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# Early Music Ensemble

Friday, April 10, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

## PROGRAM

### **Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen BWV 51**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Cantata for solo soprano

1. Aria: Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen
2. Recitative: Wir beten zu dem Tempel an
3. Aria: Höchster, mache deine Güte
4. Chorale: Sei Lob und Preis mit Ehren
5. Finale: Alleuja !

### **Trio sonata in G major BWV 1039**

Johann Sebastian Bach

Adagio

Allegro ma non tanto

Adagio e piano

Presto

### **Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 61**

Johann Sebastian Bach

1. Chorale fantasia: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
2. Recitative (tenor): Der Heiland ist gekommen
3. Aria (tenor) Komm, Jesu, komm su deiner Kirche
4. Recitative (bass) : Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür
5. Aria (soprano): Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herse
6. Chorale: Amen, amen, komm du schöne Freudenkrone

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Director's Note

In this complex and sometimes dark beginning of 2026, it seemed right to me to delve with my students into all the joy, sadness and profound trust that Bach communicates through his music. While historical performance is not, and should not, be limited to Bach, his ability to synthesize style, form and affect makes his music the ideal place to build musical and technical familiarity with historically informed practice. The mission of this ensemble is to give students the opportunity to explore and pursue notions of historical performance—in this case, I am excited to say, almost exclusively on early instruments and at low pitch. However, it has seemed so much more important that Bach's unique artistic sensibility constitutes such an essential touchstone that we continue to connect with, ever reminding ourselves of the imperfect but fundamentally wonderful thing that is human nature.

Lillian Gordis

Eaton Chair of Baroque Music

April 2026

## About the Program

This semester's Early Music Ensemble concert brings together some of the most beautiful and memorable works in the sweeping catalogue of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). All three works were composed in his Leipzig period, where he spent the last twenty-seven years of his life. While in Leipzig, he was employed as the Thomaskantor, directing the St. Thomas School while also providing church music for multiple churches within the city. Additionally, he maintained relations with the courts at both Köthen and Weissenfels, along with his involvement in recreational music-making through the Leipzig Collegium Musicum.

## Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen BWV 51

Johann Sebastian Bach composed this cantata, *Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen* ("Exhalt God in all the lands") not as part of any particular cantata cycle, unlike BWV 61 (*Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland*). Bach writes in the manuscript that the cantata was composed for the 15th Sunday after Trinity, or "In ogni temps" [at any time], indicating that he did not write the work for a specific liturgical occasion. Musicologists have speculated whether it was composed for performance in the Thomasschule in Leipzig, or for performance at the Court of Weissenfels, owing to the fact that Bach had previously written cantatas to celebrate the birthday of the Duke of Weissenfels, and because the scoring of solo voice and solo trumpet was fairly popular at that location. The soprano and trumpet parts are incredibly virtuosic, echoing and mimicking the other throughout the first and final movements.

The work begins with a joyful Italianate concerto grosso-style opening movement, with virtuosic passages alternating between the trumpet and voice. A recitative, first accompanied by all of the strings, then just by continuo, follows. From here, the tension continues to build with a central aria (“Höchster, mache deine Güte”) with a repeating bassline pattern, underscoring a soaring and technically demanding aria for the soprano. The final movement, comprised of a chorale fantasia and a fugal *Alleluja*, is a tour-de-force for the entire ensemble. The chorale fantasia recalls earlier composers of the North German school such as Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707). The chorale melody, sung unadorned by the soprano, is adapted from the chorale “Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren.” The text is slightly altered, though the melody remains the same. Constructed around this chorale is a trio sonata for the violins and continuo, which proceeds directly into the *Alleluja* to conclude the work.

## **Trio sonata in G major BWV 1039**

Bach’s sonata for two flutes and basso continuo in G major is said to have been written for performance by the Collegium Musicum in Leipzig, run by Bach beginning in 1729. The sonata, performed here by violin and traverso, also appears as a sonata for obbligato harpsichord and viola da gamba (BWV 1027).

The first movement is a flowing introduction to the sound world, with cascading figures for all three parts. Throughout the whole work, the continuo is treated as a nearly equal member of the ensemble, given interesting melodic figures, included in the interplay between the upper voices. The second movement evokes a more joyful tone, though slightly restrained, with the initial theme

inverted over the course of the movement. The third movement casts a looming shadow on the previous movement, with tense harmonies resolving upward, but always falling back down. A constant, unrelenting pulse in the continuo gives the whole movement an oppressive feeling. A bright spot appears in the center of the movement, though Bach immediately pulls away, and the listeners are left feeling unsatisfied. The tension is resolved in the final movement, a joyful pastoral presto in cut time, marked by galloping melodic figures throughout.

## **Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland BWV 61**

Bach composed the cantata *Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland* for performance in Leipzig during his tenure as the Thomaskantor, and is scored for a string orchestra and four-part choir. The opening text of the cantata, “Nun Komm, der Heidan Heiland” (“Now come, savior of the gentiles”) is derived from a chorale melody by Martin Luther. This chorale was, in turn, taken from the Latin hymn *Veni redemptor gentium* (“Come, redeemer of the nations”) by Ambrose of Milan.

This cantata was part of Bach’s second cycle of cantatas, beginning in 1724, where he composed a new cantata for each week of the liturgical year. This second cycle is referred to as his “chorale cycle” owing to the fact that each new cantata is based on a different Lutheran chorale tune. All of the church cantatas composed by Bach during this year were chorale cantatas. This particular cantata would have been performed on the first Sunday of Advent. The first movement is in the style of a French overture, with dotted eighth-sixteenth patterns in a slow duple meter to begin, followed by a fast fugal section, concluding with

a repeat of the opening material. Bach was an avid collector of French music, and his use of the “French Overture” style is a recurring theme in his works. This is followed by a tenor recitative and aria, with the aria in 9/8 with unison upper strings. The tenor aria is followed by an accompanied recitative for the bass singer, centered around the idea of “knocking” present in the text: the strings play pizzicato (plucked, as opposed to bowed) while the bass sings the text “Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tur un klopfe an” (“Look, I stand before the door and knock”). The bass recitative is followed by an aria for soprano and basso continuo, in a minuet-like feel. The work concludes with a final “Amen,” with the chorus and orchestra joining back in. The melody sung by the soprano, alone on the part, is an old German children’s song, evoking a sense of childlike joy.

—Ray Pragman, April 2026

# Early Music Ensemble

Lillian Gordis, harpsichord and direction

## **Voices:**

Mae Harrell, soprano

Kristin Gornstein, alto

Davian Raggio, tenor

Andy Konopak, baritone

## **Violins:**

Eli Pouliot, concertmaster

Alex Sabiers

Ryannah Blackman

## **Violas**

Shelley Armer

Jane Hanselman

## **Cello and viola da gamba**

Ray Pragman

## **Traverso**

Santiago Reveiz

## **Trumpet**

John Laszakovits

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*The Drowsy Chaperone (2023).  
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