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STEPHAN MACLEOD

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FOR THE MUSICIANS OF
GLI ANGELI GENÈVE

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host Matthew White at 7:15:

Stephan MacLeod



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VANCOUVER BACH FESTIVAL 2018

FRIDAY AUGUST 3 AT 7:30 PM | CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

BACH CANTATAS: ACTUS TRAGICUS

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750):

"Christ lag in Todesbanden" – CANTATA BWV 4

Sinfonia

Christ lag in Todesbanden

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm

So feiern wir das hohe Fest

Wir essen und leben wohl

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767):

"Du aber, Daniel, gehe hin" – FUNERAL CANTATA TWV 4:17

Sonata

Coro: Du aber Daniel

Recitativo: Mit Freuden folgt die Seele

Aria: Du Aufenthalt der blasen Sorgen...Aria da Capo

Accompagnato: Mit sehnedem Verlangen

Aria: Brecht ihr müden Augen lieder

Recitativo: Dir ist, hochsel'ger Mann

Coro: Schlaf wohl, ihr seligen Gebeine

INTERVAL

Johann Sebastian Bach:

"Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit" (Actus Tragicus) – CANTATA BWV 106

Sonatina

Coro: Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit

Arioso: Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken

Coro: Es ist der alte Bund

Aria: In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist

Arioso & Choral: Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein

Coro: Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit

Johann Sebastian Bach:

"Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu Dir" – CANTATA BWV 131

Coro: Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir

Arioso & Choral: So du willst, Herr, Sünde zurechnen

Coro: Ich harre des Herrn

Aria & Choral: Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn

Coro: Israel hoffe auf den Herrn

Gli Angeli Genève

Stephan MacLeod

DIRECTOR

SOLOISTS

Aleksandra Lewandowska

SOPRANO

Alex Potter

ALTO

Thomas Hobbs

TENOR

Stephan MacLeod

BASS

RIPIENO SINGERS

Juliet Fraser

SOPRANO

Christelle Monney

ALTO

Stephan Gähler

TENOR

Frederik Sjollema

BASS

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Bart Coen

Jan Van Hoecke

RECORDERS

Emmanuel Laporte

OBOE

Veronika Skuplik

Anaïs Chen

VIOLINS

Romina Lischka

Kaori Uemura

VIOLAS DA GAMBA

Félix Knecht

VIOLONCELLO

Philippe Miqueu

BASSOON

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DOUBLE BASS

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PROGRAMME NOTES

BY MATTHEW WHITE

It is the ancient law: Man, you must die!

Es ist der alte Bund: Mensch, du mußt sterben!

From Actus Tragicus – BWV 106

Ecclesiasticus 14:17

Despite the modern world's obsession with prolonging life and extending youth through healthier eating, regular exercise, expensive medications, surgeries of all types, yoga, and meditation, the fact remains, we are all heading to the same place eventually. For many of us in the twenty-first century, especially those of us who live without a faith in God, we would rather change the subject than make death the focus of regular conversation. In the 17th and 18th centuries, however, people took a different approach to a subject that was then much harder to ignore. In the wake of the Thirty Years War, and without the mercies of modern medicine, death was ubiquitous. People found comfort in the idea that, though life on earth was miserable, it would not last long, and they had eternity in Heaven to look forward to. All the works on tonight's programme are gloriously beautiful meditations on the release of death and the joy that awaits in paradise. Despite the gloomy subject matter, the genius, imagination and hopefulness of these works is life-affirming and mystifying regardless of whether you believe in an afterlife or not.

Christ Lag in Todes Banden, bwv 4 (Christ Lay in the bonds of death) is an early cantata written while Bach was still in his early 20s. It demonstrates his already masterful ability to transform text into musical figures that create a whole far greater than the sum of its parts. Likely written in 1707 as an audition piece for the position of organist at Mühlhausen, it is the only one of the early cantatas that we know Bach later revised and revived in Leipzig. It is hard to imagine a more perfect realization and augmentation of Luther's chorale text in which the inevitability of death is balanced and ultimately defeated by Christ's gift of everlasting life through his own suffering and death. One of the most frequently performed of Bach's cantatas, it introduces a myriad of rhetorical devices to evoke not just the seriousness of sin and death, but also the glory, joy, love, and hope of salvation. There is no better argument for following along with the translations in your programme book than this extraordinary work, which includes some of the most effective word painting in the history of music. In his highly-recommended recent book, "Music in the Castle of Heaven", John Eliot Gardiner devotes a compelling and heartfelt thirteen pages to elucidating how Bach mirrors and augments Luther's text in a movement- by-movement analysis.

