

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
Cantatas Vol 22: Eisenach

CD 1 68:26

For Easter Sunday

Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV 4

Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert BWV 31

CD 2 52:13

For Easter Monday

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen BWV 66

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden BWV 6

For Easter Tuesday

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß BWV 134

Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen BWV 145

Angharad Gruffydd Jones, Gillian Keith *sopranos*

Daniel Taylor *alto*, James Gilchrist *tenor*

Stephen Varcoe *bass*

The Monteverdi Choir

The English Baroque Soloists

John Eliot Gardiner

Live recordings from the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage

Georgienkirche, Eisenach, 23-25 April 2000

SGG

Soli Deo Gloria

Volume 22 SDG 128

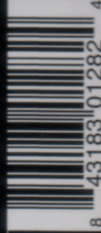
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SDG 128

Bach Cantatas Gardiner

22

Bach Cantatas
Gardiner



The Bach Cantata Pilgrimage

On Christmas Day 1999 a unique celebration of the new Millennium began in the Herderkirche in Weimar, Germany: the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner set out to perform all Johann Sebastian Bach's surviving church cantatas in the course of the year 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach's death.

The cantatas were performed on the liturgical feasts for which they were composed, in a year-long musical pilgrimage encompassing some of the most beautiful churches throughout Europe (including many where Bach himself performed) and culminating in three concerts in New York over the Christmas festivities at the end of the millennial year. These recordings were made during the course of the Pilgrimage.

CD 1 68:26 For Easter Sunday

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|------|-------|--|
| 1-8 | 21:45 | Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV 4 |
| 9-17 | 18:26 | Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubilieret BWV 31 |

For Easter Monday

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 18-23 | 28:04 | Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen BWV 66 |
|-------|-------|---------------------------------|

Gillian Keith *soprano*, Daniel Taylor *alto*
James Gilchrist *tenor*, Stephen Varcoe *bass*

The Monteverdi Choir
The English Baroque Soloists
John Eliot Gardiner

Live recording from the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage
Georgenkirche, Eisenach, 23-24 April 2000

The Monteverdi Choir

Sopranos

Suzanne Flowers
Angharad Gruffydd
Jones

Gillian Keith
Donna Deam
Nicola Jenkin
Belinda Yates

Altos

David Clegg
Richard Wyn Roberts
William Towers
Lucy Ballard

Tenors

Rory O'Connor
Paul Tindall
Nicolas Robertson
Iain Rhodes

Basses

Noel Mann
Richard Savage
Christopher Dixon
Paul im Thurn

The English

Baroque Soloists

First Violins

Alison Bury
Kati Debretzeni
Penelope Spencer
Rebecca Livermore
Debbie Diamond

Second Violins

Lucy Howard
Roy Mowatt
Andrew Roberts
Desmond Heath

Violas

Katherine McGillivray
Rosemary Nalden
Lisa Cochrane
Colin Kitching

Cellos

David Watkin
Lynden Cranham

Double Bass

Judith Evans

Oboes

Katharina Arfken
Mark Baigent
Richard Earle
Gail Hennessy

Bassoon

Alastair Mitchell

Trumpets

Niklas Eklund
Marc Ulrich
Frode Jakobsen

Timpani

David Corkhill

Organ

Howard Moody

Bach Cantatas
Gardiner



Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
Cantatas Vol 22: Eisenach

CD 1 68:26 For Easter Sunday

21:45 Christ lag in Todesbanden bww 4

- 1 (1:25) 1. *Sinfonia*
- 2 (3:59) 2. *Versus I: Coro* Christ lag in Todesbanden
- 3 (5:33) 3. *Versus II: Sopran, Alt* Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
- 4 (1:45) 4. *Versus III: Tenor* Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn
- 5 (1:48) 5. *Versus IV: Coro* Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg
- 6 (4:23) 6. *Versus V: Bass* Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm
- 7 (1:38) 7. *Versus VI: Sopran, Tenor* So feiern wir das hohe Fest
- 8 (1:14) 8. *Versus VII: Choral* Wir essen und leben wohl

18:26 Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert bww 31

- 9 (2:23) 1. *Sonata*
- 10 (3:23) 2. *Coro* Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert
- 11 (1:52) 3. *Recitativo: Bass* Erwünschter Tag! Sei, Seele, wieder froh!
- 12 (2:20) 4. *Aria: Bass* Fürst des Lebens, starker Streiter
- 13 (1:10) 5. *Recitativo: Tenor* So stehe dann, du gottergebne Seele
- 14 (1:45) 6. *Aria: Tenor* Adam muss in uns verwesen
- 15 (0:44) 7. *Recitativo: Sopran* Weil dann das Haupt sein Glied
- 16 (3:51) 8. *Aria con Choral: Sopran* Letzte Stunde, brich herein
- 17 (0:58) 9. *Choral* So fahr ich hin zu Jesu Christ

For Easter Monday

28:04 Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen bww 66

- 18 (8:54) 1. *Coro* Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen
- 19 (0:31) 2. *Recitativo: Bass* Es bricht das Grab und damit unsre Not
- 20 (6:02) 3. *Aria: Bass* Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen
- 21 (4:06) 4. *Recitativo (Dialogo) ed Arioso (Duetto): Tenor, Alt*
Bei Jesu Leben freudig sein
- 22 (7:46) 5. *Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor* Ich fürchte zwar des Grabes Finsternissen
- 23 (0:45) 6. *Choral* Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

CD 2 52:13 For Easter Monday

19:17 Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden BWV 6

- 1 (5:55) 1. *Coro* Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden
- 2 (3:44) 2. *Aria: Alt* Hochgelobter Gottessohn
- 3 (3:55) 3. *Choral: Sopran* Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ
- 4 (0:43) 4. *Recitativo: Bass* Es hat die Dunkelheit
- 5 (4:20) 5. *Aria: Tenor* Jesu, lass uns auf dich sehen
- 6 (0:39) 6. *Choral* Beweis dein Macht, Herr Jesu Christ

For Easter Tuesday

23:57 Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß BWV 134

- 7 (0:34) 1. *Recitativo: Tenor, Alt* Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß
- 8 (5:25) 2. *Aria: Tenor* Auf, Gläubige, singet die lieblichen Lieder
- 9 (2:19) 3. *Recitativo: Tenor, Alt* Wohl dir, Gott hat an dich gedacht
- 10 (7:06) 4. *Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor* Wir danken und preisen dein brünstiges Lieben
- 11 (1:48) 5. *Recitativo: Tenor, Alt* Doch würke selbst den Dank in unserm Munde
- 12 (6:43) 6. *Coro* Erschallet, ihr Himmel, erfreue dich, Erde

8:58 Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen BWV 145

- 13 (3:31) 1. *Aria (Duetto): Tenor, Sopran* Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen
- 14 (0:59) 2. *Recitativo: Tenor* Nun fordre, Moses, wie du wilt
- 15 (3:05) 3. *Aria: Bass* Merke, mein Herze, beständig nur dies
- 16 (0:44) 4. *Recitativo: Sopran* Mein Jesus lebt
- 17 (0:39) 5. *Choral* Drum wir auch billig fröhlich sein



Introduction
John Eliot Gardiner

When we embarked on the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage in Weimar on Christmas Day 1999 we had no real sense of how the project would turn out. There were no precedents, no earlier attempts to perform all Bach's surviving church cantatas on the appointed feast day and all within a single year, for us to draw on or to guide us. Just as in planning to scale a mountain or cross an ocean, you can make meticulous provision, calculate your route and get all the equipment in order, in the end you have to deal with whatever the elements – both human and physical – throw at you at any given moment.

