



FR 12 DEC 2025 7 PM ST. TOMAS CHURCH

SA 13 DEC 2025 5 PM ST. TOMAS CHURCH

SO 14 DEC 2025 5 PM ST. THOMAS CHURCH

## GRAND CONCERTS

### CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Gewandhaus Orchestra, St. Thomas Boys Choir Leipzig, Andreas Reize conductor

Robin Johannsen soprano, Sarah Romberger alto, Kieran Carrel tenor, Martin Häßler bass

Johann Sebastian Bach — Christmas Oratorio BWV 248 (Cantatas 1 to 3)

Johann Sebastian Bach — Cantata 'Unser Mund sei voll Lachens' BWV 110

Johann Sebastian Bach — 6th Cantata from the Christmas Oratorio BWV 248

Organiser: Gewandhaus zu Leipzi

## THE THREE-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD CANTATA CALENDAR

On 25 December 1725, the cantata ‘Unser Mund sei voll Lachens’ was performed for the first time. It is part of Bach's third Leipzig cantata cycle, which is more varied in style and form than the preceding chorale cantata cycle. Between 1728 and 1750, Bach returned to the cantata for Christmas Day several times and adapted it to the circumstances of the moment. The libretto, consisting of biblical quotations, reflective aria texts and chorale verses, was compiled by Georg Christian Lehms, a former law student in Leipzig, town clerk in Darmstadt and court poet. The infectious joyful opening message immediately spreads to the audience with the entrance of the choir.

## THAT WOULD BE LAUGHABLE

To frame the opening chorus, Bach drew on the solemn part of his orchestral overture BWV 1069. Two transverse flutes breathe life into the tenor's first aria

breath when the miracle of the Incarnation is sung. In the second aria, the lamentations of the alto and oboe d'amore intertwine, while the third unites soprano and tenor in a basso continuo-based

praise of the angels, ‘Glory to God in the highest.’ The Leipzigers would have been familiar with this duet as an interlude in the Magnificat. The bass is proudly countered in

the last aria by the solo trumpet. A simple chorale verse seals the end of the half-hour cantata, which is in no way inferior to the Christmas Oratorio, premiered 10 years later, in terms of

musical splendour, varied vocal and instrumental arrangement, or subtle illumination of the text. Once again, one can only marvel at the great miracle of Bach's music and, through it, at the greatest of all miracles: the birth of Christ.

*Translated with [DeepL.com](https://www.DeepL.com) (free version)*