

Royal Academy of Music /
Kohn Foundation
Bach Cantata Series



Royal
Academy
of
Music

J. S. Bach.

The Cantatas 2012

The fourth year of a major series celebrating Bach's magnificent works in concert and on historical instruments



Sir John Eliot Gardiner, 25th March



Georg Christoph Biller with the Thomanerchor Leipzig, 11th March

'The perfect Sunday lunch for any Bach lover'
The Times

'The Bach Cantata series at the Royal Academy of Music offers London audiences a marvellous new opportunity to hear such masterpieces, many of them rarely heard. I know from my recent experience at the Academy that these talented singers and instrumentalists will produce outstanding results'
Sir John Eliot Gardiner

'The Royal Academy of Music /Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series has become one of the highlights of the London concert calendar... repeatedly affirms both the promise of young musicians, and the continually renewing inspiration of Bach's genius... performed with stunning virtuosity'
Musical Opinion

'The Academy is internationally known and recognised as representing the highest values of music and musical society'
Daniel Barenboim

Royal Academy of Music / Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series presented through the generosity and vision of the Kohn Foundation

Welcome to the fourth year of our epic Bach cantata voyage. If you are already a regular supporter, you'll know that this ambitious series of concerts has become an integral part of the London musical scene. By the end of this calendar year we will have performed close on a half of the complete sacred and secular choral works of JS Bach. Each year seems to confirm more radiantly than ever an unparalleled journey of richness for both performer and audience.

What delight we have in choosing which of the wonderful array of cantatas to perform during the course of the year! There are also interesting questions about how best to position them in 'relief', or even in 'friction', with each other. Since Bach seems to traverse the complete gamut of human experience, seeking both unity of expression and contrast in the juxtaposition of cantatas becomes an absorbing exploration. There's considerable creative leeway because we've deliberately not followed a strict liturgical path; this is a concert series designed for the broadest church of belief. There are other pragmatic decisions, too, as we take care not to release at once too many familiar cantatas, solo pieces, or works from the same period of Bach's creative life. And there are other concerns, such as not bunching together too many works of similar scoring, texture or stylistic and seasonal traits.



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 experiencing this music for the first time. We know that most listeners fall into this second category, and therefore it seems especially appropriate to hold these events in an environment where young performers are discovering 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 'period' 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. Following concerts in 2010 and 2011 with modern instruments (notably Peter Schreier's Easter Oratorio performance last January), we've decided to incorporate a couple of such concerts a year. This, we believe, reflects the perennial relevance of Bach to performers of different traditions and instrumental backgrounds, and introduces an increasing number of Academy students to Bach's music.

We are also pleased to welcome two guest artists for this season's programme. In March, we will hear the Thomanerchor Leipzig under Bach's successor, and its Cantor, Georg Christoph Biller, winners of the Royal Academy of Music / Kohn Foundation Bach Prize for 2011; and in the same month our performers will be directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner (Bach Prize winner in 2008) whose compelling 'pilgrimage' of cantatas in 2000 has recently been released on CD to widespread acclaim. There are few more perspicacious Bachians than Sir John Eliot.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood
Principal

Es wartet alles auf dich, BWV 187

These wait all upon Thee

Widerstehe doch der Sünde, BWV 54

Stand firm against all sinning

Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, BWV 12

Weeping, wailing, fretting, fearing

Midday Duke's Hall

*Tickets £11 (concessions £8),
season discounts available
Book now: telephone 020 7873 7300
or www.ram.ac.uk/bach*

Iain Ledingham director
Madeleine Easton leader

'Es wartet alles auf dich' was first performed in Leipzig in 1726, on the seventh Sunday after Trinity; but the text bears relationship with harvest thanksgiving as well as with the appointed Gospel reading which recounts the feeding of the five thousand. As so often in Bach's cantatas the musical focal point lies in the superbly crafted opening chorus with its extended instrumental ritornellos and contrapuntal vocal writing. We may confidently conjecture that Bach himself thought highly of this work since a few years later he parodied not only its opening chorus but also three further movements in his 'short' Mass in G minor (BWV 235).

