



**WASHINGTON BACH
CONSORT**

Dana Marsh, Artistic Director

DANQI ZENG
BAROQUE VIOLIN

Thursday, September 10, 2026

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA

Friday, September 11, 2026

Live! at 10th & G
945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

DOLCISSIMA SPERANZA
FEATURING THOMAS COOLEY

Friday, October 23, 2026

Live! at 10th & G
945 G Street NW, Washington, DC

Saturday, October 24, 2026

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
228 South Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA

DANQI ZENG

BAROQUE VIOLIN

***Winner of the 2025 Lillian & Maurice Barbash
International J.S. Bach Competition***

Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 7:00 pm | St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA
Friday, September 11, 2026, at 6:00 pm | Live! at 10th & G, Washington, DC

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750) Music for Solo Violin

from Six solos for violin without accompanying bass

Partita II in D Minor for Violin BWV 1004

Allemanda
Corrente
Sarabanda
Giga
Ciaccona

Sonata III in C Major BWV 1005

Adagio
Fuga
Largo
Allegro assai

Margarita Brose, *underwriter*

Violinist and baroque violin specialist **DANQI ZENG** is the Grand Prize winner of the 2025 Lillian & Maurice Barbash International J.S. Bach Competition. Featured as a soloist across North America and Asia, her recent achievements include winning Indiana University's Stravinsky, Saint-Georges, and Historical Performance Institute Vivaldi concerto competitions, as well as top prizes in the MASTA and MTNA Young Artist Competitions.

In addition to her recital for the Washington Bach Consort, other 2026–2027 engagements include appearances with Island Symphony Bach Festival, Gotham Early Music Scene, Amor Artis, and the Bach Choir of Bethlehem. Active in chamber music, Danqi performs with the Z-G Duo alongside her husband, keyboardist Benjamin Gittens. She performs regularly on modern violin, baroque violin, and viola da gamba.

Dedicated to education, Danqi has taught students globally for over a decade and serves as an associate instructor in music theory at Indiana University. Her education includes dual master's degrees from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She is currently completing dual doctor of music degrees in modern violin and historical performance at Indiana University under Mauricio Fuks, Ingrid Matthews, and Joanna Blendulf.



A SENSE OF PLACE

Program Notes by Daniel R. Melamed

Johann Sebastian Bach would probably have been surprised to hear the works for solo violin on today's program performed in a concert hall for a large paying audience. One reason, of course, is that concert halls were themselves a new phenomenon, becoming venues for musical performance only over the course of the 18th century. Charging for admission was also relatively new. Visitors to public opera houses had been paying for tickets (starting in Italy) since the 17th century, but most of the other venues for hearing elite music in a public setting—principally churches—were not commercial.

But perhaps a more important reason lies in the surprisingly close association in Bach's time between a composition's musical style and the intended place of its performance. This association had its origins in the 17th century, and even though music and its performance had changed by Bach's time, the outlines of this way of thinking were still a factor in musical life.

The starting point was the increasingly scientific way of thinking around 1600, manifested in attempts to catalogue and describe the natural world. This was a goal achieved both by exploration and by the systematic sorting out of the kinds of plants, animals, minerals, and other things found throughout creation. This approach found its way into learned writings about music as well. For example, authors tallied and organized the kinds of musical instruments, categorizing them by their physical characteristics and their uses.

They also surveyed and tried to make sense of all the kinds of music in their world, systematically categorizing it along various lines. There was "old style" and "new style," reflecting a sense that something significant had changed in the first decades of the 17th century. There were musical styles (literally, ways of writing, as with a "stylus") associated with different sorts of pieces from motets to dances.

Perhaps most influential was a division of music by the places in which it was performed: the church, the stage, and the studio. Different sorts of music were thought of as being proper to specific spaces. Objections to "secular" musical style in church, for example, represented complaints that some kinds of music were literally "out of place" in a house of worship. Music for the stage, which embraced both opera and dance, was of an entirely different sort and represented the most public sort of composition.

At the other end of the spectrum was music for the studio or chamber, meaning the private rooms typically of nobility or the well-to-do. Of course we still speak of "chamber music" today; for most people this primarily means music for just a

few players or singers, but a sense of specific (private) place is embedded in it. A "recording studio" is a private space where records are made, often by an ensemble that usually performs in public.

There was also a sense that music for the studio was different from more public kinds. For one thing, it was as much for the performers themselves as for other listeners who might or might not be present. It was likely to be thought of as more refined and more challenging, not so much in difficulty of execution as in the demands it made on musical understanding and its potential to teach. Pieces designed for the development of technique have long been known, of course, as "études"—"studies," and conservatory instructors teach in rooms still called "studios."

All of this is part of the background for J. S. Bach's six works for solo violin, two of which are heard on this program. We do not know precisely why Bach composed them, but they date from a time (1720) when he was employed in Cöthen and where his duties lay primarily in providing music for the prince and the court—for the royal "chamber."

