



2010 Bach

THE COMPLETE CHORAL CANTATAS



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BWV 65: Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen
BWV 127: Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott
BWV 143: Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele

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Was mein Gott will, g'scheh allzeit



What God resolves will He achieve.
His will is perfect ever.
He succors all who firm believe
And for the best endeavour.
Our help in need, our God indeed,
With gentle moderation
He chastens us, so Him we trust,
We need not fear damnation.

If now, o Lord, it pleases Thee
To take me in Thy keeping,
Protect Thou me and let this be
'til I in death am sleeping;
My heart and soul do Thou control;
They are of thy creation
So all my days I sing thy praise
In heartfelt adoration.



BWV 65: SIE WERDEN AUS SABA ALLE KOMMI

1. Chor

*Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen, Gold und Weihrauch bringen
und des Herren Lob verkündigen.*

2. Choral

Die Kön'ge aus Saba kamen dar,
Gold, Weihrauch, Myrrhen brachten sie dar,

3. Recitativ B

Was dort Jesaias vorhergesehen,
Das ist zu Bethlehem geschehn.
Hier stellen sich die Weisen
Bei Jesu Krippe ein
Und wollen ihn als ihren König preisen.
Gold, Weihrauch, Myrrhen sind die köstlichen Geschenke,
Womit sie dieses Jesuskind
Zu Bethlehem im Stall beehren.
Mein Jesu, wenn ich itzt an meine Pflicht gedenke,
Muß ich mich auch zu deiner Krippe kehren
Und gleichfalls dankbar sein:
Denn dieser Tag ist mir ein Tag der Freuden,
Da du, o Lebensfürst,
Das Licht der Heiden und ihr Erlöser wirst.
Was aber bring ich wohl, du Himmelskönig?
Ist dir mein Herze nicht zuwenig,
So nimm es gnädig an,
Weil ich nichts Edlers bringen kann.

4. Arie B

Gold aus Ophir ist zu schlecht,
Weg, nur weg mit eitlen Gaben,
Die ihr aus der Erde brecht!
Jesus will das Herze haben.
Schenke dies, o Christenschar,
Jesu zu dem neuen Jahr!

5. Recitativ T

Verschmähe nicht, du, meiner Seele Licht,
Mein Herz, das ich in Demut zu dir bringe;
Es schließt ja solche Dinge
In sich zugleich mit ein,
Die deines Geistes Früchte sein.
Des Glaubens Gold, der Weihrauch des Gebets,
Die Myrrhen der Geduld sind meine Gaben,
Die sollst du, Jesu, für und für
Zum Eigentum und zum Geschenke haben.
Gib aber dich auch selber mir,
So machst du mich zum Reichsten auf der Erden;
Denn, hab ich dich, so muß
Des größten Reichtums Überfluß
Mir dermaleinst im Himmel werden.

6. Arie T

Nimm mich dir zu eigen hin,
Nimm mein Herze zum Geschenke. Alles, alles, was ich bin,
was ich rede, tu und denke,
Soll, mein Heiland, nur allein
Dir zum Dienst ewiglich sein.

1. Chorus

*They will all come forth out of Sheba, bringing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.*

2. Chorale

The kings came out of Sheba,
they brought gold, incense, myrrh along,

3. Recitative B

What Isaiah prophesied there
has happened in Bethlehem.
Here the wise men stand
next to Jesus' manger
and mean to praise him as their King.
Gold, incense, and myrrh are the precious gifts,
with which they honor this Jesus-child
in a stable in Bethlehem.
My Jesus, when I think about my duty now,
I must also turn to Your manger
and likewise be thankful:
for this day is a day of joy for me,
since You, o Prince of Life,
have become a light to the heathens and their Savior.
But what could I present to You, heaven's King?
If my heart is not too insignificant for You,
then accept it graciously,
since I can offer nothing more noble.

4. Aria B

Gold from Ophir is too meager;
away, away with vain gifts
that you mine from the earth!
Jesus wants to have your heart.
Offer this, o Christian throng,
to Jesus for the new Year!

5. Recitative T

Do not scorn, o You the light of my soul,
my heart, that I bring to You in humility;
it contains such things
within itself
that are the fruits of Your spirit.
The gold of faith, the incense of prayer,
the myrrh of patience are my gifts,
that You shall have, Jesus, for ever and ever
as Your due and as my offering.
Only give Yourself also to me,
then You will make me the richest one on earth;
for, having You,
the abundance of the greatest kingdom
must some day be mine in Heaven.

