

**THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF
AUSTRALIA**

Report by

GRAHAM LIESCHKE

2004 Churchill Fellow

The DAME ROMA MITCHELL CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP

**for musical and management studies
facilitating the liturgical presentation
of J.S. Bach cantatas – Germany, USA**

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INTRODUCTION

The St Johns Southgate Lutheran Church Bach Program in Melbourne was established in 1997, and is now in its 8th year. In that time it has developed a high community profile and is one of the major contributions that this congregation makes to the Melbourne community and cultural scene. Presenting J.S. Bach's cantatas in their intended church context imbues them with a special beauty, significance and drama that is not easily recapitulated in a concert setting. However, the ongoing regular performance of such complex orchestral/choral works presents considerable musical and administrative challenges to a church organisation. There is no other Australian group or church presenting Bach cantatas frequently, regularly, and in the context of an ongoing commitment. This Churchill Fellowship project enabled me, in my role as Director of Music at St Johns Southgate, to visit several churches with prominent, internationally-recognised, long-running, ongoing programs of liturgical Bach cantata presentations. Through observation of, discussion about, and participation in the musical preparation, performances and administration of the programs, insights were gained which will be of considerable value in enhancing the Bach Cantata Program of St Johns Southgate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The St Johns Bach Cantata Program owes its existence and ongoing viability to the support of the congregation of St Johns Southgate, and particularly to the support of its Church Council and pastor Rev. Tom Peitsch. I take this opportunity to thank the many instrumental musicians and choristers from the wider Melbourne community who contribute their skills to the cantata presentations and on whose ongoing commitment the program depends. For my interest in Bach's music, I owe much to my parents for supporting my musical education, and my organ teachers, particularly Ian Brooke, John Mallinson and Douglas Lawrence. My interest in liturgy and Lutheran worship stems from the church tradition in which I grew up, but I particularly thank Rev. Robert Gribben for what he has taught me through example, discussion and encouragement about the art of liturgy and worship.

I thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the generosity of Dame Roma Mitchell for the unique and valuable opportunity this fellowship provided to cultivate my interests and skills in Bach's choral and church music, and to develop the St Johns Bach Program.

I particularly thank Dr Tony Burgess, Anne Gilby, and Dr Jeff Szer for their professional support which made it possible to undertake the fellowship at this time.

For my time in America, I thank the community of Emmanuel Music and Church for welcoming me and sharing their experience with me, particularly Craig Smith and Leonard Matczynski, and also Cynthia Medeiros, James Griffin, Sandy Hebart, Kyle Haugen, Rick Erikson, and Thomas and Kathy Schmidt. For my time in Germany, I extend particular thanks to Christian Wolff, Georg Christoph Biller, Uta-Maria Thiele, Carmen Stieler and the numerous organists who made their instruments available to me to play. Finally, I thank my family both for accommodating the impact of the fellowship absence on our family life, and for the time we spent together in Germany sharing experiences of Bach's music.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project Summary: The DAME ROMA MITCHELL CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP for musical and management studies facilitating the liturgical presentation of J.S. Bach cantatas – Germany and USA

HIGHLIGHTS:

Based at Emmanuel Music, Boston, MA, USA:

- observation of rehearsals preparing service music, Bach cantatas and a concert performance of a Handel Oratorio
- liturgical presentation of 5 Bach cantatas in Sunday Morning Worship Services
- discussions with Emmanuel Music and church staff: *Craig Smith* (Artistic Director), *Leonard Matczynski* (Artistic Administrator), and *William Blaine-Wallace* (Rector) about artistic and administrative management of the Bach program, and its intersection with regular life of the congregation
- specific discussion and tuition with Craig Smith about interpretation and direction
- regular practice on pipe organs particularly suited to the organ music of J.S. Bach
- visit to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (New York) Bach Vespers Program, observing rehearsal, liturgical cantata presentation, and discussion with *Rick Erickson* (Cantor)
- visit to St Peter's Lutheran Church (New York) with discussion with *Thomas Schmidt* (Director of Music and Cantor)

Based at the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, Germany:

- observation of rehearsals of the Thomanerchor and Gewandhausorchester preparing service music, Bach cantatas, and concert performances, primarily under direction of the current Thomaskantor *Georg Christoph Biller*
- liturgical and concert presentations of 7 Bach cantatas and 2 major choral works over the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany liturgical seasons
- participation in the regular congregational worship life at Thomaskirche and discussion about intersection of congregation life and the music program with the pastor *Christian Wolff*
- regular practice on pipes organs, including 7 instruments dating from the time of Bach by the famous builders Silbermann and Hildebrandt, several with known direct connection with his activities, and several modern instruments of interest
- visits to museums and churches associated with the history of Bach's life and the Lutheran Church in Leipzig and surrounds, and in wider Germany, including the Leipzig Bach-Archiv (*Bernhard Heß*, director) and Bach-Museum

OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Many artistic insights into interpretation and performance of Bach cantatas
- Many ideas regarding artistic and administrative professionalism in church-based music programs
- Implementation and dissemination of lessons will be immediately possible through the ongoing Bach Cantata Program at St Johns Southgate, directed by Dr Lieschke (see 2005 program, Appendix 1)

PROGRAMME AND MAJOR CONTACTS

United States of America (3/Nov/04-6/Dec/04)

Based at: Emmanuel Music *Craig Smith* (Artistic Director)
 Emmanuel Church *Leonard Matczynski* (Artistic Administrator)
 15 Newberry St *William Blaine-Wallace* (Rector)
 Boston MA 02116

Visits: Bach Vespers *Rick Erickson* (Cantor)
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
 3 W 65th St
 New York NY 10023

St Peters Lutheran Church *Thomas Schmidt* (Director of Music, Cantor)
 619 Lexington Ave
 New York NY 10022-4610