This is certainly demanding music both for the player and for the listener. It requires (and presumably is meant to teach) many aspects of violin technique, including the playing of multiple lines (giving the impression of several "voices" at once); every kind of bowing and phrasing; and the elements both of French music (in the three partitas or dance suites in the collection) and Italian music (in the three sonatas).

The sonata BWV 1005 is in the typical four movements organized as slow-fast-slow-fast. The first movement is constructed over a slow, pulsating bass line. ("Bass line" here is relative, of course—Bach manages to convince the listener that the solo violin is playing multiple musical lines at the same time, here a foundational line low in the instrument's register and a higher, more melodic line above.) The same rhythmic figure appears throughout, at least until the rhapsodic ending phrases, emulating so-called pattern preludes that explore harmonies in a repeating figure.

The conclusion of the opening movement is less than strongly final, leading directly into the fast second movement, a fugue. Here, by the simultaneous sounding of 2, 3, or even all 4 strings of the violin, Bach creates the illusion of multiple "voices" that enter in imitation of each other. As in most of Bach's fugues, passages in which the fugue subject (the melody heard at the opening) is present alternate with freer sections that take a musical idea from the subject as their loose starting point.

The following slow movement consists mostly of a solo melody with wisps of accompaniment here and there. That melody is notable for its instrumental character—it is not the sort of tune you would want to sing. The final fast movement is a perpetual motion piece that includes the most virtuosic writing in the sonata. The techniques on display include rapid string crossing that suggests chords and harmony, even though there are no simultaneous notes in the entire movement. This is music that asks for intense concentration from player and listener alike.

Bach's partita BWV 1004 opens with the four dances that came to be standard in German suites: an allemande, a corrente, a sarabande, and a gigue. These are stylized versions of dances originally cultivated at the 17th-century French royal court both as social and theatrical pieces—that is, as public music. Here music for the chamber borrows from the stage.

Each dance is marked by characteristic rhythmic and metrical construction, resulting in a consistent sense of motion throughout. Every dance is organized in two parts. The first, which is repeated, gives a sense of departure and arrival somewhere new; the second, also played twice, provides a sense of return. The music tends to fall in regular or at least balanced phrases, frequently with a clear sense of an antecedent statement answered by a consequent phrase. Longer phrases, especially the ones that drive towards the close of sections, often repeat the same figure or phrase at

several different pitch levels, either building tension as they climb or relaxing it as they descend.

BWV 1004 does not end after the four typical dance movements. A fifth movement follows in the form of another stylized dance, a ciaccona, cast as a set of variations on a four-measure phrase built over a bass line that moves down by step. Instead of imitating artfully composed dances (like the first four), in this movement Bach invokes the kind of improvisation associated with dances based on a short repeating pattern. Every eight or twelve measures (two or three repetitions) he takes up a new kind of figuration, or violin technique, or ornamentation, or character, presenting an enormous collection of variations on the tune, bass line, and harmony of the first four measures.

By varying speed, complexity, and texture; by mixing in a section in a major key rather than the opening's minor key; by periodically returning to the opening statement; by invoking various virtuosic violin techniques; and by controlling the pacing of the whole, Bach takes the player and the listener on a journey that one would hardly suspect from the conventional four-measure phrase that opens the movement.

The ciaccona was also a stage dance, but this one is far longer and more complex than anything that ever was danced. It represents an exploration of the type suited to the privacy and contemplation of the studio, even if today we might listen to it together in the concert hall.

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DOLCISSIMA SPERANZA

Friday, October 23, 2026, at 7:00 pm | Live! at 10th & G, Washington, DC
Saturday, October 24, 2026, at 7:00 pm | St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA

I. Pastoral Innocence: The Illusion of Permanence

- "Antri ch'a miei lamenti" Jacopo Peri (1561–1633)
from *L'Euridice* (1600)
"Se l'aura spira tutta vezzosa" Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643)
Primo libro d'arie musicali (1630)
"Filli mia, Filli dolce, o sempre novo" Francesco Rasi (1574–1621)
Madrigali di diversi autori (1610)
"Rosa del ciel, vita del mondo" Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)
from *L'Orfeo* (1607)

II. Desire, Longing, and Emotional Exuberance

- "Dolcissimo sospiro" Giulio Caccini (1551–1618)
Le nuove musiche (1602)
"Chi vidde più lieto, e felice di me?" Bellerofonte Castaldi (1580–1649)
from Modena, Biblioteca Estense Ms. G.239
"Dispiegate guancie amate" Francesca Caccini (1587–c.1641)
Il primo libro delle musiche (1618)
"Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi" Claudio Monteverdi
from *L'Orfeo* (1607)

III. Shock and the Descent into Grief

- "Non piango e non sospiro" Jacopo Peri
from *L'Euridice* (1600)
"Giunto a la tomba, ove al suo spirto vivo" Sigismondo d'India (c.1582–1629)
Le musiche . . . libro terzo a una e due voci (1618)
"Lasciatemi qui solo" Francesca Caccini
Il primo libro delle musiche (1618)
"Che si può fare?" Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677)
Arie (1664)