With weekly preparations leading to the performance of these extraordinary works, a working rhythm we sustained throughout a whole year, our approach was influenced by several factors: time (never enough), geography (the initial retracing of Bach's footsteps in Thuringia and Saxony), architecture (the churches both great and small where we performed), the impact of one week's music on the next and on the different permutations of players and singers joining and rejoining the pilgrimage, and, inevitably, the hazards of weather, travel and fatigue. Compromises were sometimes needed to accommodate the quirks of the liturgical year (Easter falling exceptionally late in 2000 meant that we ran out of liturgical slots for the late Trinity season cantatas, so that they needed to be redistributed among other programmes). Then to fit into a single evening cantatas for the same day composed by Bach over a forty-year

span meant deciding on a single pitch (A = 415) for each programme, so that the early Weimar cantatas written at high organ pitch needed to be performed in the transposed version Bach adopted for their revival, real or putative, in Leipzig. Although we had commissioned a new edition of the cantatas by Reinhold Kubik, incorporating the latest source findings, we were still left with many practical decisions to make over instrumentation, pitch, bass figuration, voice types, underlay and so on. Nor did we have the luxury of repeated performances in which to try out various solutions: at the end of each feast-day we had to put the outgoing trio or quartet of cantatas to the back of our minds and move on to the next clutch – which came at us thick and fast at peak periods such as Whitsun, Christmas and Easter.

The recordings which make up this series were a corollary of the concerts, not their *raison d'être*. They are a faithful document of the pilgrimage, though never intended to be a definitive stylistic or musicological statement. Each of the concerts which we recorded was preceded by a 'take' of the final rehearsal in the empty church as a safety net against outside noise, loud coughs, accidents or meteorological disturbance during the performance. But the music on these recordings is very much 'live' in the sense that it is a true reflection of what happened on the night, of how the performers reacted to the music (often brand new to them), and of how the church locations and the audiences affected our response. This series is a tribute to the astonishing musicality and talent of all the performers who took part, as well as, of course, to the genius of J.S. Bach.



Georgenkirche, Eisenach

Pastor Robscheit of St George's welcomed us warmly. We should have come here ten years ago, he said; for then, during GDR times, there was so little contact with the outside and wider world of Bach performance practice that the only way Eisenach citizens could pick up hints of a more cosmopolitan approach to Bach was via the radio or CDs smuggled in by grandma after brief visits to the west. But it was good that we had chosen to stop here on our pilgrimage, as Eisenach is *the* place where 'Bach meets Luther', Bach having spent the first ten years of his life here and been a chorister of this church; Luther also having sung here and having penned his German translations of the New Testament while confined in the Wartburg castle which overlooks the town.

The pastor pointed to the font where Bach was baptised, set centre stage in front of the raised chancel steps – the most prominent physical symbol in the church. Yet it was almost submerged by rostra as we encircled it for our three consecutive concerts on Easter Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, orchestra and choir deployed centrally. Earlier on Easter Sunday morning we had been placed high up at the back of the church in the organ gallery, from where we were invited to lead the singing in the main Lutheran mass commemorating both St George's Day and Easter Sunday. A packed congregation made up of local parishioners and extended Thuringians, as well as Bach pilgrims (some of whom had flown out from England and elsewhere, others who had bicycled all the way from Holland) filled the church to capacity. Like so many Thuringian churches, the *Georgenkirche* is arranged like a baroque theatre (or a three-decker galleon) with tiers of galleries and boxes for the *Prominenten*, everyone able to see and hear the preacher clearly. From our position in the choir loft, with the organ vibrant and loud behind us, we had an unimpeded view of Bach's font and of the pulpit close to it from which Luther preached in 1521. Very likely both men once stood exactly where we were now standing, as boy choristers. The hymns we were to sing, *Christ ist erstanden* and *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, were as old as the church itself, reworked by Luther in his sturdy German prose and given a further twist by Bach through his stupendous four-part harmonisations, transforming their melodies in ways that enable us to sense the words' significance to himself and redoubling their appeal to us as listeners or worshippers.

The sense of Easter as the pivotal feast of the Lutheran liturgical year was inescapable here – the accumulated layers of pagan spring sacrifice, Passover, and the feast of Unleavened Bread, that ancient Canaanite agricultural festival adopted by the Hebrews after their settlement in the Promised Land and later re-rooted by the Lutherans in this little-changed, wooded landscape. In the reverence of the ceremony one caught a glimpse of the way Luther regarded the Eucharist: as a ritual in which the believer is called upon to become a character in the play of redemption, casting aside his doubts and meeting the ephemeral Christ in tangible form. Here, then, was evidence of a perceptible synergy between Luther and Bach. Our image of them has been conditioned by musicologists and historians who write as though both men can be reduced to their most cerebral output – in Luther's case to his driest theological writings, devoid of wit or metaphor; in Bach's to his more intractable keyboard works. This is to turn one's back on an essential characteristic of both men – their temperament: the fire in the belly that gave Luther the courage to break with Rome and Bach the tenacity to devote four years of his life (1723-1727) to composing year-long cantata cycles which chart the stages of doubt and fear, faith and disbelief in life's pilgrimage with unprecedented inventiveness.

It was not hard to imagine the young Bach in this place, one of the cradles of Lutheranism, and on this occasion outwardly so little changed. Enrolled in Eisenach's *Lateinschule* from the age of seven, just as Luther had been, he sang in the regular services in St George's under its Cantor, Andreas Christian

Dedekind. From seven until the age of ten he received an early grounding in the rudiments of music from his father Ambrosius, court trumpeter, director of the town's music and a versatile exponent of several instruments, from Cantor Dedekind and from Johann Christoph, his father's first cousin, organist of St George's and the most influential figure in Bach's musical upbringing.

At the core of Bach's early exposure to music and theology were the German chorales which were to play a central role in his church cantatas – those very hymns we sang on Easter morning, refashioned by Luther. In his preface to Babst's *Gesangbuch* (1545) Luther maintained that 'God has gladdened our heart and conscience by sending his beloved Son to redeem us from sin, death and the devil. Those among us who earnestly believe this are of good cheer and wish to sing happily for everyone to hear and take heed.' This was the core of Luther's evangelical message and an early lesson for Bach, for whom daily singing must have seemed an utterly natural activity from the time he was first required to attend choir practice four days a week.

But this cheerfulness comes at a price: the resolution of that emotional tension between fear and hope, despair and trust, and the acceptance that we have to fulfil our baptism in our struggle with and conquest of death. Nowhere is this more clearly articulated than in Luther's magisterial **Christ lag in Todesbanden**, at its heart a battle between the forces of life and death from which the risen Christ emerges as victor. Did Bach first hear this hymn in this church and at this time? If so, he could have found no clearer formulation of the way in which Luther's faith sprang

from early Christian roots – the Old Testament reference to Christ as the Easter Lamb, which reinforces the notion that Christ is the essence of life and that the preservation of life comes with light (the sun) and food (bread, or the Word).

Bach's setting of Luther's hymn (BWV 4) is one of his earliest cantatas, composed for his probationary audition at Mühlhausen in 1707 and a bold, innovative piece of musical drama which sets all seven of Luther's verses, each beginning and ending in the same key of E minor. I suppose that having performed it more often than any other cantata I feel very much at home with it – and it never palls. But the feeling of Bach drawing on medieval musical roots (the hymn tune derives from the eleventh-century plainsong *Victimae paschali laudes*) and of his total identification with the spirit and letter of Luther's fiery, dramatic hymn was never so strong or so moving as here in our Eisenach performance.

