

WIGMORE HALL 125

Friday 26 September 2025
7.30pm

La Grande Audition de Leipzig: The Great Audition of Leipzig

Paul Agnew director

Miriam Allan soprano

Maarten Engeltjes countertenor

Thomas Hobbs tenor

Edward Grint bass

Les Arts Florissants

Violaine Le Chenadec soprano

Nicolas Kuntzelmann countertenor

Sean Clayton tenor

Benoît Descamps bass

Tami Troman violin I

Liv Anna Heym violin II

Sophie de Bardonèche viola

Hanna Salzenstein cello (basso
continuo)

Michael Chanu double bass
(basso continuo)

Neven Lesage oboe

Jon Olaberria oboe

Niels Coppalle bassoon

Benoît Hartoin organ (basso
continuo)

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Wer sich rächet TWV 1:1600 (?1711-19)

Lobe den Herrn meine Seele (1722)

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn BWV23 (1723-31)

Interval

Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Aus der Tiefen rufen wir (1723)

Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe BWV22 (1723)



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On 5 June 1722, the director of music at St Thomas Church (Thomaskantor) in Leipzig, **Johann Kuhnau**, died. At that time, the duties of the *Thomaskantor* were many and varied: to teach music to the school choirboys and direct their singing in Leipzig's four main churches; to compose new sacred cantatas for performance in church services; and to oversee musical activities across the city for all kinds of festivities and occasions. Although Kuhnau composed a vast quantity of church music, only around 30 pieces survive today; among them is *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele*, one of two cantatas with this title, based on Psalm 103. Following his death, the Leipzig city council held a series of auditions to find a worthy successor to the 'blessed Kuhnau'. However, the replacement of the *Thomaskantorat* was far from straightforward.

The city council's preferred candidate was **Georg Philipp Telemann**, who had studied in Leipzig and had written music for its churches and opera house before moving away in 1705. Since 1721, Telemann had resided in Hamburg, where he was music director of the city's five largest churches. On 9 August 1722, he auditioned for the post of *Thomaskantor* with two cantatas, of which only one (*Ich muss auf den Bergen weinen und heulen*, TVWV 1:851) has survived complete. *Wer sich rächet* (TVWV 1:1600) dates from an earlier period, and sets a libretto by Erdmann Neumeister. Its arresting opening chorus (No. 1) is in two contrasting sections, one tumultuous and dramatic, depicting revenge, the other calm and expressive, evoking forgiveness. A particular highlight of this cantata is the heartstopping bass aria (No. 5), where Telemann uses a rest to place special musical emphasis on the word 'schweigen' ('silent').

Telemann was offered the position of *Thomaskantor* two days after his audition, and wrote letters to his Hamburg employers requesting dismissal, gleefully noting the 'considerable financial improvement' he would obtain in Leipzig. However, the Hamburg city officials resolved to retain Telemann at all costs, and after receiving a substantial increase in salary, he turned down the post. In late 1722, the Leipzig council approached other candidates, most notably Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688-1758), another former Leipzig student who had just become *Kapellmeister* at the court of Anhalt-Zerbst. However, Fasch ultimately declined to audition, ostensibly because he was unwilling to leave his new position in Zerbst, but possibly also for other, more personal reasons.

For the Leipzig city council, the situation was now becoming urgent. They turned to **Christoph Graupner**, Fasch's composition teacher and *Kapellmeister* at the Court of Hesse-Darmstadt. Graupner, an alumnus of both the *Thomasschule* and Leipzig University, was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with his position in Darmstadt: the opera house had been closed for some years, his employer, Landgrave Ernst Ludwig, seemed to have little interest in court music, and the pay was woeful. For his audition in January 1723, Graupner travelled to Leipzig in secret. One of the cantatas he presented there was *Aus*

der Tiefen rufen wir (GWV1113/23a). In the opening chorus (No. 1), which paraphrases Psalm 130, duetting oboes and sustained strings evoke a plea for God's help in a time of need. The central movement (No. 2), a lengthy accompanied recitative, features expressive alternating solo and choral sections; the final chorus (No. 3), meanwhile, is more optimistic in character, and striking in its command of rich polyphonic textures. Unfortunately, despite being offered the *Thomaskantor* post, Graupner's desire to escape Darmstadt led him to recklessly disclose confidential details of the conditions there to the Leipzig council, essentially briefing against his employer. When the council wrote to Darmstadt arguing for Graupner's release, using information that could only have come from him, the Landgrave refused to let him leave.