IV. Defiance: The Journey into the Underworld

- "Funeste piagge, ombrosi orridi campi" Jacopo Peri
"Gioite al canto mio, selve frondose!" Jacopo Peri
from *L'Euridice* (1600)
"Vissi all'hor noiosa vita" Bellerofonte Castaldi
Primo mazzetto di fiori (1623)

V. Loss, Transfiguration, and the Lover Alone

- "Sovente all'hor, ch'in su gli estivi ardori" Sigismondo d'India
"Piangono al pianger mio le fere, e i sassi" Sigismondo d'India
Le musiche . . . da cantar solo (1609)

MUSICIANS

Thomas Cooley, *tenor*
Freyja Creech, *violin*
Adam Pearl, *harpsichord*

Dušan Balarin, *theorbo*
Alexa Haynes-Pilon, *cello*

A NEW EXPRESSIVENESS

Program Notes by Daniel R. Melamed

In the simplest telling of Western music history, around the year 1600 performers and composers adopted a new musical style, replacing old polyphonic (multi-voice) textures with a new one that presented a solo voice against a simple, supporting bass line. As you might guess, there are problems with this simplified view. The older polyphonic style never really went away, and solo singing was not new—presumably, people had been singing solo for millennia. But it is true that for elite settings of serious poetry, a new style emerged right around the turn of the 17th century, one that focused on a solo voice, that aimed to move the affections of the listener, and that called on expressive and sometimes virtuosic singing.

One of the first compositions to make use of the new expressive kind of solo singing was Jacopo Peri's setting of Ottavio Rinuccini's *L'Euridice*, a telling of the Orpheus legend first performed in 1600 for the wedding of King Henry IV of France and Maria de Medici. This piece is widely considered the first surviving opera, and indeed opera was the genre that made the most of the new style. Today's program includes four telling excerpts, all for Orpheus himself, and they represent a good way to orient your ears for the entire program.

All four pieces from *L'Euridice* are intense expressions of emotion that sequentially trace the trajectory of the opera. In "**Antri, ch'a miei lamenti**" Orpheus sings of his former sorrow and present joy at the love of Eurydice. The contrast of these two opposite feelings was essential to the style and indeed to the expressive aims of much music of the 17th century. And we can note that Orpheus explicitly sings about his own feelings, about his "verses," his "lyre," and about sounds that "echo." Of course he is a musician, making singing central to his identity, but the very earliest music of this kind often repeatedly points to itself as song and as sound; its poets and composers were self-conscious about their attempt to move the affections of their listeners with music.

"**Non piango e non sospiro**," sung by Orpheus after he learns of Eurydice's death, is of course an expression of sorrow, once again explicitly about the sounds of weeping, crying, and calling out. Orpheus sings "**Funeste piagge, ombrosi orridi campi**" in hell, referring to his own anguished words and their "resounding." The text is quasi strophic, organized in three stanzas with a refrain ("Weep at my weeping, shades of hell") that makes explicit what the singer is attempting: to move the affections of his listeners, both in Hades and in the audience.

All three numbers, each focusing on emotional expression, rely on the expressive singing of a simple musical line over

a supporting instrumental bass line. Their musical style was understood as greatly heightened musical speech; the texts are poetic, but freely alternate 7- and 11-syllable lines and deploy rhyme sparingly. Poetic meter thus does not govern the vocal line; instead, the composer uses contours, tessitura (height in the vocal range), and expressive harmony to guide the listener through the emotions in the text in free meter. Melodic lines often start at the bottom or in the middle of the singer's range, gradually rising and increasing in musical intensity and then returning to the original pitch to mark the close of a phrase or section.

The fourth excerpt from *L'Euridice*, "**Gioite al canto mio, selve frondose!**" is different. It, too, is an expression of emotion (here, rejoicing), and like the other passages refers to itself as "song" and calls out "echoes." At this moment in the drama Orpheus has returned from the underworld with Eurydice and sings a number in a regular meter, with a tuneful melodic line and simple harmonies—almost a dance. The composer treats the text as strophic, like a song, presenting a second stanza that begins with the tune used for the first, and each stanza ends with a repeated last line as a closing gesture. This piece represents the second kind of solo music found in the earliest operas, and it is stylistically connected to the many choruses and dance numbers heard throughout these spectacles.

The two excerpts on the program from Alessandro Striggio and Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1607) are similar. "**Rosa del ciel, vita del mondo**" is characteristically about the character's feelings, and employs the same expressive style as the first three excerpts from Peri's opera. And "**Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi**" is a strophic, metrical dance song with instrumental ritornellos between vocal stanzas—precisely the other type found in *L'Euridice*. (Note that Orfeo still sings about both his sadness and his happiness explicitly.)

Most of the other works on the program represent the adoption of the new expressive and dramatic style by composers of free-standing works—that is, pieces that were not part of operas. Giulio Caccini's "**Dolcissimo sospiro**" is from his significantly titled collection *Le nuove musiche* (1602) that comprises solo songs of exactly the kind one might find in opera but meant to stand on their own.