First published in 1524, Luther's hymn brings the events of Christ's Passion and Resurrection vividly to life, depicting both the physical and the spiritual ordeals Christ needed to undergo in order to bring about man's release from the burden of sin. The narrative begins with a backward glance at Christ in the shackles of death, and ends with his jubilant victory and the feast of the Paschal Lamb, and the way Luther unfolds this gripping story has something of the folk or tribal saga about it, full of colour and incident. In this, his first-known attempt at painting narrative in music, Bach shows himself equal to the task of matching music to words, alert to every nuance, scriptural allusion, symbol and mood. Not content merely to mirror the text, one senses him

striving to bring to it an extra dimension, following Luther's own ideal in which music brings the text to life, and in doing so, drawing on a whole reservoir of learning to date: music learnt by heart as a boy, the family's rich archive of in-house motets and *Stücken*, music put before him as a chorister in Lüneburg as well as works that he had studied or copied under the aegis of his various mentors, his elder brother Johann Christian, Boehm, Reincken and Buxtehude.

Bach begins by uprooting the very first two notes of the chorale-tune from their Dorian mode, sharpening the interval of a fourth and creating a falling half-step, a musical motif that readily expresses sorrow. This becomes the seminal melodic interval of his entire composition. It was a radical move – provocative even – for a young composer to make, daring to alter the melodic contours of this age-old tune, hallowed by Luther's famous treatment of it. Bach's strategy is to embed this chorale-tune deeply into the fabric of his composition, giving particular emphasis to its (altered) first two notes, the falling semitone which recurs hauntingly. Already in the third bar of the sombre opening Sinfonia he detaches these two notes – a wordless 'Christ lag... Christ lag...' – and only at the third attempt do we recognise this as the first full line of the hymn, giving weight to the retrospective re-enactment of Christ's death and entombment.

With the entry of the choir in verse one the hymn tune is chiselled out of the dense contrapuntal heartwood of this imposing chorale fantasia. The violins exchange the breathless type of figure known as *suspiratio* – sighs aptly interposed here to reflect Christ's suffering in the grip of death. Soon these give

way to chains of dactyls and anapaests, generating an appropriate rhythmic vitality to convey how Christ's rising again has 'brought us life'. The fantasia finally erupts into an *alla breve* conclusion, a fleet-footed canon based on the simplest of tunes: five descending notes, shaped as a syncopated riff, and one that, for Gillies Whittaker, 'almost overwhelms the bounds of church decorum in its breathless, whirling excited exhilaration'.

That mood of unbridled joy is short-lived. Abruptly Luther reminds us of the time when death held humanity captive, a grim tableau every bit as graphic as those late medieval Dance of Death friezes painted on the church walls of many plague-visited German towns. It puts me in mind of the allegorical chess game in Ingmar Bergman's film *The Seventh Seal*. Twin time frames overlap here: pre-regenerate Man on one hand, contemporaneous Thuringians of both Luther's and Bach's day on the other, marked by their regular brushes with pestilential death. Bach uses his falling semitone in two-note fragments – segmented and desolate, exchanged between soprano and alto in a grief-laden, rocking motion, over the basso continuo (which plays the same two-note interval obsessively, but with octave jumps and in diminution). Bach finds spell-binding music to convey humanity helpless and paralysed as it awaits God's judgement against sin – what Luther called the 'most serious and most horrible' penalty of death.

Onto this bleak stage the skeletal personification of death now makes a stealthy approach, seizing mortals in his bony hands. Twice Bach freezes the frame, the music sticking first on the words 'den Tod / der Tod', tossed back and forth four times, then again

on the word 'gefangen' (imprisoned), where soprano and alto are locked in a simultaneous E/F sharp dissonance. The surprising word 'Halleluja' follows, as it does at the end of every stanza. But here its mood is unremittently sad, apart from a brief flicker of promise near the end, before the music sinks back in resignation.

A stark contrast of mood, and verse 3 is launched by the violins pealing out an Italianate concerto-like variant of the chorale in unison. The tenors herald the coming of Christ: sin is overthrown and death's sting is plucked out. Bach uses the violins like a flail to depict the way Christ slashes at the enemy. The continuo line is dispatched, spinning down to a bottom E in an appropriate and 'Miltonic thrusting below of the rebellious angel' (Whittaker again). Death's power is snapped in two. The music comes to a complete stop on 'nichts': 'naught remained...' – the tenors slowly resume – 'but Death's mere form', now a pale shadow of itself. Here Bach has the violins etch the four-note outline of the cross with great deliberation, before continuing their concerto, now a festive display of prowess, a victory tattoo to which the tenors add their 'Hallelujas' in a gleeful chortle.

The central stanza reenacts the crucial contest between life and death: 'It was an awesome war when death and life struggled'. Bach seizes on the physicality of the contest: only the continuo provides instrumental support as groups of onlookers describe their reactions to the seminal bout which will determine their fate. Yet they know the outcome already – for it was 'foretold by the scriptures... how one death gobbled up the other'. For this Bosch-like scene Bach sets three of his four voice parts in hot

pursuit of one another, a fugal *stretto* with entries just a beat apart, while the fourth voice (altos) trumpets out the familiar melody in deliberate tones. One by one the voices peter out, devoured and silenced: death has been turned into a joke. Back comes the falling semitone, still the emblem of death, but spat out now with derision by the crowd. All four voices round off the scene with its Halleluja refrain, the basses descending through nearly two octaves before coming to a point of rest as the commentators file off stage.

Now returning as High Priests in the ritual Easter Mass, the basses intone the fifth stanza over a descending chromatic bass line reminiscent of Purcell ('Dido's Lament') – for Bach in future a recurrent image of the Crucifixion. A mystical link has been established between the Paschal Lamb foretold by the prophets and Christ's sacrificial death. Emblems proliferate, principally that of the cross which Bach isolates and evokes by halting the harmonic movement for a single bar while each of its four points is inscribed, each instrumental voice symbolically pausing on a sharp (in German, 'Kreuz'). To help us focus on the mysterious way 'blood marks our door [to release]' he gives three attempted starts at that particular line (continuo, voice, violin), before the basses and then the violins seem to paint and re-paint the cross, the very symbol to which faith clings up to the point of death. At this moment of profound anguish Bach forces the basses to plunge downwards by a diminished twelfth to a low E sharp. Now comes an unprepared and totally unprecedented clarion call as they sound out a top D, holding it for nearly ten beats to represent 'the stranger...

who can no longer harm us'. It is magnificent, a gauntlet thrown down to the singers (yes, plural, for he never wrote like this for a solo voice) to sustain that D at full force until the air gradually drains from their lungs. Now the ritual unfolding of the chorale resumes serenely in the string choir. But, instead of following suit, the basses launch into a series of exultant 'Hallelujas', culminating with a monster victory shout spanning two octaves.

That, to all intents and purposes, concludes the drama, though not the musical delights. For the penultimate verse, set as a duet for soprano and tenor with continuo, Bach gives us a tripping dance of unalloyed joy. The word 'Wonne' or Joy is expressed in Purcellian roudades, the concluding 'Hallelujas' exchanged in alternating triplets and duplets between the voices. His original four-part harmonisation for the final verse has not survived, but the one he substituted eighteen years later in Leipzig is rich compensation: superbly rousing and, aptly, his seventh illustration of how to sing 'Halleluja' – each time with a subtly differentiated expressive twist.