Likely written for the death of a dignitary, the compositional date of Georg Phillip Telemann's **Du Aber Daniel** (Go thy way Daniel) is uncertain. Telemann wrote an astonishing 1,400 cantatas, and this one is considered among his very best. It uses the new sacred cantata style, alternating recitatives and arias in the style of secular and operatic works of the period. The text, the final verse of the Book of Daniel, expresses a yearning for the release of death and the promise of the afterlife to come. 'But go thou Daniel on thy way and take thy rest, for thou shalt receive thy just share at the end of days.' (Daniel 12:13). For this reason, and for its similarly intimate instrumentation featuring the gamba and recorder prominently, it has long been associated and favourably compared with the J.S. Bach's *Actus Tragicus*, BWV 106.

The origin of the epithet "Actus Tragicus" is not clear, as it appeared in a manuscript dating from after Bach's death. What is abundantly clear, however, is that despite being one of his earliest works, **Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit, bwv 106** (God's



View of Mühlhausen in the 18th century, where Bach wrote his first Cantatas

own time is the very best time), stands out as one of the most profoundly moving sacred works ever written. Likely composed for the funeral of his uncle, Tobias Lämmerhirt, who died in Erfurt on 10 August 1707, it is a masterpiece that makes a powerful distinction between the dark reality of the ancient, Old Testament law that we all must die, and the redemptive power of Christ's love. There is no more beautiful moment than the middle of the piece, when the soprano interrupts the three lower voices in the middle of a dark and thorny three-part fugue on the text "It is the ancient law, Man you must die". This moment acts as dramatic pivot point in which the soprano line breaks the almost unbearable tension, reminding us that despite our worldly suffering and mortality, there is hope: "Yes, Jesus is coming". Regardless of whether you believe, Bach's music makes you desperately want to give in to the promise and leave your doubt and worries behind. Perhaps not by chance, this cantata has the reputation of containing a few moments that are fiendishly difficult to realize in performance. The most infamous of these is the passage where the bass soloist sings about the glory of paradise in a range so high that Bach never repeated it again in all his sacred repertoire. It is as if Bach is saying that while you may look forward to paradise, you will get there only via desperate earthly struggle.

The final work on the programme is cantata **Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131** (Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee), often referred to as Bach's earliest cantata. In 1908, the great theologian, organist, writer, humanitarian, philosopher, and physician Albert Schweitzer said, "I'd trade a hundred of the later cantatas for ten like this one". BWV 131 is like BWV 4 and BWV 106 in that it does not employ the avant-garde cantata style of alternating recitatives and arias setting contemporary poetry. Instead, it is an unbroken succession of choruses and arias on texts drawn from biblical passages and hymns. Retrospective both in form and timbre, it is an apotheosis of seventeenth-century German sacred music. Though not specifically centred around the theme of death, the text is structured in an oppositional way that balances the misery of sin with the hope offered by faith. The occasion on which *Aus der Tiefen* was first performed is unknown, but it has been suggested that it was possibly written in connection with a serious fire that destroyed much of Mühlhausen in 1707. As in BWV 106, the listener, like the soul of the believer, needs to wait until the middle of the work for a ray of hope that doesn't come until the third movement. It is happily worth the wait and the cantata builds to a final chorus that is unequivocal in its affirmation of redemptive power of God's mercy. ■

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Johann Sebastian Bach: Cantata BWV 4: "Christ lag in Todesbanden"

Sinfonia

Violino I/II, Viola I/II, Continuo

Versus 1

Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso
Violino I/II, Viola I/II, Continuo

Christ lag in Todesbanden
Für unsre Sünd gegeben,
Er ist wieder erstanden
Und hat uns bracht das Leben;
Des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
Und singen halleluja,
Halleluja!