Giulio Caccini's daughter, the singer and composer Francesca Caccini, is represented on the program by two works, one of each type. "**Dispiegate guancie amate**" is a slightly lascivious dance song; the imposing "**Lasciatemi qui solo**" is a five-section lament with a refrain, "Lasciatemi morire," that refers to Monteverdi's most famous aria.

Sigismondo d'India, perhaps Monteverdi's most talented contemporary in the composition of solo music, is heard in three expressive arias. Two of them employ standard bass lines: "**Sovente all'hor, ch'in su gli estivi ardori**" is sung over the "aria di Genova," and "**Piangono al pianger mio le fere, e i sassi**" uses the harmonic pattern known as the Romanesca. The poetry of his "**Giunto a la tomba, ove al suo spirto vivo**" is in the form known as *ottava rima*, used for epics, and indeed this text by Torquato Tasso would have been immediately recognized as coming from his Crusade poem "Gerusalemme liberata," a serious topic indeed.

The singer Francesco Rasi was Monteverdi's first Orfeo; his composition "**Filli mia, Filli dolce, o sempre novo,**" a work firmly in the Arcadian pastoral tradition, appeals in a

familiar way to "sound" and "harmony." Keyboard composer Girolamo Frescobaldi is heard in a dance aria "**Se l'aura spira tutta vezzosa**" whose text invokes singing and dancing itself. Bellerofonte Castaldi's "**Vissi all'hor noiosa vita**" is cast explicitly as the dance known as a galliard. The same composer's frankly silly "**Chi vidde più lieto, e felice di me?**" might best be read as a send-up of the kind of love poetry heard elsewhere on the program.

Finally, from a later generation comes singer and composer Barbara Strozzi's "**Che si può fare?**" This piece represents an even newer style of aria, in a regular meter but with the kind of vocal expressivity heard in earlier settings. This song is held together by its repeating bass line whose four-note descent had become an emblem of lament.

DANIEL R. MELAMED is professor emeritus of musicology at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His book *Hearing Bach's Passions* (Oxford University Press), now in an updated paperback edition, is designed for general readers and discusses Bach's passions today against the background of their presentations in the eighteenth century. His most recent book, *Listening to Bach: The Mass in B Minor and the Christmas Oratorio* (Oxford), also for general readers, takes up issues of listening and is illustrated with many recorded examples.

With an acclaimed international career spanning over two decades, tenor **THOMAS COOLEY** is recognized for his vivid artistry and commanding performances across the Americas, Europe, and Asia. His appearances have taken him to more than 30 US states and prestigious concert halls, including Carnegie Hall, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Philharmonie, Konzerthaus Vienna, Walt Disney Hall, Tchaikovsky Hall Moscow, Kennedy Center, and Singapore's Esplanade Hall. Thomas has sung under the batons of renowned conductors including Helmuth Rilling, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Bernard Labadie, Osmo Vänskä, Dame Jane Glover, Robert Spano, and especially Nicholas McGegan, with whom he has collaborated more than 100 times. His distinguished orchestral partnerships include the New York Philharmonic; St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig; National, Atlanta, and St. Louis symphonies; Orchestra of St. Luke's; Singapore Symphony; and Osaka Philharmonic.

Celebrated as a leading interpreter of Handel and J.S. Bach, he has appeared with the Thomanerchor Leipzig, Windsbacher Knabenchor, Dresdner Kreuzchor, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Handel and Haydn Society, Tafelmusik, Boston Baroque, and MusicAeterna, and at the Göttingen and Halle Handel festivals. Thomas Cooley's discography spans over 20 recordings on labels including Deutsche Grammophon, Carus, Sony, and Avie Records, which released Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Nicholas McGegan in 2026. He is a visiting associate professor of music in voice and historical performance at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.



TEXT & TRANSLATIONS

Antri, ch'a miei lamenti

Rimbombaste dolenti,
Amiche piagge, e voi, piante selvagge,
Che alle dogliose rime
Piegate per pietà l'altre cime,
Non fia più, no, che la mia nobile cetra,
Con flebil canto a lagrimar v'alletti.
Ineffabil mercede, almi diletti
Amor cortese oggi al mio pianto impetra.
Ma deh, perchè sì lente
Del bel carro immortal le ruote accese
Per l'eterno cammin tardano il corso?
Sferza, padre cortese,
A' volanti destrier la groppa e il dorso!
Spegni ne l'onde omai,
Spegni o nascondi i fiammeggianti rail
Bella madre d'amor,
Da l'onde fuori sorgi
E la notte ombrosa
Di vaga luce scintillando indora.
Venga, deh, venga omai la bella sposa
Tra il notturno silenzio e i lieti orrori
A temprar tante fiamme e tanti ardori!
— Ottavio Rinuccini, from *L'Euridice*

Se l'aura spira tutta vezzosa,

La fresca rosa ridente sta,
La siepe ombrosa di bei smeraldi
D'estivi caldi timor non ha.
A balli, a balli, liete venite,
Ninfe gradite, fior di beltà.
Or, che sì chiaro il vago fonte
Dall'alto monte al mar sen' va.
Suoi dolci versi spiega l'augello,
E l'arboscello fiorito sta.
Un volto bello al l'ombra accanto
Sol si dia vanto d'haver pietà.
Al canto, al canto, ninfe ridenti,
Scacciate i venti di crudeltà.