Germany (10/Dec/04-25/Jan/05)

Based at: Thomaskirche *Georg Christoph Biller* (Thomaskantor)
 Thomaskirchhof 18 *Christian Wolff* (Pfarrer)
 04109 Leipzig *Ullrich Böhme* (Thomasorganist)

Visits (Institutions, Museums etc) related to musical and church interests:
 Leipzig – Bach Archiv *Bernhard Heß* (Geschäftsführer)
 Leipzig – Universität Leipzig Musikinstrumenten-Museum
 Leipzig – Mendelssohn-Haus

Visits (specifically to play organs):
 Leipzig – Thomaskirche *Ullrich Böhme* (Thomasorganist)
 Leipzig – Nikolaikirche *Jürgen Wolf* (Nikolaiorganist)
 Altenburg – Schloßkirche *Felix Friedrich*
 Naumburg – Wenzelskirche *Irene Greulich*
 Rötha – Georgenkirche *Susan Broughton* (Kantorin)
 Rötha – Marienkirche *Susan Broughton* (Kantorin)
 Freiberg – Dom *Christian Skobowsky* (Domorganist)
 Störmthal – Dorfkirche *arranged via church office*
 Ponitz – Friedenskirche *arranged via church office*

Selected visits (Institutions, Museums etc) of general interest:
 Dresden – Hofkirche, Frauenkirche, Zwinger
 Wittenberg – Schlosskirche, Stadtkirche St. Marien
 Cathedrals – Naumburg, Meissen, Bamberg, Köln, Ulm, Trier
 Eisenach – Wartburg
 Baroque abbeys, churches – Ochsenhausen, Ottobeuren, Rot an der Rot
 Castles – Altenburg, Meissen, Neuschwanstein
 St Gallen – Abbey and Stiftsbibliothek

REPORT

Emmanuel Music, Boston

“The Cantata Series is the heart of Emmanuel Music. We present the cantatas, a neglected repertoire, as they were meant to be heard, in a context that gives them greater meaning than they might achieve in the concert hall.”

History

Emmanuel Music was founded in 1970 by its current Artistic Director Craig Smith “to perform the complete cycle of over 200 sacred cantatas by J.S. Bach in the liturgical setting for which they were intended”. Along with concerts, the group makes about 50 presentations per year. In the current season, 30 cantatas are scheduled for weekly presentation in services at Emmanuel Church from September 2004 to May 2005. Emmanuel music has become an icon of the Boston musical scene, and its concert performances and recording have attracted critical praise.

Administration

Although originally an offshoot of Emmanuel Church, Emmanuel Music is now an independently administered organisation with its own business structure, resident at Emmanuel Church and enjoying an amicable relationship with the church and congregation. One driver for forming an organisation independent of the church was to facilitate opportunities for obtained federal grant funding, something unavailable to church organisations in the United States because of the separation of church and state.

Emmanuel Music is resident at Emmanuel Church. Its staff include the Artistic Director, Associate Conductor/Chorusmaster, Executive Director/Artistic Administrator (also responsible for orchestra personnel), Development Director, and Office Assistant/Box Office Manager. An Advisory Board of prominent musicians, scholars, and community members contributes to the profile of the organisation. Emmanuel Music operates a library relevant to its activities, and its assets include musical instruments including a chamber organ for the cantata presentations.

The musicians themselves are highly professional and skilled. The chorus typically comprises 16-20 voices, and vocal soloists are drawn from its ranks. Many of the choristers have a long association with Emmanuel Music, and many Emmanuel musicians have gone to distinguished musical careers outside the organisation. Choristers are admitted to the group by audition. A regular group of chorus members is supplemented where necessary by additional recruits; management of the chorus is the hands of the Associate Conductor/Chorusmaster. Orchestral players are hired from a pool of freelance players, but generally comprise a regular group of largely the same players from week-to-week. The orchestra is based around a string section typically of approximately 3-2/3-2-2-1 players supplemented with 1/part woodwind and brass players as cantata orchestrations demand; the performances are with modern instruments.

The church itself contributes to Emmanuel Music through a residency arrangement, and by providing salary support for the Artistic Director through his shared role as Director of Music for the church. Other financial support comes from grants, active fund raising, CD sales and ticket sales from concert presentations. The organ in Emmanuel Church is not notable, but the Organist provides music, often from Bach's compositions and including selections particularly appropriate for the cantata of the day.

Advertising of events, in addition to regular church notices, is prominent. A highly professional webpage is maintained. Large professionally-prepared banners outside the church advertise the most current events. Local arts listings in the free print media regularly include the Emmanuel Services with details of the works to be performed. Concerts are heavily marketed with handbills and special banners. Music critics from the major newspapers typically appraise the concert performances, but not the liturgical presentations.

Concert presentations supplement the liturgical activities of Emmanuel Music. The concerts provide an additional academic/scholarly output of the group. For example, the Handel oratorio "Israel in Egypt" was performed in the late 1757 version, the first time this version was performed in Boston despite a long history of oratorio performance in this city by groups such as the "Handel and Haydn Society".

Although I did not experience it, Emmanuel Music also runs a "Community Connections" program "to inspire artistic excellence, but also to develop new relationships across neighbourhoods and cultures, and to encourage respect for all people." Activities offered in this program include open cantata rehearsals, a school program, and a worship music exchange program.