6. Aria T

Take me to Yourself as Your own,
take my heart as a present.
All, all that I am, what I say, do, and think,
shall alone, my Savior,
be dedicated to Your service.

7. Choral

Ei nun, mein Gott, so fall ich dir
Getrost in deine Hände.
Nimm mich und mach es so mit mir
Bis an mein letztes Ende,
Wie du wohl weißt, daß meinem Geist
Dadurch sein Nutz entstehe,
Und deine Ehr je mehr und mehr
Sich in ihr selbst erhöhe.

7. Chorale

Well now, my God, so I settle
comforted into Your hands.
Take me and make it so for me
until my final end
as You best know, so that my spirit
is developed through its purpose,
and Your honor more and more
shall exalt itself.

BWV 127: HERR JESU CHRIST, WAHR' MENSCH UND GOTT

1. Choral

Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott,
Der du litt'st Marter, Angst und Spott,
Für mich am Kreuz auch endlich starbst
Und mir deins Vaters Huld erwarbst,
Ich bitt durchs bit't're Leiden dein:
Du wollst mir Sünder gnädig sein.

1. Chorale

Lord Jesus Christ, true Man and God,
You who suffered martyrdom, anguish and ridicule,
at the end also died for me on the Cross
and won for me Your Father's favor,
I ask, through Your bitter suffering:
Be merciful to me, a sinner.

2. Rezitativ T

Wenn alles sich zur letzten Zeit entsetzet,
Und wenn ein kalter Todesschweiß
Die schon erstarrten Glieder netzet,
Wenn meine Zunge nichts, als nur durch Seufzer spricht
Und dieses Herze bricht:
Genung, daß da der Glaube weiß,
Daß Jesus bei mir steht,
Der mit Geduld zu seinem Leiden geht
Und diesen schweren Weg auch mich geleitet
Und mir die Ruhe zubereitet.

2. Recitative T

When everything shudders at the last hour,
and when a cold death-sweat
bathes limbs already stiff,
when my tongue cannot speak other than through sighs
and this heart breaks:
Enough, that faith knows then
that Jesus stands with me,
He who endured His suffering with patience
accompanies me also on this difficult journey
and prepares my rest for me.

3. Arie S

Die Seele ruht in Jesu Händen,
Wenn Erde diesen Leib bedeckt.
Ach ruft mich bald, ihr Sterbeglocken,
Ich bin zum Sterben unerschrocken,
Weil mich mein Jesus wieder weckt.

3. Aria S

The soul rests in Jesus' hands,
when earth covers this body.
Ah, call me soon, you death-knell,
I am unafraid of death,
because my Jesus will awaken me again.

4. Rezitativ und Arie B

Wenn einstens die Posaunen schallen,
Und wenn der Bau der Welt
Nebst denen Himmelsfesten Zerschmettert wird zerfallen,
So denke mein, mein Gott, im besten;
Wenn sich dein Knecht einst vors Gerichte stellt,
Da die Gedanken sich verklagen,
So wollest du allein,
O Jesu, mein Fürsprecher sein
Und meiner Seele tröstlich sagen:
Fürwahr, fürwahr, euch sage ich:
Wenn Himmel und Erde im Feuer vergehen,
So soll doch ein Gläubiger ewig bestehen.
**Er wird nicht kommen ins Gericht
Und den Tod ewig schmecken nicht.**
Nur halte dich,
Mein Kind, an mich:
Ich breche mit starker und helfender Hand
Des Todes gewaltig geschlossenes Band.

4. Recitative and Aria B

When one day the trumpets ring out,
and when the structure of the world
along with the vault of heaven will crumble destroyed,
then think of me well, my God;
when Your servant stands that day before judgment,
where thoughts accuse themselves,
then will You alone,
O Jesus, be my Advocate
and speak comfortingly to my soul:
Truly, truly I say to you:
Though heaven and earth pass away in fire,
yet a believer shall remain forever.
**He will not come before judgment
and never taste death.**
Only cling,
my child, to Me:
I break, with a strong and helping hand,
the powerful, imprisoning bond of death.

5. Choral

Ach, Herr, vergib all unsre Schuld,
Hilf, daß wir warten mit Geduld,
Bis unser Stündlein kömmt herbei,
Auch unser Glaub stets wacker sei,
Dein'm Wort zu trauen festiglich,
Bis wir einschlafen seliglich.