Bach's autograph score of 'Widerstehe doch der Sünde' has not survived but it is likely that the cantata was first performed at Weimar in 1714 during Lent. The work is scored for solo alto voice with strings and continuo and begins with an aria of striking harmonic boldness and melodic beauty. Its dissonances and affective diminished sevenths imprint themselves at once in our memory, colouring with originality the almost unremittingly severe text.

'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen' was first performed at Leipzig during the Easter season of 1724. Like many of the cantatas which Bach produced for his first Leipzig Easter the music goes back to his time as Music Director at the Weimar court. The cantata begins with a poignant Italianate Sinfonia for solo oboe with strings leading to a chorus which has become better known in its parodied version as the 'Crucifixus' of the B minor Mass.



Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch, BWV 86

Verily, verily I say unto you

Schleicht, spielende Wellen, und murmelt gelinde!, BWV 206

Glide, O sparkling waves and murmur softly!

Midday Duke's Hall

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season discounts available
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Iain Ledingham director
Madeleine Easton leader

'Wahrlich, wahrlich, ich sage euch' belongs to Bach's first Easter festival at Leipzig, in 1724. This modestly proportioned and lightly scored cantata begins with a movement for bass solo containing Christ's words 'Verily, verily I say unto you. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name He will give it you'. Bach presents it as a triple fugue with string accompaniment. Among striking features to be found elsewhere are a florid Italianate violin obbligato which enlivens the picturesque textual imagery of the alto aria, a chorale accompanied by two playful oboes d'amore, and a warmly expressive aria for tenor.

'Schleicht, spielende Wellen' was composed in 1734 as part of the birthday celebrations for Friedrich Augustus the Second who had succeeded his father as Elector of Saxony and King of Poland in the previous year. It was two years later, though, before Bach first performed this splendid 'dramma per musica', on the same Elector's birthday. The text rather unpromisingly concerns a vacuous dispute between the four rivers of the countries under Augustus's rule. It hardly need be said that Bach's music soars above this unlikely panegyric, and nowhere more so, perhaps, than in the robust, swaggering polonaise in which the Vistula, which flows through Warsaw, pays obsequious homage to her new ruler.



Sunday 11th March

Motette Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf, BWV 226

The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness

Concerto for Oboe, Strings and Continuo in F minor, BWV 1056

Aus Schemellis Gesangbuch: Dir, dir, Jehova, BWV 452

To thee, Jehovah

Aus Schemellis Gesangbuch: Gott lebet noch, BWV 461

God still lives

Alles mit Gott und nichts ohn' ihn, BWV 1127

Everything with God and nothing without him

Motette Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!, BWV 225

Sing unto the Lord a new song!

Midday Duke's Hall

Tickets £15 (concessions £10),

season discounts available

Book now: telephone 020 7873 7300

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Thomanerchor Leipzig

Georg Christoph Biller director

Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra

Margaret Faultless director

The Thomanerchor Leipzig, which in 2012 celebrates the 800th anniversary of its foundation, shares this very special all-Bach concert with the Academy's Baroque Orchestra.



Thomanerchor Leipzig

Leipzig's famous boys' choir is paying this rare visit to London as the latest recipients of the Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize. This prestigious prize, sponsored by the Kohn Foundation, is presented annually to recognise an outstanding contribution to the performance and/or scholarly study of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Professor Christoph Wolff, who was himself awarded the Prize in 2006, commented: 'This represents a wonderful recognition of what is one of the oldest and continuously active performing ensembles in the world, whose one-time conductor was none other than JSB himself. This honours him posthumously!'



