the North German style and are perhaps more science than art. Nonetheless, I believe they hold a certain performance value and may be of particular interest to specialists.

The North German style—as we perceive it today, with composers like Buxtehude, Reincken, Bruhns, and Tunder—combines modal structures with features of the organizational system we now understand as tonality. With these pieces, I have sought to explore the boundaries of this style and perhaps stretch them slightly, while still adhering to the internal logic of its stylistic features. However, to my knowledge, not all the techniques I have employed can be found in the repertoire of the time. For example, the use of a leading tone as a sort of final in a modal cadence is an avoided strategy for good reasons. Yet, I decided to experiment with it in one cadence of the first chorale. This works via a moderately complex chain of deceptive cadences.

Overall, the chorales are characterized by abundant, even extreme chromaticism, and each of them has its own independent idea. Despite their chromatic nature, these pieces are entirely playable on meantone organs as well.

The portion of the concert I perform on the choir organ concludes with perhaps the most popular representative of the North German style today: Dieterich Buxtehude's Toccata in D Minor. This piece, quite virtuosic in its stylistic context, is a highly successful blend of *stilus fantasticus* drama, smooth counterpoint, and playful gestures and rhythms.

I composed the organ sonata for my concert at the Mänttä Music Festival in the summer of 2019. The work came together fairly quickly, as I drew on material from an earlier organ sonata I had improvised at the Old Church in Helsinki. The four-movement sonata is marked by a certain neoclassicism, and each movement has a very clear structure: sonata form, a scherzo with trio, a sonata form without development that evokes a Mozartian slow movement, and a rondo finale—all of which are easily graspable by an informed listener. Yet, each movement also contains its own surprises.

Although I think that the technical aspects of music are, in a sense, secondary, I have chosen to focus on them in this concert's program notes and to avoid influencing the audience's experience or impressions by sharing my personal feelings. I would rather let each listener create their own meanings and leave that perspective untouched here.

Enjoy the concert!

Olli Saari

OLLI SAARI

Olli Saari is an organist and composer originally from Kokkola, currently based in Helsinki. Saari studied organ playing under Ville Urponen at the Church Music program of the Sibelius

Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, from which he graduated with a Master's degree in music in the spring of 2018. He has also studied organ improvisation under Markus Malmgren. Saari completed the A-degree in organ playing in the spring of 2021, with Peter Peitsalo as his teacher, while studying in the performing arts program at the Sibelius Academy, from which he graduated with a Master's degree in music in June 2022. His studies also included extensive music theory and composition at the Department of Music Theory at the Sibelius Academy. He has furthered his organ studies with repertoire performance and improvisation masterclasses in Finland and abroad, studying with teachers including Matthias Havinga, Erwin Wiersinga, Ludger Lohmann, Jeremy Joseph, James David Christie, Monica Melcova, and Pieter van Dijk.

As a composer, Olli Saari aims to create music that is accessible to a broader audience while maintaining high artistic goals. His music has been performed at music festivals and concerts in Finland, as well as in Japan, Germany, Sweden, and Norway. His extensive Requiem for mixed choir and organ was premiered at the Helsinki Organ Festival in March 2023. Notable recent premieres include *Ozymandias*, commissioned by the Male Choir Euga, and a Sonata for Violin and Organ, premiered by Irina Vavilova (organ) and Matias Lahti (violin). Upcoming premieres include *The Great War*, a war-themed male choir piece commissioned by the University Student Choir, which will be performed at Kallio Church on April 3, *Serenadimestarit*, a series of four serenades commissioned by choir Viipurin Lauluveikot, to be performed in May, and *Sammon taonta*, an organ piece composed for Aleksanteri Wallius, to be premiered at Turku Cathedral on June 3.

In addition to his concert performances, Olli Saari has collaborated extensively with many choirs and ensembles in the Helsinki metropolitan area, such as the Cantores Minores boys' choir, Somnium Ensemble, Tapiola Choir, Murtosointu, and Muntra Musikanter. Recent orchestral collaborations include performing the organ continuo in *Johannespassion* with the FiBo Baroque Orchestra and performing the organ part in *Interstellar* with the Vantaa Entertainment Orchestra. In June 2023, he participated as an organist in the Cantores Minores' tour of the British Isles, and a tour in Germany is expected in June 2025. Chamber music is an important part of Saari's musical career, and he is also known as an improviser. Alongside his artistic activities, he serves as a lecturer in organ improvisation at the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki.