5. Chorale

Ah, Lord, forgive all our misdeeds,
help us to wait with patience
until our hour comes upon us;
also may our faith be always brave,
trusting Your word firmly,
until we fall asleep contentedly.

BWV 143: LOBE DEN HERRN, MEINE SEELE

1. Chor

Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele.

1. Chorus

Praise the Lord, my soul.

2. Choral S

Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ,
Wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott,
Ein starker Nothelfer du bist
Im Leben und im Tod;
Drum wir allein
Im Namen dein
Zu deinem Vater schreien.

2. Choral S

O Prince of peace, Lord Jesus Christ,
true human and true God,
You are a strong helper in need
in life and in death.
Therefore only
in Your name
do we cry to Your Father.

3. Rezitativ T

*Wohl dem, des Hülfe der Gott Jakob ist, des Hoffnung auf dem
Herrn, seinem Gotte, stehet.*

3. Recitative T

*It is fortunate for him, whose help the God of Jacob is, whose hope is
placed in the Lord, his God.*

4. Arie T

Tausendfaches Unglück, Schrecken,
Trübsal, Angst und schneller Tod,
Völker, die das Land bedecken,
Sorgen und sonst noch mehr Not
Sehen andre Länder zwar,
Aber wir ein Segensjahr.

4. Aria T

Thousand-fold misfortune, terror,
trouble, fear, and rapid death,
people who overrun the land,
cares and even yet more anguish
other countries see indeed,
but we a blessed year.

5. Arie B

Der Herr ist König ewiglich, dein Gott, Zion, für und für.

5. Aria B

The Lord is King eternally, your God, Zion, for ever and ever.

6. Arie (mit instr. Choral) T

Jesu, Retter deiner Herde,
Bleibe ferner unser Hort,
Daß die Jahr uns glücklich werde,
Halte Wacht an hedem Ort.
Führ, o Jesu, deine Schar
Bis zu jenem neuen Jahr.

6. Aria (with instr. Chorale) T

Jesus, saver of Your flock,
remain our treasure in the future;
so that the year may be fortunate for us,
keep watch in every place.
Lead, o Jesus, Your followers
to this new year.

7. Choral

Halleluja.
Gedenk, Herr, jetzund an dein Amt,
Daß du ein Friedfürst bist,
Und hilf uns gnädig allesamt
Jetzund zu dieser Frist;
Laß uns hinfort
Dein göttlich Wort
Im Fried noch länger schallen.

7. Chorale

Hallelujah.
Think, Lord, at this time on Your office,
that You are a Prince of peace,
and graciously help us all together
now and at this moment;
let us henceforth
speak Your divine word
yet longer in peace.

PROGRAMME NOTES

BWV 65: Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen

Epiphany (6 January) is the end of the Christmas season. It marks the arrival of the three kings at the manger, where they present their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. As we have found so many times in Luther's theology—and in Bach's interpretation of that theology—the biblical story is then meant to be reenacted in the life of the believer. In the case of Epiphany, that means that the Christian is similarly meant to present gifts—in this case, a faithful heart.

Bach wrote BWV65 for Epiphany 1724. He had been Thomaskantor for about eight months; this cantata comes from his first *Jahrgang*, or annual cycle of cantatas. The opening movement of BWV65 finds its greatest parallel in the opening of BWV1, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, which Bach would write for the Annunciation in March 1725. In a liturgical sense, the work of the Annunciation—in which Gabriel appears to Mary to tell her that she will bear God's son—is completed in Epiphany, when the magi arrive to worship the prophesied king. So it is not surprising that they share musical characteristics, as the “morningstar” from the Annunciation becomes the star that guides the three kings at Epiphany. In both cases, the opening movement is set in 12/8, the metre of the pastorale associated with the shepherds and the manger. Both choruses also use horns to represent the kingship, as well as oboes da caccia (cor anglais) to represent the shepherds. In BWV65, Bach uses a pair of flutes to represent the star, whereas in BWV1, he uses a solo concertante violin. There are two arias in both cantatas: although the first aria in BWV1 is sung by a soprano, and in BWV65 is sung by a bass, both are accompanied by the oboe da caccia. In both cantatas, the second aria is a minuet for tenor.