Sunday 25th March

04/05

Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott, BWV 101

Take from us, Lord, Thou faithful God

O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort, BWV 20

O eternity, O word of thunder

Midday Duke's Hall

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With guest conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Rachel Podger leader

Bach first performed his 'Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott' at Leipzig on the tenth Sunday after Trinity in 1724. Its text is based on a hymn by Martin Moller. The hymn's associated melody, 'Vater unser im Himmelreich' features in all but the second of the work's seven movements. The prevailing mood of the cantata is one of austerity and this is established in its powerful, motet-like opening chorale fantasia, richly scored for trombones, cornett, flute, two oboes, oboe da caccia, strings and basso continuo.

With his performance at Leipzig in 1724 of 'O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort' Bach inaugurated his impressive and original cycle of chorale-based cantatas. The librettist based his text on Johann Rist's seventeenth-century hymn from whose imposing first line the cantata takes its name. Justice, repentance and the implications of eternity are the central tenets of this spaciouly laid out work. Bach's declamatory opening chorale fantasia is cast in the form of a French overture in which the voices take part both in the characteristic introductory and concluding 'Grave' and in the centrally placed, fugal 'Vivace'. Later on Bach vividly illustrates the Last Judgement with ringing trumpet calls.

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her, BWV 9

Salvation has come to us

Die Elenden sollen essen, BWV 75

The meek shall eat

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Although the scheme which Bach adopted for 'Es ist das Heil uns kommen her' is that which he applied with such consummate brilliance to the chorale-based cantatas of his second annual Leipzig cycle, the piece was not composed until the early to mid-1730s. The opening chorale fantasia is a subtle one whose concerto-like treatment is lent particular charm by Bach's translucent scoring for flute, oboe d'amore and strings. An unusual feature lies in the scoring for bass voice of all three recitatives, emphasising a strand of continuous narrative.

The two arias are strongly contrasted; one for tenor with solo violin is rich in word painting, while the other, a duet for soprano and alto, is coloured by flute and oboe d'amore.

'Die Elenden sollen essen' is the first cantata which Bach performed after his appointment as Leipzig's music director and Kantor of the Thomasschule. He directed it on the first Sunday after Trinity in 1723 'to good applause', just a week or so after he and his family had arrived in the city. Bach was clearly out to please as well as to impress his new audience, and it would seem that he gained their approval. The opening chorus, with oboes and strings, begins with a slow, rhythmical section leading to a faster fugal one somewhat in the manner of a French overture.

An analogy with the French overture-suite perhaps could be extended to embrace the arias, too, which are cast in varying dance metres.

'An epoch-making opportunity to hear some of Bach's greatest and least familiar music complete, as if you were part of a uniquely privileged congregation... prompt booking is recommended'
Country Life



Erschallet, ihr Lieder, erklinget, ihr Saiten!, BWV 172

Resound, ye songs, ring out, ye strings!

Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen, BWV 32

Beloved Jesus, my desire

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren, BWV 137

Praise the Lord, the mighty King of honour

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

'Erschallet, ihr Lieder' was first performed during Whitsun at Weimar, in 1714. Bach revived it with revisions on at least three further occasions at Leipzig. All versions of this resplendent cantata feature dazzling trumpet writing, which is notably on display in the two identical choruses which frame the piece, and in the bass aria whose Trinity-related text is underlined by three-strand trumpet texture. A tenor aria and a duet for soprano and alto provide reflective contrast with their more extrovert neighbours.

'Liebster Jesu, mein Verlangen' was first performed at Leipzig in 1726 during Epiphany. It is cast as a dialogue between Jesus (bass) and the Soul (soprano), and begins with a lyrical aria for soprano with oboe obbligato, strings and continuo. A spaciouly-proportioned bass aria is accompanied by an obbligato violin while, in a duet which is dance-like in character, Jesus and the Soul are united.

'Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König' was first performed at Leipzig in August 1725 during the Trinity season. Its text is based on a hymn by Joachim Neander, whose melody occurs in every movement of Bach's cantata. This jubilant work begins with a chorus accompanied by trumpets, drums, oboes, strings and continuo. The second movement, in which the alto sings a decorated version of the hymn melody accompanied by an obbligato violin, is of particular charm.



Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen, BWV 66

Rejoice, all ye hearts

Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147

Heart and mouth and deed and life

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

'Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen' takes its place among the cantatas which Bach performed in 1724 during his first Easter festival at Leipzig. Its music, though, goes back to his time at Cöthen when he performed it, with a secular text, for the birthday of his musically enlightened employer, Prince Leopold. The richly orchestrated and joyful opening chorus sets the prevailing mood of the work, where bright keys and dance rhythms predominate. Among arresting features is a virtuoso violin obbligato accompanying a duet for alto and tenor.

*'A wonderful sense of
binding intimacy... surely
a glimpse of heaven'*
Evening Standard

'Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben', in its extended Leipzig form dates from July 1723 when Bach performed it on the Feast of the Visitation. Yet, like the other cantata in the programme, much of its music was composed earlier in his life: the opening chorus and at least three of its four arias originally belonged to an Advent cantata for the Weimar court chapel in 1716. Splendid though the opening chorus undoubtedly is, it is the chorale settings that conclude the two parts of the work which steal the show. Popularly known as 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring', the choir declaims hymn verses around which Bach has woven an independent accompaniment in lilting quavers.



Geist und Seele wird verwirret, BWV 35

Spirit and soul become confused

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, BWV 98

What God doth, is well done

Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot, BWV 39

Deal thy bread to the hungry

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

'Geist und Seele wird verwirret' is a Trinity cantata which Bach performed at Leipzig in 1726. While the scoring for an alto voice with oboes, strings, continuo and obbligato organ is modest, the dimensions of this lyrical piece are certainly not. As well as three extended arias, Bach prefaced each of the Cantata's two parts with fully worked-out concerto movements for woodwind, strings and solo organ.

'Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan' is the second of three cantatas that Bach wrote incorporating part of the text of a seventeenth-century hymn. While the other two works substantially share the same music in their opening choruses, the present piece has only the title and its associated chorale melody in common. Performed at Leipzig in 1726 during Trinity, this is the most modestly proportioned of the three cantatas, calling for an ensemble of oboes, strings and continuo.

'Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot' was first performed at Leipzig in 1726 on the first Sunday after Trinity. Its tenderly expressive opening chorus is a fantasia of concerto-like character, scored for treble recorders, oboes and strings. In this masterly movement an initial idea, in which the two wind groups and the strings answer one another, leads to an elaborate fugue. This is one of several cantatas in which Bach seems to have embraced a layout favoured by his cousin Johann Ludwig at Meiningen.



Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland I, BWV 61

Come now, Saviour of the gentiles I

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62

Come now, Saviour of the gentiles II

Schwingt freudig euch empor, BWV 36

Soar joyfully aloft

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Bach wrote the earlier of his two cantatas 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland' in 1714. He had recently been promoted to the rank of Konzertmeister at the Weimar court, and was required to compose and perform a church cantata once a month. This work was written for Advent Sunday and incorporates the first verse of Martin Luther's German version of the hymn 'Veni, redemptor gentium'. Two of its most striking features lie in a French overture with its chorally treated fugal section, and an accompanied bass recitative containing the words of Christ in direct speech, for which Bach provides memorable word-painting.

Almost exactly ten years after he had composed his Weimar cantata Bach once more turned to Luther's Advent hymn. He performed this 'Num komm, der Heiden Heiland' at Leipzig on Advent Sunday, 1724. Perhaps less fêted nowadays than the Weimar piece, it is nevertheless a varied and inventive cantata whose opening chorus is punctuated by playful orchestral ritornellos which emphasise the joyful spirit underlying the beginning of the Church year. A fervently expressed accompanied recitative for soprano and alto voices is affecting in its tender intimacy.

The complex history of 'Schwingt freudig euch empor' suggests that Bach held it in high regard. In its final form he performed it at Leipzig on Advent Sunday, 1731, and Bach again made provision for Luther's Advent hymn. The lively opening movement is a vocally imitative chorus with oboes d'amore, strings and continuo. Of the work's three arias the last, for soprano with muted violin obbligato, in which echo-like figures play a prominent role, is of particular allure.