Saturday, March 8

Helsinki Cathedral at 19:30

CONCERT

Bach Collegium Helsinki

ESSI LIND-VALLINOJA, ALTO
NIILO ERKKILÄ, TENOR
VEIKKO VALLINOJA, BASS
ESTER NURMINEN, CELLO
JOONAS MINKKINEN, ORGAN
ANNI NOUSIAINEN, ORGAN
HISKI WALLENIUS, CONDUCTOR

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750):

Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 686

Anni Nousiainen, organ

Aus der Tiefen, Cantata BWV 131

1. Aus der Tiefen; Sinfonia & coro
2. So du willst, Herr/ Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last;
Arioso (B) & Choral (S)
3. Ich harre des Herrn; Coro
4. Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn /
Und weil ich denn in meinem Sinn; Aria (T) & Choral (A)
5. Israel hoffe auf den Herrn; Coro

Fantasy and Fuge in G minor, BWV 542

Anni Nousiainen, organ

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen, Cantata BWV 182

1. Sonata
2. Himmelskönig, sei willkommen; Coro
3. Siehe, ich komme; resitativo (B)
4. Starkes Lieben; Aria (B)
5. Leget euch dem Heiland unter; Aria (A)
6. Jesu, lass durch Wohl und Weh; Aria (T)
7. Jesu, deine Passion; Choral
8. So lasset uns gehen in Salem der Freuden; Coro

THE SINGERS

Sopranos

Anna Ginström
Viena Kangas
Noomi-Rebekka Määttä
Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen

Altos

Laura Ginström
Liisalotta Lepistö
Essi Lind-Vallinoja
Sofia Majanen
Anni Nousiainen

Tenors

Niilo Erkkilä
Jônatas Meireles
Joel Ward

Basses

Ossi Hiltunen
Justus Pitkänen
Veikko Vallinoja

In cooperation with Helsinki Cathedral



KIRKKO HELSINGISSÄ
TUOMIOKIRKKOSEURAKUNTA



BACH COLLEGIUM HELSINKI

Bach Collegium Helsinki was founded in 2023 to delve deep into the treasure trove of J.S. Bach's church cantatas, their boundless beauty and timeless depictions of human psyche, and make them available to a broader audience. The collective is made of young music professionals including singers, organists, conductors and baroque instrumentalists.

THE PERFORMERS

Choir conductor and church musician **Hiski Wallenius** graduated with a Master's degree of Music from the Sibelius Academy in 2021, simultaneously completing an A-level examination in choral conducting. He has worked as a conductor, organist and singer in all productions of BCH. Wallenius is the artistic director of the Academic Male Choir Psaldo and Graduale Choir and holds the position of A-organist in Lauttasaari parish. He was one of the founders of the Lauttasaari Music Festival. In 2021–22, he was a visiting conductor of the Helsinki Cathedral Chamber Choir Viva vox. Wallenius has also worked as an artistic director of Medicanto, as an assistant director and repetiteur of Suomen Laulu Choir, and as a coach for the Cantores Minores boys' choir, in which he himself sang as a child.

THE PLAYERS

Anni Nousiainen is an organist and church musician from Helsinki. She played her Master's recital in organ and graduated with a master's degree from Sibelius Academy in early summer 2024. She has given concerts all over Finland both as a soloist and with several choirs. In Bach Collegium Helsinki, Anni plays the organ and sings the alto part.

Joonas Minkkinen is an organist, harpsichordist and pianist based in Helsinki. He studies church music at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. Minkkinen has worked as repetiteur and accompanist in rehearsals and concerts with many choirs as well as in Philip Glass's opera Akhnaten, produced by Opera Box. He is the deputy choral director of Suomen Laulu choir.

Cellist **Ester Nurminen** began her studies of early music at the Sibelius Academy under the guidance of Markku Luolajan-Mikkola last autumn. She became interested in early music during a summer course in middle school, where she practiced Bach's solo cello suites for the first time. During the course, she met Jukka Rautasalo, with whom she still often plays. Ester especially enjoys playing together with others. Bach's music always presents new challenges and insights, which makes playing inspiring.