— Anonymous

Filli mia, Filli dolce, o sempre novo

E più chiaro concento,
Quanta dolcezza sento
In sol Filli, dicendo? Io mi pur provo,
Né qui tra noi ritrovo,
Né tra Cieli armonia,
Che del bel nome tuo più dolce sia.
— Giovan Battista Strozzi

Rosa del ciel, vita del mondo,

E degna prole di lui
Che l'universo affrena,
Sol che l tutto circonda e l tutto miri,
Da gli stellanti giri
Dimmi vedestù mai
Di me più lieto e fortunato amante?
Fù ben felice il giorno
Mio ben che pria ti vidi,
E più felice l'ora
Che per te sospirai
Poi ch'al mio sospir tu sospirasti:
Felicissimo il punto
Che la candida mano
Pegno di pura fede a me porgesti.
Se tanti cori havessi
Quant'occh'ha il ciel Eterno
E quante chiomè
Han questi colli ameni il verde Maggio
Tutti colmi sarieno e traboccanti
Di quel piacer ch'oggi mi fa contento.
— Alessandro Striggio, from *L'Orfeo*

Caverns, that with my grieving
Echoed back my lamenting,
Friendly shores, and you, wild-growing trees,
Who to my sorrowing verses
Bent down your lofty crowns in pity
No more, no, shall my noble lyre
Entice you with its plaintive song to tears.
Indescribable reward, heavenly joys, today courteous
Love has won through my weeping.
But ah, why move so slowly
The fiery wheels of that immortal chariot,
Delaying on their everlasting course?
Spur them, gracious father!
Lash on the flanks and backs of those flying steeds!
Quench now beneath the waves—
Quench, or conceal, those blazing rays!
Fairest mother of Love,
Arise from the waves,
And gild the shadowed night,
Sparkling with lovely light.
Come, ah, come now, my lovely bride,
Amid night's silent hush and joyful terrors,
To temper all these flames, these burning fires!

If the breeze sighs so charmingly
The fresh rose smiles
The shady hedge of beautiful emerald
Does not fear the heat of summer.
To dance, to dance, come gladly
Graceful nymphs, flowers of beauty
Now that the lovely spring, so clear
Descends from the high mountain to the sea.
The bird his sweet verses presents
And the sapling is in bloom
A beautiful face in the shadows nearby
Alone may boast of its beauty.
Sing, sing, joyful nymphs
Drive away the cruel winds!

Phyllis, Sweet Phyllis, oh always new
And even clearer harmony,
How much sweetness do I feel
Just by saying Phyllis? I search in vain;
Neither here among us
Nor among celestial harmony is found
A sweetness greater than your beautiful name.

Rose of heaven, life of the world
And designated heir of him
Who rules the universe,
Sun, which envelops all and sees all,
From your celestial circling
Tell me, have you ever seen anyone
As happy and fortunate a lover as me?
Wonderfully happy was the day
That I was blessed, my beloved, to see you,
And happier still the hour
When I sighed for you.
Then, that at my sighing, you sighed:
Happiest was the moment
When you gave me your snow-white hand
As a token of pure fidelity.
If I had as many hearts
As the eternal heavens have eyes,
And as many leaves as these pleasant hills
In the green of May
All of them would be filled and overflowing
With the pleasure that brings me joy today.

Dolcissimo sospiro

Ch'esci da quella bocca
Ove d'amor ogni dolcezza fiocca.
Deh, vieni a raddolcire
L'amaro mio dolore
Ecco, ch'io t'apro il core.
Ma folle a chi ridico il mio martire
Ad un sospiro errante
Che forse vola in sen ad altro amante.

— Ottavio Rinuccini

Chi vidde più lieto, e felice di me?

La bella mia donna incontrandomi un dì,
Mi mira sott'occhio mi disse zi zi
lo pien di desio gli feci [si tosse]
Amor, se n'accorse e ci disse: ah ah
Già siete miei e prigionieri ci fa.

O cara catena che l'alma legò,
O bocca soave, che disse così:
O caro, e brammato, a me dici zi zi
O mozza favella, che lieti ci fa
Amor, che l'intese, ci disse oh oh
Se pur son cieco già sordo non so.

— Anonymous

Dispiegate guancie amate

Quella porpora acerbetta;
Che peridenti, che dolente
Sian le rose in su l'erbetta

De togliete quella rete,
Auree, chiome, aureo Tesoro
Ch'a toccarvi, ch'a spiegarvi
Tornerà quest'aria d'oro.

Apri o labbro di cinabro
Un sorriso ancor tra'l velo;
Ch'ad aprirlo, ch'a scoprirlo,
Riderà la terra e'l cielo.

