

# **Bach** <sup>2011–2012</sup> Cantata Vespers *reception*

Grace Lutheran Church and School ■ River Forest, Illinois  
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost ■ September 25, 2011

## *Program*

Coffee and Baked Goods

Blue Max Coffee

Welcome

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, Cantor

*Cantata: Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht* (BWV 211)

Maura Janton Cock, soprano ■ Kurt Hansen, tenor

Douglas Anderson, baritone

Cynthia Fudala, flute ■ Betty Lewis, violin I ■ Paul Zafer, violin II

Naomi Hildner, viola ■ Susan Ross, cello

The Rev. Michael D. Costello, continuo

Prayer and Benediction

The Rev. Dr. Bruce K. Modahl, Senior Pastor

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.*

*Background notes for the cantata are found on the back cover of this program.*

### 1. Recitative (tenor)

*Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht  
Und höret, was itzund geschicht:  
Da kömmt Herr Schlendrian  
Mit seiner Tochter Liesgen her,  
Er brummt ja wie ein Zeidelbär;  
Hört selber, was sie ihm getan!*

Be quiet, chatter not,  
Give ear to what will now transpire:  
Now Mister Schlendrian  
Comes with his daughter Liesgen here  
And rumbles like a honey bear;  
Now listen what she's done to him!

The tenor takes the role of narrator, just as he does in Bach's Passions. His first task is to tell the audience to quiet down, suggesting the informal atmosphere for which this cantata is intended. He then announces that Herr Schlendrian (literally, "jog trot," someone stuck in a monotonous routine) is coming, and his approach is heard in repeated dotted figures in the bass line, marked "*con pompa*" (pompously). The tenor dips into his lower register to sing an aside, confiding to the audience that Schlendrian is growling like a bear.

### 2. Aria (bass)

*Hat man nicht mit seinen Kindern  
Hunderttausend Hudelei!  
Was ich immer alle Tage  
Meiner Tochter Liesgen sage,  
Gehet ohne Frucht vorbei.*

Don't we have with our own children  
Hundred thousand woes to see!  
What I'm ever daily saying,  
To my daughter Liesgen praying,  
Passeth fruitless on its way.

The orchestra depicts Schlendrian's growl using groups of four repeated sixteenth notes with the second note in the group a half-step under the main pitch. This figure appears in the continuo as well as in the upper parts and colors Schlendrian's singing. He truly is growling! The many repetitions of this figure illustrate Schlendrian's "hundred thousand" irritations with his daughter. "*Immer alle Tage*" (always, every day) he tells her what she should do, in one tonality after another, but to no avail, until the middle section comes to a cadence on the third degree of the scale. He must really be upset—how did he end up there? The orchestra intervenes to bring back the original key of D Major, and Schlendrian returns to his original complaint, with an emphatic finish.

### 3. Recitative (bass and soprano)

*Bass*

*Du böses Kind, du loses Mädchen,  
Ach! wenn erlang ich meinen Zweck:  
Tu mir den Coffee weg!*

*Sopran*

*Herr Vater, seid doch nicht so scharf!  
Wenn ich des Tages nicht dreimal  
Mein Schälchen Coffee trinken darf,  
So werd ich ja zu meiner Qual  
Wie ein verdorrtes Ziegenbrätchen.*

(Schlendrian)

Thou naughty child, thou wanton hussy,  
Ah, when will I achieve my way?  
For me, off coffee lay!

(Liesgen)

Dear Father, do not be so strict!  
For if I may not thrice each day  
My little cup of coffee drink,  
I'll turn indeed to my distress  
Into a dried-up goat for roasting.

Schlendrian scolds his daughter in vain. His phrases are short—he's frustrated and angry. But Liesgen, perky and sweet, defies her father, and rapidly tosses off the declamation that without coffee she will become a “dried-up piece of roast goat.”