Fortunately, the council had reluctantly invited another candidate to audition as a backup. Unlike Telemann, Fasch and Graupner, the Cöthen court composer **Johann Sebastian Bach** had no existing ties to Leipzig, and was the only candidate who had not attended university. Bach presented two cantatas for his audition, which was held on 7 February 1723, the last Sunday before Lent (Quinquagesima). Both deal with different aspects of Luke's Gospel for that day. In *Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe* (BWV22), Jesus tells the disciples of his suffering to come, elegantly represented by the bass voice in the opening arioso (No. 1). The two arias are both dance-based: No. 2 is a mournful gigue, accompanied by an expressive oboe, and No. 4 a joyful *passepied*. The perpetual motion of the final chorale leaves a memorable impression, the voices accompanied by stirring instrumental figuration over a walking bass.

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn (BWV23), which concerns the healing of the blind, was performed after the sermon. Its poignant opening movement (No. 1) is an ornate duet for soprano and alto; in the tenor recitative that follows (No. 2), the oboe and first violin play the German Agnus Dei, foreshadowing what is to come. The cantata, which was pre-composed in Cöthen, originally ended with a dance-like chorus (No. 3). However, after arriving in Leipzig, Bach rearranged the work at the last minute, transposing it from C minor into B minor and adding a concluding chorale (No. 4). The text of the Agnus Dei, 'Christe, du Lamm Gottes', is now heard, sung against an instrumental background featuring intense harmonic shifts, polyphony and syncopation. In its direct anticipation of Holy Week, it is somehow all the more affecting, as the last music that the Leipzig congregation would hear before Good Friday. By that time, Bach had been offered the post of *Thomaskantor*, and would sign his contract a week later. His unanimous election, however, was borne less out of enthusiasm than desperation; as one Leipzig councillor put it, 'since it is not possible to get the best, we should choose somebody average'. They could not have known what they were unleashing.

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Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Wer sich rachtet
TWV 1:1600 (?1711-19)
Erdmann Neumeister

**He who takes
revenge**

1. Coro

1. Chorus

Wer sich rächet,
An dem wird sich der Herr
wieder rächen,
Und wird ihm keine Sünde
auch behalten.

He who takes revenge,
the Lord shall in turn
avenge,
and shall not shield him
from sin.

2. *Accompagnato e Coro*

2. *Accompaniment and chorus*

Vergib deinem Nächsten,
Was er dir zu leide getan
hat,
Und bitte denn,
So werden dir deine Sünde
auch vergeben.

Forgive your neighbour,
however he has harmed
you,
then pray
and your sins will be
forgiven.

3. *Recitativo*

3. *Recitative*

Nichts schwerer geht dem
alten Adam ein,
Als wenn er soll vergeben
und vergessen,
Versöhnlichkeit wird ihm zu
bitterer Pein.
Die Rache schmeckt nur
süsse.
Und wenn man ihm die
freien Hände liess,
So sollte wohl das Maass noch
mehr, als zehnfach, sein
Womit er seinem Feinde
würde messen.
Doch Christlich ist das nicht.
Wer dies im Vater Unser
spricht:
Vergib uns dieses sprechen:
Als wir vergeben unsern
Schuldigkeit.
Wer sich will selber rächen,
Verscherzet Gottes Huld,
Und wird selbst über sich
Den Stab zum Urteil brechen.
Drum überwinde
dich.
Der nur, der heisst ein
Christ,
Der seines Willens Herr und
sein selbst mächtig ist.

Old Adam finds nothing
more difficult
than to forgive and
forget,
reconciliation causes him
bitter pain,
and were he allowed to
have his way,
he would treat
his enemies
ten times more
severely.
But that is not Christian.
As the Lord's Prayer
says:
forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those that
trespass against us.
He who takes revenge,
forfeits God's grace,
and will condemn
himself to death.
Therefore, prevail upon
thyself.
Only he can be called
Christian,
who does the Lord's will
and controls himself.

4. *Aria*

Fried' und Liebe krönt die
Christen.
So ein Schmuck ist
ungemein,
Und die sich mit Sanftmut
rüsten,
Werden Heldengottes sein.
Wer durch einen stillen Geist
Zorn und Grimm im Herzen
dämpft,
Dieses heisst
Einen guten Kampf
gekämpft.

4. *Aria*

Christians are crowned
with peace and love.
Such adornment is
unique,
and those who arm
themselves with
gentleness,
will be God's heroes.
He who with gentleness
suppresses anger and
rage –
can be said
to have fought a good
fight.