Christ lay in death's bonds
handed over for our sins,
he is risen again
and has brought us life
For this we should be joyful,
praise God and be thankful to him
and sing alleluia,
Alleluia!

Versus 2

Soprano, Alto
Continuo

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
Bei allen Menschenkindern,
Das macht' alles unsre Sünd,
Kein Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
Und nahm über uns Gewalt,
Hielt uns in seinem Reich gefangen.
Halleluja!

Nobody could overcome death
among all the children of mankind.
Our sin was the cause of all this,
no innocence was to be found.
Therefore death came so quickly
and seized power over us,
held us captive in his kingdom.
Alleluia!

Versus 3

Tenore
Violino, Continuo

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
An unser Statt ist kommen
Und hat die Sünde weggetan,
Damit dem Tod genommen
All sein Recht und sein Gewalt,
Da bleibet nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
Den Stach'l hat er verloren.
Halleluja!

Jesus Christ, God's son,
has come in our place
and has put aside our sins,
and in this way from death has taken
all his rights and his power,
here remains nothing but death's outward form
it has lost its sting.
Alleluia!

Versus 4

Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso
Continuo

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg,
Da Tod und Leben rungen,
Das Leben behielt den Sieg,
Es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
Wie ein Tod den andern fraß,
Ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Halleluja!

It was a strange battle
where death and life struggled.
Life won the victory,
it has swallowed up death
Scripture has proclaimed
how one death ate the other,
death has become a mockery.
Alleluia!

Versus 5

Basso
Violino I/II, Viola I/II, Continuo

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
Davon Gott hat geboten,
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
In heißer Lieb gebraten,
Das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür,
Das hält der Glaub dem Tode für,
Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Halleluja!

Here is the true Easter lamb
that God has offered
which high on the trunk of the cross
is roasted in burning love,
whose blood marks our doors,
which faith holds in front of death,
the strangler can harm us no more
Alleluia!

Versus 6

Soprano, Tenore
Continuo

So feiern wir das hohe Fest
Mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
Das uns der Herre scheinen läßt,
Er ist selber die Sonne,
Der durch seiner Gnade Glanz
Erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz,
Der Sünden Nacht ist verschwunden.
Halleluja!

Thus we celebrate the high feast
with joy in our hearts and delight
that the Lord lets shine for us,
He is himself the sun
who through the brilliance of his grace
enlightens our hearts completely,
the night of sin has disappeared.
Alleluia!

Versus 7

Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso
Violino I/II, Viola I/II, Continuo

Wir essen und leben wohl
In rechten Osterfladen,
Der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
Sein bei dem Wort Gnaden,
Christus will die Koste sein
Und speisen die Seel allein,
Der Glaub will keins andern leben.
Halleluja!

We eat and live well
on the right Easter cakes,
the old sour-dough should not
be with the word grace,
Christ will be our food
and alone feed the soul,
faith will live in no other way.
Alleluia!

Georg Philipp Telemann:
"Du aber, Daniel, gehe hin"

Funeral Cantata tvwv 4:17
for soprano and basso soloists, 4-part choir,
recorder, oboe, violin, 2 violas da gamba, cello, bassoon and organ

Sonata

Coro

Du aber, Daniel, gehe hin,
bis das Ende komme
und ruhe, daß du aufstehst zu deinem Teil
am Ende der Tage!

But thou, Daniel, go on
until the end cometh,
rest that thou mayst rise to thy reward
at the end of days.

Recitativo

Basso

Mit Freuden folgt die Seele so einem lieblichen Befehle, zumal,
da auf der ganzen Welt nichts ist,
das ein rechtschaffner Christ
für seine Ruh und Glücke hält.
Mit Freuden greift sie zu, wenn ihr der Tod die kalten
Hände beut,
sie weiß, er bringt den müden Leib zur Ruh;
drum ist sie schon bereit,
der Welt aus diesem Leben
den Abschied ganz vergnügt zu geben.