— Ansaldo Cebà

Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi

De miei lung'h'aspri tormenti,
Quando sassi ai miei lamenti
Rispondean fatti pietosi?
Vi ricorda o boschi ombrosi?

Dite, all'hor non vi sembrai,
Più d'ogn'altro sconsolato?
Hor fortuna'hà stil cangiato,
Et hà volta in festa i guai.
Dite, all'hor non vi sembrai
Piu d'ogn'altro sconsolato?

Vissi già mesto e dolente,
Hor gioisco, quegl'affani
Che sofferti hò per tant'anni
Fan più caro il ben presente.
Vissi già mesto e dolente.

Sol per te, bella Euridice
Bedico il mio tormento.
Dopo'l duol viè più contento
Dopo'l mal viè più felice.
Sol per te, bella Euridice.

— Alessandro Striggio, from L'Orfeo

Non piango e non sospiro.

O mia cara Euridice
Che sospirar, che lagrimar non posso
Cadavero infelice
O mio core, o mia speme,
O pace, o vita,
Ohime, chi mi t'ha tolto, dove sei gita?
Tosto vedrai ch'invanno
Non chiamasti morendo
Il tuo consorte non son son lontano.
Io vengo, o cara vita, o cara morte!

Ottavio Rinuccini, from L'Euridice

Sweet sigh

Which drifts from that mouth
Which pours out every sweetness of love.
Please, come to sweeten again
The bitterness of my sorrow.
Here, I open my heart for you.
But fool that I am, to whom do you repeat my suffering?
To an errant sigh
Which perhaps floats from the breast of another lover.

Whoever saw one happier and more content than me?
My lovely lady, encountering me one day,
Made eyes at me and said "psst."
Full of desire I said [coughs].
Love noticed and said "ah, ah!
Now you are mine," and made us prisoners.

O dear chain that bound the soul,
O sweet mouth that spoke thus:
O dear and longed-for, who said to me "psst"
O broken speech that brings us joy,
Love, who understood, said "oh, oh!
I might be blind but I am not deaf."

Show forth, beloved cheeks
That youthful crimson
So that the roses in the grass
Are lost and sad.

Ah, remove that net
Golden locks, golden treasure
For in touching them, in spreading them out
The air itself will turn to gold.

Open, o lips of cinnabar
A smile still behind the veil;
Which in opening and revealing it
Earth and heaven will laugh.

Do you recall, o shady woods
My long and bitter torments
When the boulders to my laments
Responded with pity?
Do you recall, o shady woods?

Tell me, did I not seem to you
More wretched than anyone else?
Now fortune has changed her aspect
And has changed my troubles to joy.
Tell me, did I not seem to you
More wretched than anyone else?

Once I lived sad and sorrowful
Now I rejoice! The pangs
Which I suffered for years
Make my present happiness more dear.
Once I lived sad and sorrowful.

Only for you, beautiful Eurydice
I bless my torment:
After sadness, there is greater contentment
After pain, one is happier still
Only for you, beautiful Eurydice

I do not weep or sigh.
O my dear Eurydice
To sigh, to cry is not possible.
Unhappy cadaver.
O my heart, o my hope,
O peace, o life,
Alas, who has taken you from me; where have you gone?
Soon you will see him whom, dying,
You did not call out for in vain.
Your husband is not far away.
I am coming, o beloved life, o beloved death.

Giunto a la tomba, ove al suo spirito vivo

Dolorosa prigion il Ciel prescrisse:
 Pallido, freddo, muto, E quasi privo
 di movimento, al marmo gli occhi affisse.
 Al fin sgorgando un lagrimoso rivo
 In un languido ohimè proruppe, e disse
 Oh sasso amato, ed honorato tanto,
 Che dentro hai le mie fiamme e fuori il pianto.

— *Torquato Tasso*

Lasciatemi qui solo

Tornate, augelli, al nido
 Mentre l'anima e'l duolo
 Spiro su questo lido
 Altri meco non voglio
 Ch'un freddo scoglio,
 E'l mio fatal martire.
 Lasciatemi morire.

Dolcissime sirene,
 Ch'n sì pietoso canto
 Raddolcite mie pene,
 Fate soave il pianto
 Movete il nuoto altronde,
 Togliete all'onde
 i crudi sdegni, e l'ire.
 Lasciatemi morire.

Placidissimi venti,
 tornate al vostro speco.
 Sol miei duri lamenti
 Chieggo che restin meco
 Vostri sospir non chiamo;
 Solingo bramo
 i miei dolor finire.
 Lasciatemi morire.

Felicissimi amanti,
 Tornate al bel diletto.
 Fere, eccelsi o notanti,
 Fuggite il mesto aspetto.
 Sol dolcezza di morte
 Apra le porte all'ultimo languire
 Lasciatemi morire

Avarissimi lumi
 Che sul morir versate,
 Amarissimi fiumi,
 Tard'è vostra pietate.
 Già mi sento mancare
 O luci avere e tarde al mio Conforto,
 Già sono esangue e smorto.

— *Anonymous*

Che si può fare?