5. *Recitativo*

5. *Recitative*

Ein Hund beisst in den Stein,
Womit man nach ihn wirft,
Und ist doch nur vergebens.
Was bringst vor Vorteil ein,
Wenn Gall' und Gift in
Herzen kocht?
Man wird ein Mörder seines
Lebens,
Und löscht das Tocht'
Desselben vor der Zeit nur aus.
So wirft den Gräuel aus.
Die Menschen machet er zu
Bären und zu Wölfen.
Wer ihm will selbst durch
eigne Rache helfen,
Der reizet Gottes Rache
wider sich.
Drum noch einmal,
Ach! überwinde dich!

A dog bites the stone
that is hurled after him,
and does so in vain.
What does it avail you
to give vent to
rage?
You will destroy your own
life
and extinguish the candle
before your time.
Therefore, cast out this rage.
He turns humans into
bears and wolves.
He who wishes to wreak
his own revenge,
heaps God's revenge
upon himself.
Therefore I repeat:
Ah! Prevail upon thyself!

6. *Aria*

6. *Aria*

Segne den, der dich
verflucht.
Welcher dein Verderben sucht,
Diesem sollst du Guts
erzeigen,
Und bei Lästerworten
schweigen.
Gebet dir das Unrecht nah?
Denke, Gottes Huld ist
da.
Der wird dir die Schmach in
Ehren,
Und den Fluch in Segen
kehren.

Bless the man who curses
you.
He who seeks your ruin,
you should treat with
kindness
and suppress all
slandorous words.
If injustice looms,
just think – God's grace is
near at hand.
He will honour the
insult
and turn curses into
blessing.

*Work continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly
as possible.*

7. Coro

Verleih, dass ich aus Herzen
Grund
Mein'n Feinden mög'
vergeben.
Verzeih mir auch zu dieser
Stund',
Schaff mir ein neues Leben:
Dein Wort mein Speis lass
allweg sein,
Damit mein Seel' zu nähren,
Mich zu wehren,
Wenn Unglück geht daher,
Dass mich bald möchte
abkehren.

7. Chorus

Grant that from the
bottom of my heart
I might forgive my
enemies.
Forgive me at this
hour,
give me a new life:
let Thy word always feed
me,
that my soul be nourished,
that I might resist
when calamity draws near,
that I might turn away
from it.

Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722)

Lobe den Herrn meine Seele (1722) *Biblical text*

1. Sonata

2. Duetto

Lobe den Herrn, meine
Seele,
Und was in mir ist, seinen
heiligen Namen.
Lobe den Herrn, meine
Seele,
Und vergiss nicht, was er dir
Gut's getan hat.

3. Aria

Der dir alle deine Sünde
vergibet
Und heilet alle deine
Gebrechen,
Der dein Leben vom
Verderben erlöset,
Der dich krönet mit Genade
und Barmherzigkeit.

4. Aria

Der deinen Mund fröhlich
machtet,
Und du wieder jung wirst wie
ein Adler.

Praise the Lord, O my soul

1. Sonata

2. Duet

Praise the Lord, O my
soul,
and all that is within me
and his holy name.
Praise the Lord, O my
soul,
and forget not all his
benefits.

3. Aria

He who forgives all your
iniquities
and heals all your
diseases
and redeems your life
from ruin
and crowns you with
grace and mercy.

4. Aria

Who gives you
joy,
that your youth be
renewed like an eagle's.

5. Recitativo

Der Herr schaffet Gerechtigkeit
und Gericht allen,
Die Unrecht leiden.
Er hat seine Wege Mose
wissen lassen,
Die Kinder Israel sein
Tun.

6. Duetto

Barmherzig und genädig ist
der Herr,
Geduldig und von grosser
Güte.

7. Recitativo

Er wird nicht immerdar hadern
Noch ewiglich Zorn halten.
Er handelt nicht mit uns
nach unsern Sünden
Und vergilt uns nicht nach
unser Missetat.

8. Duetto

Alleluja.

5. Recitative

The Lord treats all who
suffer wrong
with justice and the law.
He made known his ways
to Moses,
His acts to the people of
Israel.

6. Duet

The Lord is merciful and
gracious,
patient and abounding in
love.

7. Recitative

He will not always chide,
nor keep his anger for ever.
He does not deal with us
according to our sins,
nor requite us according
to our iniquities.

8. Duet

Hallelujah.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn BWV23 (1723-31) *Anonymous*

1. Aria (Duetto)

Du wahrer Gott und Davids
Sohn,
Der du von Ewigkeit in der
Entfernung schon
Mein Herzeleid und meine
Leibespein
Umständlich angesehen,
erbarm dich mein!
Und lass durch deine
Wunderhand,
Die so viel Böses
abgewandt,
Mir gleichfalls Hilf und
Trost geschehen.