**'A superb new concert series
which promises to form a
highlight of London's musical
calendar... book early!'
Music and vision daily**



Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir, BWV 29

Unto Thee, O God, do we give thanks

Falsche Welt, dir trau ich nicht!, BWV 52

False world, I do not trust you!

Weihnachts-Oratorium 'Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage', BWV 248i

Christmas Oratorio 'Rejoice, be glad! Come, praise the days!'

Midday Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Madeleine Easton leader

With 'Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir', Bach was fulfilling one of the multifarious tasks expected of him as Leipzig's 'director musices': the provision and performance of a festival cantata for the election each August of a new town council. Bach first performed this piece in 1731, introducing it with a highly original and richly orchestrated 'parody' of the E major Prelude for unaccompanied violin. Trumpets, drums, oboes and strings provide a resplendent backdrop for a dazzling organ obbligato, whose right hand plays the solo violin line of the Prelude. Bach reworked the first chorus of the cantata for the 'Dona nobis pacem' of the Mass in B minor.

'Falsche Welt, dir trau ich nicht' belongs to Bach's third Leipzig cantata cycle and was first performed late in the Trinity season of 1726. He scored it for soprano solo, introducing a four-part vocal texture only for the concluding chorale. It begins, though, with an extended orchestral sinfonia, more familiar as the first movement of Brandenburg Concerto No.1 in F major. Of the work's two arias the second is especially appealing for its light-hearted vocal line and its gratifying woodwind texture of three oboes and bassoon.

Bach composed his Christmas Oratorio for the Leipzig Christmas festival of 1734-35. Although the Oratorio is cast in six autonomous parts, Bach has nevertheless achieved a unified work within itself. Each of its parts can be performed separately and with complete propriety — as Bach did himself. Part One is scored for trumpets, drums, flutes, oboes, oboes d'amore and strings and is chiefly concerned with the Nativity. The Evangelist tells the story while arias, duets and trios for the soloists along with choruses and chorales (perhaps for the congregation to join in) meditate upon the events taking place.



Sundays in Marylebone

The Academy's building is just across Marylebone Road from Marylebone Village.

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Marylebone Farmers' Market takes place on Sundays from 10am to 2pm. Fresh seasonal flowers, fruits and foods are the order of the day.

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www.marylebonevillage.com



'Preparing and performing the Bach Cantatas is one of the great privileges of being a musician. Doing so with the Academy's talented and passionate young musicians enriches the experience still further. This is an extraordinary project — a great gift to our cultural well-being'
Margaret Faultless, performer and tutor

How to Book

12/13

**General booking opens
at 10am on Monday
3rd October 2011**

**Buy online at any time:
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Tickets for 11th March: £15
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All other concerts: £11
(concessions £8)

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discounts:**

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concerts and save 20%

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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.

Box Office

The Academy's Box Office is open for telephone and personal bookings from Monday to Friday, 10am–12 noon and 2–4pm. Answering service at all other times. Credit cards are accepted with a small booking fee. You can buy online at any time: www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Discover more

You can find more about the Academy's history of Bach performances at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

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 'period' performance.

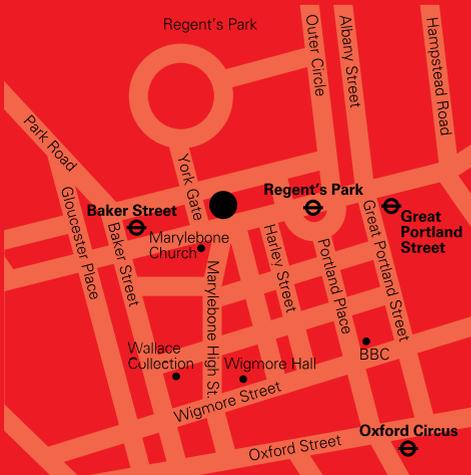
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