SOPRANOS

Soprano **Anna Ginström** is a founding member of BCH and will graduate with a Master's degree in Church Music from the Sibelius Academy and as a vocal pedagogue from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in the spring of 2025. In addition to church music, Anna has a passion for opera and lied, which she is currently working on together with pianist Dávid Szila-

si. The duo won 1st prize in the Helsinki Lied Competition held in the autumn of 2024. Anna is particularly drawn to Baroque music for its chamber music qualities and emotional expressiveness.

Viena Kangas is a Helsinki-based creative mixed-skilled worker who fell in love with Bach's cantatas as a child thanks to her cantor father. Viena specializes in founding new ensembles and has been the director of the Vino Ensemble and the Kupliva Women's Choir since their founding. As a singer, she enjoys the challenges of contemporary music in addition to baroque music, and she often enjoys them in the rows of the Helsinki Chamber Choir. Viena graduated as a music pedagogue from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and completed her studies at the Sibelius Academy and Tampere University of Applied Sciences.

Noomi-Rebekka Määttä is a musician who graduated from the Helsinki Conservatory in spring 2024. She is studying violin pedagogy at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and classical singing at the West Helsinki Music Institute. Noomi is an experienced choir singer and sings in the treble choir at Vino Ensemble and in Lauluyhtye Virta. She is particularly interested in working with early music and contemporary works.

Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen is a freelance music writer, poet and founding member of BCH who has been passionate about early music her entire life. She has played the viol and performed as a vocal soloist in Sonus Borealis, Cappella Tibia and Donum Dei early music ensembles. In Bach Collegium Helsinki, she switches between soprano and alto parts.

ALTOS

Laura Ginström is a singer and psychologist from Helsinki. She holds a bachelor's degree in vocal pedagogy from Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and has graduated from the master's program in Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, majoring in Ensemble singing. She is a founding member of BCH and also sings in Somnium Ensemble.

Liisalotta Lepistö has completed a Master's degree from the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki, majoring in church music and organ. She works as a cantor in the Malmi parish, is a conductor of the CaMinus children's choir of the Candomino choir family and is the artistic director of the chamber choir Dimus. Liisalotta has sung in Bach Collegium Helsinki since its founding.

Essi Lind-Vallinoja is a mezzo-soprano from Rovaniemi with a passion for baroque music. She performs regularly in oratorios, operas and as an ensemble singer. Lind-Vallinoja studies vocal arts in Sibelius-Academy and vocal pedagogy in Metropolia UAS. She also holds a master's degree in church music from Sibelius Academy. She is a founding member of BCH.

Recently graduated with a Master's degree in Church Music, and simultaneously completed the A-examination in voice performance, mezzo-soprano **Sofia Majanen** enjoys both solo and ensemble singing. In addition to Bach Collegium Helsinki, Sofia sings in several ensembles, such as the Helsinki Chamber Choir. On the side of freelance singing, Sofia works as a vocal pedagogue, producer, and teaches Gregorian chant at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

TENORS

Tenor **Niilo Erkkilä** is completing his Master's studies at the Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki under the direction of Rabbe Österholm. He is often heard as an evangelist of Bach's church music works. Bach's music became familiar to Erkkilä in the Cantores Minores boys' choir. Erkkilä is an experienced ensemble singer and has been awarded for his achievements, including the international Grammy and the Finnish Emma award. In his free time, he enjoys going outdoors and watching NHL compilations with his morning coffee.

Jônatas Meireles is a Brazilian exchange student at the Sibelius Academy, in the department of Vocal Arts. He has performed as a soloist in operas, concerts and numerous chamber music recitals with pianist Durval Cesetti. He also has an extensive experience as a chorister, having sung in various professional choirs, including São Paulo Symphony Orchestra's Choir.

Joel Ward is a Finnish-English music professional. As a singer, he mainly performs with Bach Collegium Helsinki as well as with the Helsinki Chamber Choir, Munx Gregoriana and the Sibelius Academy Vocal Ensemble. He also works as a freelance musician in various vocal ensembles and choirs both in Finland and abroad, including the Vokal Nord choir in Tromsø. In addition to singing, Joel works in the recording industry as a mastering engineer, recording engineer, and producer.