Cantata presentations

Of its activities, Emmanuel Music lists the Bach cantata presentations as its "heart". Cantatas are presented in the main (10 a.m.) Sunday morning Worship Service. The Eucharist is a standard Anglican (Episcopal) mass, incorporating sung liturgy, hymns, anthems and motets, with the cantata positioned following the distribution of communion, but before the final blessing and dismissal. Service Orders include notes about all the service music, but in particular present a parallel German/English text of the cantata, and a brief explanatory note about the cantata covering its genesis, text and music. Although the a capella music is presented from choir stalls to one side of the sanctuary, the cantatas are presented from the central sanctuary, which is quickly set up for the presentation after the communion distribution by musicians and "stage-hands", this being by far the most musically advantageous location in this church.

The cantata program is planned and advertised for a full season in advance. Programming is cognisant of the liturgical context, although not beholden to the traditional Lutheran lectionary, and includes composed specifically for the major church festivals and appropriate for the church calendar. Cantatas are rehearsed primarily through the preceding week, with individual rehearsal of the vocal soloists where the work is new to them, and a regular Saturday morning rehearsal of all the service music in the practice room, starting with the chorus alone, and joined at noon by the orchestra for a rehearsal in the church of the cantata. Choir rehearsals are

supported by a répétiteur pianist. On Sunday morning, the cantata is rehearsed with chorus, soloists and orchestra in the practice room prior to the service. The orchestra is hence effectively required for two calls, one on Saturday and one on Sunday morning that encompasses both the rehearsal and service. Currently, once per month, a discussion forum follows the Sunday service in which a panel (Artistic Director, Rector, other clergy, congregation representative) discusses aspects of that Sunday's liturgy and music, including the history of the work, their reaction to it, and its modern relevance.

Comment

The musical momentum of the program benefits from its established nature and reputation. Musicians derive considerable professional benefit from their involvement, as well as personal musical satisfaction. The rehearsal schedule is sleek and efficient, also benefiting from the familiarity of many of those involved with the repertoire generally, and often, with the individual cantatas specifically. In terms of musical style, it was interesting to hear the works performed with a choir of mature adult voices, albeit with controlled vibrato, but still with a richer and more mature sound than we are accustomed to hearing in Australia. Although the performances are with modern instruments, the instrumental players are highly sensitive to modern scholarship in stylistic baroque performance and highly skilled, and the presentations are stylistically and idiomatically very baroque. Recitatives are approached in a manner similar to that to which I was accustomed. Of particular interest was the performance of the chorales with the observation of all fermata as pauses, an approach not usual in Melbourne for this repertoire.

Craig Smith has an intimate, at-hand knowledge of the cantatas, such as can only come after 30 years of performing them regularly. One-on-one discussions with him about the performance of the works, their musical interpretation, their technical and musical challenges to their director, and his views of the contemporary relevance of the texts, were highly interesting and worthwhile.

The positioning of the cantatas regularly at the end of the services is an arrangement that works well at Emmanuel. Many people are there for the entire service including the cantata. Some people arrive towards the end of the service, presumably specifically to hear the music, and some worshippers chose to leave prior to it. It certainly means the service ends on a musically exhilarating note.

Church music in America is a far more professional affair than is typical in Australia, even in major city congregations. Organisations such as the American Guild of Organists (and, to a lesser extent, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians) function as a musicians' union, and provide an industrial framework for negotiating church musicians' positions and payment. The formal, professional, structure administration of Emmanuel Music was notable; I am unaware of any comparable organisational structure for church music performance in Australia. Though bringing many advantages, one potential disadvantage is the distancing from congregational ownership of the music program, which in the history of Emmanuel Music has resulted at least once in tensions between it and the congregation. However, even here, the community support that the organisation was able to harness through its

advisory board, and on the basis of the program's musical and community value, was invaluable in maintaining the program and its relationship with the church.

Bach Vespers at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New York

“... we are pleased to continue our practice of bringing Bach to our congregation and community through Bach Vespers, an institution ongoing since 1968. Here, Bach's cantatas and many other early works are presented in the living Lutheran tradition implemented by Bach himself three centuries ago as Cantor in Leipzig, Germany.”

While based in Boston, one weekend I travelled to New York City to experience the Bach Program at Holy Trinity Lutheran church, and meet its Director Rick Erickson.

History and description

The Bach Vespers program at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church was instigated in 1968 and is currently running its 37th season. Although originally Bach cantatas were presented weekly, the current program includes 14 Bach cantatas/choral works in a season running from October 2004-July 2005, in a schedule fleshed out by other events featuring choral music by other composers and the keyboard works of Bach. This program maintains a strong Lutheran identity. Cantatas are presented by the professional Bach Choir and Bach Players, and are original instrument performances. The services strive to re-create the historical vespers liturgical context in which Bach himself presented the cantatas.

Administration

The long-running Bach Vespers program has had a chequered history, but is currently supported by the Bach Foundation. The Bach Foundation is not independent of the congregation, but is administered under its auspices, and has its own set of “Administrative Guidelines” that are under current review. Although its purposes are broad and directed at supporting all administrative and musical aspects of the presentation of Bach Vespers and related musical activities, this arrangement also provides for a financial foundation supporting the professional musical activities and has a significant fund-raising and financial management function. It reports to the Congregational Council, but has its own Board of Directors, Officers, and guidelines for operating and endowment fund management. Its officers include a President, Secretary, Treasurer, Board of Directors, Investment Advisor, Bach Officer Manager, and the Cantor. The Bach Office maintains a professional webpage and an active e-mail notification service.

Cantata presentations

The cantatas are presented in a 5 p.m. Vespers Service that includes sung liturgy, hymns, organ music, a motet, and a sermon. The choir comprises 6 professional choristers, from whom soloists are drawn, and a 1/part orchestra of professional early instrument players. Presentations are from the central sanctuary at the front of the church. A service order is provided that includes a parallel interspersed German/English translation, and a brief paragraph of notes about the cantata. The cantata occurs centrally in the service in the liturgical sequence Gospel-Homily-

Offering-Cantata-Magnificat-Prayers. The church has a large gallery organ in the American romantic style, and a curiously-designed chamber organ for continuo work, the intention being to replace this with a more suitable instrument soon.

