

## The Cannabis Cantata

Many Thanks to all who helped make this possible and to  
All who have befriended, taught and inspired me along the way  
To friends, family and colleagues, endless thanks and love.



Joel Ford

## Bach and the Coffee Cantata

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) composed *Schweigst stille, plaudert nicht* ("Be still, stop chattering") (aka *The Coffee Cantata*) (BWV 211) between 1732 and 1734 as a collaboration with friend and colleague, the poet Picander, who wrote most of the libretto. The piece was performed by the Collegium Musicum, directed by Bach at the time, at their regular gig at Zimmerman's Coffee House. Bach himself was a coffee drinker. It is possible, but not certain, that Bach wrote this satirical piece in response to German authorities' attitudes towards coffee houses and their patrons. Coffee had suffered blows to its reputation in Germany, especially in Leipzig. In a January 1697 meeting, the city's council ordered council members and local authorities to visit coffee houses; these visits resulted in the arrest and punishment of numerous "rabble" and "coffee hussies" (this last term coined by the Lawyer Gottlieb Siegmund Corvinus, only in German). In 1716, Leipzig authorities passed an ordinance forbidding the presence of gambling and women in coffee houses and limiting the shops' hours of operation. Coffee shops made an effort to fall in line, but still their reputations were consistently maligned by officials and moral experts. The coffee dispute was amusing from an historical perspective and mirrors certain modern prohibitions. While students and literati composed many odes to the bean's graces, officials degraded and taxed the heck out of it, basically outlawing it by 1766. The *Coffee Cantata* opens with Schlendrian complaining about his daughter's coffee habits. Lieschen comes in singing of coffee's wonders. Schlendrian tries to curb Lieschen's coffee intake by denying her certain privileges, but Lieschen would gladly give these up to stay on the java. Her father gains the upper hand when he offers to sign a marriage contract, but she outwits him in the end when she includes a clause in the contract that her husband must allow her to drink coffee whenever she wishes. The final trio of the Cantata includes the lyrics, written by Bach himself, "Women will hold to their coffee, Mother likes coffee, So does Grandmother, Who, in the end, would berate the daughters!"

## Writing the Cannabis Cantata

I originally had the idea to write a *Cannabis Cantata* while researching BWV 211 for 101 B with Leta Miller. Several of the articles I read suggested that the piece could be modernized by replacing coffee with another prohibited substance. The idea stuck in my head and I presented the plan to my Graduate composition advisor, David Evan Jones, who has helped me greatly in the process of realizing this project. My characters are clear derivations of *Coffee Cantata* characters – Lieschen becomes Lisa, the coffee pounding lawyer fed up with managing her father's finances and with his copious marijuana use; Schlendrian becomes Stephen, Lisa's father, the struggling artist who uses pot to evoke his muse; my narrator is a devout Rastafarian named Curley who, like Bach's narrator, joins the action near the end of the story. I add a fourth character, Mary, who is Stephen's love interest. Her scene serves a plot point suggested by Ben Carson, in which Stephen's desire to smoke pot is mingled with his desire for sex. There are several quotes of *the Coffee Cantata* in the *Cannabis Cantata* in both the music and the libretto. You might also hear quotes of Bill Evans, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Cole Porter, Bob Marley, Frank Zappa, and more. My goal was, like Bach's, merely to present an entertaining story rather than make a heavy political point, but I couldn't resist taking it there a little bit, especially at the end when the characters ask, essentially, "Why is this illegal?"

## Excerpts

### WARNING: SPOILERS

#### The Following is an excerpt of the libretto taken from the epilogue

Stephen: Cops do it.

Lisa: Lawyers do it.

Curley: Even politicians in the white house do it.

All: So why can't we(they) do it without breaking the law?

Lisa: The one time I dared to hit the bong, something very strange was going on. I Gained some perspective and gained some respect for ganga. Now I'll take a pot case Pro bono.

Curley: My method is herbal for seeking Jah eternal, and for me and mine ganga is a tried and true ritual. Babylon is mighty and its deceptions spite me, so I spread the herb for love and peace and unity. For some it is a medicine.

Stephen: Well...I guess...

Curley: for some it brings confusion....

Stephen: ...gettin' high ev'ry day was not exactly....

Curley: for some it's recreation....

Stephen: ...what I needed....

Curley: for others liberation...it always has a lesson...

Stephen and Mary: but every so often it's so very nice.

Mary: I knew you'd like it I knew you would.

Stephen: I do, I really do.

Simultaneously:

—  
Mary: Just let me hit that hay, bit my lip, blow my roof, fire it up, burn one down.

