



Music Highlights for Holy Week 2024 at St. Peter's Toorak

Between Palm Sunday (24th March 2024) and Easter Sunday (31st March 2024) we will be featuring various chorale and organ pieces in support of the Liturgy at this special time of the year.

We have engaged Bridie Kibby (soprano), Aleise Bright (alto), Kristian Gregory (tenor) and Bernard Leon (bass) to perform at the five Liturgies scheduled for Holy Week. In addition, on Holy Thursday and for the Easter Vigil on Saturday we have added Eliza Bennetts O'Connor (soprano) and Jack Jordan (tenor) making a choir of six for these two Liturgies.

Here are some of the highlights of the programme: -

1. Palm Sunday – 24th March 2024 at 9.30am

Offertory Motet: “*Wirf, mein Herze, wirf dich noch*” (“*Throw yourself my heart, throw yourself again*”) from the cantata **Mein Gott, wie lang, ach lange?** (**My God, how long, ah, how long**), BWV 155(4) - a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach first performed in Weimar on 19 January 1716. This soprano aria will be performed by Bridie Kibby.

Communion Motet: “*So lasset uns gehen in Salem der Freuden*” (“*So let us go into Salem (Jerusalem) with joy*”) from the cantata **Himmelskönig, sei willkommen** (**King of Heaven, welcome**), BWV 182/8 by Johann Sebastian Bach composed in Weimar specifically for Palm Sunday, and first performed on 25 March 1714. This chorale will be sung by all four singers.

2. Holy Thursday – 28th March 2024 at 7.30pm

Washing of the Feet: “*Ubi Caritas*” by Ola Gjeilo. Ola Gjeilo is a Norwegian composer and pianist, living in the United States. Born May 5, 1978 (age 45). This 4-part chorale will be sung by the full choir of six.

Offertory Motet: Soprano solo: Sung by Eliza Bennetts O'Connor “*Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben*” (“*Out of Love my Saviour is Willing to Die*”) from **The Passion of St. Matthew** (BWV 244/58) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

Communion Motet: “*Jesu, deine Passion*” (“*Jesus, your Passion*”) from the Easter cantata **Himmelskönig, sei willkommen** (**King of Heaven, Welcome**) (BWV 182/7) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). He composed it in Weimar for Palm Sunday, and first performed it on 25 March 1714, which was also the feast of the Annunciation that year. This piece will be sung by all six singers.

Stripping of the altar: “*Ich harre des Herrn, meine Seele harret*” (“*I Wait for the Lord, my soul waits*”) from the cantata **Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir** (**I call to you, Lord, from the depths**), BWV 131(3). It was composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in either 1707 or 1708, which makes it one of Bach's earliest cantatas. Some sources suggest that it could be his earliest surviving work in this form. This chorale will be sung by all six singers.

At the conclusion of the Mass, the choir will remain for approximately an hour to accompany the Vigil at the Altar of Repose. During this time contemplative organ selections will alternate with choir pieces such as: -

- (i) Tenor solo “*Mein Verlangen*” (“*My Longing*”) from the Easter cantata ***Komm, du süße Todesstunde (Come, Sweet Hour of Death)*** (BWV 161/3) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) to be sung by Jack Jordan.
- (ii) The recitative “*Zerreiβet eure Herzen*” (“*Ye people, rend your hearts*”) and the aria “*So ihr mich von ganzem Herzen suchet*” (“*If with all your hearts*”) being BWV A25/3 and 4 from Felix Mendelssohn’s oratorio ***Elijah***. These will be performed as tenor soli by Kristian Gregory.
- (iii) The recitative “*Siehe, ich komme, im Buch ist von mir geschrieben*” (“*Behold I Come, it is written about me in the book*”) and the aria “*Starkes Lieben*” (“*Strong loving*”) from the church cantata ***Himmelskönig, sei willkommen (King of Heaven, Welcome)***, BWV 182/3 and 4, a church cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach. These will be performed as bass soli by Bernard Leon.
- (iv) Alto solo sung by Aleise Bright “*Leget euch dem Heiland unter*” (“*Bow Down before your Saviour*”) from the Easter cantata ***Himmelskonig, sei willkommen (King of Heaven, Welcome)*** (BWV 182/5) by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

3. Good Friday – 29th March 2024.

The Way of the Cross commencing from St. John’s, Toorak at 11.30am.

When the people reach St. Peter’s for the Second Station the choir will sing *Komm, de süße Todesstunde (Come, Sweet Hour of Death)* from the cantata of the same name, BWV 161(1), a church cantata composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in Weimar and first performed in 1716. The cantata opens with this alto aria which will be sung by Aleise Bright. The chorale tune, known as “*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*” (“*O Sacred Head sore Wounded*”) appears in this first movement. Originally played by the organ, in this arrangement our tenor Kristian Gregory will sing this line. Further musical motifs of the arias are derived from it, providing an overall formal unity to the composition.

The group will then proceed to the Third Station during which procession Kristian Gregory will sing the tenor recitative from St. Matthew’s Passion (BWV 244/63) which describes the intervention by Simon of Cyrene.

When the service reaches its final Station at TUC the choir will sing an unaccompanied version of the African American spiritual “*Were You There*”.

4. The Easter Vigil – Saturday 30th March 2024 at 7.00pm

Reflective music: “*Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden*” (“*Stay with us, for evening falls*”), BWV 6/1, is a cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig in 1725 for Easter Monday and first performed it on 2 April 1725. The first four-part movement will be sung by the full choir of six.

Communion Motet: “*Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder*” (“*Ah Lord, poor sinner that I am*”), BWV 135/1 is another church cantata composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig this time in 1724. It is the fourth chorale cantata from his second annual cycle, and is based on the hymn by Cyriacus Schneegass. This four-part movement will be sung by the full choir.

5. Easter Sunday – Sunday 31st March 2024 at 9.30am

Offertory Motet: “*So feiern wir das hohe Fest*” (“*This is how we Celebrate the High Festival*”) from the church cantata ***Christ lag in Todes Banden (Christ lay in death's bonds)***, BWV 4/6 – an Easter cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach and possibly one of his earliest church cantatas. This duet will be sung by soprano Bridie Kibby and tenor Kristian Gregory.

Communion Motet:
 “*O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht*”
 (“*O Jesus Christ, light of my Life*”), BWV 118/1 is a sacred motet composed by Johann Sebastian Bach.
 This opening movement is a four-part chorale.