A spiritual voyage of a different kind is charted in Bach's second surviving cantata for Easter Day, composed at the ducal court in Weimar when he had just turned thirty. Beginning with a festive sonata for three instrumental 'choirs' of brass, reeds and strings, BWV 31 **Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert** bursts out into a chorus evoking celestial laughter and worldly jubilation at Christ's Resurrection. The five-part choral texture, the dance-propelled rhythms and the trumpet-edged brilliance look forward to the 'Gloria' from the *B minor Mass*, even to the slowing

down of tempo and silencing of the brass when the words speak of Christ's release from the tomb. This is one of a handful of Weimar cantatas (the others are BWV 21, 63 and 172) which by their scale and scoring suggest an alternative original performance space to the diminutive music gallery in the court chapel known as the Himmelsburg ('Castle of Heaven'), best suited to its core ensemble of eight singers and five instrumentalists. Evidently the ducal family chose from time to time to attend the afternoon services in the town church of Saints Peter and Paul (for reasons of politics, preacher-preference, or merely variety?). The organist at the *Stadtkirche* was Bach's half-cousin Johann Gottfried Walther, and the possibility such festive occasions afforded of joining forces with the town musicians, perhaps in the outer movements of this fine cantata, must have appealed to Bach, allowing for a two-tiered performance with only the court *Capelle* taking charge of the three *intimiste* arias. These culminate with the valedictory lullaby 'Letzte Stunde', for soprano and oboe d'amore, while the upper strings wordlessly intone Nikolaus Herman's death-bed chorale, 'Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist'. The listener is led to contemplate in turn the firmament rejoicing (Nos 1 and 2), the injunction to participate in Christ's resurrection (No.3), the victory of the cross (No.4), the need for the new man to emerge free from the grip of sin (No.5) and for Adam to 'decay within us' (No.6), the projected union with Jesus (No.7) and, in anticipation of the final hour, the prayer 'to be like the angels' (No.8) which re-emerges as the final chorale (No.9) with soaring trumpet descant, in a transcendent setting.

Some scholars have claimed that in his first years in Leipzig Bach was so spent by the effort of producing his *St John* and *St Matthew Passions* that he had no creative energy left to expend on new compositions for Easter. But that misses the point. Easter is such a central festivity in the Lutheran year and a time for such jubilant celebrations that it was only natural for him – as well as highly appropriate – that besides revising the earlier *Christ lag in Todesbanden* and *Der Himmel lacht*, he should now turn to music composed in Cöthen for secular festivities and recycle it for Eastertide. The exuberant BWV 66 **Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen**, for Easter Monday 1724, is a skilful adaptation of a lost birthday serenata for Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, in which the allegorical Happiness and Fame are transformed into Hope and Fear. Its opening chorus, with violins scurrying up to a top A and bassoons chortling in a tenor register, has more than a passing similarity to some of the operatic choruses and storm scenes of Bach's French contemporary Jean-Philippe Rameau.

Probably the most joyous of all these ex-Cöthen pieces is BWV 134 **Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß**, for Easter Tuesday of the same year, formerly a secular New Year piece (BWV 134a) composed for 1 January 1719, which has two extended triple rhythm passepied-like movements: the opening tenor aria 'Auf, Gläubige' and the final chorus 'Erschallet, ihr Himmel'. The latter has an affinity with the opening of BWV 66 in that it alternates two solo voices (each exchanging short opening phrases) with the full choir. Mid-cantata is the irresistible duet 'Wir danken und preisen' (No.4), which has a true Brandenburg-like swagger and

rhythmical élan. Those years in Cöthen seem to have been the happiest in Bach's life; it shows in this rumbustious and irrepressible dance-derived music which suits the post-Resurrection festivities and seems to hark back to pre-Christian rites of spring. The two Cöthen movements (Nos 1 and 3) of BWV 145 **Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen**, a dialogue cantata also based on a lost secular work, reveal a similar exuberance and uncomplicated delight in music-making.

You sense that Bach had the final chorus of his *St John Passion*, if not on his writing desk, then still ringing in his ears when he sat down to compose his 'Emmaus' cantata, a new work for Easter Monday 1725. The opening chorus of BWV 6 **Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden** shares both the *sarabande*-like gestures of 'Ruht wohl' and its key of C minor, with its characteristic sweet-sad sonority. But where the *Passion* epilogue is elegiac and consolatory, the 'Emmaus' cantata, tinged with the sadness of bereavement, opens with tender pleadings which become ever more gestural and urgent for enlightenment in a darkening world from which Jesus' presence has been removed. It manages to be both narrative (evoking the grieving disciples' journey to Emmaus as darkness falls) and universal at the same time (the basic fear of being left alone in the dark, literally and metaphorically). If the overall mood and pattern is one of descent, Bach, as one might expect, introduces a counter-balance, subtly weaving in a theological message to the faithful – to hold on to the Word and sacrament, those mainstays of Christian life in the world after Jesus' physical departure. He finds a way of musically

'painting' these two ideas: by juxtaposing the curve of descent (via downward modulatory sequences) with the injunction to remain steadfast (by threading 25 Gs then 35 B flats played in unison by violins and violas through the surrounding dissonance). This is linked to the reiterated pleas to Christ to remain, intoned nine times during the ensuing choral fugue.

The collision of these two ideas, lending poignancy to this opening chorus, suggested to me an affinity with Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* (his first version, dated 1601). Beyond the obvious parallel of contrasted planes of light and darkness is the further dichotomy, between serenity on the one hand (Christ in the act of blessing the meal, affirming his identity and presence, seems to stretch forward his hand of comfort beyond the canvas towards the viewer) and urgency on the other, the impulsive theatrical gestures of the two disciples painted from real life directly onto canvas. This is religious drama presented as contemporary quotidian life, rather as though Bach were seeking to capture, both here and in the next two movements, the disciples' despondency in the Saxon twilight he observed outside his study window. The other, entirely personal, memory I have of this fine cantata came flooding back to me tinged with fear: the terror of having been set an impossible assignment by my octogenarian teacher Nadia Boulanger to prepare and conduct this work with the rag, tag and bobtail of conservatory students at Fontainebleau on a hot August afternoon in 1968, and the blessed relief of realising that she had slept through the entire performance.

As we filed out of the *Georgenkirche* at the end of the

mass on Easter morning, the pastor invited a few of us to visit what remains today of the old Dominican monastery and of Bach's former school. We walked with him past the old town wall to the cemetery known as the *Gottesacker*. Somewhere here are the unmarked graves of Bach's parents. Graham Greene once wrote: 'There is always a moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in' – and here it was, for Bach, in 1694. Tragedy struck when he was in his tenth year: within a matter of months he lost first his mother and then his father. With the death of both parents, the family home in Eisenach was broken up. No trace of it exists today, and the *Bachhaus* visited by countless pilgrims is, sadly, a fake. Johann Sebastian was taken in by his much older brother, Johann Christian, in Ohrdruf, thirty miles to the south east. The door to the future had been rudely thrown open.

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From a journal written in the course of the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage



For Easter Sunday

CD 1

Epistle 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Gospel Mark 16:1-8

BWV 4

Christ lag in Todesbanden (?1707)

1 1. Sinfonia

2 2. Versus I: Coro

Christ lag in Todesbanden
für unsre Sünd gegeben,
er ist wieder erstanden
und hat uns bracht das Leben;
des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
und singen halleluja,
halleluja!