This group has also performed by invitation, and has published several CDs. An interesting educational activity being planned by this group is a “Bach Vespers and the Future Symposium”, a weekend workshop preceding the biennial Association of Lutheran Church Musician conference to be held in New York in July 2005. Bach Vespers also offers to “export” cantatas to other churches.

Comment

Again, the musical momentum of the program benefits from its long-standing nature. The small venue permits one instrument per part performances and use of a small choir from which soloists are drawn. The program has expanded and contracted over its history, and faced challenges that have threatened its viability, but these have been negotiated and overcome. The most significant challenges have stemmed from internal congregational considerations and dynamics.

The administrative and organisational basis of this program was of considerable interest, particularly for its Lutheran congregational context. The Bach Foundation provides the program with financial and musical independence, but retains the benefit of the congregational umbrella. A significant endowment was quickly established and has permitted the program to function at a fully professional level. Other factors assisting this fully professional approach include the small venue permitting presentations with minimal resources, easing back from presenting cantatas every week and including other Bach Vespers events that use smaller musical resources and present other repertoire, including services primarily using organ music. The program is cultivating an identity as a local leader in early music performance through involvement, patronage, and residency arrangements, the latter likely to facilitate the greater involvement professional brass players in the near future. Ways are being sought to more effectively exploit the program’s proximity to the Julliard School and the performing and academic resources it represents.

Thomaskirche, Leipzig, Germany

Thomaskirche - Ort des Glaubens, des Geistes, der Musik.

History

Bach was Kantor at the Thomaskirche from 1723 until his death in 1750. Most of the cantatas were written during his tenure there, and first performed in the Thomaskirche or Nikolaikirche.¹ This historical fact has made Leipzig and the Thomaskirche a centre of pilgrimage for Bach enthusiasts, and underpinned their long tradition of regular liturgical and concert performances of Bach’s choral music. The current Thomaskantor, Georg Christoph Biller, is the 16th in succession to Bach.

¹ See “Johann Sebastian Bach – The Learned Musician” by Christoph Wolff (Oxford University Press, 2000) for an informative, modern, scholarly biography of Bach including a description of his Leipzig years and cantata compositions.

There is a long history of association and co-operation between the City of Leipzig, the Thomaskirche, and the city-owned and operated school. In 2012 the Thomaskirche, Thomanerchor and Thomasschule will celebrate an 800-year association. The historical and current parameters shaping the current parish are summarised on the church's highly informative and attractive webpage (in much more detail in the German than English version [http://www.mcpetersen.net/tkirche/neu/gemeinde/gemeinde_portrait.htm]).

Cantata presentations in Concerts, Motette, and Gottesdienste

The regular music schedule at the Thomaskirche includes the Sunday *Gottesdienst* (9.30 a.m.) sometimes with a cantata, a Saturday *Motette* (3 p.m.) sometimes with a cantata and a Friday *Motette* (6 p.m.). In addition, in the Advent/Christmas period there was a succession of evening *Weihnachtsliederabend* concerts and concert performances of Bach's *Weihnachtsoratorium*. For most events Thomanerchor sings under the direction of the Thomaskantor with organ music by the Thomasorganist, but other local and visiting groups and artist also present. Players from the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester usually form the orchestra accompanying the cantatas.

The *Motette* have a liturgical format, with content is closely aligned with the church calendar and festivals. They include organ music, responses, sung psalm, congregational chorale(s), bible reading (often sung), sermon, prayers, blessing, and when where there is a cantata, it occurs at the end. Although liturgical in purpose and structure, they have some feeling of a concert performance. The *Motette* cantatas are prepared by the Thomanerchor, and there is one rehearsal with the orchestra and soloists on the day of performance. The Gewandhausorchester players are extremely competent and familiar with the music and style, and little rehearsal is required to shape the orchestral parts. The program provides text in German of all choir works, rubrics, melody lines to assist congregational involvement, and a cantata libretto with brief explanatory notes about the cantata (about half an A5 page).

The *Gottesdienste* (services) have the formal structure of liturgical Lutheran worship, with its characteristic emphasis on congregational participation in liturgy and chorales. In fact, the liturgical music is the same as that used in the traditional liturgy of the Lutheran Church of Australia. Here the cantata sits in its classical position, following the Gospel reading, as part of the Liturgy of the Word, and is followed by the creed and sermon. The choir contributes other music (e.g. an Introit) and leads the liturgy. The service is structured so that it comes to a conclusion as a "service without communion" with the sequence prayers-closing chorale-blessing-*Orgelnachspiel*. Following this organ postlude, most congregation members leave and the communion liturgy continues with the remaining small congregation gathered in the *Altarraum*, music now led primarily by the organ. The Service Order again provides text in German of all choir works, rubrics, melody lines to assist congregational involvement, and a cantata libretto with brief explanatory notes about the cantata (about half an A5 page).

In the Christmas period, these events are very popular. There is no charge for worship services. Concerts are sold out well in advance although tickets are very expensive. The Christmas *Motette* and *Gottesdienste* form part of the liturgical worship life of the congregation, and people queue for several hours to gain access. For other "regular"

liturgical events, attendances are still high and visitors are still anxious to arrive early before doors open to obtain the best seats. Access to *Motette* is by program (purchased for a nominal charge of €1.00). At the conclusion of every event, a retiring collection is made for the upkeep and work of the Thomaskirche.