With what joy doth the soul follow such a sweet order,
since there be naught in this world
that an upright Christian
might consider to be his peace and happiness.
He reacheth out with joy when Death stretcheth
its icy hands
towards him, for he knoweth that Death shall bear
his weary body to rest.
Thus is he prepared to take his leave in joy
from the world and from life.

Aria

Basso

Du Aufenthalt der blassen Sorgen,
verhaßte Welt zu guter Nacht.

Thou abode of pale cares,
O hateful world, good night.

Accompagnato

Basso

Du bist ein ungestümes Meer, das uns an keinen Hafen stellt,
ein Kerker, der uns hartgefangen hält,
ein Labyrinth, wo man in seiner Not kein Ende findet,
ein Lazareth, wo man nur seich und krank,
ein wüster Ort, wo stets ein kläglicher Gesang
in die erschrocknen Ohren fällt.

Thou art an impetuous sea that bringeth us to no harbour;
a dungeon that holdeth us hard imprisoned;
a labyrinth wherein no end to our distress is found;
a lazaret, wherein all are ill and diseased;
a desert place, wherein a plaintive song
ever falls on terrified ears.

Aria

Basso

Komm, sanfter Tod,
du Schlafes Bruder,
komm, löse meines Schifflens
Ruder und führe meines Lebens Kahn
ans Land der guten Hoffnung an,
wo stete Ruh und Freude lacht.

Come, peaceful death,
brother of sleep;
come, release the oars of my small craft
and lead the ship that is my life
to the land of good hope
where there is always peace and smiling joy.

Rezitativo

Basso

Im Himmel ist der Sitz vollkommener Freuden,
wo Jesus selber will auf Rosen weiden,
und darauf geht mein Sinn, drum fahre Welt und alles hin.

In Heaven is the seat of perfect joys,
where Jesus himself doth dwell amongst roses;
my spirit goeth hence, farewell O world and all else.

Recitativo

Soprano

Mit sehndem Verlangen erwartet man also
den letzten Blick der Zeit,
daß Jesus in der Seligkeit uns möge bald,
so wie wir ihn, umfassen.

With yearning and with longing
doth man await that last moment of time,
when Jesus in blessedness may embrace us
as we embrace Him.

Aria

Soprano

Brecht, ihr müden Augenlieder,
sinket ihr erstarrten Glieder,
denn so kommt mein Geist zu Ruh.
Kommt ihr Engel, tragt die Seele aus
des Leibes Jammerhöhle
nach der Burg des Himmels zu.

Close, ye weary eyelids,
and sink to rest, ye stiffened limbs,
for thus will my spirit come to rest.
Come, ye angels, and bear my soul away
from this cavern of tears that is my body
to the Heavenly City.

Recitativo

Basso

Dir ist, hochsel'ger Mann, dies Glück geschehen:
du Gottgeliebter Daniel bist nun der Sterblichkeit entrißen,
dich lacht itzt stetge Ruhe an.
Dein Geist kann seinen Heiland sehen,
der dich an jetzt wird in die Arme schließen.
Zwar schauen wir mit Seufzen und mit Sehnen
die schwarze Totenbahre an,
dieweil mit dir die Krone,
so uns hat bedeckt, geziert, beglückt,
ist in des Todes Staub gefallen.
Doch hemmet dieses unsre Tränen,
dass dich die Lebenskrone
vor Gottes hohem Throne mit aller Pracht des Himmels
schmückt, drum rufen wir dir noch bei deiner Ruh,
die halb gebrochne Worte zu:

To thee, O man greatly blessed, is this happiness come to pass;
from thee, Daniel, beloved of God, is thy mortality torn
now torn away, and on thee smileth everlasting peace.
Thy soul can behold its Saviour,
who from henceforth shall enfold thee in His arms.
Although we gaze upon the funeral bier
with sighs and with longing,
whilst your crown which had so covered,
adorned, and cheered us
is fallen with thee into the dust of death,
this doth stem our tears:
the Crown of Life now adorneth thee
in all its splendour before God's high throne
and therefore shall we cry to thee
in broken accents even in thy rest:

Coro

Schlaft wohl, ihr seligen Gebeine,
bis euch der Heiland wieder weckt.
Müst ihr gleich die Verwesung sehen,
bleibt dennoch euer Ruhm bestehen,
den weder Staub noch Moder deckt.