Ossi Hiltunen is a Finnish composer, choir conductor and choral singer. He currently works as the artistic director of the Kullervo Choir, as a singer in the Sibelius Academy Vocal Ensemble and as a bass vocalist in the EMO Ensemble. Hiltunen has been a singer and conductor at the BCH since its founding.

Justus Pitkänen sings bass in some of the top Finnish choirs like Helsinki Chamber Choir, Somnium Ensemble and Key Ensemble. He has also written program notes (f.ex. for the Finnish Baroque Orchestra, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Kuopio Symphony Orchestra) and done journalism about music.

Baritone **Veikko Vallinoja** has performed as an oratorio soloist with many notable Finnish ensembles, such as the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and the Finnish Baroque Orchestra. In the national Lappeenranta Song Competition in 2023 he received 2nd prize, winning the male voice category. He has also successfully competed in multiple Lied competitions with pianist Jussi Littunen. He is currently finalizing his Vocal Art studies at the Sibelius Academy. Veikko is a founding member of BCH.

PROGRAM NOTES

Bach Collegium Helsinki is dedicated to performing J.S. Bach's church cantatas and other works by him that are rarely heard in Finland. The casual practicality of the Baroque era serves as an ideal: performances are organised according to instruments and musicians available at a given time. In this concert, the instrumental parts of the cantatas are played on the organ, fitting the occasion of an organ festival: on the spotlight is the organist's skill in interpreting and recreating the orchestra part with the organ.

During his time, Sebastian Bach was known first and foremost as an astonishing organ virtuoso and masterful improviser, and he was quite conscious of his skills. He hoped to be recognized primarily as a composer, but his creations kept perplexing his contemporaries and attained their status only after his death. He was known as the stubborn and arrogant Saxon who frustrated musicians and listeners alike with overly complex and stylistically outdated works.

At the peak of his career as the Cantor of St. Thomas church and school in Leipzig (1723–50), Bach's task was to compose and teach, not to play the organ. At that time, the city was home to six churches with multiple organists, but since Bach's reputation rested on his organ playing, he certainly did not stay away from the keyboard when conducting performances of his cantatas. Up on the gallery of St. Thomas church, Bach was known to conduct vigorously with all his limbs, occasionally moving to the keyboard and adding to the playing of the current musician. It is also likely that he played solo organ

works whenever present at the service. Many of Bach's organ compositions are clearly born in practical situations, improvised as preludes to hymns.

Although not all services featured as much music – during Lent and Advent seasons in Leipzig, cantatas were not performed – they were always grand occasions, lasting at least three hours. In line with the Lutheran ideal, several hymns were sung and always introduced by an organ prelude. The cantata was also preceded by a prelude during which the musicians tuned their instruments. In fact, the early forms of keyboard music born during the Renaissance, such as toccata (“created by touching”), ricercare (“to search, to recreate”), and fantasia (“imagined”) originated from such situations of tuning, testing, and connecting with the instrument.

The cantata was typically heard in two parts during the service. These “slots” were situated before the Creed and during the Communion. Sometimes the slots featured two separate cantatas, or one cantata and another set of music. Additional music for the communion was regularly needed, so Bach likely took the opportunity and jumped to the organ. Communion took a while since the congregation at St. Thomas Church could exceed 3,000 people!

In the post Thirty Years' War Saxony, the Sunday service was not so much a pious duty as a social privilege. The main service, especially – alternating weekly between the churches of St. Thomas and St. Nicholas – was a social spectacle which the lower classes could access on standing places at most. The seating inside the church followed the social hierarchy. Some high-ranking individuals reserved their boxes on the west gallery – above the main entrance – close to the musicians in order to see them. The wealthiest acquired a private chapel in the church.

The atmosphere during services was far from pious, with people entering and exiting, exchanging news, reading newspapers and flirting. Bach, for whom creating new kind of sacred music was a life-long mission, was certainly frustrated by the chaos. Some of the shocking openings, powerful gestures and gripping harmonies in his works may be written in order to shake and wake up the audience.

Bach expanded the role and scope of organ music. He transformed chorale fantasies and preludes from practical liturgical music into full-scale musical numbers with large overarching structures, varying stylistic registers and technical explorations of the organ.