### 4. Aria (soprano)

*Ei! wie schmeckt der Coffee süße,  
Lieblicher als tausend Küsse,  
Milder als Muskatwein.  
Coffee, Coffee muss ich haben,  
Und wenn jemand mich will laben,  
Ach, so schenkt mir Coffee ein!*

Ah! How sweet the coffee's taste is,  
Sweeter than a thousand kisses,  
Milder than sweet muscatel.  
Coffee, coffee, I must have it,  
And if someone wants to treat me,  
Ah, my cup with coffee fill!

Liesgen's aria rhapsodizing over coffee is an elegant trio sonata for voice, flute and continuo. The minuet form suggests Liesgen's flirtatiousness and grown-up airs, but her ecstatic exclamations and the irregular phrases and accents show her immaturity. The flute part is independent of the voice, bubbling and swirling through the air like the steam rising from Liesgen's favorite beverage. The minor key reminds us of coffee's exotic far-away origins.

## 5. Recitative (bass and soprano)

*Bass*

*Wenn du mir nicht den Coffee lässt,  
So sollst du auf kein Hochzeitfest,  
Auch nicht spazierengehn.*

*Sopran*

*Ach ja!  
Nur lasset mir den Coffee da!*

*Bass*

*Da hab ich nun den kleinen Affen!  
Ich will dir keinen Fischbeinrock  
nach itzger Weite schaffen.*

*Sopran*

*Ich kann mich leicht darzu verstehn.*

*Bass*

*Du sollst nicht an das Fenster treten  
Und keinen sehn vorübergehn!*

*Sopran*

*Auch dieses; doch seid nur gebeten  
Und lasset mir den Coffee stehn!*

*Bass*

*Du sollst auch nicht von meiner Hand  
Ein silbern oder goldnes Band  
Auf deine Haube kriegen!*

*Sopran*

*Ja, ja! nur lasst mir mein Vergnügen!*

*Bass*

*Du loses Liesgen du,  
So gibst du mir denn alles zu?*

(Schlendrian)

If thou for me not coffee quit,  
Thou shalt attend no wedding feast,  
Nor ever take a stroll.

(Liesgen)

Agreed!  
But here to me my coffee leave!

(Schlendrian)

Here now I've got the little monkey!  
I will most sure a whalebone dress  
of latest girth refuse thee.

(Liesgen)

I can with ease learn this to bear.

(Schlendrian)

Thou shalt not to the window venture  
And no one see who walks beneath it!

(Liesgen)

This also; but heed my petition  
And grant that I my coffee keep!

(Schlendrian)

Thou shalt as well not from my hand  
A silver or a golden band  
Upon thy bonnet gain thee!

(Liesgen)

Yes, yes! But leave to me my pleasure!

(Schlendrian)

Thou wanton Liesgen thou,  
Then dost thou yield me ev'rything?

Schlendrian threatens to take away one privilege after another if Liesgen will not give up her coffee. The dialogue moves along quickly, propelled by rhymes within the text.

## 6. Aria (bass)

*Mädchen, die von harten Sinnen,  
Sind nicht leichte zu gewinnen.  
Doch trifft man den rechten Ort,  
O! so kömmt man glücklich fort.*

Maidens who are steely-hearted  
Are not easily persuaded.  
But just hit the proper spot,  
Oh, ye'll have a happy lot.

Schlendrian is thinking, accompanied only by the continuo plodding along underneath. It's hard to know what to do about a stubborn young woman. But in the second part of the aria he gets an idea, and as he warms to it, his excitement appears in melismas on the words *kömmt* and *fort*. Parallel sixths with the continuo at the cadence suggest his belief that this just might work!

## 7. Recitative (bass and soprano)

*Bass*  
*Nun folge, was dein Vater spricht!*

(Schlendrian)  
Now, follow what thy father bids!

*Sopran*  
*In allem, nur den Coffee nicht.*

(Liesgen)  
In all things, only coffee not!

*Bass*  
*Wohlan! so musst du dich bequemen,  
Auch niemals einen Mann zu nehmen.*

(Schlendrian)  
Go on, thou must then be contented  
To lack as well a husband ever.