The opening movement of BWV65 is a stunning musical depiction of the three kings' arrival in Bethlehem. The rising scalar theme in a stately 12/8 metre gives the opening section a processional feel, as do the canonic entries first of the different instrument families, and later the voice parts in canon. Following the opening processional material, the choir begins a vocal fugue. The theme itself is a quasi-inversion of the opening processional theme. This highly lyrical, rocking fugue subject is joined by a countersubject to the text “bringing gold and frankincense and praising the Lord.” Once the instruments join the singers, Bach develops a complex yet always lyrical fugue. He closes the movement by recapitulating the opening instrumental ritornello. In a technique known as *Vokaleinbau*, this time Bach grafts vocal parts onto the original instrumental material. The very short chorale that follows is a setting of the 1545 Latin chorale *Puer natus in Bethlehem*, a hymn that was sung in Leipzig at Epiphany.

In the bass recitative that follows, the unidentified librettist draws the connection between the wise men presenting their gifts at the manger and the imperative for the individual believer to “likewise turn to thy manger and be thankful.” The theological message of Epiphany is then articulated, both in the recitative and in the bass aria that follows, perhaps best expressed by the English poet Robert Herrick in 1647: “Christ, He requires still, wheresoe'er He comes,/ To feed, or lodge, to have the best of rooms:/ Give Him the choice; grant Him the nobler part/ Of all the house: the best of all's the heart.” In his aria, the bass eschews costly gifts, exemplified by “gold from Ophir”, the land from which Solomon collected gold. Bach uses the opening motive

throughout the movement, not only in the bass solo, but also in canonic imitation between the two oboes da caccia and continuo. The semi-quavers, sequences and musical repetition, though certainly attractive, represent the “empty gifts” in the libretto. Instead, when Bach sets the text “Jesus wants to have the heart”, the oboes drop out momentarily—the true gift is one of simplicity of heart, not the complexity of counterpoint.

If the bass recit-aria pair concerns what God requires from His people in worshipping the baby in the manger, then the tenor recit-aria pair is the believer's answer. In the recitative, the tenor pledges his heart, offering his own kingly gifts: the gold of faith; frankincense of prayer and myrrh of patience. In the beautiful aria that follows, the tenor pledges all that he has to God. The choir of a minuet represents royalty; from its emergence in the French court of the 1660s, particularly in the hands of Lully, the minuet was closely associated with nobility and royalty. The rising sixth in the opening motto is a musical illustration of man offering upwards to God; the filigree of the rising demi-semi-quavers echo the idea of frankincense burning upwards as a prayer offering. Even the vocal coloratura near the end of the aria, more ornamental than melodic, echoes the idea of offering. As we saw in the first movement, there is a great deal of concerto-like interplay between the different sections of the full orchestra—horns, flutes, oboes da caccia, strings and continuo.

The closing chorale verse, set in typical 4-part homophonic style, is from the chorale *Was mein Gott will, das G'scheh allzeit*, which Bach uses many times for the cantatas from the season between Epiphany and Lent. Perhaps this is a nod towards the coming change in liturgical season, where we often encounter the theme of following God's will regardless of the price to be paid. But we haven't left Epiphany entirely yet: the star remains, in the flutes, who play the chorale melody an octave above the rest of the ensemble.

BWV 127: Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott

The great Bach cantata scholar Alfred Dürr has written that Bach's cantatas composed for Estomihi, the last Sunday before Lent, seem to have been given special attention by the composer. “Almost all (with the possible exception of the ‘test piece’, BWV22, which was hastily prepared for Leipzig) bear the mark of specially high artistic skill.” Certainly, the placement of Estomihi in the church calendar is important; since there was no concerted church music during Lent, it was the final opportunity for a choral-orchestral work until Palm Sunday. This Sunday also marked the turning point towards the Crucifixion. In the gospel reading for the day, Jesus tells the disciples that they are going to Jerusalem so that the prophecies about him might come to pass. As they pass Jericho, a blind man cries out “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Earlier this year, we performed BWV22 and 23 on the same programme. In these cantatas, which were composed for Estomihi 1723, Bach concentrated more explicitly on the gospel story, using the blind man to represent the Christian who calls out in faith for God's mercy. In 1725, the year in which BWV127 was performed (11 February), Bach had embarked on a year-long cycle of cantatas that were largely based on chorales. BWV127 was based on

Paul Eber's 1562 funeral chorale *Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott*. We hear the first and last stanzas of that chorale in the opening and closing of this cantata; the other stanzas of the chorale were reworked to provide the text of the inner movements. Though not directly connected to the gospel of the day, the text is appropriate for the shift towards Jerusalem and the Crucifixion, and there are still veiled references to the day's gospel.

