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Academy
of Music

2016

Royal Academy of Music/
Kohn Foundation
Bach Cantata Series

J. S. Bach.

How to book

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Sean Rafferty on BBC Radio 3 ‘In Tune’

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Opens at 10am on Tuesday 6th October 2015
from www.ram.ac.uk/bach
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Opens at 10am on Tuesday 6th October 2015
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Book for at least four concerts and save 10%
Book for at least six concerts and save 20%
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Our Box Office is open for telephone and personal bookings from Monday to Friday, 10am–4pm. We now have a telephone queuing system: please hold the line as it continues to ring, as your call will be answered as soon as the previous customer’s transaction has been completed.

Each cantata concert begins at midday and lasts around one hour. The Academy’s restaurant will be open for light refreshments from 10.30am until the start of each concert.

We do not charge any fees for Box Office bookings.

The Royal Academy of Music is where many leading musicians learn their trade. Our student community is truly international, representing more than fifty countries. The Academy’s wide range of concerts and events includes jazz, opera, musical theatre, twenty-first-century music and historical performance.

Royal Academy of Music

Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT
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The eighth year of a major series celebrating Bach’s magnificent works in concert

‘Don’t miss the Royal Academy of Music’s outstanding Sunday lunchtime series surveying all of Bach’s cantatas’

The Times

‘A wonderful sense of binding intimacy... surely a glimpse of heaven’

Evening Standard

‘A satisfying spiritual start to the day... The performance was a model of vitality, concentration and period authenticity’

The Sunday Times



The Principal's Welcome

Welcome to the eighth year of our epic Bach cantata voyage. If you are already a regular supporter — or if you've read the enthusiastic reports about these performances in the press — you'll know that this ambitious series of concerts has become an integral part of life both at the Academy and in the London musical scene. We are now well past half-way in our travels through the complete sacred and secular choral works of JS Bach, and each year seems to confirm more radiantly than ever an unparalleled journey of richness for performer and audience alike.

We do not follow a strict liturgical path when deciding which works to programme throughout the year: this is a concert series designed for the broadest church of belief. To these monthly concerts we welcome people from far and wide. Audiences

range from musicians who have a profound knowledge of the cantatas to those hearing this music for the first time. We know that most listeners fall into this second category — which makes the whole project particularly thrilling as performer and audience experience the bulk of the music without preconceptions. It seems especially appropriate to hold these events in an environment of discovery where young performers can explore the cantatas in such a fresh, spirited and communicative way.

The distinguished violinists Rachel Podger, Madeleine Easton and Margaret Faultless form the select roster of leaders in our historical band which has, with the choral group, developed a remarkably vibrant and dynamic 'house style', at one with the intimacy and warmth of the Duke's Hall and yet also relishing the lyrical and dramatic ambitions of our exceptional director Iain Ledingham.

We are delighted to welcome distinguished Dutch keyboard player and conductor Ton Koopman as guest director for November's performance, at which he will be presented with the Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize, supported by the Kohn Foundation

The installation in 2013 of the spectacular Sir Elton John/ Ray Cooper Organ provides an opportunity to extend a few of our programmes by adding one of Bach's incomparable works for solo organ. Our February, March and May audiences are the beneficiaries in the 2016 season.

We also continue to ring the changes by incorporating a couple of concerts played on modern instruments, in celebration of Bach's continuing inspiration to performers of many different traditions.

No other institution in the country is as steeped in Bach as the Royal Academy of Music, where we have been introducing his music to new audiences since our very early days in the 1820s. The tradition continues thanks to the remarkable commitment of the teachers, students and visiting artists of the Academy and — crucially central to its perpetuation — the close involvement, collaboration and generosity of Sir Ralph Kohn and the Kohn

Foundation. All good schemes are a team effort but the Kohns (regular attenders from three generations of the family) are rare birds in the collective pride they feel in giving such unparalleled joy through their inspired support for this mighty project.

Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood
Principal



Photo: Rachel Podger, Masaaki Suzuki and Bachians from the Royal Academy of Music and Juilliard School after performing at Leipzig's Thomaskirche in June 2015, pictured in Bach's organ loft with Sir Ralph Kohn, Professor Christoph Wolff and the Principal.