Sleep well, ye blessed limbs,
till the Saviour waketh you again.
Although you must straightway see your dissolution,
your glory shall nonetheless endure,
for neither dust nor decay shall tarnish it.

INTERVAL

Johann Sebastian Bach:
Cantata BWV 106: "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit"
(Actus Tragicus)

Sonatina

Flauto I/II, Viola da gamba I/II, Continuo

Coro

Flauto I/II, Continuo

Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit.
In ihm leben, weben und sind wir, solange er will.
In ihm sterben wir zur rechten Zeit, wenn er will.

God's time is the very best time.
In him we live, move and are, so long as he wills.
In him we die at the right time, when he wills.

Arioso

Tenore

Flauto I/II, Viola da gamba I/II, Continuo

Ach, Herr, lehre uns bedenken
daß wir sterben müssen,
auf daß wir klug werden.

Ah Lord, teach us to think
that we must die
so that we become wise.

Aria

Basso

Flauto I/II, Continuo

Bestelle dein Haus;
denn du wirst sterben
und nicht lebendig bleiben.

Put your house in order
for you will die
and not remain living.

Coro & Soprano

Flauto I/II, Viola da gamba I/II, Continuo

CORO: Es ist der alte Bund:
Mensch, du mußt sterben!

It is the old covenant:
Man, you must die!

SOPRANO: Ja, komm, Herr Jesu, komm!

Yes, come, lord Jesus. come!

Aria

Alto

Continuo

In deine Hände befehl ich meinen Geist;
du hast mich erlöst, Herr, du getreuer Gott.

Into your hands I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, Lord, you faithful God.

Arioso (Basso) & Chorale (Alto)

Viola da gamba I/II, Continuo

BASSO: Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.

Today you will be with me in paradise.

ALTO: Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin
In Gottes Willen,
Getrost ist mir mein Herz und Sinn,
Sanft und stille.
Wie Gott mir verheißen hat:
Der Tod ist mein Schlaf geworden.

With peace and joy I travel there
in God's will,
my heart and mind are confident,
peaceful and calm.
As God has promised me:
death has become my sleep

Coro

Flauto I/II, Viola da gamba I/II, Continuo

Glorie, Lob, Ehr und Herrlichkeit
Sei dir, Gott Vater und Sohn bereit,
Dem heiligen Geist mit Namen!
Die göttlich Kraft
Mach uns sieghaft
Durch Jesum Christum, Amen.

Glory, praise, honour and majesty
be given to you God father and son,
to the holy spirit by name!
God's strength
make us victorious
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Johann Sebastian Bach:
Cantata BWV 131: "Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu Dir"

Coro

Oboe, Fagotto, Violino, Viola I/II, Continuo

Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir.
Herr, höre meine Stimme,
laß deine Ohren merken auf
die Stimme meines Flehens!

Out of the depths I cry, Lord, to you.
Lord, hear my voice,
let your ears notice
the voice of my pleading.

Arioso (Basso) & Chorale (Soprano)

Oboe, Continuo

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

If you want to count up sin,
Lord, who will withstand you?

SOPRANO: Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last,
Nimm sie aus meinem Herzen,
Dieweil du sie gebüßet hast
Am Holz mit Todesschmerzen,

Have mercy on me with such a burden,
Take it away from my heart,
since you have paid the price for it
on the wood [of the cross] with the pains of death.

BASSO: Denn bei dir ist die Vergebung,
daß man dich fürchte.

For with you is forgiveness,
so that we may fear you.

SOPRANO: Auf daß ich nicht mit großem Weh
In meinen Sünden untergehe,
Noch ewiglich verzage.

So that I may not with great sorrow
drown in my sins
nor despair for ever.

Coro

Oboe, Fagotto, Violino, Viola I/II, Continuo

Ich harre des Herrn, meine Seele harret,
und ich hoffe auf sein Wort.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and I hope in his word.

