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**CONTACT**

Amanda Sweet/Bucklesweet

[amanda@bucklesweet.com](mailto:amanda@bucklesweet.com)

347-564-3371

## **WASHINGTON BACH CONSORT PRESENTS SACRED GRAND MOTETS OF FRENCH COMPOSERS LULLY & CHARPENTIER**

*Sunday, March 10 at 4 p.m. at the National Presbyterian Church*

**WASHINGTON**— Continuing the 2024 Director's Series, the Washington Bach Consort, under the leadership of Artistic Director Dana Marsh, will present **Te Deum! Sacred Grand Motets of Lully and Carpenter** on Sunday, March 10 at 4 p.m. at the National Presbyterian Church (4101 Nebraska Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016). Ticket prices range from \$10-79 and are available for purchase at <https://bachconsort.org/te-deum/>

As a young composer, J.S. Bach (1685-1750) absorbed the best of all European musical styles and combined them to create his own unique voice. This concert will highlight a number of rarely heard works from the two most influential composers of the French Baroque: Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) and Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704). Charpentier's magnificent *Te Deum* will conclude a program of exquisite works that reflect the magnificence of French courtly and ecclesiastical grandeur.

As a type in its own right, the sacred *Grand Motet* emerged from the pen of Lully during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and developed to become one of the most important French genres of the high Baroque. Lully spent much of his energy composing for King Louis XIV, with new works performed typically at Versailles or the Chapelle Royale in Paris. On the first half of the program, three such masterpieces will be heard—one almost certainly performed for the first time live in the United States. A stellar array of acclaimed soloists, Margaret Carpenter Haigh & Margot Rood (sopranos), James Reese (haute-contre), Jacob Perry Jr. (Tenor), Ian Pomerantz (bass-baritone), and Ross Tomaccio (bass-baritone) will promise a brilliant enhancement of Bach Consort forces.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Te Deum* is his most well-known work, especially its bright, warlike prelude—famous today as a theme often used at the soccer world cup. The ancient hymn, *Te Deum*, was historically set to music through the centuries to celebrate military victories and many other public events, but the exact occasion of this setting by Charpentier is not known for certain. It dates from the early 1690's, when he was music master for the Jesuits in Paris, and it may have been written to celebrate Louis XIV's victory over the allies at Steenkerque in Flanders (1692).

"I know that Washington, D.C. audiences will especially love this program—Lully's oeuvre is truly beyond compare," Marsh said. "When his music is performed in the U.S., typically it's the operas, ballets, and instrumental suites that receive all the attention. Two out of three of the sacred Grand Motets slated for the first half of the program have never been performed even by the leading baroque period-instrument ensemble in France (although another French ensemble has recorded them)—and these are almost certainly to be U.S. modern premieres. Indeed, in one case we had to create our own performance edition from a manuscript housed in the *Bibliothèque Nationale Paris*, digitized only in 2020."

Audiences can join the Washington Bach Consort before the concert at 3 p.m. for "Talking Bach," a series of free pre-concert lectures by noted Bach scholar, Dr. Michael Marissen.

## **PROGRAM**

### **Jean-Baptiste Lully:**

*Thésée*, Marche Act 1/9, LWV 51

Notus in Judaea, LWV 77/17

O lachrymae, LWV 26

O dulcissime Domine, LWV 77/9

*Thésée*, "Entrance of Warriors" Act 1/10

Exaudi te, Dominus, LWV 77/15

### **Marc-Antoine Charpentier:**

Marche de Triomphe, H. 547

Litanies de la Vierge, H. 83

Motet pour les Trespassez: Miseremini mei, H. 311

Deuxième Aire de Triomphe pour Trompettes, H. 547

Te Deum, H. 164

## **The Washington Bach Consort**

Founded in 1977 by the late Dr. J. Reilly Lewis, the Washington Bach Consort is a professional choral and period-instrument ensemble based in Washington, DC, led since 2018 by Artistic Director, Dr. Dana Marsh, presenting over 25 live concerts each season. On October 3, the Acis label released the ensemble's newest album, *Myths Contested*, with the music of J.S. Bach, and a world premiere recording of a commissioned work by composer, Trevor Weston.

The Bach Consort is noted for its historically informed performances of 18th-century music on period instruments. As one of the DC area's most critically acclaimed and nationally recognized performing ensembles, the group has made regular appearances with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington Performing Arts, and the Cathedral Choral Society. In addition, the Bach Consort has appeared at numerous festivals and on a number of European tours. Recordings include Bach's complete motets, both J.S. and C.P.E. Bach's Magnificats, the first American recording of the masses in F major and G minor, and three solo soprano cantatas with opera luminary Elizabeth Futral. Having completed Bach's entire 215-cantata cycle, the Consort continues to present these works free of cost to the Washington DC public. The Library of Congress has welcomed the Washington Bach Consort recording and concert program archives into its permanent collection.

In August 2018, the Bach Consort welcomed Dana Marsh as its Artistic Director. Acclaimed by *The Washington Post* as "a superb choral conductor, energetic and precise," Marsh has worked variously as an accomplished organist, vocalist, conductor and musicologist. He is Professor of Music and Director of the Historical Performance Institute at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

In May 2019, the Council of the District of Columbia honored the Washington Bach Consort in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Consort's annual series of free classical music performances. In a written proclamation, the Council cited the Consort's musical mission to "enrich the quality of life" by "recognizing that not everyone is able to afford a regular subscription concert ticket" and celebrated the Consort's attempt to "reach as many people as possible."

Following a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in December 2019, the *Washington Post* opined that the Bach Consort "could go head-to-head with period performance ensembles anywhere." For further information please visit [bachconsort.org](http://bachconsort.org)

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