

Bach 2018–2019 48th Year Cantata Vespers *reception*

Grace Lutheran Church and School ■ River Forest, Illinois
The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost ■ September 30, 2018

Program

Coffee and Baked Goods
Black Fodder Coffee Co.

Welcome
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, Cantor

Cantata: *Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht* (“Coffee Cantata”), BWV 211

Susan Nelson, soprano ■ Derek Chester, tenor
Douglas Anderson, baritone

Cynthia Fudala, flute ■ Betty Lewis, violin 1 ■ Paul Zafer, violin 2
Naomi Hildner, viola ■ Jean Hatmaker, cello ■ Douglas Johnson, double bass
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, continuo

Prayer and Benediction
The Rev. David R. Lyle, Senior Pastor

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.
Background notes for the cantata are found on the back cover of this program.*

1. Recitative (tenor)

Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht
Und höret, was itzund geschicht:
Da kömmt Herr Schlendrian
Mit seiner Tochter Liesgen her,
Er brummt ja wie ein Zeidelbär;
Hört selber, was sie ihm getan!

**Now keep quiet, no more chatter,
And hear what's going on right now:
Here comes Herr Schlendrian
Approaching with his daughter Liesgen
He's growling like a honey-bear —
Hear for yourselves what she has done to him.**

The tenor is assigned the role of narrator. His first task is to tell the audience to quiet down, suggesting the informal atmosphere for which this cantata is intended. He then announces that Herr Schlendrian (literally, “jog trot,” someone stuck in a monotonous routine) is coming. His approach is heard in repeated dotted figures in the bass line, marked “*con pompa*” (pompously). The tenor dips into his lower register to sing an aside, confiding to the audience that Schlendrian is growling like a bear.

2. Aria (bass)

Hat man nicht mit seinen Kindern
Hunderttausend Hudelei!
Was ich immer alle Tage
Meiner Tochter Liesgen sage,
Gehet ohne Frucht vorbei.

**If only we didn't have with our children
A hundred thousand irritations!
Which I always and every day
Say to my daughter Liesgen
Go on by without profit.**

The orchestra depicts Schlendrian's growl using groups of four repeated sixteenth notes with the second note in the group a half-step under the main pitch. This figure appears in the continuo as well as in the upper parts and colors Schlendrian's singing. He truly is growling! The many repetitions of this figure illustrate Schlendrian's “hundred thousand” irritations with his daughter. “*Immer alle Tage*” (always, every day) he tells her what she should do, in one tonality after another, but to no avail, until the middle section comes to a cadence on the third degree of the scale. He must really be upset—how did he end up there? The orchestra intervenes to bring back the original key of D Major, and Schlendrian returns to his original complaint, with an emphatic finish.

3. Recitative (bass and soprano)

Bass

Du böses Kind, du loses Mädchen,
Ach! wenn erlang ich meinen Zweck:
Tu mir den Coffee weg!

Sopran

Herr Vater, seid doch nicht so scharf!
Wenn ich des Tages nicht dreimal
Mein Schälchen Coffee trinken darf,
So werd ich ja zu meiner Qual
Wie ein verdorrtes Ziegenbrätchen.

Schlendrian scolds his daughter in vain. His phrases are short—he’s frustrated and angry. But Liesgen, perky and sweet, defies her father, and rapidly tosses off the declamation that without coffee she will become a “dried-up piece of roast goat.”

(Schlendrian)

**You naughty child, you wild girl!
Oh! If I could only achieve my goal:
Take away the coffee!**

(Liesgen)

**Father, don’t be so hard!
If I cannot, three times a day,
Drink my little cup of coffee,
Then in my agony I’d be like
A dried up piece of roasted goat.**

4. Aria (soprano)

Eil wie schmeckt der Coffee süße,
Lieblicher als tausend Küsse,
Milder als Muskatene Wein.
Coffee, Coffee muss ich haben,
Und wenn jemand mich will laben,
Ach, so schenkt mir Coffee ein!

Liesgen’s aria rhapsodizing over coffee is an elegant trio sonata for voice, flute and continuo. The minuet form suggests Liesgen’s flirtatiousness and grown-up airs, but her ecstatic exclamations and the irregular phrases and accents show her immaturity. The flute part is independent of the voice, bubbling and swirling through the air like the steam rising from Liesgen’s favorite beverage. The minor key reminds us of coffee’s exotic far-away origins.

**Ah! how sweet the coffee tastes!
Lovelier than a thousand kisses,
Smoother than muscato wine.
Coffee, I must have coffee,
And if anyone wants to comfort me,
Ah! just give me some coffee!**

5. Recitative (bass and soprano)

Bass

Wenn du mir nicht den Coffee lässt,
So sollst du auf kein Hochzeitfest,
Auch nicht spazierengehn.