Aria (Tenore) & Coro (Alto)

Continuo

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

My soul waits for the Lord
from one morning watch until the next.

ALTO: 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.

Especially since I in my mind,
as I have for a long time lamented,
am also a troubled sinner,
who is gnawed by his conscience,
and would willingly in your blood
be washed clean from my sins
like David and Manasseh.

Coro

Oboe, Fagotto, Violino, Viola I/II, Continuo

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, hope in the Lord
for with the Lord is grace
and much redemption with him
and he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

GLI ANGELI GENÈVE

STEPHAN MACLEOD, DIRECTOR

Gli Angeli Genève was founded by Stephan MacLeod in 2005 as an ensemble of varying composition that performs vocal and instrumental repertoire of the renaissance, baroque and classical periods. It is made up of musicians who either have solo careers of their own or who are chamber recitalists in the field of Baroque music, but who are not exclusively active in this clearly defined area; in other words, they perform more than just early music, their eclecticism guaranteeing their enthusiasm and the sincerity of their research. While performing the complete Bach cantatas in a long-term concert series in Geneva, in September 2017, Gli Angeli Genève initiated a new adventure of performing of all Haydn Symphonies over a decade. The ensemble is regularly invited to leading festivals and concert venues around the world. In 2018, Gli Angeli Genève will perform among others in Saintes, Utrecht, Paris, in the Netherlands and in Ottawa.

Aleksandra Lewandowska soprano

Aleksandra began her musical road studying violin and piano. She later turned her attention to singing and eventually graduated with distinction from the Music Academy in Poznan (Poland) in the class of Wojtek Drabowicz and continued as a student of postgraduate studies at the University of Music Franz Liszt in Weimar (Germany).

She now has an established international career as a solo and ensemble singer, working regularly with leading groups and conductors such as Philippe Herreweghe (Collegium Vocale Gent), Jos van Veldhoven (Nederlands Bach Vereniging), Stephan MacLeod (Gli Angeli Genève), John Duxbury (Cantatio), the Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, as well as with conductors including Christophe Coin, Václav Luks, Yves Corboz, Andrew Parrott, Ivan Fischer, Giovanni Antonini, Skip Sempé, Daniel Reuss, Alexander Weimann, Christoph Spering, Peter Neumann and Michael Willens.

Aleksandra has been a guest artist at festivals including Musikfest Bremen, Bachwoche Stuttgart, Thüringer Bachwochen, Festival Oude Muziek (Utrecht), Early Music Vancouver, Festival de Saintes, Lumine Voice Festival of Lofoten, Kulturwald Festspiele Bayerischer Wald and Wratistavia Cantans.

Though mainly a specialist in earlier repertoires, Aleksandra also now performs contemporary repertoire with enthusiasm (notable collaborations include projects with the Swiss quartet, Quatuor Sine Nomine).

Alex Potter countertenor

Described as a “rising star of the countertenor world”, Alex Potter is a sought-after interpreter of seventeenth and eighteenth-century music. He has performed with conductors including Philippe Herreweghe, Thomas Hengelbrock, Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Jos van Veldhoven, Peter Neumann, Paul Goodwin and Frieder Bernius.

After beginning his musical career as a chorister at Southwark Cathedral, Alex Potter was a Choral Scholar and read Music at New College, Oxford. He then went on to pursue further study in singing and baroque performance practice at the Schola Cantorum in Basel with Gerd Türk, taking additional classes with Evelyn Tubb.

Recent performances of note include the title role Handel's *Solomon* with Stephen Layton and The Holst Singers, Bach's *St. John Passion* with Manfred Honeck and the Stuttgart Symphony Orchestra, a solo recital at the Utrecht Early Music Festival, Bach's *B-Minor Mass* at the Salzburger Festspiele with Collegium 1704 and Václav Luks, several tours with music by J.S. Bach and Henry Purcell under Philippe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale Gent, and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with Archangelo and Jonathan Cohen in Dresden.