The Thomanerchor/Gewandhausorchester performances use modern instruments. However, other Leipzig-based groups are linked in with the schedule including an early instrument orchestra which performed with an adult-voice choir. Several performance practices were of interest, particularly concerning the recitatives. For the Weihnachtsoratorium concert performance, use was made of a lute in the continuo group, including for the *secco* recitatives, and I was surprised by the effective contribution it made in such a large church. Although I thought I was familiar with some scholarly views on *secco* recitative performance advocating a non-sustained *basso*,² I was intrigued to find *secco* recitatives approached a completely different way, with the organ and ‘cello sustaining the bass notes through, but organist (and lute) adopting a varied approach to the realisation of chords above, sometimes sustained though and sometimes shortened according to the flow of the text. This approach reflected more recent scholarship published in German,³ but not yet to my knowledge promulgated in English.

Concert presentations have one interesting feature at the Thomaskirche. No matter how formal, prestigious or even if they are secular/commercial in intent, they always start with a word of welcome to the Thomaskirche by one of the pastors. A particularly poignant example of this was the B-minor Mass concert performance, held as a benefit concert for the Meeting Centre of the Leipzig Jewish congregation, which provided the pastor with an opportunity to comment on the relationship between the Christian and Jewish churches in Leipzig and Germany from both historical and current perspectives.

Administration

The current unique association between the City of Leipzig, Thomaskirche, Thomasschule, Thomaskantor and Bach himself represents the cumulative outcome of centuries of history. However, without here intending to be comprehensive, several aspects of its current administration were of interest.

The arrangement in Leipzig continues to represent a collaboration between the city and church, despite the recent widening in Germany of the separation between church and state. Hence the Thomasschule and Thomanerchor are civic institutions, and city funds contribute directly to the music activities of the church (e.g. funding the use of Gewandhausorchester players).

The Thomaskantor has primary responsibility for the choice of music and the formal responsibility of training the Thomanerchor, a group of approximately 80 boys from ages approximately 7-18. The boys attend a choir school, now located in Hillerstraße

² Laurence Dreyfus “Bach’s Continuo Group. Players and practices in his vocal works.” Harvard University Press, Cambridge, (1987)

³ Joachim Roller “Die Ausführung des Orgelcontinuo vornehmlich in den Recitativen der geistlichen Kantaten und Passionen von Johann Sebastian Bach.” Kirchenmusikalische Studien Vol 6 (Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, ed), Studio Verl. Schewe, (2001).

(a few blocks distant from the church), which provides a comprehensive education program into which the musical training, rehearsal and performance schedule is incorporated.

An important management/administrative strength of the Thomaskirche program is its support by a successful fund-raising program. In this regard and several others, it was described to me that the Thomaskirche congregation sees itself as an “ice-breaker” (perhaps better translated as a “ground-breaker”). Amongst its projects, the “Verein Thomaskirche Bach 2000 e.V”, a foundation for the Thomaskirche, has raised DM10.000.000 for the restoration of the Thomaskirche itself, established toilet facilities and a shop at the church, and now has fund-raising projects aiming to restore the old Thomasschule building adjacent to the church (€850.000), the Sauer organ (€250.000). While the Thomaskirche obviously has a unique and strong brand identity on which to capitalise through its historical association with Bach, and this facilitates obtaining commercial and business sponsorship, the success of this fund-raising vehicle illustrates what can be achieved by a church approaching these challenges in a business-like manner. An ambitious venture, the “Forum Thomanum”, proceeding independently but modelled similarly, seeks to create an integrated Kindergarten through late secondary school education precinct with a musical emphasis, integrated with an academic meeting centre for the study, research and performance of the music of Bach.

Comment

A major aspect of this project was to experience the regular liturgical musical life of this congregation, and the Churchill Fellowship period provided the considerable advantage of being able to experience this week after week by becoming a regular participant over the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany period. This was quite different to the experience of the short, once-off “grab” experience of a tourist. It was possible to experience the different atmosphere of concert and *Motette* presentations compared with a Sunday *Gottesdienst* worship service. It was particularly interesting to listen to this spectacular music on the days of the church year for which it was intended, and particularly moving to have this experience in the church where Bach worked and for which this music was originally composed. I was able to see how works are reprogrammed so that the demanding schedule of presentations can be undertaken. The value of the experience was maximised by the invitation to observe the orchestra and choir during rehearsals, and to sit in the *Empore* (gallery) adjacent to the performance space during services and performances. Of particular interest, given the Lutheran context of the St Johns Bach Program in Melbourne, was the German Lutheran context in which all this occurred.

Aside from direct musical activities, I particularly valued the insights and comments of Pastor Christian Wolff and developed a great admiration for his energy, ambition and achievements at the Thomaskirche. Although enthusiastic for its musical programs, he showed me that the Thomaskirche exists not only for its flagship musical programs, but is also a living, normal congregation, with children’s programs, religious training activities, fellowship and study programs, inter-congregational and inter-denominational activities, and involvement in social ministries. The way the congregation engages its members, volunteers and structures to manage the operational logistics of such a large musical program was of considerable interest. My

family and I left Leipzig feeling we had been welcomed into this community and privileged to have been a part of it.

The Thomaskirche music program is prominently integrated into the life of the city, and in a way that is strikingly unusual from an Australian perspective, the city unapologetically promulgates the cultural life of its churches. Tangible examples of this are the prominence given to the churches and their activities in tourist information (e.g. see the Leipzig city webpage), and the inclusion of the Thomaskirche cantatas involving the Gewandhausorchester in the Gewandhaus event calendar. The churches themselves provide another good example of useful trans-institutional collaboration and support in the publication of an event calendar “In Leipziger Kirchen – Konzerte, Vorträge, Treffs”, listing church events, musical and otherwise. This brochure contains advertising not only of organ and instrument builders and social welfare organisations, but also of banks, theatres, the Gewandhaus, and services such as electricians. A Leipzig churches webpage includes listings of both protestant and catholic churches.