Lisa: It was OK. It was pretty strange. I won't do it again.

Curley: Enjoy the herb Jah put on the Earth. A gift for us to enjoy. Praise Jah! Medicine, can be confusion...

Stephen: You know, Lisa, you were wrong about it not being an aphrodisiac.

—  
Lisa: Oh really?

Curley: Recreation.

Stephen and Mary: Yes Really.

Curley: Inspiration.

Stephen and Mary: Quite the opposite in fact.

Lisa: I don't want to hear it.

Stephen, Curley, and Mary: It's fun to fly the Mexican airlines when you want to make some sweet love [without Curley] we can attest to that.

Simultaneously:

—  
Mary: Hit that joint, poke some smot, puff the dragon!

Lisa: (That)'s enough. Not for me. No thank you. I get the point!

Curley: Ire'y 'ites. Positive vibration.

Stephen: Just sometimes is enough.

—  
Lisa: I get the point!

All: So why can't we(they) do it without (sans Lisa) break me off a piece of that (all) dank green without breaking the law!

## Glossary

### Here are some handy definitions of Terms used in the Cannabis Cantata

**Joy Pop:** To use normally highly addictive substances occasionally for fun.

**Un Lumier:** A bright person.

**Chef stupid:** Chief stupid.

**Dead Head:** Fan of the Grateful Dead.

**Mary Jane:** Marijuana.

**Sinsemilla:** Pot.

**Home Grown:** Pot.

**Dope:** Pot.

**Fluffy stuff:** Pot.

**Dank green:** High quality cannabis.

**Fly:** Cool, good, fun, etc. used mostly in the mid 90's, when the word "phat" was especially popular. (exp-"that dance was sooo fly")

**Jah:** Rastafarian God.

**Hit the hay:** Smoke pot.

**Puff the dragon:** Smoke pot.

**Bite your lip:** Smoke pot.

**Blow your roof:** Smoke pot.

**Fire it up:** Smoke pot.

**Burn one down:** Smoke pot.

**Fly the Mexican airlines:** Smoke pot.

**Poke smot:** Smoke pot.

**Bong:** Tobacco water pipe used sometimes for the illegal consumption of marijuana.

## Synopsis

### WARNING: SPOILERS

#### Scene 1: The Bet

Lisa complains about her father, Stephen's, marijuana consumption and his reliance on her for financial management. He arrives at her apartment to show her his new painting and overhears her complaining. He then sings about his experiences with pot. He then goes on to ask Lisa if he has enough money to buy a new suit for his date with Mary. Their ensuing conversation gets ugly and Lisa demands that Stephen cuts out the weed. Stephen makes a bet with her that if he can stay off pot for a week, she'll try it once.

#### Scene 2: The week

Stephen laments his departure from stoniness. He wakes the next day and, just before taking a hit, remembers the bet. Lisa, overwhelmed by work and her own disorganization, searches for her i-Pod, forgetting that she'd lent it to Stephen only a few days ago. Stephen listens to the i-Pod throughout the week to help him relax and to inspire creativity. He struggles with trying to paint sober and finds a way around this by painting city skylines. Lisa's frantic i-Pod search turns into a breakdown. She decides that trying marijuana might help her relax.

#### Scene 3: The Date

Stephen's date with Mary goes well until she requests that he smoke pot before they make love. The request turns into a demand and Stephen, overcome with desire, decides to pretend to smoke pot. Finding him not on the correct wavelength for her astral love adventures, Mary kicks him out of her apartment.

#### Scene 4: Stoners

Stephen meets with Curley at the end of the week, who has brought some fine herb over to help Stephen fulfill his agreement with Lisa. When Curley asks Stephen about his date, Stephen constructs an elaborate story in order to hide the fact that he did kind of smoke pot. Lisa arrives, and they begin the stoning ritual. Lisa trips out a little bit.

#### Epilogue

After trying pot once, Lisa decides it's not really for her, but goes on to take pot cases pro bono. Stephen winds up selling his skyline paintings to a post card company and, after finally hooking up with Mary, decides to smoke pot only before sex.

## Bios

**Joel Ford:** In composition, the object is to gather the musical notes in the correct order as indicated in the status area, while also avoiding flying musical instruments. To control your bouncing character, move the left analog stick left or right for direction, and move it up to increase the height of your bounce. Be sure to push up just when you bounce, don't press up continuously. Once you have collected the proper musical notes, grab the treble clef at the top of the level. At that point, a tune will begin playing and you can now grab all the remaining musical notes, as well as the musical instruments. This is as much of the process as I've been able to determine thus far. Being a dad is going to be awesome.