3 3. Versus II: Sopran, Alt

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
bei allen Menschenkindern,
das macht' alles unsre Sünd,
kein Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
und nahm über uns Gewalt,
hielt uns in seinem Reich gefangen.
Halleluja!

BWV 4

Christ lay in the bonds of death

1. Sinfonia

2. Versus I

Christ lay in the bonds of death,
sacrificed for our sins.
He has risen again
and brought us life;
for this we should rejoice,
praise the Lord and give thanks
and sing alleluia,
alleluia!

3. Versus II

No one could overcome Death
amongst all mankind;
this was all caused by our sins,
no innocence could be found.
Thus it was that Death came so soon
and seized power over us,
holding us captive in his kingdom.
Alleluia!

4 4. Versus III: Tenor

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
an unser Sftatt ist kommen
und hat die Sünde weggetan,
damit dem Tod genommen
all sein Recht und sein Gewalt,
da bleibet nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
den Stach'l hat er verloren.
Halleluja!

6 5. Versus IV: Coro

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg,
da Tod und Leben rungen,
das Leben behielt den Sieg,
es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
wie ein Tod den andern fraß,
ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Halleluja!

6 6. Versus V: Bass

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
davon Gott hat geboten,
das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
in heißer Lieb gebraten,
das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür,
das hält der Glaub dem Tode für,
der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Halleluja!

7 7. Versus VI: Sopran, Tenor

So feiern wir das hohe Fest
mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
das uns der Herre scheinen lässt,

4. Versus III

Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
has come to our abode
and cast all sin aside,
thereby depriving Death
of all his rights and strength.
Naught but Death's mere form remained:
he had lost his sting.
Alleluia!

5. Versus IV

It was an awesome battle
when Death and Life struggled.
Life won the victory
and devoured Death;
the scriptures foretold it so,
how one death gobbled up the other
and made a mockery of Death.
Alleluia!

6. Versus V

Here is the true Easter Lamb,
that God has offered;
high on the tree of the cross
it was burned in ardent love.
His blood marks our door,
faith holds it up in the face of death,
the strangler can no longer harm us.
Alleluia!

7. Versus VI

So we celebrate with heartfelt joy and pleasure
the High Feast
that the Lord for us makes manifest.

er ist selber die Sonne,
der durch seiner Gnade Glanz
erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz,
der Sünden Nacht ist verschwunden.
Halleluja!

8 8. Versus VII: Choral

Wir essen und leben wohl
in rechten Osterfladen,
der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
sein bei dem Wort der Gnaden,
Christus will die Koste sein
und speisen die Seel allein,
der Glaub will keins andern leben.
Halleluja!

Text: Martin Luther

BWV 31

Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert (1715)

9 1. Sonata

10 2. Coro

Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert
und was sie trägt in ihrem Schoß;
der Schöpfer lebt! Der Höchste triumphiert
und ist von Todesbanden los.
Der sich das Grab zur Ruh erlesen,
der Heiligste kann nicht verwesen.

He is Himself the sun,
who through the splendour of His grace
fills our hearts with light:
the night of sin has disappeared.
Alleluia!

8. Versus VII

We eat and fare well
on the true unleavened Easter bread.
The ancient leaven shall not
be with us at this time of mercy:
Christ shall be our food now,
He alone shall feed the soul,
faith would live on nothing else.
Alleluia!

BWV 31

The heavens laugh! The earth rejoices

1. Sonata

2. Chorus

The heavens laugh! The earth rejoices,
and all she bears within her womb.
The Creator lives! The Highest triumphs
and is freed from the bonds of death.
He who has chosen the grave for rest,
the Holiest One cannot decay.

11 3. Recitativo: Bass

Erwünschter Tag! Sei, Seele, wieder froh!
Das A und O,
der erst und auch der letzte,
den unsre schwere Schuld in Todeskerker setzte,
ist nun gerissen aus der Not!
Der Herr war tot,
und sieh, er lebet wieder;
lebt unser Haupt, so leben auch die Glieder.
Der Herr hat in der Hand
des Todes und der Hölle Schlüssel!
Der sein Gewand
blutrot bespritzt in seinem bitterm Leiden,
will heute sich mit Schmuck und Ehren kleiden.

12 4. Aria: Bass

Fürst des Lebens, starker Streiter,
hochgelobter Gottessohn!
Hebet dich des Kreuzes Leiter
auf den höchsten Ehrenthron?
Wird, was dich zuvor gebunden,
nun dein Schmuck und Edelstein?
Müssen deine Purpurwunden
deiner Klarheit Strahlen sein?

13 5. Recitativo: Tenor

So stehe dann, du gottergebne Seele,
mit Christo geistlich auf!
Tritt an den neuen Lebenslauf!
Auf! Von den toten Werken!
Lass, dass dein Heiland in dir lebt,
an deinem Leben merken!
Der Weinstock, der jetzt blüht,
trägt keine tote Reben!

3. Recitative

O longed-for day! O soul, be glad again!
The Alpha and Omega,
the first and also the last,
whom our great guilt cast into Death's prison
is now snatched away from distress!
The Lord was dead
and lo, He lives again;
if our head lives, then our members live too.
The Lord has in His hand
the keys of hell and death!
He whose cloak
was sprinkled blood-red in His bitter passion
will put on finery and glory today.

4. Aria

Prince of life, mighty warrior,
high exalted Son of God!
Does the ladder of the cross
raise Thee to glory's highest throne?
Will what once held Thee in bondage
now be Thy finest gem and jewel?
Must Thy wounds of purple
be the beams of Thy radiance?

5. Recitative

Rise then, O God-devoted soul,
with Christ in spirit!
Set out on life's new course!
Rise up from your dead works,
let your Saviour live in you,
to be reflected in your life!
The vine that now blooms
bears no dead grapes!

Der Lebensbaum lässt seine Zweige leben!
Ein Christe flieht
ganz eilend von dem Grabe!
Er lässt den Stein,
er lässt das Tuch der Sünden
dahinten
und will mit Christo lebend sein.

14 6. Aria: Tenor

Adam muss in uns verwesen,
soll der neue Mensch genesen,
der nach Gott geschaffen ist.
Du musst geistlich auferstehen
und aus Sündengräbern gehen,
wenn du Christi Gliedmaß bist.

15 7. Recitativo: Sopran

Weil dann das Haupt sein Glied
natürlich nach sich zieht,
so kann mich nichts von Jesu scheiden.
Muss ich mit Christo leiden,
so werd ich auch nach dieser Zeit
mit Christo wieder auferstehen
zur Ehr und Herrlichkeit
und Gott in meinem Fleische sehen.

16 8. Aria con Choral: Sopran

Letzte Stunde, brich herein,
mir die Augen zuzudrücken!
Lass mich Jesu Freudenschein
und sein helles Licht erblicken!
lass mich Engeln ähnlich sein!
Letzte Stunde, brich herein!

The tree of life lets its branches flourish!
A Christian flees
most swiftly from the grave!
He leaves the stone,
he leaves the shroud of sin
behind him
and would live with Christ.

6. Aria

Adam must decay in us
if the new man shall recover,
who is created in God's image.
You must arise in spirit
and leave sin's dark cavern,
if you are a member of Christ.

7. Recitative

Since the head by nature
takes the members with Him,
so can nothing sever me from Jesus.
If I must suffer with Christ,
so I shall, in due time,
rise again with Christ
to glory and majesty
and see God in my flesh.