Although it might be easy to dismiss the historical context, success and profile of the Thomaskirche as irrelevant to our program here in Melbourne, I do not see that to be the case. Rather, the differences are largely a matter of scale, and in both places, there is a strong sense of the music and congregational worship life working together in a synergy that serves not only purposes of church worship, but also that enriches the wider community.

Activities related to my interests as an organist

In both USA and Germany I sought out opportunities to hear and play organs that were either built with the intention of being particularly suitable for the performance of Bach’s organ works, or had direct historical connections with Bach, either because they were perhaps played by him or were instruments he was known to have admired (Table 3). Many of the instruments I played in Germany are the subject of academic discussion regarding what they imply for the performance of Bach organ works.⁴

Of particular interest were the instruments by Gottfried Silbermann and Zacharias Hildebrandt. I played Silbermann’s early, large instrument in Freiberg Dom, a small 1-manual instrument in the Marienkirche, Rötha, and of particular interest because of its similar size to the instrument in St Johns Southgate, the instrument in the Georgenkirche, Rötha. Instruments by Hildebrandt, an apprentice of Silbermann and a builder much admired by Bach, were the small instrument in Störmthal and the large recently restored instrument in the Wenzelskirche, Naumburg. They met all my expectations of excellence with their strong voicing, the rich foundation tone of *principal* choruses, the brilliance of *mixtures*, and their high mutation and unison high ranks effectively forming *décomposé* mixtures on the subsidiary division of some instruments. The importance of mutations making a flute-based cornet in addition to principal-based *sesquialtera* was more evident than I had expected. Although manual

⁴ See “J.S. Bach as Organist – his instruments, music and performance practice” Georg Stauffer and Ernest May (eds), Indiana University Press, (1986); and “The registration of JS Bach's organ works. A Study of German Organ-Building and Registration Practices of the Late Baroque Era.” Thomas Fredric Harmon, PhD Thesis, Washington University (1971), published by Uitgeverij Frits Knuf B.V., Buren (1981).

reeds were not prominent features of the specifications, the ubiquitous Pedal *Posaune 16'* was invariably strikingly successful and useful, with its full, fundamental but reedy tone, very well suited to sitting clearly underneath without dominating the chorus. For me, this particularly was a musical revelation. The considerable differences between the degree of “stringyness” of the *viola da gamba 8'*, both between different Silbermann instruments, and also between Silbermann and Hildebrandt instruments was also of note. In contrast to this, the famous organ by Trost in the Schloßkirche, Altenburg, an instrument also played and admired by Bach, was clearly positioned in a different, later style, and its strongly *tierce*-containing mixtures were unlike anything I had heard before.

Also of interest was the approach of German organists to service music playing, both in Lutheran and Catholic churches. The liturgical phrases familiar to the congregation through week-to-week repetition were harmonised in widely varying ways, often within one service, from straight unison throughout to extremely adventurous chord progressions. The introductions to congregational chorales were rarely a straight play-over of the chorale in 4-part harmony, but more usually chorale preludes. Some chorale preludes were standard (e.g. from Bach’s *Orgelbüchlein*), others were by minor old and modern composers, and other were possibly improvised on the spot. They were always in the key of the chorale to follow, but often presented the chorale melody in another meter, or even older or variant form, than that which was to be sung. Sometimes the reference to the chorale melody was so abstracted as to make it unclear just what melody was to follow, a situation that worked as an introduction to congregational singing only if the chorale was extremely familiar. While this made for very interesting preparation for the chorales, it sometimes resulted in a hesitant start on the part of the congregation, if not by the choir.

Comment

One danger of playing such famous and excellent instruments could have been that on returning I may have found less satisfaction with the organ in St Johns Southgate, built in 1992 by Knud Smenge with the intention of being particularly suited to Bach’s music. However, I am pleased to report this is not the case; rather I have returned even more convinced of the adequacy and success of this instrument for performing the organ works of Bach and his contemporaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most useful outcomes of my experiences was to return with a stronger conviction that the approach of our program in Melbourne is on the right track, and a strong sense of validation as to its liturgical and musical quality. This confidence will be a great encouragement for our activities at St Johns. Another valuable outcome is the sense that an opportunity has been opened for our Program to become more a part of the international Bach performance community.

Regarding the musical presentation of Bach cantatas:

- We should present some cantatas, particularly those with smaller orchestras, with multiple strings per part rather than always one-per-part instruments as now.
- We should try various approaches to the execution of recitatives, particularly *secco* recitatives, based on sustaining the bass note on the organ and ‘cello.
- We should try the use of a lute in the continuo group as there are players available in Melbourne.
- Although we intend to present all the church cantatas in due course, the non-chorale cantatas could be given more priority in selection.
- We should retain our commitment to generally present the cantatas in the main Sunday morning service (rather than an evening service), as this is relatively unusual.
- Despite the effort and difficulty, I should read the German literature about Bach cantatas more assiduously and comprehensively.

