



Clavecin en concert:  
Praise and Hope

## Description

# Three Bach cantatas were presented this year as part of the complete series in Bourgie Hall

Par Luc Archambault

December 7, 2022

On November 27, **Clavecin en concert** presented ***Praise and Hope***, three Bach cantatas as part of the complete Bach cantata series at **Bourgie Hall**. Cantata BWV 149, *Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg* "We sing of victory with joy", exalts the strength of God and his angels, accompanying the faithful in confidence. The cantata BWV 28, *Gottlob! Nun geht das Jahr zu Ende* "God be praised! The year is now coming to an end," prays God to watch over his faithful in the new year as he did throughout the year that is coming to an end. The cantata BWV 137, *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren* "Praise the Lord, the mighty king of glory", is a song of thanksgiving.

This exquisitely refined concert was executed with incredible excellence. As usual, Luc Beauséjour led his musicians and soloists in a masterlully way.

The series of the *Complete cantatas of J.S. Bach* arrives in the last year of a musical dive undertaken more than 8 years ago. This in-depth journey will have allowed the Montreal public to hear more than 200 works of an extraordinary diversity of expression and feelings, constituting a prodigious sound registry and a deep spiritual universe.



## Bach Cantates BWV 28, 137 and 149

**Luc Beauséjour:** Conductor

**Jacqueline Woodley:** Soprano

**Florence Bourget:** Mezzo-soprano

**Louis-Charles Gagnon:** Tenor

**Geoffroy Salvas:** Baritone

With the Ensemble Clavecin en Concert

### **CANTATE BWV 149 : *MAN SINGET MIT FREUDEN VOM SIEG***

*Gottes Engel weichen nie,  
Sie sind bei mir allenden.  
Wenn ich schlafe, wachen sie,  
Wenn ich gehe,  
Wenn ich stehe,  
Tragen sie mich auf den Händen.*

God's angels never depart,  
They are with me all ends.  
When I sleep they wake up,  
When I walk,  
When I stand  
They carry me on their hands.

The cantata BWV 149, *Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg* (We sing the victory with joy) depicts the victory of Saint Michael against Satan. The booklet follows the victory of the archangel, the beast having been finally defeated. The victory of Saint Michael is thus celebrated following the terrible fight. Starting from the apocalyptic vision of the



archangel slaying the dragon, an image of the spiritual combat of good which prevails over evil, the teaching provided by the text of the cantata pursues the metaphor of triumph. Then the protection of the guardian angels is invoked, in a soprano tune dominated by the soft light of grace. And before concluding, it is a duet of the alto with the tenor which calls on the guardian angels in expectation of the resurrection.

### **CANTATA BWV 28 : GOTTLOB! NUN GEHT DAS JAHR ZU ENDE**

*Gott hat uns im heurigen Jahre gesegnet,  
Dass Wohltun und Wohlsein einander begegnet.  
Wir loben ihn herzlich und bitten darneben,  
Er woll auch ein glu?ckliches neues Jahr geben.  
Wir hoff ens von seiner beharrlichen Gu?te  
Und preisens im voraus mit dankbarm Gemu?te.*

God has blessed us this year  
That goodness and well-being should meet.  
We praise him heartily and ask besides that  
He also wants to give you a happy new year.  
We hope of his persistent goodness  
And praise in advance with grateful hearts.

As the year draws to a close, the cantata BWV 28 *Gottlob! Nun geht das Jahr zu Ende* (Praise God! The year is now coming to an end) was designed to be performed on the Sunday following Christmas. In 1725, therefore, the opportunity arose for Bach to compose a song of praise foreign to any liturgy. The theme of this cantata is a simple thanksgiving, without catechesis or preaching. God has watched over his faithful during the year that is ending, he must therefore be praised by asking him to continue and increase his blessing in the year that is beginning. It is historically the very first praise song of the Lutheran Church.

### **CANTATA BWV 137 : LOBE DEN HERREN, DEN MÄCHTIGEN KÖNIG DER EHREN**

*Lobe den Herren, der deinen Stand sichtbar gesegnet,  
Der aus dem Himmel mit Strömen der Liebe geregnet;  
Denke dran,  
Was der Allmächtige kann,  
Der dir mit Liebe begegnet.*

Praise the Lord who visibly blessed your estate,  
Who rained down from heaven with torrents of love;  
Remember  
What the Almighty  
Who meets you with love can do.

With age, Bach hardly ever composed a new cantata. The cantata BWV 137 *Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren* (Praise the Lord, the mighty king of glory) was composed in 1725 in his last years as cantor. The work is based entirely on a text by Joachim Neander, of the Pietist current, from which Bach derived this cantata of praise. Imitating the stylistics of the Psalms (notably Psalms 146 to 150), Neander begins each of his five stanzas with *Lobe den Herren* (Praise the Lord), thus creating a litany effect. This text becomes a song entirely devoted to praising, without the slightest evolution in the discourse or the slightest catechetical intention. We must simply



praise the Almighty Lord, the author of so many blessings.

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This exquisitely refined concert was executed with incredible excellence. As usual, Luc Beauséjour led his musicians and soloists in a masterful way. What can one add about a baroque orchestra that counts both an Italian harpsichord and a positive organ? Who brings together about twenty musicians, and a choir of nine singers, including the four soloists? This ensemble is pure honey for the ears.

The only problem stems from the German pronunciation of the soloists. Having unfortunately stayed in Germany, your servant's ear was sculpted by Germanic chants. Some of the soloists add fricatives (genitive mark) where there are none and pronounce their diphthongs in a very strange way. In Latin/Anglo-Saxon countries, this represents a mere detail, but if it was ever decided to publish the recording of this concert, it would undoubtedly be necessary to rework these points. Because to the ears of a Germanophile, such freedoms are irritating.

## December 18 concert

The next concert in the Complete J.S. Bach cantatas series will be presented at Salle Bourgie on Sunday, **December 18.**

Laval Symphony Orchestra  
**Alain Trudel**, conductor



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The Newman Chapel Choir

**Adrian Ross**, conductor

**Andréanne Brisson Paquin**, soprano

**Martina Myskohlid**, mezzo-soprano

**Louis-Charles Gagnon**, tenor

**Alexandre Sylvestre**, bass

## PROGRAM

Cantatas

BWV 38 : *Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir*

From the depths of my distress, I cry out to you

BWV 57 : *Selig ist der Mann*

Blessed is the man

BWV 121 : *Christum wir sollen loben schon*

We must truly praise Christ

*Images: Dominic Blewett*

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**Luc Archambault**, writer and journalist, globe-trotter at heart, passionate about movies, music, literature and contemporary dance, came back to Montreal from an extended stay in China to pursue his unrelenting quest for artistic meaning.



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## Date Created

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