In 1717, shortly before Bach's arrival in Leipzig, St. Paul church which served as the university church, received a new magnificent organ. As a re-

nowned organist, Bach was invited to test it, and was thrilled by the splendid instrument. Although St. Paul church had its own music director, it is certain that Bach made use of this exceptional instrument as much as he could: it had 53 stops and three manuals, making it one of the largest organs in Germany. Bach undoubtedly held concerts on this organ – during the 17th century, a tradition of public concerts started to form around churches. The recitals Bach performed on the great St. Paul organ must have been a special attraction for visitors during the international fairs held in Leipzig three times per year. There were also many ceremonial events for the city, university and local court in which Bach could exhibit his talents as an organist.

Between 1731 and 1741, Bach published four works under the title *Clavier-Übung*, ‘keyboard exercises’. These were not student pieces (unlike, for example, the *Inventions*) but a collection of true masterpieces for organ and harpsichord. Dedicated to the organ, *Clavier-Übung III* (1739) features chorale fantasies and preludes. *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir BWV 686* is a magnificent yet solemn showpiece based on a penitential hymn after Psalm 130 (Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord). Bach reworks ancient stylistic means into a stern and grandiose structure. The chorale is dressed into a six-voice texture, with both feet playing different voices.

The early cantata *Aus der Tiefe BWV 131* from around 1707 is related to the same impressive psalm, supplemented, in the chorales accompanying arias, with two hymn texts. At that time, Bach was serving as an organist in the town of Mühlhausen. The cantata was possibly composed for a memorial service held due to a fire that ravaged Mühlhausen. The painful work thus relates to a moment of collective mourning. Like Bach’s other early cantatas, it strongly reflects the tradition of the through-composed, fantasy-style cantata of the 17th century, in which music creates a continuous flow from one movement to another.

Scarcely any documents is left on Bach’s organ playing in Leipzig, although he certainly performed as an organist in various contexts. We know much more about his numerous organ concerts in other cities around Germany. Sometimes it was a concert, sometimes a job audition or some special visit, such as in 1747 when the elderly composer visited his son Carl Philipp Emanuel at the latter’s workplace, the Potsdam palace of King Frederick the Great of Prussia, and demonstrated his improvisation skills – resulting in the enigmatic collection of fugues and canons, *Musikalisches Opfer*.

In 1720, Bach was aiming for a position in Hamburg and gave an astonishing organ recital there lasting over two hours, including the *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542*. The audience was amazed by the scale and architecture of the fantasia where improvisational and punctual gestures alternated. The theme of the virtuosic fugue is derived from a Dutch folk song.

As is the case with most of Bach's organ compositions, the two works were originally not composed as a pair but rather individual pieces put together later.

The other cantata heard in this concert also dates back to the time before Bach's Leipzig years, this time in the court of Weimar. Himmelskönig sei Willkommen BWV 182, anticipating Easter, was composed for Palm Sunday in 1714. In Leipzig, Bach performed it on the Feast of the Annunciation, to which it also suited as it is all about longing for the Messiah.

Text and English translation: Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen

SUNG TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir (BWV 131)

Text: Psalm 130, Bartholomäus Ringwaldt

Sinfonia & Coro

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir.

Herr, höre meine Stimme, lass deine Ohren merken auf die Stimme meines Flehens!

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

Arioso (bass) & Chorale

So du willst, Herr, Sünde zurechnen, Herr, wer wird bestehen?

If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last,

Nimm sie aus meinem Herzen,

Dieweil du sie gebüsst hast

Am Holz mit Todesschmerzen,

Have mercy on me and my burden,

Take it away from my heart,

since you have released me from it

by dying on the cross

Denn bei dir is die Vergebung, dass man dich fürchte.

But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can,

with reverence, serve you.

Auf dass ich nicht mit grossem Weh
In meinen Sünden untergeh,
Noch ewiglich verzage.

*So that I may not in sorrow
perish from my sins
nor despair forever.*

Coro

Ich harre des Herrn, meine Seele harret, und ich hoffe auf sein Wort.
I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

Aria (tenor) & Chorale

Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn von einer Morgenwache bis zu der andern.

I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Und weil ich denn in meinem Sinn,
Wie ich zuvor geklaget,
Auch ein betrübter Sünder bin,
Den sein Gewissen naget,
Und wollte gern im Blute dein
Von Sünden abgewaschen sein
Wie David und Manasse.