Le stelle rubella
 non hanno pietà
 S'el cielo non dà
 Un influxo di pace
 Al mio penare.
 Che si può dire?
 D'agl'astri disastri
 Mi piovano ognhor.
 Se perfido amor
 Un respiro di nega
 Al mio martire.

— *Gaudenzio Brunacci*

Funeste piagge, ombrosi orridi campi

Che di stelle, o di Sole
 Non vedesti già mai scintill' o lampi,
 Rimbombaste dolente
 Al suon dell'agnosiose mie parole
 Mentre con mesti accenti
 Il perduto mio ben con voi sospiro.
 E voi, deh, per pietà del mio martiro,
 Che nel misero cor dimora Eterno,
 Lacrimate al mio pianto, ombre d'inferno.

Having come to the tomb where Heaven
 prescribed a sorrowful prison for his living spirit
 Pale, cold, mute, and almost deprived
 of movement, he fixed his eyes upon the marble.
 At last, pouring forth A stream of tears
 He broke with a languid "Alas!" and said:
 "O beloved stone, and so greatly honored,
 You who have within you my flames, and
 outside, my tears.

Leave me here alone.
 Return, little birds, to your nest
 While I sigh out my soul and grief
 Upon this shore
 I want no one with me
 But a cold rock
 And my fatal suffering.
 Leave me to die.

Sweetest sirens
 Who with such compassionate song
 Soften my pains
 Make my weeping gentle,
 Swim away somewhere else
 Take from the waves their cruel anger
 And rage,
 Leave me to die.

Gentlest winds
 Return to your cave.
 I ask only that my bitter laments
 Remain with me.
 I do not call for your sighs;
 Alone I burn to finish my grief.
 Leave me to die.

Happiest lovers
 Return to your beautiful delight
 Wild beasts, be you flying or swimming,
 Flee this sorrowful sight.
 Only the sweetness of death
 Opens the gates of my final languish
 Leave me to die.

Most miserly eyes
 Which as I am dying, you shed
 The bitterest streams of tears,
 Too late is your pity.
 Already I feel myself departing
 O miserly eyes, and too late for my consolation
 Already I am bloodless and pale

What can one do?
 The rebellious stars
 Have no pity.
 If heaven doesn't grant
 An influence of peace
 To my suffering
 What can one say?
 From the stars disasters
 Rain down on me continually
 If perfidious love
 Denies even a breath
 from my torment.

Mournful shores, shadowy, dreadful fields
 Which by stars or by the sun
 Have never seen a glimmer or flash,
 Resound sorrowfully
 At the sound of my anguished words
 While, with mournful tones
 I sigh with you for my lost love.
 And you, ah, out of pity for my torment,
 Which dwells eternally in my wretched heart,
 Weep at my weeping, shades of hell.

Ohimè, che sull'aurora
Giunse all'ocaso il sol degli'occhi miei.
Misero, misero, e su quell'ora
Che scaldarmi a bei raggi io mi credei,
Morte ispanse il bel lume, e freddo e solo
Restai fra'l pianto e'l duolo,
Com'angue suol in fredda piaggia il verno.
Lacrimate al mio pianto, ombre d'inferno.

E tu, mentr'al ciel piaque,
Luce di quest lumi,
Fatti al tuo dipartir fontane e fiumi,
Che fai per entro i tenebrosin orrori?
Forse t'affliffi, e piagni
L'acerbo fato e gl'infelici amori.
Deh, se scintilla ancora
Ti scalda'l sen di quei sì cari ardori,
Senti, senti, mia vita,
Quai pianti, e quai lamenti
Versa'l tuo caro Orfeo dal cor interno
Lacrimate al mio pianto, ombre d'inferno.

Ottavio Rinuccini, from L'Euridice

Gioite al canto mio, selve frondose!
Gioite amati colli e d'ogni intorno
Ecco rimbombi dalle valli ascese.
Risorto è il mio bel sol, di raggi adorno
E coi begli occhi onde fa scorno a Delo
Raddoppia foco all'alme e luce al giorno
E fa servi d'Amor la terra e il cielo.

Ottavio Rinuccini, from L'Euridice

Vissi all'hor noiosa vita
Mentre giel fu 'l viver mio;
Poi ch'accese il mio desio
Bellezz'alta infinita,
Di dolcezza ho colmo il core.

Ben che in mar Nettun si sdegni
Sollevando e onde e spume,
Io co' rai del mio bel lume
d'Ocean trascorro i regni,
Né m'assale unqua timore.

Là 've Marte il non mai stanco
Di sbranar le membra sparte
Fa di stratio horribile arte,
Io men vo sicuro e franco,
Pur co' rai del tuo splendore.

Hor che stato ha sì gran fama
Che s'aguagli a l'amoroso,
O qual cor sia mai ritroso
Quando seco Amor il chiama,
Se begli occhi han tal valore?