Sopran

Ach ja!
Nur lasset mir den Coffee da!

Bass

Da hab ich nun den kleinen Affen!
Ich will dir keinen Fischbeinrock
nach itzger Weite schaffen.

Sopran

Ich kann mich leicht darzu verstehn.

Bass

Du sollst nicht an das Fenster treten
Und keinen sehn vorübergehn!

Sopran

Auch dieses; doch seid nur gebeten
Und lasset mir den Coffee stehn!

Bass

Du sollst auch nicht von meiner Hand
Ein silbern oder goldnes Band
Auf deine Haube kriegen!

Sopran

Ja, ja! nur lasst mir mein Vergnügen!

Bass

Du loses Liesgen du,
So gibst du mir denn alles zu?

Schlendrian threatens to take away one privilege after another if Liesgen will not give up her coffee. The dialogue moves along quickly, propelled by rhymes within the text.

(Schlendrian)

**If you will not let the coffee go for me,
You won't be having any wedding;
You also won't go out walking.**

(Liesgen)

**Alright then!
Just leave me my coffee!**

(Schlendrian)

**I'll get the little monkey now!
I won't get you a whalebone skirt
in just your size.**

(Liesgen)

I can easily understand that.

(Schlendrian)

**You shall not stand at the window
And will see no one passing by!**

(Liesgen)

**I don't mind that either; but please, I beg you,
Just let me have my coffee!**

(Schlendrian)

**What's more you will not get from me
A silver or golden ribbon
To put on your bonnet!**

(Liesgen)

That's fine! Just let me have my pleasure!

(Schlendrian)

**You careless Liesgen, you,
You would give in to whatever I say?**

6. Aria (bass)

Mädchen, die von harten Sinnen,
Sind nicht leichte zu gewinnen.
Doch trifft man den rechten Ort,
O! so kömmt man glücklich fort.

**Girls with obstinate minds
Are not easily won over.
But if you hit the right spot,
Oh, then you are in luck.**

Schlendrian is thinking, accompanied only by the continuo plodding along underneath. It's hard to know what to do about a stubborn young woman. But in the second part of the aria he gets an idea, and as he warms to it, his excitement appears in melismas on the words *kömmt* and *fort*. Parallel sixths with the continuo at the cadence suggest his belief that this just might work!

7. Recitative (bass and soprano)

Bass
Nun folge, was dein Vater spricht!

(Schlendrian)
Now follow what your father says!

Sopran
In allem, nur den Coffee nicht.

(Liesgen)
In all things, but not coffee.

Bass
Wohlan! so musst du dich bequemen,
Auch niemals einen Mann zu nehmen.

(Schlendrian)
**Well then! You must get used to the idea
That you'll never take a husband.**

Sopran
Ach ja! Herr Vater, einen Mann!

(Liesgen)
O yes! Father, a husband!

Bass
Ich schwöre, dass es nicht geschicht.

(Schlendrian)
I swear, it will not happen.

Sopran
Bis ich den Coffee lassen kann?
Nun! Coffee, bleib nur immer liegen!
Herr Vater, hört, ich trinke keinen nicht.

(Liesgen)
**Until I can give up coffee?
Right! Coffee, remain forever untouched!
Father, listen, I won't drink anymore.**

Bass
So sollst du endlich einen kriegen!

(Schlendrian)
Then at last you'll get a husband!

Schlendrian sternly tells Liesgen that she will not be allowed to have a husband if she continues to drink coffee. Her four-note sigh on “a husband” signals to him that his threat is having the desired effect. So he repeats it, and she quickly promises to give up coffee. (That's how fast things can change in short satiric comedies!)

8. Aria (soprano)

Heute noch,
Lieber Vater, tut es doch!
Ach, ein Mann!
Wahrlich, dieser steht mir an!
Wenn es sich doch balde fügte,
Dass ich endlich vor Coffee,
Eh ich noch zu Bette geh,
Einen wackern Liebsten kriegte!

**This very day,
Dear father, do it now!
Ah, a husband!
Truly, who suits me well!
If only it could happen soon,
That at last I, instead of coffee,
Before I go to bed
Would have a gallant lover!**

Liesgen's excitement about a husband—whom she wants her father to find today!—is sung to the accompaniment of a rather dignified gigue in a pastorale style, suggesting perhaps the formalities of a wedding. The more lyrical vocal line in the middle section of this *da capo* aria contrasts with the delighted leaps and inversions of the first section. Will a “gallant lover” make a more satisfied and mature woman of Liesgen?

