

COLORADO *Bach* ENSEMBLE

James Kim, Artistic Director

Colorado Bach Ensemble Season

2025 ————— 2026

Masterworks

Messiah

December 12th-14th, 2025

St. John Passion

February 27th-March 1st, 2026

Cantata Insight Series

BWV 17

October 19th, 2025

BWV 9

November 9th, 2025

BWV 49

January 9th-10th, 2026

BWV 18

March 29th, 2026

BWV 56

April 19th, 2026

Young Artist Competition

May 16th, 2026

Statement from the Director

Dear Friends of the Colorado Bach Ensemble,

We're thrilled to share some exciting news: for the first time in the history of our organization, the Colorado Bach Ensemble now has an Executive Director!

Please join me in welcoming **Benjamin Tomkins** to this important new role. A talented violinist and longtime collaborator, Ben now brings his passion and leadership to help guide our ensemble forward. We're thrilled for what's ahead – welcome, Ben!

Now, on to our **2025–26 Season**, which is full of incredible music and meaningful experiences:

Handel's *Messiah* returns this holiday season by popular demand, with **three performances** across the Front Range. A beloved tradition, these concerts bring together community, celebration, and the enduring brilliance of Handel's masterwork.

We're honored to present **Bach's *St. John Passion*** – a landmark work from 1724 and one of his most powerful and dramatic large-scale vocal compositions. Alongside the *St. Matthew Passion*, it stands as a pinnacle of sacred music. Performances will take place in **Denver, Northglenn, and Fort Collins**.

Our **free Cantata Series** continues, offering deep dives into **five remarkable Bach cantatas** this season. Not only will I share insights into the theological and musical ideas behind each work, but you'll also be invited to **sing the final chorale** alongside our musicians – an opportunity to engage directly with the music in a meaningful way.

Our annual **Young Artist Competition** returns this spring, with the **final round open to the public** when finalists visit Colorado in May. You'll hear some of the most promising young musicians from around the country – artists who share our passion for the music of J.S. Bach. You'll also hear performances this season from **past competition winners**.

As always, **Bach continues to challenge us as musicians and inspire us as human beings**. His music speaks across time, reminding us of our shared humanity and limitless potential.

With gratitude and excitement,

James Kim

Founding Artistic Director

Messiah

December 12th, 2025 | 7:00 p.m.
Parker United Methodist, Parker

December 13th, 2025 | 7:00 p.m.
Central Presbyterian Church, Denver

December 14th, 2025 | 2:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Fort Collins



Emily
Donato



Abigail
Nims



Gene
Stenger



Andrew
Garland

Handel's beloved *Messiah* returns to CBE this December, highlighting the holiday season with a complete performance of this brilliant and inspiring masterwork. Composed in 1741, its Dublin premiere began a remarkable ascent as one of the great pillars of classical music in the hearts and minds of audiences worldwide.

Messiah's endurance is rooted in a message that transcends its formal context: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." Handel's dramatic orchestration, exquisite Baroque counterpoint, and evocative word painting breathe drama and intimacy into the unfolding narrative of Christ, culminating with a promise of new life, redemption, and enduring hope.

St. John Passion

February 27th, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.
Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver

February 28th, 2026 | 7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist Church, Fort Collins

March 1st, 2026 | 1:30 p.m.
Parsons Theatre, Northglenn



James Reese
(Evangelist)



Clara
Rottsolk



Abigail
Nims



Christopher Short
(Jesus)



Gene
Stenger



Harrison
Hintzsche

Composed in 1724, the *St. John Passion* is a grand and turbulent work produced at the height of Bach's creative and expressive powers. The foreboding restlessness and tension in the opening chorus propels us into the inner world of John the Evangelist and his dramatic witness of betrayal, torment, and transfiguration in the gospel narrative.

Unlike the *St. Matthew Passion's* broad themes, *St. John* explores our personal experience of suffering, anguish, fear, loss, and the enduring sustenance of hope. Amid it all, Bach's glorious orchestration, counterpoint, and harmonic language sharpens each exquisite moment, from the severe to the sublime.

Wer Dank opfert, der preiset mich

He who offers thanks praises Me

October 19th, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.

Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver



Sarah
Moyer



Rebecca
Robinson



Michael
Hoffman



Andrew
Garland

Est is das Heil uns kommen her

It is our salvation come here to us

November 9th, 2025 | 6:00 p.m.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Littleton



Mackenzie
Laun



Gabrielle
Razafinjatovo



Michael
Hoffman



Stuart
Dameron

A bright and uplifting work in A major, BWV 17 was composed in 1726 for the 14th Sunday after Trinity. It celebrates the healing of worldly afflictions through spiritual embrace, with hardly a moment of brooding on the physical suffering that will be overcome.