Thou very God and David's son

1. Aria (Duet)

Thou, very God and
David's Son,
Thou, who from eternity,
hath from afar
Already seen all my
body's pain
And heart's distress, have
mercy on me!
Grant through Thy
wondrous hand,
Which has repelled so
much evil,
That I be given both
help and comfort.

2. *Recitativo con
choral*

Ach! gehe nicht vorüber;
Du, aller Menschen
Heil,
Bist ja erschienen,
Die Kranken und nicht die
Gesunden zu bedienen.
Drum nehm ich ebenfalls an
deiner Allmacht teil;
Ich sehe dich auf diesen
Wegen,
Worauf man
Mich hat wollen
legen,
Auch in der Blindheit an.
Ich fasse mich
Und lasse dich
Nicht ohne deinen Segen.

3. *Coro*

Aller Augen warten, Herr,
Du allmächtger Gott, auf
dich,
Und die meinen sonderlich.
Gib denselben Kraft und
Licht,
Lass sie nicht
Immerdar in Finsternissen!
Künftig soll dein Wink
allein
Der geliebte Mittelpunkt
Aller ihrer Werke sein,
Bis du sie einst durch den
Tod
Wiederum gedenkst zu
schliessen.

4. *Coro*

Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der
Welt,
Erbarm dich unser!
Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der
Welt,
Erbarm dich unser!
Christe, du Lamm Gottes,
Der du trägst die Sünd der
Welt,
Gib uns dein' Frieden. Amen.

2. *Recitative with
instrumental chorale*

Ah, do not pass me by;
Thou, the Saviour of
mankind,
Didst appear on earth
To succour the sick and
not the healthy.
So I too share share in
Thy almighty power;
I see Thee also along
these paths,
Where
People have tried to leave
me,
Even in my blindness.
I compose myself
And shall not leave Thee
Except Thou bless me.

3. *Chorus*

The eyes of all, O Lord,
Thou almighty God, wait
upon Thee,
Mine above all others.
Give them strength and
light,
Leave then not
In darkness for evermore!
Henceforth a sign from
Thee
Shall be the beloved focus
Of all their labours,
Till Thou shalt at last
through death
Decide once more to
close them.

4. *Chorus*

Christ, Thou Lamb of God,
Who dost bear the sins of
the world,
Have mercy on us!
Christ, Thou Lamb of God,
Who dost bear the sins of
the world,
Have mercy on us!
Christ, Thou Lamb of God,
Who dost bear the sins of
the world,
Grant us Thy peace.
Amen.

Christoph Graupner (1683-1760)

Aus der Tiefen rufen
wir (1723)
Liturgical text

1. *Tutti*

Aus der Tiefen rufen
wir,
Gott, barmherz'ger Gott, zu Dir.
Uns're Not hat zugenommen,
Doch die Rettung folget
nicht,
Weil dein Geist dagegen
spricht:
„Meine Stund' ist noch nicht
kommen.“

2a. *Accompagnato-
Rezitatif (Ténor)*

Wenn aber kommt einmal die
höchst-erwünschte Stunde?
Wir haben lange Zeit schon
keinen Freudenwein und
müssen überall in
Trübsalswassern schrei'n.

2b. *Tutti*

Herr, unser Helfer, hilf, sonst
gehen wir zugrunde.

2c. *Accompagnato-
Rezitatif (Soprano)*

Wie tausend Jahr vor dir die
Zeit von einem Tage,
So ist im Gegenteil bei
Jammer Angst und Plage
Ein einz'ger Tag bei uns mehr
Als ein ganzes Jahr.

2d. *Accompagnato-
Rezitatif (Basse)*

Verkürze diesen doch der
auserwählten Schar
zuliebe,
Welche sich so fest mit dir
verbunden, und sprich:
„Verzweifle nicht, itzt
kommen meine Stunden.“

2e. *Tutti*

Aus der Tiefen [da capo]

Out of the depths we
cry unto Thee

1. *Tutti*

Out of the depths we cry
unto thee,
O merciful God.
Our need has increased,
yet salvation does not
draw near,
for your spirit is against it
and speaks:
'My hour is not yet
come.'

2a. *Accompanied
recitative (Tenor)*

But when shall the keenly
desired hour come?
We have for long tasted
no wine of joy and must
everywhere weep in
waters of tribulation.

2b. *Tutti*

Lord, our Helper, help or
we shall perish.

2c. *Accompanied
recitative (Soprano)*

A thousand years seem
like a day with Thee,
whereas a single day spent
in grief, fear and torment
seems to us more
than a whole year.

