



City Bach Collective General Press release

Bach in the City of London since 1976 and the service of Bach Vespers

In the autumn of 1976, Peter Lea-Cox, organist of St. Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb was appointed organist of St. Mary-at-Hill in the City. An administrator with some teaching responsibilities at the Royal Academy of Music, Peter decided to use the church to give his students the opportunity to perform Bach cantatas, preparing the editions himself. The series began on 11 November 1976 with a performance of BWV 38, '*Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir*'.

In September 1982, Peter was invited to bring his Bach performance into the formal structure of a service of Lutheran Vespers. The St. Anne's Lutheran Church, an American Lutheran congregation based at St. Anne & St. Agnes, Gresham Street provided the services in which these performances took place.

In this way performances of music by Bach and his contemporaries in the City have continued throughout the recent modern period of early music scholarship. Since January 2016 the group has been known as the City Bach Collective, continuing Bach Vespers for St. Anne's Lutheran Church.

Performing Bach's cantatas within a service of Lutheran Vespers – for which he wrote them – gives the experience of the music a very special context. The service is almost all musical. The Collective tries to follow the type of pieces and ordering of the music that would have been experienced around the time that Bach was working in the German churches where he was employed in the early 1700s. The service is in English; the German words of the choral music come with translations.

Everyone is welcome to come to these services. You don't need a ticket. There's no need to be religious. Services last just over an hour. The church gives all those attending an opportunity to show appreciation and support of the music in a traditional church collection, where you can give whatever you feel is right.

There's more information about the Collective including an archive of pictures, press cuttings and orders of service at the Collective's website, citybachcollective.org.uk.