Alex Potter has a large discography with several different ensembles. His most recent solo CD – *Fede e Amor* – of Viennese Baroque Music for alto voice and obbligato trombones was released in 2014 on the Ramée label. He also features on the newly released recording of Bach's *B-Minor Mass* with Concerto Copenhagen and Lars Ulrik Mortensen, which was Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine.

He lives in the Lüneburger Heath region of Germany with his wife and two daughters. When not singing, he enjoys baking bread, restoring his half-timbered house, and growing vegetables in the garden with varying degrees of success.

Thomas Hobbs tenor

Thomas Hobbs is in demand with many leading baroque and early music ensembles, appearing throughout Europe and the US as a soloist in key works from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

Current and future engagements include Haydn's *Creation* with Israel Camerata in Jerusalem and with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, tours with Collegium Vocale Gent, and Bach cantatas, Mass in B Minor, and Easter Oratorio with the Nederlandse Bachvereniging. Hobbs will also sing Bach with the Musikpodium Stuttgart, and Monteverdi Vespers with the Academy of Ancient Music.

Recent concert performances include Damon in *Acis and Galatea* with Dunedin Consort, Bach cantatas with the Nederlandse Bachvereniging and Ensemble Pygmalion, Bach's Christmas Oratorio with the Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich, Tonhalle Orchester Zürich and Le Concert Lorrain. Hobbs has also sung Evangelist in the Bach St Matthew Passion and St John Passion with the Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

Hobbs's operatic roles include a critically acclaimed Telemachus in *The Return of Ulysses* in a new production for English National Opera conducted by Jonathan Cohen, Apollo and Shepherd in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in semi-staged performances with Richard Egarr and the Academy of Ancient Music, the title role in *Albert Herring* and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*. Also a keen recitalist, Hobbs' recent highlights include performing Brett Dean's *Winter Songs* at the Cheltenham Festival, Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge* with the Edinburgh Quartet, Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin*, Schumann's *Liederkreis*, Op.39 and a recital of Mozart songs at London's Kings Place.

Born in Exeter, Thomas Hobbs studied at the Royal College of Music under the tutelage of Neil Mackie, where he was awarded the RCM Peter Pears and Mason scholarships, and at the Royal Academy of Music under Ryland Davies, where he held a Kohn Bach Scholarship in addition to a full entrance scholarship. He was also a member of the prestigious Académie at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, where he performed in concert with Louis Langrée and the Camerata Salzburg.

Stephan MacLeod music director & baritone

Born in Geneva, Stephan MacLeod first played the violin and the piano and then studied singing with Kurt Moll in Cologne and with Gary Magby in Lausanne. Active all over the world as a renowned concert singer since his early twenties, his desire to conduct led him to establish his own ensemble, Gli Angeli Genève, in 2005. The ensemble has since become one of the most respected European ensembles specializing in period performance. In recent years, he has been invited to conduct a production of Cavalli's *La Calisto* in Geneva, Mozart concerts at the Lausanne Opera, a production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* in Geneva, Bach Motets with the Netherlands Bach Society, Bach's Matthew Passion in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands, and orchestral works by Bach and Rameau with the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande*.

As a soloist, Stephan is particularly active in the oratorio repertoire, particularly under Philippe Herreweghe, Gustav Leonhardt(†), Franz Brüggen(†), Masaaki Suzuki (Bach Collegium Japan), Jordi Savall, Philippe Pierlot (Ricerca Consort), Michel Corboz, Daniel Harding, Václav Luks, Sigiswald Kuijken, Konrad Junghänel (Cantus Cölln), Christophe Coin, Helmut Rilling, Frieder Bernius, Jos Van Immerseel, Jésus López Cobos, Hervé Niquet, Paul Van Nevel (Huelgas Ensemble), and with such ensembles as the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Musica Antiqua Köln, the Freiburger Barockorchester, Tafelmusik, and the RIAS-Kammerchor. In the opera world, he has sung in several productions in Brussels (La Monnaie), Venice (La Fenice), Cologne, Bilbao, Edinburgh, and Geneva.

Stephan currently holds a professorship in singing at the Haute Ecole de Musique of Lausanne and is about to embark on a new concert series with Gli Angeli featuring performances of the complete Haydn Symphonies.

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