Regarding the management and administration of the St Johns Bach Program:

- Establishment of a committee of patrons/artistic advisors to support and add credibility to the program
- Engagement with professional groups with resources and ideas that would aid the Bach program e.g. Association of Lutheran Church Musicians
- Immediately exploring opportunities for Federal, State and City Arts Grant applications to support the program
- Working to engage wider community recognition of the excellence of Melbourne church music and the contribution it can make to Melbourne’s cultural life, particularly by civic and secular organisations
- More active pursuit of fund-raising opportunities in support of the program:
 - Release of a Bach CD from St Johns
 - Concert activities based on the annual repertoire and expertise of the musicians
 - Consider explicit fund-raising with a view to establishing a Foundation in support of the program
 - “Exporting” cantatas as a fund-raising activity
- “Branding” the identity of the chorus and orchestra e.g. referring to them by name as the St Johns Bach Choir, St Johns Bach Orchestra
- Continue to explore possibilities that involve outside groups in the program, both those who approach us and by invitation
 - Maintain and develop the collaboration with the Victorian College of the Arts
- Cultivate networking opportunities opened up by the Fellowship
 - Maintain personal relationships

- Implement opportunities that have arisen for international visibility for our Program
- Establish exchange programs to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas
- Improvement of the webpage
- Working to facilitate the city churches to collaborate in support of each other's music programs

Regarding the organ music in services:

- More use of chorale preludes, particularly to introduce German congregational chorales
- More use of full cornet-based registrations in German chorale preludes
- Consider the possibility of the following modifications to the St Johns organ:
 - Addition of the flute *Terz 1 3/5'* to complete the *Hauptwerk* cornet, as was intended from the outset
 - Revoicing the Pedal reed *Fagot 16'* to strengthen the fundamental tone in the direction of a *Posaune 16'*
- Encourage professionalism amongst the congregation's organists and in the congregations approach to its musicians

Implementation of these recommendations will be immediately possible through the ongoing activities of the Bach Cantata Program at St Johns Southgate, directed by Dr Lieschke (see 2005 program, Appendix 1).

REFERENCES

Web-based references and resources related to Churchill Fellowship Activities:

Related to activities in USA

<http://www.emmanuelmusic.org/>
<http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Bio/Emmanuel-Music.htm>
<http://www.emmanuel-boston.org/index.html>
<http://www.holytrinitynyc.org/>
<http://www.bachvespersnyc.org/>
<http://www.unilu.org/about/index.htm>

Organs of interest the USA

http://www.richardsfowkes.com/pages/opus/10/10a_01.shtml

Professional societies in the USA

<http://www.agohq.org/home.html>
<http://www.alcm.org/alcm/html/index.jsp>

Related to activities in Leipzig and surrounds

<http://www.thomaskirche.org/>
<http://www.nikolaikirche-leipzig.de/home/home.html>
<http://www1.leipzig.de/int/en/>
<http://www.bach-leipzig.de/>
<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/museum/musik/>
<http://www.stadt-altenburg.de/site/>
<http://www.leipzig-online.de/thomanerchor/>
<http://www.forum-thomanum.de/>

Organs and Organ Builders in Germany

<http://www.silbermann.org/engl/eindex.htm>
<http://www.euleorgelbau.de/>
<http://www.orgelbau-klais.com/>
<http://www.orgelbau-woehl.de/>
<http://www.euleorgelbau.de/rnaumen.htm>
<http://www.silbermannorgel-ponitz.de/>
<http://home.versateladsl.be/vt607832/stormthal.htm>
<http://www.kirche-um-borna.de/roetha-boehlen/vorstellung.htm>

General information about Bach cantatas etc

<http://www.bach-cantatas.com/>
<http://www.uvm.edu/~classics/faculty/bach/>
<http://www.npj.com/bach/bb-complex.html>

St Johns Southgate Bach Program

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~stjohns/BachCantatas.htm>

TABLE 1. Presentations of Bach cantatas and major works observed during Churchill Fellowship studies

Date	BWV	Cantata	Director	Presented at
7/Nov/04	BWV5	Wie soll ich dich empfangen	Craig Smith	Emmanuel Church, Boston
14/Nov/04	BWV49	Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen	Michael Beattie	Emmanuel Church, Boston
21/Nov/04	BWV26	Ach wie nichtig, ach wie flüchtig	Craig Smith	Emmanuel Church, Boston
27/Nov/04*	BWV62	Nun komm der Heiden Heiland	Craig Smith	Emmanuel Church, Boston
28/Nov/04	BWV61	Nun komm der Heiden Heiland	Rick Erickson	Holy Trinity, New York
5/Dec/04	BWV167	Ihr Menschen, rühmet Gottes Liebe	Craig Smith	Emmanuel Church, Boston
11/Dec/04¶	BWV248/1-3,6	Weihnachtsoratorium	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
18/Dec/04	BWV186a	Ägre dich, o Seele, nicht	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
25/Dec/04	BWV248/1	Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
26/Dec/04	BWV248/2	Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend	Ron-Dirk Entleutner	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
31/Dec/04	BWV248/3	Herrscher des Himmels	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
6/Jan/05	BWV248/6	Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
15/Jan/05	BWV124	Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
22/Jan/05	BWV144	Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
23/Jan/05¶	BWV232	Messe in H-moll (Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Halle, Monteverdi-Chor Hamburg)	Gothart Stier	Thomaskirche, Leipzig

* observed in rehearsal only

¶ concert performance

TABLE 2. Other musical/liturgical events attended during Churchill Fellowship studies

Date	Event	Director	Presented at
6/Nov/04-5/Dec/04	Rehearsals: Emmanuel music, for cantata services and concert performances	Craig Smith Michael Beattie	Emmanuel Church, Boston
13/Nov/04	Handel: Israel in Egypt - 1757 version (concert performance)	Craig Smith	Emmanuel Church, Boston
16/Nov/04	Tuesdays with Sebastian: concert of JS Bach organ music	Christa Rakich and Peter Sykes	First Lutheran Church, Boston
21/Nov/04	Sunday Worship Service; GL played the organ	n/a	University Lutheran Church, Cambridge, MA
23/Nov/04	Oratorio Vocal Class	Craig Smith	Boston University
28/Nov/04	Sunday Worship Services	Thomas Schmidt	St Peters Lutheran Church, New York
1/Dec/04	Verdi: Aida (concert performance)	Marcello Viotti	Metropolitan Opera, New York
10/Dec/04-25/Jan/05	Rehearsals for numerous events: Thomanerchor, Gewandhausorchester	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
12/Dec/04	Weihnachtsmusik des Diakonischen Werkes Innere Mission Leipzig e.V.; with various choirs and Leipziger Bläserkreis (leit. Jörg-Michael Schegel)	Thomas Ratzak	Nikolaikirche, Leipzig
12/Dec/04	<i>Sunday Worship Services: with varied music integrated into liturgy</i> Included fugue from Bach motet “Singet dem Herr ein neues Lied” BWV 255	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
9/Jan/04	Included excerpt from Bach’s Schemelli Gesangbuch: “Ermuntre dich, mein schwacher Geist” BWV454		
16/Jan/04	Included excerpt from Bach motet “Jesu meine		