The Cantatas: 2016 at a glance

All performances start at midday in the Academy's Duke's Hall and last around one hour

SUNDAY 17 JANUARY

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele II, BWV 143
Praise the Lord, O my soul II

Laßt uns sorgen, laßt uns wachen, BWV 213
Let us take care, let us watch

SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY

Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt, BWV 18

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven

Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV 548, for solo organ

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele, BWV 69a
Bless the Lord, O my soul

SUNDAY 20 MARCH

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170
Contented rest, beloved inner joy

Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit, BWV 669, for solo organ

Concerto in C (after Johann Ernst, Prince of Weimar), BWV 595, for solo organ

Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209
He knows not what sorrow is

SUNDAY 24 APRIL

Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit, BWV 111
May my God's will always be done

Was frag ich nach der Welt, BWV 94
Why enquire after the world

Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig, BWV 26
Ah how fleeting, ah how trifling

SUNDAY 22 MAY

Der Friede sei mit dir, BWV 158
Peace be unto you

Fugue in E flat, BWV 552, for solo organ

Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd!, BWV 208
The merry hunt is all that I love!

SUNDAY 26 JUNE

Gott ist mein König, BWV 71
God is my King

Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe, BWV 156
I stand with one foot in the grave

Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn, BWV 119
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem

SUNDAY 02 OCTOBER

Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 33
In Thee alone, Lord Jesus Christ

Wohl dem, der sich auf seinen Gott, BWV 139
Happy is he who can trust his God

Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz, BWV 138
Why are you troubled, my heart?

SUNDAY 06 NOVEMBER

Schauet doch und sehet, ob irgendein Schmerz sei, BWV 46
Behold and see, if there be any sorrow

Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53
Haste to strike, oh longed for hour

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!, BWV 190
Sing unto the Lord a new song!

SUNDAY 04 DECEMBER

Ich freue mich in dir, BWV 133
I rejoice in Thee

Nur jedem das Seine!, BWV 163
To each only his due!

Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen, BWV 248v
Glory be to Thee, O Lord (Christmas Oratorio Part 5)

www.ram.ac.uk/bach

17 JANUARY 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele II, BWV 143
Laßt uns sorgen, laßt uns wachen, BWV 213

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director

Rachel Podger leader

Performed on historical instruments

'Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele II' induces some curiosity amongst scholars due to its uncertain origins and its unique scoring for three horns and drums. Although the text is unambiguously assembled from Psalm 146 and a 1601 hymn by Jakob Ebert, the music is problematic to date and hard to indubitably attribute to JS Bach in entirety. Featuring uncharacteristically simple harmonies and structures in the choruses, and yet presenting intricate, complex ritornello themes and a typically Bachian tenor aria, this cantata for New Year is intriguing.

Written for the eleventh birthday of the Crown Prince of Saxony, BWV 213 was first performed on 5th September 1733 in Zimmermann's coffee garden by Bach and his Collegium Musicum. This secular cantata praises the House of Saxony: the young prince is compared with Hercules, who meets the allegorical figures of Pleasure and Virtue at a crossroads. They tempt him to follow their differing paths, and the cantata follows Hercules as he learns to find the most worthy road in life. Richly scored for an ensemble including horns and oboe d'amore, this cantata contains music that Bach later used in his Christmas Oratorio.



21 FEBRUARY 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt, BWV 18
Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV 548*
Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele, BWV 69a

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader
Joseph Beech organ*

Performed on modern instruments



Originating from 1713 and his Weimar years, BWV 18 is one of Bach's early cantatas. The popular libretto comes from Erdmann Neumeister's 1711 Eisenach cantata cycle. The poet skilfully weaves a large proportion of liturgical text into a particularly pictorial narrative which likens the fruitfulness of God's word on earth to the fertility and goodness that rain and snow bring to the ground, and warns the congregation against Satan's worldly traps and snares. Bach's setting masterfully illustrates this beguiling imagery throughout the cantata. Bach performed BWV 18 in Leipzig eleven years after its premiere, when he added two recorders to the original ensemble of four violas, bassoon and basso continuo. Although the musical material remains unchanged, perhaps the revision enhances the pastoral associations of the text. It is upon this later version that today's performance is based.