Its seven movements begin with a chorus featuring the title text from Psalms 50:20 (He who gives thanks praises Me). It's followed by a secco recitative and a soprano aria with a charming violin duet accompaniment. It concludes with a reassuring chorale filled with imagery of gentle breezes through flowers and fallen leaves.

Composed for the 6th Sunday after Trinity, BWV 9 (It is our salvation come here to us) is based on a hymn by Martin Luther's Protestant co-founder Paul Speratus. It begins with a bright, light chorale fantasia featuring flute, oboe, strings, continuo, and chorus.

The cantata is then framed by three recitatives that comprise a miniature sermon on our fallen nature and the uplifting promise of redemption and renewal. Between these are two arias that serve as vignettes on the journey of our fall and rise. It concludes with a warm, resonant chorale in E major offering reassurance and hope.

Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen

I go forth and seek with longing

January 9th, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver

January 10th, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

Plymouth Congregational Church, Fort Collins



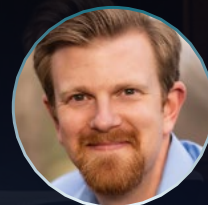
Sarah
Moyer



Aaron
Harp



Mackenzie
Laun



Michael
Hoffman



Andrew
Garland

Bach's Leipzig congregation first heard BWV 49 on the 20th Sunday after Trinity in 1726. It is an intimate work that features orchestra and soloists with no chorus, and depicts a lighthearted courtship between Christ (bass) and the Soul (soprano).

Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen (I go forth and seek with longing) begins with a sinfonia, and unlike many other cantatas, concludes with a duo aria rather than a chorale. With this tender musical union, Bach reminds us of the fulfillment and beauty love offers and the promise of this spiritual bond.

Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt

*Just as the rain and snow fall
from heaven*

March 29th, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver

Composed for the second Sunday before Lent, BWV 18 begins with a brooding sinfonia that sets the stage for a reflection on falling rain and snow and the new growth it will eventually bring. Undoubtedly, Bach's parishioners were beginning to anticipate the upcoming seasonal fasting, and this cantata reminds them that this period of sacrifice will bear spiritual fruit.

The opening key of G minor gives way to the warm central recitativo and chorus in E-flat major, transporting the listener from grey earthly concerns to heavenly bliss. The final chorale serves as a prayer for steadfastness throughout the season.

Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen

I will gladly carry the Cross

April 19th, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

Wellshire Presbyterian Church, Denver



Harrison
Hintzsche

BWV 56 is a solo cantata for bass. The low, weighty male voice represents both Jesus and humanity as they navigate their earthly trials. Despite the suffering, the singer confirms that "[We] will gladly carry the cross" – both a reference to the crucifixion and a sailor's cross-staff (*kreuzstab*).

The second movement features rolling arpeggios in the cello as the singer describes churning waves threatening to sweep our ships from their spiritual moorings. The final chorus affirms the blessings of staying the course and the promise of safe harbor to come.



Young Artist Competition

May 16th, 2026

CBE's Young Artist Competition brings some of the world's most talented emerging vocal artists to Colorado to celebrate Bach's music and showcase their skills. Competitors prepare multiple selections from some of Bach's most challenging and popular works, culminating in a final-round performance for a live audience. This concert is free and open to everyone with a suggested donation to CBE's mission.

We are thrilled to announce that last year's winner, bass-baritone Christopher Short, will be featured in the role of Jesus for CBE's February production of the *St. John Passion* – don't miss hearing his extraordinary artistry again this winter!

SUPPORT CBE

The largest single source of our outside funding comes from patrons like you. Your generous contributions, large and small, help us continue to bring great performances to you year after year and help us make our performances affordable to all.

Ways to Support

- Donate online at ColoradoBach.org
- Mail a check payable to:
'Colorado Bach Ensemble'
4500 E Hampden Ave
Cherry Hills Village, CO 80113
- Mail a check using the envelope provided in concert programs and mailings
- Contact us about sponsoring one of our Cantata Insights Series concerts or to inquire about other giving opportunities at:

(720) 819-7831

cobachensemble@gmail.com

Special Thanks



Colorado Bach Ensemble is a 501c(3) non-profit organization.

We are grateful for gifts of all sizes.

All donors will be sent an acknowledgment letter.