Dür's observations about the high quality of the composition are certainly borne out in the first movement, an elaborate chorale-prelude on the Eber hymn. The opening bar of the chorale is omnipresent throughout the movement; there are only a handful of bars (10 out of 80) in the entire movement in which the music for "Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God" doesn't appear in either the instruments or the voices. In the opening ritornello, Bach blends three elements: that melodic motive (or "motto") from the chorale; a dotted-rhythm descending ostinato figure; and the hymn tune *Christe, du Lamm Gottes*, the German *Agnus Dei*. Although the instrumentation is split into groups—the recorders (played here on flute), oboes and strings—the material is shared around rather than being identified with one group of instruments only. Each element has theological significance. The chorale motto refers to the name of Christ—the ability for the Christian to recognise Jesus as God, as the blind man did in the day's gospel. Surely it is significant that in a gospel story in which Jesus "calls the twelve" together, that motto is heard *eleven* times in the introduction—Judas, who betrays Jesus by not acknowledging him as God, is pointedly not musically included. The issue of the name of God is extremely important in Bach's *St John Passion*, with its recurrent use of the word *Herr*. That setting had been performed the previous year in Leipzig. In BACH 2010, we recently saw the same inexorable use of a chorale motto throughout a chorale-prelude for the same reason—the naming of God—in BWV123, *Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen*, which Bach had written less than a month earlier in 1725 for Epiphany. The jagged rhythm of the ostinato—dotted semi-quavers followed by demi-semi-quavers—is also found in the Passions, most notably in the aria "Komm, süßes Kreuz" from the *St Matthew Passion*. The many lines in the note stems are a visual representation of the cross. And finally, the use of the German *Agnus Dei*, with which Bach closed BWV23 two years earlier, is an echo of the blind man's call for Jesus' mercy. These elements are intertwined throughout the chorale-prelude. When the voices enter, the lower three parts sing short phrases based on the chorale's opening motto, while the soprano sings the entire chorale melody in augmentation.

It becomes obvious from the tenor recitative that the chorale text upon which this cantata is based was a reflection on the nature of death. The imagery is striking, with lines like "when the cold sweat of death moistens my already stiffened body" and "when my tongue can only groan". But in this recitative and in the extraordinary soprano aria which follows, the believer associates their death with Jesus' own death, and the thought that He has gone ahead—to prepare a place allows the Christian to die in peace: "Call me, soon, ye bells of death—I am not terrified of dying, because my Jesus shall awaken me again." Although the instrumentation of the soprano aria (oboe solo accompanied by two staccato recorders) is highly unusual, it is not without precedent. In the *St John Passion*, the soprano lament *Zerfließe mein Herze* is accompanied by flute and oboe da caccia, and though there is no staccato accompaniment, the texture is still very sparse. Even more like the BWV127 aria is the soprano aria during the crucifixion scene in the *St Matthew Passion*, in which the flute is accompanied by staccato oboes da caccia. Perhaps BWV127 is the model for that later composition, in which the continuo is entirely abandoned. In this aria, the rhapsodic oboe melody winds around the staccato recorders and pizzicato cello. The melodic material is largely based on the opening theme. In the B

section, the strings enter, representing the bells of death with pizzicato chords that continually shift position between root position and inverted chords. Bach used this technique the previous year in his setting of *Herr wie du willst*, BWV73. In that cantata's bass aria, Bach accompanies the word *Leichenglocken*, "funeral bells" with the same bell-like pizzicato string representation.

The bass recitative/aria that follows is equally profound. The believer has moved from the deathbed to the Judgment Day; in the introductory section of this movement, the trumpet sounds the fanfare at the end of time and the *conciato* string accompaniment depicts earth and heaven shattering into pieces. Following this introduction, there are three sections, each of which is divided into two parts: the *vox Christi*, voice of Christ, in lyrical arioso accompanied by continuo; and the voice of judgment, accompanied again by trumpet and *conciato* strings, this time in 6/8. In this section, Christ promises that those who stand in faith will not be harmed by the apocalypse. In the calmer arioso sections, Bach repeatedly quotes the chorale motto heard so many times in the first movement, again representing the faith of those who call upon the true name of Jesus.

The cantata closes with a straightforward four-part setting of the last verse of the chorale. But even here, Bach's genius is evident in little harmonic touches. The tenor and bass reach upwards for "valiant faith"; the alto has a series of slurred quavers for "Thy word to trust firmly", and the setting of "until we blessedly fall asleep" at the end features a highly chromatic descending bass line.