*Sopran*  
*Ach ja! Herr Vater, einen Mann!*

(Liesgen)  
O yes! Dear Father, please, a man!

*Bass*  
*Ich schwöre, dass es nicht geschieht.*

(Schlendrian)  
I swear it, it will never be.

*Sopran*  
*Bis ich den Coffee lassen kann?  
Nun! Coffee, bleib nur immer liegen!  
Herr Vater, hört, ich trinke keinen nicht.*

(Liesgen)  
Until from coffee I abstain?  
Well! Coffee, be forever conquered!  
Dear Father, mark, I'll never drink a bit.

*Bass*  
*So sollst du endlich einen kriegen!*

(Schlendrian)  
And thou in turn at last shalt get him.

Schlendrian sternly tells Liesgen that she will not be allowed to have a husband if she continues to drink coffee. Her four-note sigh on “a husband” signals to him that his threat is having the desired effect. So he repeats it, and she quickly promises to give up coffee. (That's how fast things can change in short satiric comedies!)

## 8. Aria (soprano)

*Heute noch,  
Lieber Vater, tut es doch!  
Ach, ein Mann!  
Wahrlich, dieser steht mir an!  
Wenn es sich doch balde fügte,  
Dass ich endlich vor Coffee,  
Eh ich noch zu Bette geh,  
Einen wackern Liebsten kriegte!*

This day, still,  
O dear Father, do it, please!  
Ah, a man!  
Truly, he would suit me fine!  
If it only soon might happen  
That at last in coffee's stead,  
Ere I yet shall go to bed,  
I a gallant lover find me!

Liesgen's excitement about a husband—whom she wants her father to find today!—is sung to the accompaniment of a rather dignified gigue in a pastorale style, suggesting perhaps the formalities of a wedding. The more lyrical vocal line in the middle section of this *da capo* aria contrasts with the delighted leaps and inversions of the first section. Will a “gallant lover” make a more satisfied and mature woman of Liesgen?

## 9. Recitative (tenor)

*Nun geht und sucht der alte Schlendrian,  
Wie er vor seine Tochter Liesgen  
Bald einen Mann verschaffen kann;  
Doch, Liesgen streuet heimlich aus:  
Kein Freier komm mir in das Haus,  
Er hab es mir denn selbst versprochen  
Und rück es auch der Ehestiftung ein,  
Dass mir erlaubet möge sein,  
Den Coffee, wenn ich will, zu kochen.*

Old Mister Schlendrian now goes to seek  
How he for this his daughter Liesgen  
Soon may a husband here procure;  
But Liesgen secretly makes known:  
No suitor come into my house  
Unless he's made to me the promise  
And put it in the marriage contract, too,  
That I shall be allowed to brew,  
Whenever I desire, my coffee.

The text of this recitative was not part of Picander's original script and may have come from Bach himself. The changed ending adds another level to the satire, and makes some concessions to the women in the audience. (Women were not allowed in coffeehouses in London in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but they were important customers at Zimmermann's in Leipzig.)

## 10. Chorus

*Die Katze lässt das Mäusen nicht,  
Die Jungfern bleiben Coffeeschwestern.  
Die Mutter liebt den Coffeebrauch,  
Die Großmama trank solchen auch,  
Wer will nun auf die Töchter lästern!*

A cat its mousing never quits,  
A girl remains a coffee-nurser.  
The mothers love to use the brew,  
The grandmas fondly drank it too,  
So who would now the daughters censure?

The final movement is a choral fantasy, as the entire ensemble acknowledges that the coffee craze is here to stay—through not just one, but two *da capos*. The hymn-like homophonic setting of the repeating A-sections gives the movement an air of comic solemnity. The singers' canonic entrances and counterpoint in the middle sections illustrate that mothers *and* grandmothers *and* young women *ALL* enjoy coffee.

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### Thanks to the following people for making today's reception possible:

**Janel Dennen,**

for her assistance with contracting musicians and set-up.