The highly jubilant and exuberant opening chorus of 'Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele' is nothing if not celebratory and radiant as Bach calls upon three trumpets, three oboes, strings and timpani to sing praise to God in a double fugue. Written originally for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity in Leipzig 1723, Bach rescored material from this cantata multiple times, most notably in 1748 to celebrate the council elections – a rare example of Bach reusing religious music for secular occasions. The anonymous text of the cantata refers to the Gospel of Mark as it praises God's constant presence in our earthly life and revels in his ability to restore hearing to a deaf mute man. The subsequent movements of the cantata take a more personal and intimate turn through tenor and bass arias with humble obbligato woodwind lines.

20 MARCH 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170
Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit, BWV 669*
Concerto in C (after Johann Ernst, Prince of Weimar), BWV 595*
Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader
James Orford organ*

Performed on historical instruments

'Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust' is one of only two surviving cantatas for the sixth Sunday after Trinity. First performed in July 1726, it is a highly original cantata for a solo alto voice. Through Lehms's text, the modestly scored cantata tells of a world full of sin and perversion that the repentant Christian may be relieved from when he is received into Heaven. The cantata reaches its climax in the third movement where the alto sings of those souls who have lost the path to God. With breath-taking tension, Bach removes the basso continuo line from beneath the feet of these ungrounded souls and, for the first time in his sacred cantata repertory, gives the organ an obbligato line during an aria.

Although BWV 209 is also set for a solo (this time, soprano) voice, the musical contrast between these two cantatas could not be greater. One of only two sister cantatas with an Italian text, 'Non sa che sia dolore', this is a lighthearted, charming and Italianate bouquet of

movements. The text, from a collection of poems and opera libretti by Giovanni Battista Guarini and Pietro Metastasio, follows a scholar as he returns by wind and waves to Ansbach after his travels. The energetic and virtuosic flute obbligato lines alongside a sinfonia which is reminiscent of the B minor Orchestral Suite suggest that the cantata may have been written around 1724 when Bach had contact with an exceptional flautist.



24 APRIL 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit, BWV 111
Was frag ich nach der Welt, BWV 94
Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig, BWV 26

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director
Madeleine Easton leader

Performed on historical instruments

The buoyant chorale cantata BWV 111 was composed for the third Sunday after Epiphany in January 1725. The text draws on a hymn by Duke Albrecht of Prussia alongside biblical passages about finding comfort in submission to the will of God. The centrepiece of the work is a determined and confident dance-like duet for alto and tenor with flashes of violin passagework and grounded pedal notes to reflect mankind's spirited steps as he walks with God to death.

In an exploration of human nature, 'Was frag ich nach der Welt' is a chorale cantata of much variety. Like many of the Leipzig cantatas from 1724, BWV 94 has an active flute part in the opening chorus fantasia — and indeed the flute and oboes d'amore play a vital role throughout. The text is based on a hymn by Balthasar Kindermann and, beginning with unflinching joy, the cantata progresses through despairing lamentation, loyalty and steadfastness, to purity and searching optimism.

Perhaps the positive and swirling opening movements of 'Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig' are unexpected given the topic of Michael Franck's thirteen-verse hymn, but Bach's setting is a masterpiece of insightful figuration. The text for BWV 26, reduced into only six verses, describes the melancholy demise of earthly treasures in our all-too-fast progression through life. The opening sinfonia and tenor aria are exceptional depictions of nature through melodic invention, and the final bass aria employs three oboes in an enticing yet macabre dance towards death.



22 MAY 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Der Friede sei mit dir, BWV 158
Fugue in E flat, BWV 552*
Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd!, BWV 208

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader
Graham Thorpe organ*

Performed on modern instruments

Although reaching us as fragmented performance material, and almost certainly incomplete, 'Der Friede sei mit dir' is a mysterious work of aching beauty. The date and context for the cantata is uncertain and it is possible that the outer movements were intended for Easter services whilst the inner movements seem to date from an earlier Purification cantata. The bass aria tells of the weary but peaceful wait for Heaven. A wandering, almost ethereal solo violin circles around the voice, while oboe and soprano distantly echo the sentiment in an unadorned chorale.

'Sheep may safely graze' is perhaps one of Bach's most cherished cantata arias, and indeed it has a charm that emanates from much of 'Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd!'. A cantata of homage dating from 1713, the work is amongst Bach's earliest secular cantatas and it was performed after a hunt given to celebrate the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels. The librettist Salomo Franck took hunting as a theme for the plot, and the mythological characters of Diana, Endymion, Pan and Pales congratulate and praise the Prince on his rule in endearing arias that are highly characterised by horns, oboes, recorders and strings.