8. Aria with instrumental chorale

Come, O final hour,
and close my eyes!
Let me behold Jesus' radiant joy
and his bright light,
let me be like the angels!
Come, O final hour!

17 9. Choral

So fahr ich hin zu Jesu Christ,
mein' Arm tu ich ausstrecken;
so schlaf ich ein und ruhe fein,
kein Mensch kann mich aufwecken,
denn Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
der wird die Himmelstür auftun,
mich führn zum ew'gen Leben.

Text: Salomo Franck (1-8); Nikolaus Herman (9)

9. Chorale

So I'll journey to Jesus Christ,
hold out to Him my arms;
I'll fall asleep and rest in peace,
no man shall ever wake me,
for Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
will unlock the door of heaven
and lead me to eternal life.

For Easter Monday

Epistle Acts 10:34-43

Gospel Luke 24:13-35

BWV 66

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen (1724)

Dialogue

Furcht (Alt), Hoffnung (Tenor)

18 1. Coro

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen,
entweichet, ihr Schmerzen,
es lebet der Heiland und herrscht in euch.
Ihr könnet verjagen
das Trauren, das Fürchten, das ängstliche Zagen,
der Heiland erquicket sein geistliches Reich.

19 2. Recitativo: Bass

Es bricht das Grab und damit unsre Not,
der Mund verkündigt Gottes Taten;
der Heiland lebt, so ist in Not und Tod
den Gläubigen vollkommen wohl geraten.

20 3. Aria: Bass

Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen
vor sein Erbarmen und ewige Treu.
Jesus erscheinet, uns Friede zu geben,
Jesus beruft uns, mit ihm zu leben.
Täglich wird seine Barmherzigkeit neu.

BWV 66

Rejoice, all ye hearts

Dialogue

Fear (Alto), Hope (Tenor)

1. Chorus

Rejoice, all ye hearts,
begone, all ye agonies,
the Saviour lives and governs in you.
You can dispel
the grieving, the fear, the anxious trembling,
the Saviour revives the Kingdom of the spirit.

2. Recitative

The grave is rent asunder, and thus our woe is ended,
the mouth proclaims the deeds of God;
the Saviour lives, and so in distress and death
the faithful prosper abundantly.

3. Aria

Raise to the Highest a song of thanksgiving
for His mercy and eternal faith.
Jesus appears, to give us peace,
Jesus summons us to live with Him.
His compassion is renewed each day.

**21 4. Recitativo (Dialogo)
ed Arioso (Duetto): Tenor, Alt**

Hoffnung

Bei Jesu Leben freudig sein
ist unsrer Brust ein heller Sonnenschein.
Mit Trost erfüllt auf seinen Heiland schauen
und in sich selbst ein Himmelreich erbauen,
ist wahrer Christen Eigentum.
Doch weil ich hier ein himmlisch Labsal habe,
so sucht mein Geist hier seine Lust und Ruh,
mein Heiland ruft mir kräftig zu:
'Mein Grab und Sterben bringt euch Leben,
mein Auferstehn ist euer Trost.'
Mein Mund will zwar ein Opfer geben,
mein Heiland, doch wie klein,
wie wenig, wie so gar geringe
wird es vor dir, o großer Sieger, sein,
wenn ich vor dich ein Sieg- und Danklied bringe.

Hoffnung

Mein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,
es hält ihn nicht der Tod in Banden.

Furcht

Kein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,
es hält ihn noch der Tod in Banden.

Hoffnung

Wie, darf noch Furcht in einer Brust entstehen?

Furcht

Lässt wohl das Grab die Toten aus?

Hoffnung

Wenn Gott in einem Grabe lieget,
so halten Grab und Tod ihn nicht.

Furcht

Ach Gott! der du den Tod besieget,
dir weicht des Grabes Stein, das Siegel bricht,

**4. Recitative (Dialogue)
and Arioso (Duet)**

Hope

To rejoice in the life of Jesus
brings bright sunshine to our hearts.
To look on the Saviour and be filled with solace
and to build on oneself a Kingdom of Heaven
is the hallmark of all true Christians.
But since heavenly rapture fills me here,
my soul seeks joy and rest here too,
my Saviour calls to me with powerful voice:
'My grave and death bring you life,
my Resurrection is your comfort.'
Though my mouth would bring an offering,
my Saviour, how small,
how little, how meagre
will it seem to Thee, O mighty victor,
when I bring Thee a song of thanks and victory.

Hope

My eye has seen the Saviour woken from sleep,
Death does not hold Him in bondage.

Fear

No eye has seen the Saviour woken from sleep,
Death holds Him still in bondage.

Hope

What? Can fear still arise in any breast?

Fear

Can, then, the grave render up the dead?

Hope

If God lies in a grave,
the grave and death will not constrain Him.

Fear

Ah God! Thou who dost conquer death,
the tombstone yields for Thee, the seal breaks,

ich glaube, aber hilf mir Schwachen,
du kannst mich stärker machen;
besiege mich und meinen Zweifelmuth,
der Gott, der Wunder tut,
hat meinen Geist durch Trostes Kraft gestärket,
dass er den auferstandnen Jesum merket.

22 5. Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor

Furcht

Ich fürchte zwar des Grabes Finsternissen
und klagete, mein Heil sei nun entrissen.

Hoffnung

Ich fürchte nicht des Grabes Finsternissen
und hoffete, mein Heil sei nicht entrissen.

Beide

Nun ist mein Herze voller Trost,
und wenn sich auch ein Feind erbost,
will ich in Gott zu siegen wissen.

23 6. Choral

Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!
Des solln wir alle froh sein,
Christus will unser Trost sein,
Kyrie eleis!

Text: anon.

I believe, but help my weakness,
Thou canst make me stronger;
conquer me and my doubting heart;
the God of wondrous works
has strengthened my soul with comfort's might,
that it may heed the resurrected Jesus.

5. Aria (Duet)

Fear

I feared in truth the darkness of the grave
and complained that my Salvation was torn from me.

Hope

I feared not the darkness of the grave
and hoped that my Salvation might not be torn from me.

Both

Now my heart is full of comfort,
and even though a foe should show his wrath,
I shall be triumphant in God.

6. Chorale

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
For this we shall be glad,
Christ shall be our comfort,
Kyrie eleis!

For Easter Monday

CD 2

BWV 6

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden (1725)

1 1. Coro

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden, und der Tag
hat sich geneiget.

2 2. Aria: Alt

Hochgelobter Gottessohn,
lass es dir nicht sein entgegen,
dass wir itzt vor deinem Thron
eine Bitte niederlegen:
Bleib, ach bleibe unser Licht,
weil die Finsternis einbricht.

3 3. Choral: Sopran

Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ,
weil es nun Abend worden ist,
dein göttlich Wort, das helle Licht,
lass ja bei uns auslöschen nicht.

In dieser letzt'n betrübten Zeit
verleih uns, Herr, Beständigkeit,
dass wir dein Wort und Sakrament
rein b'halten bis an unser End.

BWV 6

Abide with us, for it is toward evening

1. Chorus

Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day
is far spent.

2. Aria

Highly praised Son of God,
may it not displease Thee
that before Thy throne
we now entreat:
Abide, ah abide with us as our light,
for darkness descends.

3. Chorale

Ah, abide with us, Lord Jesus Christ,
for evening now has fallen,
Thy holy Word, the bright light,
let it not cease to shine on us!

In this final, dismal hour,
lend us constancy, O Lord,
that we Thy Word and Sacrament
keep pure until our end is nigh.