23/Jan/05	Freude” BWV 227 Included fugue from Bach motet “Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf” BWV 226		
24/Dec/04 21/Jan/05& 22/Jan/05	<i>Motette: devotional concerts of various seasonal music, mostly a capella</i> Weihnachts-Mottette Included Bach motet “Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf” BWV 226	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
19/Dec/04	Musik zu Advent und Weihnachten: Posaunenchor St Nikolai	Christoph Käßler & Jürgen Wolf	Nikolaikirche, Leipzig
19/Dec/04	Familiengottesdienst; family Worship Service with children’s Christmas play	n/a	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
21/Dec/04	Weihnachtsliederabend des Thomanerchors	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
25/Dec/04	Nachtgebet (Komplet)	Georg Biller	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
29/Dec/05	Handel: Messiah (Concerto vocale, Sächsisches Barockorchester)	Gotthold Schwarz	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
31/Dec/05	Silvesterorgelkonzert	Ullrich Böhme	Thomaskirche, Leipzig
9/Jan/05	Meisterkonzert für Trompete und Orgel	Ludwig Güttler & Friedrich Kircheis	Thomaskirche, Leipzig

TABLE 3. Organs played during Churchill Fellowship studies

City	Church	Organ Builder	Comment
IN USA			
Boston, MA	First Lutheran, Berkeley St	Richards, Fowkes & Co (2000)	II/24 built in the style of an early 18 th century North German instrument
Cambridge MA	University Lutheran, Harvard Square	Noack (1972)	II/12
Brookline MA	All Saints Episcopal, Dean Rd	Casavant Frères (1961)	III/46
New York NY	St Peters Lutheran, Lexington Ave	Klais (1977)	II/43
IN GERMANY			
Leipzig	Nikolaikirche	Ladegast (1862), rebuilt Eule (2004)	V/102
Leipzig	Thomaskirche	Woehl (2000)	IV/61 modern organ replicating an organ known to Bach
Altenburg	Schloßkirche	Trost (1739)	II/39 known to Bach
Naumburg	St Wenzelskirche	Hildebrandt (1746)	III/53 known to Bach
Rötha	Georgenkirche	Silbermann (1721)	II/23
Rötha	Marienkirche	Silbermann (1722)	I/11
Freiberg	Dom	Silbermann (1714)	III/44
Störmthal	Dorfkirche	Hildebrandt (1723)	I/14 Bach composed BWV194 for dedication of this organ
Ponitz	Friedenskirche	Silbermann (1737)	II/27
Trier	Dom	Klais (1974)	IV/67
Göda	Stiftskirche St Peter und Paul	Eule (1988)	II/26

APPENDIX 1:**2005 BACH CANTATA SERVICE PROGRAM AT ST JOHNS SOUTHGATE**Thurs/20/Mar Palm Sunday Afternoon2 p.m. at **Matthäus-Passion (BWV 244)**

German [St Matthew Passion]

Lutheran *for double choir and two orchestras*

Trinity Directed by Marco van Pagee.

Church Presented in collaboration with the Victorian College of the Arts and German Lutheran Trinity Church

Thurs/5/May Ascension Day Vespers7.30 p.m. **Auf Christi Himmelfahrt allein (BWV 128)**

[Solely on Christ's Ascension]

for 3 soloists, chorus and orchestra (strings, 3 oboes, 2 horns, trumpet & continuo)

Directed by Graham Lieschke.

Sun/15/May Pentecost Sunday Festival Eucharist with Rite of Confirmation9 a.m. *includes the motet for double choir***Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf (BWV 226)**

[The Spirit helps us in our weakness]

Presented by the Buxtehude Consort (Louisa Hunter-Bradley, Director)

Sun/19/Jun Sunday Eucharist9 a.m. **Es ist das Heil uns kommen her (BWV 9)**

[Salvation unto us has come]

for 4 soloists, chorus and orchestra (strings, flute, oboe d'amore & continuo)

Directed by Graham Lieschke.

Sun 31/Jul Sunday Eucharist9 a.m. **Ägre dich, o Seele, nicht (BWV 186)**

[Trouble yourself not, O soul]

for 4 soloists chorus and orchestra (strings, 3 oboes & continuo)

Directed by Marco van Pagee.

Presented in collaboration with the Victorian College of the Arts.

Sun/11/Sept Sunday Eucharist9 a.m. **Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn (BWV 119)**

[Praise the Lord, Jerusalem]

for 4 soloists, chorus and orchestra (strings, 3 oboes, 2 flutes, 4 trumpets, tympani & continuo)

Directed by Marco van Pagee.

Presented in collaboration with the Victorian College of the Arts.

Sun/23/Oct Sunday Eucharist9 a.m. **Du sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben (BWV 77)**

[You shall love God, your Lord]

for 4 soloists, chorus and orchestra (strings, 2 oboes, trumpet & continuo)

Directed by Graham Lieschke.

Sun/27/Nov Advent Sunday Festival Eucharist

9 a.m. To be advised