26 JUNE 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Gott ist mein König, BWV 71
Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe, BWV 156
Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn, BWV 119

VENUE Duke's Hall

TICKETS £14 (concessions £11), season discounts available. Book from Tuesday 6th October 2015: By telephone 020 7873 7300 and in person (Monday–Friday, 10am–4pm) Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham conductor
Madeleine Easton leader

Performed on modern instruments

'Gott ist mein König', written in 1708 to celebrate the election of a new council in Mühlhausen, is the earliest of Bach's five council election cantatas. The cantata's text begins with an emphatic cry of 'God is my King' before discussing growth, rebirth and the progression of old to new. Bach's intriguing setting calls upon a large ensemble and the structural peculiarities of the cantata, which exhibits neither recitatives nor complete arias, demonstrate the ingenuity and creativity of the twenty-three-year-old composer.



For the third Sunday after Epiphany 1729, Bach chose text from Picander's 1728 cantata cycle alongside a closing chorale by Johann Schein in an intimate and haunting chamber cantata. The brief text of BWV 156 unfolds the moments before death: Bach characterises the joy of release and the peaceful serenity of time as it stands still alongside physical suffering. The familiar sinfonia for solo oboe sets the tone.

Again written for a council election, 'Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn' celebrates the Leipzig elections in August 1723. The text praises and thanks God and the council for their protection and asks for continuing support. Unmistakably ceremonial in its mature choruses, Bach employs a French overture to begin the cantata and punctuates the movement with entries from a heraldic choir of four trumpets. The excitement and pacing in the way that Bach orchestrates and structures BWV 119 can surely not have failed to make a statement during his first months in Leipzig!

02 OCTOBER 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 33
Wohl dem, der sich auf seinen Gott, BWV 139
Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz, BWV 138

VENUE Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Performed on historical instruments

The relationship between the text that Bach selected for 'Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ' and the Gospel for the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity on which it was performed is not a particularly obvious one. The words are concerned with the familiar theme of sin and redemption, as the sinner confesses to God and asks not to be cast away. The central alto aria depicts the sinner's stepping in a pizzicato string accompaniment, while a somewhat angular violin melody hints at the sinner's trepidation and regret and also the warmth that he finds in forgiveness.

The text for BWV 139 combines a hymn by Johann Christoph Rube with biblical text (Matthew 10:16) to exemplify that, although mankind is surrounded by trial, danger and sinful temptation, God's word and love will protect those who are faithful. The cantata's instrumentation and soothing melodic material focus on God's love rather than the dangers that the text describes, and the listener only glimpses fear and trial during the uniquely structured bass aria.

On 5th September 1723, the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, the Leipzig congregation heard an unusual cantata in 'Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz'. Although written a year before Bach's cycle of chorale cantatas, this work

is based on an omnipresent hymn attributed to Nuremberg, which seeks to bring comfort to the desperate and suffering individual. Whilst the music mostly focuses on the melancholic despair of the text, the chorale gently intervenes in various forms until we begin to feel comfort as the bass rejoices in a warm aria.



06 NOVEMBER 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Schauet doch und sehet, ob irgendein Schmerz sei, BWV 46
Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!, BWV 190

VENUE Duke's Hall

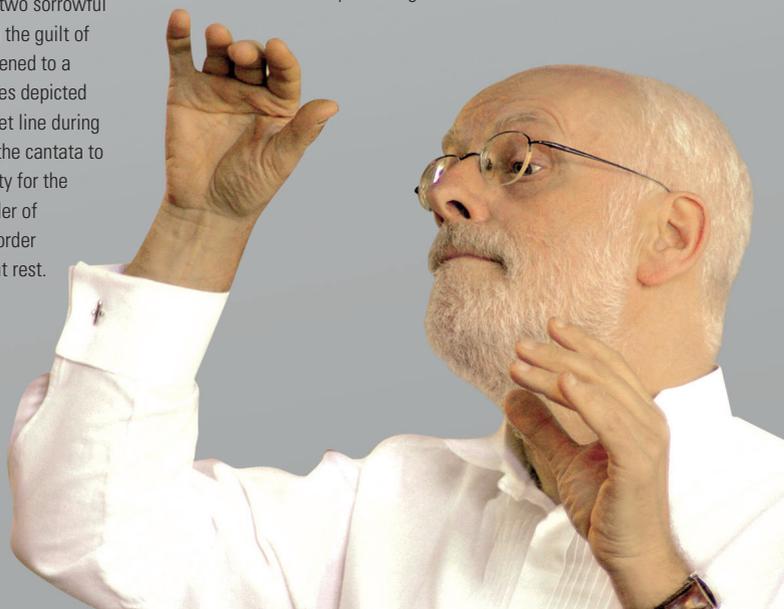
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Ton Koopman guest director
Margaret Faultless leader