4 4. Recitativo: Bass

Es hat die Dunkelheit
an vielen Orten überhand genommen.
Woher ist aber dieses kommen?
Bloß daher, weil sowohl die Kleinen als die Großen
nicht in Gerechtigkeit
vor dir, o Gott, gewandelt
und wider ihre Christenpflicht gehandelt.
Drum hast du auch den Leuchter umgestoßen.

5 5. Aria: Tenor

Jesu, lass uns auf dich sehen,
dass wir nicht
auf den Sündenwegen gehen.
Lass das Licht
deines Worts uns heller scheinen
und dich jederzeit treu meinen.

6 6. Choral

Beweis dein Macht, Herr Jesu Christ,
der du Herr aller Herren bist;
beschirm dein arme Christenheit,
dass sie dich lob in Ewigkeit.

*Text: Luke 24:29 (1); anon. (2, 4, 5);
Nikolaus Selnecker (3); Martin Luther (6)*

4. Recitative

Darkness has prevailed
in many places.
But wherefore has this come to pass?
Simply because the lowly and the mighty
have not walked in righteousness
before Thee, O God,
and have violated their Christian duty.
Therefore hast thou removed the candlestick
out of his place.

5. Aria

Jesus, let us gaze on Thee,
that we might not
tread the paths of sin.
Let the light
of Thy Word shine more brightly upon us,
and truly signify Thee always.

6. Chorale

Prove Thy might, Lord Jesus Christ,
O Thou who art the Lord of Lords;
shield Thy poor Christendom,
that all Christians might praise Thee eternally.

For Easter Tuesday

Epistle Acts 13:26-33

Gospel Luke 24:36-47

BWV 134

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß (1724)

7 1. Recitativo: Tenor, Alt

Tenor

Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß,
empfindet Jesu neue Güte
und dichtet nur auf seines Heilands Preis.

Alt

Wie freuet sich ein gläubiges Gemüte.

8 2. Aria: Tenor

Auf, Gläubige, singet die lieblichen Lieder,
euch scheint ein herrlich verneuetes Licht.

Der lebende Heiland gibt selige Zeiten,
auf, Seelen, ihr müsset ein Opfer bereiten,
bezahlet dem Höchsten mit Danken die Pflicht.

9 3. Recitativo: Tenor, Alt

Tenor

Wohl dir, Gott hat an dich gedacht,
o Gott geweihtes Eigentum;
der Heiland lebt und siegt mit Macht
zu deinem Heil, zu seinem Ruhm
muss hier der Satan furchtsam zittern
und sich die Hölle selbst erschüttern.
Es stirbt der Heiland dir zugut

BWV 134

A heart that knows its Jesus to be living

1. Recitative

Tenor

A heart that knows its Jesus to be living
feels Jesus' new kindness
and meditates only on his Saviour's worth.

Alto

How happy is a believing soul.

2. Aria

Arise, believers, sing the sweet songs,
a glorious new light shines on you.

The living Redeemer bestows on you blessed times;
arise, you souls, you must prepare an offering
and pay your obligation to the Highest with thanks.

3. Recitative

Tenor

How fortunate are you, God has thought of you,
who are God's hallowed property;
the Saviour lives and conquers with might
to bring you salvation; to His glory
Satan must now fear and tremble,
and hell itself be shaken.
The Saviour dies for your sake

und fähret vor dich zu der Höllen,
sogar vergießet er sein kostbar Blut,
dass du in seinem Blute siegst,
denn dieses kann die Feinde fällen,
und wenn der Streit dir an die Seele dringt,
dass du alsdann nicht überwunden liegst.

Alt

Der Liebe Kraft ist vor mich ein Panier
zum Heldenmut, zur Stärke in den Streiten:
Mir Siegeskronen zu bereiten,
nahmst du die Dornenkrone dir,
mein Herr, mein Gott, mein auferstandnes Heil,
so hat kein Feind an mir zum Schaden teil.

Tenor

Die Feinde zwar sind nicht zu zählen.

Alt

Gott schützt die ihm getreuen Seelen.

Tenor

Der letzte Feind ist Grab und Tod.

Alt

Gott macht auch den zum Ende unsrer Not.

10 4. Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor

Wir danken und wir preisen dein brünstiges Lieben
und bringen ein Opfer der Lippen vor dich.

Der Sieger erwecket die freudigen Lieder,
der Heiland erscheinet und tröstet uns wieder
und stärket die streitende Kirche durch sich.

and for your sake journeys to hell;
He even sheds His precious blood
that you might conquer in His blood,
for this can overcome the enemy,
and when the struggle threatens your soul,
will cause you not to be vanquished.

Alto

The power of love is for me a banner
for heroism, for strength amid the struggle.
To fashion for me the conqueror's crown
Thou didst accept the crown of thorns,
my Lord, my God, my risen Saviour,
thus can no enemy now ever harm me.

Tenor

Though the enemy be numerous.

Alto

God protects the souls that are faithful to Him.

Tenor

The last enemy is the grave and death.

Alto

God fashions that too to end our distress.

4. Aria (Duet)

We thank and praise Thee for Thy fervent love
and with our lips bring Thee an offering.

The victor utters songs of joy,
the Saviour appears and comforts us still
and strengthens the disputing church
through Himself.

11 5. Recitativo: Tenor, Alt

Tenor

Doch würke selbst den Dank in unserm Munde,
in dem er allzu irdisch ist;
ja schaffe, dass zu keiner Stunde
dich und dein Werk kein menschlich Herz vergisst;
ja, lass in dir das Labsal unsrer Brust
und aller Herzen Trost und Lust,
die unter deiner Gnade trauen,
vollkommen und unendlich sein.
Es schließe deine Hand uns ein,
dass wir die Wirkung kräftig schauen,
was uns dein Tod und Sieg erwirbt,
und dass man nun nach deinem Auferstehen
nicht stirbt, wenn man gleich zeitlich stirbt,
und wir dadurch zu deiner Herrlichkeit eingehen.

Alt

Was in uns ist, erhebt dich, großer Gott,
und preiset deine Huld und Treu;
dein Auferstehen macht sie wieder neu,
dein großer Sieg macht uns von Feinden los
und bringet uns zum Leben;
drum sei dir Preis und Dank gegeben.

12 6. Coro

Erschallet, ihr Himmel, erfreue dich, Erde,
lobsinge dem Höchsten, du glaubende Schar.

Es schauet und schmecket ein jedes Gemüte
des lebenden Heilands unendliche Güte,
er tröstet und stellet als Sieger sich dar.

Text: anon.

5. Recitative

Tenor

But make us offer up thanks,
that are now too earth-bound;
and see to it, that a mortal heart
at no time forgets Thee and Thy work;
yea, let the comfort of our breast,
and the joy and solace of every heart
that trust in Thy mercy
be perfect and unending in Thee.
May Thy hand embrace us,
that we may clearly perceive what
Thy death and victory gain for us,
that we, after Thy resurrection,
do not die, though we die in life,
and that we thereby enter Thy glory.

Alto

All that is in our power exalts Thee, mighty God,
and praises Thy grace and faith;
Thy resurrection has renewed these things,
Thy great victory frees us from our enemies
and brings us into life;
may praise, therefore, and thanks be given Thee.

6. Chorus

Ring out, ye heavens, rejoice, O earth,
all praise to the Highest, O faithful throng.

Each soul sees and tastes
our living Saviour's infinite kindness,
as a victor He comes, and comforts us.