2c. *Accompanied
recitative (Bass)*

Shorten the days for the
sake of Thy chosen
flock,
who have so united with
Thee, and say:
'Despair not, my hour is
come.'

2e. *Tutti*

Out of the depths [da capo]

Interval

Work continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly
as possible.

3. Tutti

Brunnquell der Gnaden und Ursprung der Freuden, Aller Vergnügung unendliches Meer. Ändre die Klagen, versüsse das Leiden, Hilf uns ertragen, was schrecklich und schwer, Bis sich die Stunden endlich gefunden, Die uns von aller Bekümmernis scheiden.	Fountain of grace and source of joy, boundless sea of all pleasure. Change our laments, sweeten our suffering, help us to bear what is terrible and oppressive, until the hour finally comes that will sever us from all distress.
--	---

Johann Sebastian Bach

Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe BWV22 (1723)

Anonymous

1. Arioso e Coro

Ténor

Jesus nahm zu sich
die Zwölfe und
sprach:

Basse

Sehet, wir gehn hinauf gen
Jerusalem, und es wird
alles vollendet werden,
Das geschrieben ist
von des Menschen
Sohn.

Coro

Sie aber vernahmen der
keines und wussten nicht,
Was das gesaget
war.

2. Aria (Alto)

Mein Jesu, ziehe mich nach
dir,
Ich bin bereit, ich will von
hier
Und nach Jerusalem zu
deinen Leiden gehn.
Wohl mir, wenn ich die
Wichtigkeit
Von dieser Leid- und
Sterbenszeit
Zu meinem Troste kann
durchgehends wohl
verstehn!

3. Tutti

Jesus took unto Him the twelve

1. Arioso e Chorus

Tenor

Jesus took unto Him the
twelve, and said unto
them,

Bass

Behold we go up to
Jerusalem, and all things
that are written by
the prophets concerning
the Son of man shall be
accomplished.

Chorus

And they understood
none of these things,
neither knew they the things
which were spoken.

2. Aria (Alto)

My Jesus, draw me unto
Thee,
I am prepared, and will
from hence
To Jerusalem, to Thy
Passion.
Happy me,
If I can wholly understand
the importance
Of this time of death and
pain for my own
comfort!

3. Recitativo (Basse)

Mein Jesu, ziehe mich, so
werd ich laufen,
Denn Fleisch und Blut
verstehet ganz und gar,
Nebst deinen Jüngern nicht,
was das gesaget war.
Es sehnt sich nach der Welt
und nach dem grössten
Haufen;
Sie wollen beiderseits, wenn
du verkläret bist,
Zwar eine feste Burg auf
Tabors Berge bauen;
Hingegen Golgatha, so
voller Leiden ist,
In deiner Niedrigkeit mit
keinem Auge schauen.
Ach! kreuzige bei mir in der
verderbten Brust
Zuvörderst diese Welt und
die verbotne Lust,
So werd ich, was du sagst,
vollkommen wohl verstehen
Und nach Jerusalem mit
tausend Freuden gehen.

4. Aria (Ténor)

Mein alles in allem, mein
ewiges Gut,
Verbessere das Herze,
verändere den Mut;
Schlag alles darnieder,
Was dieser Entsagung des
Fleisches zuwider!
Doch wenn ich nun geistlich
ertötet da bin,
So ziehe mich nach dir in
Friede dahin!

5. Coro

Ertöt uns durch dein
Güte,
Erweck uns durch dein
Gnad;
Den alten Menschen kränke,
Dass der neu' leben mag
Wohl hie auf dieser Erden,
Den Sinn und all
Begehren
Und G'danken hab'n zu dir.

3. Recitative (Bass)

My Jesus, draw me on,
and I shall come,
For flesh and blood cannot
comprehend at all,
Like Thy disciples, the
words Thou didst utter.
Men yearn for the world
and the company of the
multitude;
They desire, when Thou
art transfigured,
To erect a mighty fortress
on Tabor's mountain,
But not to gaze on Golgotha,
so full of the suffering
Of Thy
lowliness.
Ah, crucify in my
corrupted breast,
Before all else, this world
and its forbidden desires,
And I shall wholly
understand Thy words
And journey to Jerusalem
with a thousand joys.

4. Aria (Tenor)

My all in all, my eternal
treasure,
Reform my heart,
transform my courage,
Strike down everything
That resists this denial of
the flesh!
But when I am mortified
in spirit,
Then draw me to Thee in
peace!

5. Chorus

Mortify us through Thy
goodness,
Awaken us through Thy
grace;
Chasten in us the old man,
That the new may live
Here upon this earth,
Turning his mind and
desires
And his thoughts to Thee.