Performed on historical instruments

Ton Koopman is the 2014 winner of the Academy's Bach Prize, presented in association with the Kohn Foundation.

BWV 46, a work of great musical drama composed during Bach's first Leipzig summer of 1723, vividly represents the Gospel for the tenth Sunday after Trinity. It tells how Jesus's tears, brought to mind by two sorrowful recorders, were unable to redeem the guilt of Jerusalem. God's judgement is likened to a sudden storm, with lightning strikes depicted in dotted string parts and a trumpet line during the bass aria. Bach gently brings the cantata to a more stable and pastoral sonority for the alto aria but it ends with a reminder of the earlier drama, as whirling recorder lines refuse to leave the chorale at rest.



The beautiful and unusual aria for solo alto 'Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde' was originally classified as BWV 53 and attributed to Bach as a funeral cantata aria. However, musicologists now believe that the aria may have been composed by Melchior Hoffmann (1679–1715). Although both musicians resided in Leipzig for large proportions of their careers, Bach did not arrive in the city until eight years after Hoffmann's death. The text reflects on the moment of death with longing anticipation. A gently tolling bell is peculiar to this haunting aria.

Bach's first Leipzig cantata to celebrate the New Year came in 1724 and its unequivocally joyful text includes passages from Luther's German Te Deum, psalm texts, and the New Year hymn 'Jesu, nun sei gepreiset' by Johannes Herman. The music is incomplete; however, the surviving parts leave enough material for plausible reconstruction, and a relentlessly joyful cantata emerges with trumpets ceremonially adorning the final chorale.

04 DECEMBER 2016
SUNDAY MIDDAY

Ich freue mich in dir, BWV 133
Nur jedem das Seine!, BWV 163
Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen, BWV 248v (Christmas Oratorio Part 5)

VENUE Duke's Hall

TICKETS £14 (concessions £11), season discounts available. Book from Tuesday 6th October 2015: By telephone 020 7873 7300 and in person (Monday–Friday, 10am–4pm)
Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Performed on historical instruments

At the bottom of the score for Bach's 1724 six-part Christmas Sanctus lies a jotted-down melody which takes centre-stage as the chorale tune for 'Ich freue mich in dir', composed for the third day of Christmas in the same year. The chorale melody which forms the basis for this cantata is set to text from a hymn by Caspar Ziegler. The cantata is uplifting as the text focuses on the personal joy that the birth of Jesus and the word of God brings to Christians. Bach's setting is fairly modest for a celebratory cantata but joyful warmth is evident throughout, with only a slight shadow passing as the soprano painfully considers those who are not touched by the birth of Christ.

Closely linked to the Gospel for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, Salomo Franck's text for BWV 163 pronounces that, if we owe the sovereign taxes and duties, we owe God the greatest gift of all: our hearts. The text pauses to wonder what we can offer God, especially when our hearts may no longer be pure. Comparing the heart to a counterfeit coin that has been made dull (damaged by Satan), the text is an exploration of true and false, pure and damaged, sin and virtue. It has been suggested that these dualisms apparent in the text could have been inspiration for Bach's unusual scoring for two obbligato cellos during the bass

aria, vocal duets, and even for the melodic exchanges that occur in the opening aria.

Although the scoring is modest, the fifth cantata in the Christmas Oratorio perhaps contains some of its most joyous and cheerful music. Bach chose to write an entirely new opening chorus for this cantata to celebrate the Sunday after New Year, and it is as radiant as the guiding star that the text describes. The narrative turns from outward light to the internal hope that our hearts might too be illuminated, and Bach creates intricate and winding obbligato parts for the violin and oboe d'amore. This section is the only one in the oratorio to finish with a simple, plainly harmonized, chorale.



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