BWV 143: Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele

The job of identifying and cataloguing the music of J.S. Bach is not as straightforward as one might think. Very little of Bach's music was published in his lifetime, and when he died, the bulk of his library was divided between his two eldest sons, Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Phillip Emanuel. Although C.P.E. Bach proved to be a faithful steward of his father's legacy, W.F. Bach sold his inheritance for survival. Those WFB manuscripts have spread far and wide, often ending up as incomplete sets. It is because of this, as well as lack of proper attribution on the manuscripts in Bach's library, that there have been numerous works initially identified as Bach's in the original Bach-Gesellschaft complete edition that we now realise are the works of other composers. One of the most famous examples of this is Cantata 142, *Uns ist ein Kind geboren*, one of the few "Bach cantatas" to have remained in the repertoire throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Unfortunately, we understand now that it is not by Bach at all, but probably by his predecessor in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau.

BWV 143, though considered spurious by some scholars, is holding onto its authenticity by its fingernails. Certainly, there are some characteristics of this cantata that are atypical of Bach's cantatas. The movements are quite short; there is only one recitative, which is very short and not particularly expressive; there are three arias in a row; except for the two tenor arias, the texts are either chorales or biblical, rather than poetic; and although there are 3 horns, there are no oboes, which are always present otherwise when brass instruments are used. But the BACH 2010 audience will not jump to a conclusion too quickly; in our last concert, we heard three of Bach's earliest cantatas, so we know that Bach's early output used a vast range of forms and compositional techniques. BWV182 had short movements; BWV4 had no recitative; BWV182 had three arias in a row; BWV4 was based entirely on a chorale, with no poetic text at all; and if four violas can be used as the entire ensemble in BWV18, then any instrumentation is

possible! It is possible, then, that BWV143, which was written for New Year's Day, is simply a very early cantata, with all of the concomitant idiosyncrasies and occasional compositional weaknesses.

As we have seen with the other New Year's Day cantatas that we have performed (16, 41, 171 and 190), there are two broad themes throughout BWV143: thanksgiving to God for the year that is past, and a prayer for protection in the year to come. The opening chorus is very bright, with Italianate concerto style alternation between the different groups: brass, strings, continuo and voices. It is a setting of the opening of Psalm 146, "Praise the Lord, my soul."

Although there is no homophonic 4-part chorale setting in this cantata, the chorale melody *Du Friedfürst, Herr Jesu Christ* makes an appearance three times. The first of these is a simple setting with the soprano singing the chorale as an aria, accompanied by a florid violin solo. Following this hymn of praise, the tenor picks up the theme of God as helper in a recitative-aria pair. Here is thanksgiving for past protection; the aria text is a catalogue of tragedies that have befallen other countries—"but we have had a year of blessing." Short notes and much chromaticism in the lower strings accompany the violin solo, whose wide range and descending scalar patterns represent the misfortune of others. The music does not change much for the depiction of Saxony's blessing; instead, although the tenor melody is

more lyrical, the misfortunes continue to swirl around the "blessed" melody.

One of the reasons that this cantata has been allowed to remain in the Bach canon is the ingenuity of bass aria. The three horns and timpani are used alone with continuo in a joyful song of praise. The interplay between the brass instruments, with much use of canonic imitation, adds to the breathlessness of the movement. Although the phrases are quite short and alternate fairly quickly between brass and bass, we get a full statement of the ritornello-like instrumental section for the first time at the end of the aria.

In a prayer for protection in the new year, Bach offers another ingenious instrumentation. The tenor is accompanied by bassoon and cello, who trade descending five-note scales in canon throughout the piece. Above the tenor solo is the second appearance of the chorale melody, played in minims by unison strings. The transparency of texture is extraordinary; although the counterpoint is quite complex, the choice of instruments clarifies the texture. The cantata closes with another setting of the chorale melody, this time as a soprano melody above a chorus of "Alleluias" in the lower voices. Like the opening chorus, this finale is a concerto, with the instrumental and vocal choirs handing around joyful 6/8 themes.

C.P. Shepard

PERFORMERS

Jodie McGuren, Soprano

After completing her Bachelor of Music Education at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1995, Jodie McGuren took up a classroom teaching position for the next four years at Cranbrook School. After completing operatic study in England and an Italian language degree in Italy, Jodie returned to Sydney to pursue a career in singing. She has performed roles in *The Magic Flute* and *Dido and Aeneas* and is currently studying with Anna Connelly. Apart from opera, Jodie performs regularly as a soloist with the Sydneian Festival Choir, The American-Briton Society, and St Paul's College (Victoriana). In 2002 and 2003, she was a semi-finalist in the MacDonald's Operatic Aria competition.