*Often have I, too,
in my heart lamented,
as I'm a wretched sinner
gnawed by the conscience
and want to be washed in your blood
clean from my sins
like David and Manasseh.
[Figures in the Old Testament who were pardoned]*

Coro

Israel, hoffe auf den Herrn; denn bei dem Herrn ist die Gnade und viel Erlösung bei ihm.

Und er wird Israel erlösen aus allen seinen Sünden.

*Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and
with him is full redemption.
He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.*

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen, BWV 182
Text Salomo Franck (?), Psalm 40 Paul Stockmann

Coro

Himmelskönig, sei willkommen,
Laß auch uns dein Zion sein!
Komm herein,
Du hast uns das Herz genommen.
King of Heaven, welcome!
Let us be your people.
Come in,
we will give you our heart.

Resitativo (bass)

Siehe, ich komme,
im Buch ist von mir geschrieben;
deinen Willen, mein Gott, tu ich gerne.
Behold, I come
as is foretold in the scriptures.
Your will I'll fulfil, my Lord.

Aria (bass)

Starkes Lieben,
Das dich, großer Gottessohn,
Von dem Thron
Deiner Herrlichkeit getrieben,
Daß du dich zum Heil der Welt
Als ein Opfer vorgestellt,
Daß du dich mit Blut verschrieben.
What a strong love
drove you, o Son of God,
from your mighty throne
to save the world
as a willing sacrifice,
confirming it with your blood.

Aria (alto)

Leget euch dem Heiland unter,
Herzen, die ihr christlich seid!
Tragt ein unbeflecktes Kleid
Eures Glaubens ihm entgegen,
Leib und Leben und Vermögen
Sei dem König itzt geweiht.

*Bow down before your Saviour,
all Christian hearts!
Wear a spotless gown before him
to match your faith.
Give your all, your life and body,
to the King.*

Aria (tenor)

Jesu, laß durch Wohl und Weh
Mich auch mit dir ziehen!
Schreit die Welt nur "Kreuzige!"
So laß mich nicht fliehen, Herr,
von deinem Kreuzpanier;
Kron und Palmen find ich hier.

*Let me walk beside you, Jesus,
through good and bad times alike!
Though the world will cry: Crucify!
Lord, don't let me flee from under
the flag of your cross.
There will I find the crown of victory.*

Chorale

Jesu, deine Passion
Ist mir lauter Freude,
Deine Wunden, Kron und Hohn
Meines Herzens Weide;
Meine Seel auf Rosen geht,
Wenn ich dran gedenke,
In dem Himmel eine Stätt
Mir deswegen schenke.

*Your passion, Jesus,
is pure joy for me.
Your wounds and shameful crown
fill my heart with happiness.*

*My soul walks upon roses
when I think about it: because of you
a place in heaven
was granted me.*

Coro

So lasset uns gehen in Salem der Freuden,
Begleitet den König in Lieben und Leiden.
Er gehet voran
Und öffnet die Bahn.

*Let us enter the eternal city,
follow the King with love and sorrow.
He will go before us
and open the way.*

Trans. Auli Särkiö-Pitkänen & Bible (New International Version)



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Alkuperäinen valokuva: Mannberg, Mikko, 2021, Museovirasto

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Urkujen juuret ovat J.A. Zachariassenin urkujenrakennusperinteessä.
Urut valmistuvat vuonna 2025. Kaksi sormiota. 27 äänikertaa.

Urkurakentamo Veikko Virtanen Oy
KYLÄNPORTTI 4 02940 ESPOO



Tuesday, March 4 19:00–21:15

Music House

Concert

Sietze de Vries, organ

In cooperation with Helsinki Baroque Orchestra



Thursday, March 6 19:00–20:15

The Crypt of Helsinki Cathedral

Concert

Leipzigin pruuvi 1722–1723

Timo Kiiskinen, organ

In cooperation with Helsinki Cathedral parish



Friday, March 7 19:30–20:45

Kallio Church

Concert

Olli Saari, organ

In cooperation with Kallio parish



Saturday, March 8 19:30–20:45

Helsinki Cathedral

Concert

Bach Collegium Helsinki

In cooperation with Helsinki Cathedral parish

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