**Gwen Gotsch,**

for her attention to detail and excellent program notes on the cantata.

**Laura Zimmer,**

for her work as a liaison between Grace and Concordia and for moving equipment.

**Maurice Boyer, Charles Brown, and Steven Wentz of Concordia University Chicago,**

for loaning risers and a harpsichord to Grace for this reception.

**Marilyn Busse and Carlos Messerli,**

for their season-long contributions to the Bach Cantata Vespers ministry.

**Grace Senior Choir,**

for their dedication to this ministry and hard work each month in presenting the cantatas.

**Minh Lieu and Dan Muriello,**

for their assistance with set-up and managing logistics.

**Verna Offermann and Barb VanHeukelem,**

for calendar coordination and reception details.

**Lars Bostrom, Karen Christopher, and Jennie Hurrelbrink,**

for their assistance in the printing of programs and work "behind the scenes."

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### Special thanks to Terry Griffin of Blue Max Coffee and to Grace member Candice Hill Buchbinder for catering this afternoon's reception.

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Visit Blue Max in Forest Park (26 Lathrop Ave.) or on the web at [www.bluemaxcoffee.com](http://www.bluemaxcoffee.com).

# BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

J. S. Bach never wrote an opera. Why not?

Was it because of religious railing against the evils of opera and theater? Eighteenth-century composers of church music, including Bach, were sometimes criticized for using the “theatrical style” in their settings of sacred texts. Bach’s employment contract as Cantor at Leipzig stated that music composed for the worship service should not sound like opera. There were those who felt that the churchgoer’s devotional experience should not be unduly influenced by dramatic shifts of emotion in music.

However, Bach himself probably went to the opera when he traveled to Hamburg and Dresden, and the librettists for Bach’s cantatas supplied him with material that looked a lot like opera: recitatives followed by arias, just like the Italian operas that were fashionable in Germany at the time. The dramatic depiction of watching for the Day of Judgment in *Wachet! Betet! Betet! Wachet!* (BWV 70), which we will hear at the October 23 Cantata Vespers, is a striking example of the theatrical style in Bach’s church cantatas. The *Easter Oratorio*, also on the 2011–12 schedule, contains sung dialogue alternating with arias for the characters of Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the daughter of James. The libretto for *The Easter Oratorio* was probably written by Christian Friedrich Henrici (“Picander”) who also authored the text for the “Coffee Cantata.”

Perhaps the simplest explanation for why Bach did not compose for the stage is that Bach never lived or worked at a court or in a large city where opera was produced. Leipzig’s opera house closed in 1720, a year before Bach’s arrival. Bach was a practical, working musician, composing music—great music—for the venues and occasions at hand.

One of those Leipzig venues was the University, where students performed some of Bach’s secular cantatas in which the singers embodied mythological or allegorical characters. Johann Christoph Gottsched, an influential German literary critic and playwright who taught at the University, described these *drammi per musica* as “little operas.” Bach also directed and composed vocal and instrumental music for the Collegium Musicum, the performing ensemble that presented public concerts at Zimmermann’s Coffeehouse in Leipzig.

Coffee came to Germany about 1670, and Leipzig got its first coffeehouse in 1694. Town ordinances noted “the frivolous carrying on in coffee houses,” but the controversy over coffee-drinking was partly a balance-of-trade issue: English merchants profited from coffee sales, at the expense of local German breweries. Yet the merchants who traveled from all over to Leipzig’s bustling trade fairs met and shared ideas at the local coffeehouses, cosmopolitan settings where patrons also appreciated good music.

When the Coffee Cantata was first performed, probably at Zimmermann’s between 1732 and 1734, audience members, like musicologists and delighted listeners today, would have recognized this work as a mini-opera, similar to an *opera buffa*, the short comic operas performed in Italian opera houses between the acts of longer more serious pieces. And they would surely have enjoyed themselves!

So Bach never wrote an opera. He certainly could have done so if he’d had the opportunity!

Gwen Gotsch

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