9. Recitative (tenor)

Nun geht und sucht der alte Schlendrian,
Wie er vor seine Tochter Liesgen
Bald einen Mann verschaffen kann;
Doch, Liesgen streuet heimlich aus:
Kein Freier komm mir in das Haus,
Er hab es mir denn selbst versprochen
Und rüch es auch der Ehestiftung ein,
Dass mir erlaubet möge sein,
Den Coffee, wenn ich will, zu kochen.

**Now old Schlendrian goes off to see
How, for his daughter Liesgen,
He might soon find a husband.
But Liesgen lets it be known secretly:
No suitor shall come to the house
Lest he himself has promised
And puts it also in the marriage pact,
That I shall be permitted
To make coffee whenever I want.**

The text of this recitative was not part of Picander's original script and may have come from Bach himself. The changed ending adds another level to the satire, and makes some concessions to the women in the audience. (Women were not allowed in coffeehouses in London in the 18th century, but they were important customers at Zimmermann's in Leipzig.)

10. Chorus

Die Katze lässt das Mäusen nicht,	The cat does not leave the mouse,
Die Jungfern bleiben Coffeeschwestern.	Young ladies remain coffee sisters.
Die Mutter liebt den Coffeebrauch,	The mother loves her cup of coffee
Die Großmama trank solchen auch,	And the grandma drank it, too.
Wer will nun auf die Töchter lästern!	Who then can blame the daughters!

The final movement is a choral fantasy, as the entire ensemble acknowledges that the coffee craze is here to stay—through not just one, but two *da capos*. The hymn-like homophonic setting of the repeating A-sections gives the movement an air of comic solemnity. The singers' canonic entrances and counterpoint in the middle sections illustrate that mothers *and* grandmothers *and* young women *ALL* enjoy coffee.

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BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

J. S. Bach never wrote an opera. Why not?

Was it because of religious railing against the evils of opera and theater? Eighteenth-century composers of church music, including Bach, were sometimes criticized for using the “theatrical style” in their settings of sacred texts. Bach’s employment contract as Cantor at Leipzig stated that music composed for the worship service should not sound like opera. There were those who felt that the churchgoer’s devotional experience should not be unduly influenced by dramatic shifts of emotion in music.

However, Bach himself probably went to the opera when he traveled to Hamburg and Dresden, and the librettists for Bach’s cantatas supplied him with material that looked a lot like opera: recitatives followed by arias, just like the Italian operas that were fashionable in Germany at the time. The dramatic depiction of watching for the Day of Judgment in *Wachet! Betet! Betet! Wachet!* (BWV 70) is a striking example of the theatrical style in Bach’s church cantatas. The *Easter Oratorio* contains sung dialogue alternating with arias for the characters of Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the daughter of James. The libretto for *The Easter Oratorio* was probably written by Christian Friedrich Henrici (“Picander”) who also authored the text for the “Coffee Cantata.”

Perhaps the simplest explanation for why Bach did not compose for the stage is that Bach never lived or worked at a court or in a large city where opera was produced. Leipzig’s opera house closed in 1702, three years before Bach moved there from Köthen. Bach was a practical, working musician, composing music—great music—for the venues and occasions at hand.

One of those Leipzig venues was the University, where students performed some of Bach’s secular cantatas in which the singers embodied mythological or allegorical characters. Johann Christoph Gottsched, an influential German literary critic and playwright who taught at the University, described these *drammi per musica* as “little operas.” Bach also directed and composed vocal and instrumental music for the Collegium Musicum, the performing ensemble that presented public concerts at Zimmermann’s Coffeehouse in Leipzig.

Coffee came to Germany about 1670, and Leipzig got its first coffeehouse in 1694. Town ordinances noted “the frivolous carrying on in coffee houses,” but the controversy over coffee-drinking was partly a balance-of-trade issue: English merchants profited from coffee sales, at the expense of local German breweries. Yet the merchants who traveled from all over to Leipzig’s bustling trade fairs met and shared ideas at the local coffeehouses, cosmopolitan settings where patrons also appreciated good music.

When the Coffee Cantata was first performed, probably at Zimmermann’s between 1732 and 1734, audience members, like musicologists and delighted listeners today, would have recognized this work as a mini-opera, similar to an *opera buffa*, the short comic operas performed in Italian opera houses between the acts of longer more serious pieces. And they would surely have enjoyed themselves.

So Bach never wrote an opera. He certainly could have done so if he’d had the opportunity!

Gwen Gotsch