BWV 145

Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen (?1729)

13 1. Aria (Duetto): Tenor, Sopran

Jesus (Tenor), Seele (Sopran)

Jesus

Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen,
mein Leben erhebet dein Leben empor.

Seele

Du lebest, mein Jesu, zu meinem Ergötzen,
dein Leben erhebet mein Leben empor.

Beide

Die klagende Handschrift ist völlig zerrissen,
der Friede verschaffet ein ruhig Gewissen
und öffnet den Sündern das himmlische Tor.

14 2. Recitativo: Tenor

Nun fordre, Moses, wie du willst,
das dräuende Gesetz zu üben,
ich habe meine Quittung hier
mit Jesu Blut und Wunden unterschrieben.
Dieselbe gilt,
ich bin erlöst, ich bin befreit
und lebe nun mit Gott in Fried und Einigkeit,
der Kläger wird an mir zuschanden,
denn Gott ist auferstanden.
Mein Herz, das merke dir!

BWV 145

I live, O heart, for your delight

1. Aria (Duet)

Jesus (Tenor), Soul (Soprano)

Jesus

I live, O heart, for your delight,
my life raises up your life.

Soul

Thou livest, O Jesus, for my delight,
Thy life raises up my life.

Both

The handwriting of ordinances is blotted out,
peace now brings a quiet conscience
and opens to sinners the gate of heaven.

2. Recitative

Now order us, Moses, as you will,
to practise the threatening law,
I have my receipt here,
signed with the blood and wounds of Jesus.
And it holds good:
I am redeemed, I am set free
and live now with God in peace and unity;
the plaintiff shall be thwarted by me,
for God has arisen.
My heart, remember this!

15 3. Aria: Bass

Merke, mein Herze, beständig nur dies,
wenn du alles sonst vergisst,
dass dein Heiland lebend ist;
lasse dieses deinem Gläuben
einen Grund und Feste bleiben,
auf solche besteht er gewiss.
Merke, meine Herze, nur dies.

16 4. Recitativo: Sopran

Mein Jesus lebt,
das soll mir niemand nehmen,
drum sterb ich sonder Grämen.
Ich bin gewiss
und habe das Vertrauen,
dass mich des Grabes Finsternis
zur Himmelsherrlichkeit erhebt;
mein Jesus lebt,
ich habe nun genug,
mein Herz und Sinn
will heute noch zum Himmel hin,
selbst den Erlöser anzuschauen.

17 5. Choral

Drum wir auch billig fröhlich sein,
singen das Halleluja fein
und loben dich, Herr Jesu Christ;
zu Trost du uns erstanden bist.
Halleluja!

Text: Picander

3. Aria

Remember but this, my heart, forever,
though you forget all else,
that your Saviour is alive;
let this be a firm foundation
for your belief,
for on this it shall stand secure.
Remember but this, my heart.

4. Recitativo

My Jesus lives,
no-one shall take this from me,
and so I shall die without grieving.
I am assured
and have trust
that the darkness of the grave
shall raise me to heaven;
my Jesus lives,
I am now satisfied,
my heart and mind
shall even today go up to heaven
to gaze on the Redeemer

5. Chorale

Thus we are justly cheerful,
singing our fine Alleluia
and praising Thee, Lord Jesus Christ;
Thou art arisen to comfort us.
Alleluia!

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Katharine Arken *oboe*

Being in the churches in East Germany brings tears to my eyes. When I was a child we lived in West Germany, but on the Eastern border; my aunt lived in the East, so I grew up knowing the restrictions, and sometimes we heard shots across the border. My mother was often sad as it was very difficult to go over to visit relatives. My father was a Lutheran pastor, so I was aware of the church situation in the East. I had played in a concert in Eisenach in 1989, on the day their money was changed to Western currency; sitting in the same church in 2000 and now having access to churches we had not had access to before, where you know religion had not really been accepted, was extremely moving. I think the whole orchestra had a similar reaction to playing there.

It was a powerful experience to play such sad music before Easter, and then on Easter Sunday to experience this explosion of joy and life – I sound like a very religious person, but I'm not really! I sometimes wonder if religious music is the most profound music we have because it is written with the deepest feelings of love a composer can experience. And I wonder whether we can really express that because religion doesn't have the same role for us any more. We are not so afraid of God. Yet on the pilgrimage everyone was driven by the same spirit. John Eliot played a big role in this. I was deeply moved by how profoundly he got into the music. Music is a non-verbal activity; it makes strings vibrate in your heart. If you have a conductor with similar 'strings' it makes you give a lot more than you might otherwise, which is very rewarding as a player. To meet a conductor and other musicians who have similar musical souls –

things then suddenly happen. There was such a desire to do everything right; to understand what the words meant, where the stresses of the words were, even when we were to perform in England. I didn't do that many concerts, but those I did had a deep effect on me. I felt that the project brought out the very best in me and in the other performers. The players stood by me and supported me as I went through some very personal experiences that year, as we heard we would be able to adopt a little boy. This music touches on life and death, the meaning of life and renewal; we all grow up when exposed to this culture.

The pilgrimage turned into quite a spiritual experience, but it didn't necessarily change my playing. I've played for twenty years and I grew up singing Bach in children's choirs. However, the pilgrimage changed the way I think about the cantatas, so maybe that does change the way I play, but it is difficult to articulate – it is nothing as simple as changing the sound I make. As a result of the pilgrimage we thought back much more to how it would have been in Bach's day. There were passages that were very difficult, if not impossible – I'm thinking of the trumpets in BWV 66 No.1 – we were all sweating blood for them! John Eliot pushed that tempo to the limit. He is not interested in the difficulties of the instruments, which is absolutely right. It doesn't matter if there are technically awkward passages: if the music demands it, that's how it should be played. If you play and sing a lot of Bach you have these effects up your sleeve, but it's so nice when someone asks for them, saying yes, that's right, more please: it's difficult and challenging to produce them, but it's good.

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Suzanne Flowers
Angharad Gruffydd
Jones
Gillian Keith
Donna Deam
Nicola Jenkin
Belinda Yates

Altos

David Clegg
Richard Wyn Roberts
William Towers
Lucy Ballard

Tenors

Rory O'Connor
Paul Tindall
Nicolas Robertson
Iain Rhodes

Basses

Noel Mann
Richard Savage
Christopher Dixon
Paul im Thurn

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Kati Debretzeni
Penelope Spencer
Rebecca Livermore
Debbie Diamond

Second Violins

Lucy Howard
Roy Mowatt
Andrew Roberts
Desmond Heath

Violas

Katherine McGillivray
Rosemary Nalden
Lisa Cochrane
Colin Kitching

Cellos

David Watkin
Lynden Cranham

Double Bass

Judith Evans

Flute

Rachel Beckett

Oboes

Katharina Arken
Mark Baigent
Richard Earle

Bassoon

Alastair Mitchell

Trumpet

Niklas Eklund

Organ

Howard Moody

CD 2 52:13 For Easter Monday

1-6 19:17 Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden BWV 6

For Easter Tuesday

7-12 23:57 Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß BWV 134

13-17 8:58 Ich lebe, mein Herze, zu deinem Ergötzen BWV 145

Angharad Gruffydd Jones *soprano*, Daniel Taylor *alto*
James Gilchrist *tenor*, Stephen Varcoe *bass*

The Monteverdi Choir
The English Baroque Soloists
John Eliot Gardiner

Live recording from the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage
Georgienkirche, Eisenach, 24-25 April 2000

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