Jodie has been soprano soloist in a number of works with the Sydneian Bach Choir, including the Mozart *C Minor Mass*, Bach's *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio* and the Monteverdi *Vespers*. She was featured in SBS Television's *From Mozart to Morrison*, in which she performed the soprano solo in Mozart's *Regina Coeli* with the Sydneian Bach Choir and SBS Orchestra. She currently teaches singing at Sydney Grammar School and Loreto Kirribilli, as well as running a private studio. Jodie was recently featured on the ABC-TV programme *OperatunityOz*, and can be heard on the best-selling CD released by the ABC. She recently performed Mozart's "Queen of the Night" aria from the *Magic Flute* with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

Rabin Bhandari, Tenor

Rabin Bhandari took up singing at Sydney Grammar School, where he earned his A.Mus.A under the tutelage of Timothy Collins. While at Grammar, Rabin sang a number of solos, including the tenor solo in Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*. An oboist as well, Rabin has a particularly keen interest in early music, especially the music of J.S. Bach and Mozart. Rabin is finishing his medical degree this year and plans to continue to develop his singing technique as he

Nathan Gilkes, Tenor

An Old Sydneian, Nathan recently completed a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Nathan has studied voice with Barry Ryan and has performed with many choral groups in and around Sydney including the Sydneian Festival Choir, the Willoughby Symphony Choir, Springwood Choral Society, St Swithun's Church Choir, Pymble, the choirs of SCEGGS Darlinghurst, and the Georgian Singers; in works such as *Messiah*, Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor*, Brahms' *Liebesslieder Waltzes*, and Stainer's *Crucifixion*. He has performed tenor solos in Bach's *B Minor Mass* and the Monteverdi *Vespers* with the Sydneian Bach Choir. In September, he conducted a performance of Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with the Sydneian Bach Choir and NOVA Camerata.

Nathan graduated from NIDA in music theatre in 2002. His stage roles include Tony in *West Side Story*, Albert Peterson in *Bye Bye Birdie* and Alfred/Sam in *Romance/Romance*, as well as serving as musical director and conductor for several other productions, as well as serving as Music Director of the *a cappella* group Back in Black. Nathan is a teacher of singing and acting in music theatre, at the Julie Melrose School of Dance, and at his own studio. He conducts the choir at Sydney Grammar School's St Ives Preparatory School and North Sydney Boys' High School.

Timothy Collins, Bass-Baritone

Tim Collins studied voice at the Queensland Conservatorium under the tutelage of Professor Jan Delpratt, where he was the recipient of 12 scholarships and prizes. After singing as a member of the Young Artists' Programme with Opera Queensland, he moved to Sydney. He has been a finalist in many national aria and singing competitions and has made several national broadcasts for the ABC, singing lieder recitals, Chamber music, Oratorio and Australian contemporary music. He has also performed as a solo recitalist in

Formerly Head of Vocal Studies at McDonald Performing Arts College, Tim is currently a private singing teacher at Sydney Grammar School, The Ascham School, St. Andrews Cathedral School and SCEGGS, Darlinghurst. He has recently become an AMEB Singing Examiner.

As a young singing voice specialist, Tim has published a number of papers and articles in Australian music education, choral and vocal journals, newsletters and publications. He will present his research at the biennial National conference of The Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing in Melbourne in October. As a teacher of Raja Yoga Meditation, he has developed meditation programmes combining, values education, meditation techniques and vocal education and exercise.

Christopher Shepard, Conductor

Foundation conductor of the Sydneian Bach Choir, Christopher Shepard is Director of Music at Sydney Grammar School, and holds degrees in Music Education (piano) and Choral Conducting from the Hartt School of Music and Yale University. He has studied conducting with Marguerite Brooks, James Jordan and Helmuth Rilling, and Baroque performance practice with Jaap Schroeder, Paul Brainard and Rosalyn Tureck.

Before moving to Sydney in 1996, Chris was Head of Fine and Performing Arts at the Taft School (USA). He has served as Music Director of several community choirs and has conducted many choirs and orchestras in the greater New York metropolitan area. He has served as music director of the Georgian Singers and as chorusmaster for the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, in addition to conducting the Senior Choir at Ascham School. He has conducted the SBS Youth Orchestra on several occasions, including the Brahms *German Requiem* and a televised broadcast of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. With the Sydneian Bach Choir, he has conducted several Bach works, including the *St John Passion*, *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio*. In February 2005, he began BACH 2010, a six-year project to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas with the Sydneian Bach Choir and Orchestra. He will conduct Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra in November, and is conductor with the Mid-summer Opera, where he conducted *Love's Lessons Learned* in 2006 and will conduct Bizet's *Carmen* in 2007.