**Rebecca Stuhlbarg** is a second year masters student in music and will complete her degree this Spring. She studies voice with Patrice Maginnis and conducting with Nicole Paiment, and has learned a great deal from them both. She is interested in both singing and conducting contemporary music in particular, and directed the Contemporary Chamber Choir this past winter. Rebecca has been an active soloist with UCSC concert choir, as well as a singer with Opera San Jose and an active voice teacher and conductor in the area. She looks forward to being a mom and participating in exciting collaborative musical projects this coming year.

**Miranda Swan Veenhuysen** likes to dabble in lots of things. In the past she has dabbled in many forms of dance, acting, theatre directing, singing, swinging, and swimming. She also likes to dribble but has discovered that this is best done out of doors. She is grateful for the opportunity to dabble in depth in the area of opera directing and would like to thank Joel, Becca, Sara, and the cast of the Cannabis Cantata for making this an excitingly epic experience.

**John Seales** is working on his DMA in computer-assisted music composition at UCSC. He is a fine composer, a versatile vocalist, an enthusiastic performer, and a loving father. Recently, John and his daughter, Netta, have been receiving pressing information about mankind and the state of the world from local trees. John shares these messages with us through his compositions.

**Kalean Ung** is a third year Bachelor of Music student studying voice with Patrice Maginnis. She is involved in the opera program here at UCSC and is really excited to get this opportunity to sing in a "Be-bop-ra." On the weekends she works as a Magic Princess (which means she can definitely do magic, she's really good at making balloon animals, and painting on squirmy kids' faces). She loves all genres of the performing arts and hopes to continue to be on stage.

**Claire Gendler** is in her third year at UCSC and is earning her Bachelor of Music in voice. In her spare time she enjoys belching loudly, working as a Magic Princess, and practicing the art of being silly.

**Tyler Burton** is a superb vocalist, a clever composer, and free-spirited student of life and Patrice Maginnis. The dude can swing.

**Renzo Staiano** performs professionally on six and eight string guitars, Cuban *tres*, Andean *charango*, and other Latin American guitars. In 2006, he completed his M.A. in Latin American ethnomusicology at University of California at Santa Cruz, specializing in coastal Peruvian guitar performance under the auspices of the prominent ethnomusicologist, John Schechter. He is an active composer and arranger, currently working with the world music fusion group *Universal Language*, and Latin rock band, *deSol*. His compositions were featured in the short film, *Catalina*, released March 2007. He transcribed music for Cartoon Network's *Home Movies* and *Metalocalypse*. Renzo has performed with members of Peru Negro, Acoustic Alchemy, Savoy Brown, The Doobie Brothers, Spearhead, Maná and Santana.

**Michael Glick** is an avid jazz composer, arranger, and player. Though a math major, He has studied with Stan Poplin in the small jazz ensembles for the last two years. He is the keyboardist of the up and coming popular Santa Cruz Jam Band, "The Grandview." He performs every tuesday night at the Crepe Place restaurant.

**Leah Parker** is a graduate student at UCSC studying piano. She loves music, horses, and Super Mario Brothers 3.

**Cole Berry** studied with Mike Strunk at Cabrillo for two years on Latin American percussion and drum set, 1 year with George Marsh at UCSC, and almost 2 with Willy Winannt on percussion. He is a 4th year language studies major and his favorite cereal is granola with whole milk, nuts and honey.

**Dave Shaff** 1986-?: Shaftomatic keeps on rockin'.

**John Bisset** plays bass trombone and bass. Some of his interests include Good weird music, DOGS, the ocean, the forest, fog, hiking, backpacking, wit, irony, throat singing, stupid humor in the hands of smart people, jamming, playing music, live shows, making ridiculous movies, recording ridiculous voices for said movies.

**Justin Kenneth Endler** will soon receive his Master's degree in music composition at UCSC. In his recent composition, *War All the Time*, Endler weaves rich vocal writing with amazing creepazoid electronics and witty ensemble writing to present a harrowing look at pre and post apocalyptic America.

**Sylvain Carton:** Plays a mean saxophone. He is also savvy on flute, guitar, bass, and charango. He can compose a song faster than you can say "Hey Sylvain, how is it going?" He has compiled a volume of very bad jokes for publication.

**Paul Contos** is a great saxophone and flute virtuoso par excellence. He currently Teaches at Cal State Monterey Bay and UCSC, and is also the director for the Monterey Jazz Festival High School All-Star band. The list of well-known artists Paul has collaborated with would fill this program.

**Sara Hancock:** oboist, conductor, singer, manager extreme. Her super powers benefited the production of the *Cannabis Cantata* greatly.