— Gabriello Chiabrera

Sovente all'hor, ch'in su gli estivi ardori,
Giacean le pecorell'all'ombr'assise;
Nella scorza de faggi, e de gl'allori
Segno l'amato nome in mille guise
E de' suoi strani, ed infelici amori
Gl'aspri successi in dura scorza incise,
E rilegendo poi le proprie note,
Rigò di belle lagrime le gote.

— Torquato Tasso

Piangono al pianger mio le fere, e i sassi
A miei caldi sospir traggon sospiri.
L'aer d'intorno nubiloso fassi
Mosso anch'egli a pietà de miei martiri
Ovunque io pos'ovunque, io volgo i passi,
Par che di me si pianga, e si sospiri
Par che dica ciascun mosso al mio duolo,
Che fai tu qui meschin, doglioso e solo?

— Ottavio Rinuccini

Alas, at dawn
The sun of my eyes came to its setting.
Miserable me, and at the hour
When I believe I could warm myself in its beautiful rays,
Death extinguished that beautiful light, and cold and alone
I remained amid weeping and grief,
As a serpent would lie upon a cold stone in winter.
Weep at my weeping, shades of hell.

And you, while it pleased Heaven,
Light of these eyes, made at your
Departure fountains and rivers.
What are you doing among these dark horrors?
Perhaps you grieve and weep
For the bitter fate and our unhappy love.
Ah, if there still glows within your breast
A spark of those precious fires,
Hear, hear, my life, hear what weeping
And what lamentations your dear
Orfeo pours forth from his innermost heart.
Weep at my weeping, shades of hell.

Rejoice at my song, leafy woods,
Rejoice, beloved hills and from all around
I hear echoes of hidden valleys.
My beautiful sun has risen, adorned with rays,
And with beautiful eyes scorns Delos,
Doubly fire in the souls and the light of day,
And makes earth and heaven servants of Love.

I lived a boring life then
When my life was frozen.
Then sublime and infinite beauty
Kindled my desire:
My heart is filled with sweetness.

Though Neptune rages at the sea
Raising waves and foam.
I, with the rays of my fair light
Cross the realms of Ocean,
And fear never assails me.

There, where Mars, never tiring
Of tearing apart limbs,
Practises the horrible art of slaughter.
I move safe and secure
In the rays of your splendor.

Now this love has such fame
To rival the love god,
O, what heart could remain aloof
When Love calls it,
If beautiful eyes have such power?

Often then, when in the summer's heat
The sheep lay resting in the shade,
Upon the bar, of the beeches and the laurels he carved
His beloved's name in a thousand ways.
And of his strange and unhappy loves
He carved their bitter fortunes into the hard bark,
And then, reading his own words,
He streaked his cheeks with beautiful tears.

At my weeping the wild beasts and the stones weep;
At my burning sighs, they too draw sighs;
The air around me grows cloudy,
It too is moved to pity by my sufferings.
Wherever I rest, wherever I turn my steps,
It seems that people weep and sigh for me;
It seems that everyone, moved by my grief, says:
"What are you doing here, poor wretch, sorrowful and alone?"

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Annual Celebrity Organ Recital

Kola Owolabi plays Bach's "Dorian" Toccata & Fugue, et al.

Saturday, February 20, 2027 | St. George's Episcopal Church (Arlington, VA) at 7:00 pm

Trio Sonatas Transformed: Melodic Filigree

Friday, March 19, 2027 | Live! at 10th & G (DC) at 7:00 pm
Saturday, March 20, 2027 | St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Alexandria, VA) at 7:00 pm

The Eloquent Harpsichord: Lillian Gordis plays Bach

Friday, April 9, 2027 | Live! at 10th & G (DC) at 7:00 pm
Saturday, April 10, 2027 | St. Paul's Episcopal Church (Alexandria, VA) at 7:00 pm

The Noontime Cantata Series

Capitol Cantata Series: Mondays at St. Mark's Capitol Hill (DC) at 12:10 pm

Downtown Cantata Series: Tuesdays at Church of the Epiphany (DC) at 12:10 pm

***Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot* BWV 39**

Præludium in G Minor BuxWV 149
Toccata in D Minor BuxWV 155, Dieterich Buxtehude
October 12 & 13, 2026

Wer sich selbst erhöht, der soll erniedriget werden

BWV 47
Organ prelude TBA
November 2 & 3, 2026

***Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid* BWV 58**

Passacaglia & Fugue in C Minor BWV 582
March 1 & 2, 2027

***Ich lasse dich night, du segnest mich denn* BWV 157**

Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig BWV 768
April 5 & 6, 2027

Washington Bach Consort Mission

Founded in 1977 by Dr. J. Reilly Lewis and now led by Artistic Director Dr. Dana T. Marsh, the Washington Bach Consort shares the transformative power of music, with the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and other baroque composers at the core. Our professional artists inspire audiences with the highest levels of artistic excellence, enrich the cultural life through historically-informed performances, and provide educational programs in the Washington, DC community and beyond.

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A special thank you to our 2026–2027 season volunteers and our volunteer coordinator, Oriana Casadei;
and to Beverly Simmons, *ffortissimo* DESIGN, for program design.



Washington Bach Consort

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