Chris is Music Director of the Hotchkiss Summer Chamber Program, an intensive chamber music program for advanced young players and singers from around the world, held each July in America's Berkshire Mountains. As Director of the program, he conducts the chamber orchestra and teaches alongside several guest musicians, including the Tokyo String Quartet, Ying Quartet and the Philadelphia Singers.

Sydneian Bach Choir

In February 2005, the Sydneian Bach Choir embarked on BACH 2010, a musical journey to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas, in a series of 50 concerts through December 2010. The choir was formed in 2000 as part of the Sydneian Festival Choir, in order to raise money for local charities through fundraising concerts. Although their repertoire is wide and varied, the fifty voice Bach Choir uses the choral music of J.S. Bach as its touchstone. In residence at Sydney Grammar School, the choir performs the closing work of the School's biennial Bach Festival, including Bach's *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and *B Minor Mass*. They have also performed the music of Schütz, Taverner, Mendelssohn, Whitacre and many others, and gave the Australian premiere of Shostakovich's *Rayok* as part of a new music festival at the University of Sydney. Each year, the choir commissions new works from Australian composers, including Anna Jacobs, Richard Charlton and James Humberstone.

In combination with the Sydneian Festival Choir, they have performed several large works for choir and orchestra, including the Brahms *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Britten's *Saint Nicolas*. The Bach Choir sang Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Nova Chamber Orchestra in 2003, and performed the Monteverdi *Vespers (1610)* in 2004 as part of the Organ Festival inaugurating Sydney Grammar School's new Mander organ.

In December 2004, the Bach Choir travelled to Venice, where they performed sections of the Monteverdi *Vespers* at San Marco; to Leipzig, where they performed in Bach's churches; and to America, where they met with renowned Bach expert Christoph Wolff of Harvard University. The choir recently joined forces with the choirs of Sydney Grammar School in a programme of Mozart choral music for an SBS Television documentary aired in January 2006. The Bach Choir won the two major choral prizes in the 2006 McDonald's Performing Arts Challenge.



SYDNEIAN BACH CHOIR

Nathan Gilkes, Assistant Conductor

Fiona McCabe, Accompanist

Soprano

Eleanor Babcock

Janet Bagnall*

Elizabeth Barrett

Katherine Bartlett

Georgina Bitcon

Robin Carter

Lucinda Clarke

Alice Fraser

Jodie McGuren*

Monica Moore

Jane Phillips

Alto

Carol Berg

Jane Boyd

Robyn Bradley

Fiona Charlton

Ricky Davis

Lisa Dow

Suellen Enestrom

Su-lin Leong

Melissa Lesnie

Sandy Libling

Georgia Luikens

Eliza Newton

Robyn Tupman

Tenor

Matthew Allchurch

Rabin Bhandari, OS

Robert Chiu, OS

John Dawson, IV

Samuel Fischer, III
Nathan Gilkes, OS*
Robert Hansen, IV
Philip Moore, OS
Mathew Roberts, OS
Anthony Russell, OS

Bass

Matthew Allan, OS
Henry Fraser, OS
David Gal, OS
Peter Gilkes, OS
Daniel King, OS
Justin Koonin, OS
Robert Marks
Christopher May, OS
Peter Phillips, OS
Dan Potts
Kyriako Tsamoglou, OS
Charles Voyagis, OS
Edward Wilson, OS

SYDNEIAN BACH ORCHESTRA

Flute

Rebecca Steel*
Edward Cartwright, V

Oboe

Emmanuel Cassimatis, V
Leisa Radford

Bassoon

Edward Cartwright, V

Trumpet

David Pye*
Adrian Moran
Robert Hansen, IV

Timpani

Steven Machamer

Violin

Andrew Luboski, OS
Sheldon Leung, V

Viola

Rob Nijs*

Cello

Patricia McMeekin*

Double Bass

David Campbell, OS*

Chamber Organ

Fiona McCabe

Harpichord

Christopher Berensen

**SGS staff*

OS indicates Old Sydneian (old boy)

Roman numeral indicates Form in School

SYDNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

