

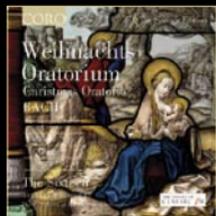
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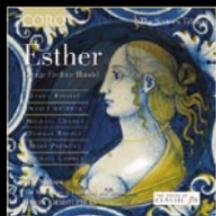
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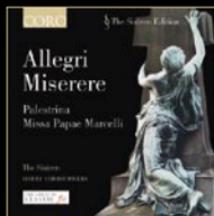
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# J. S. BACH

## CANTATAS 34, 50, 147

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The Symphony of Harmony and Invention

HARRY CHRISTOPHERS



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This disc was the direct result of a BBC Proms appearance back in 1990. The controller of Radio 3, John Drummond, had asked me to perform some of Bach's cantatas in the Royal Albert Hall; he had felt that, over the years, Proms programming had neglected Bach and he wanted to address that. It was an inspirational idea and John invited us back the following season for more of the same. Although a very difficult venue for this type of music, performing in the Albert Hall was to prove a most rewarding experience, and it was even more of a delight to go into the rich acoustics of St Jude's, Hampstead Garden Suburb a week later to record the programme.

It is the only occasion on disc when I needed a guest leader, so I turned to my good friend, Roy Goodman, who has since forsaken the violin for a burgeoning conducting career. We were fortunate to capture his playing on disc and, quite frankly, one would be hard pushed to find in the recording catalogue a more exquisite rendering of the violin obbligato in the soprano aria *Bereite dir* from Cantata 147.

If you cast your eyes over the choir listing in this booklet, you will notice the names of two singers who are now enjoying wonderful and richly deserved solo careers. Both Mark Padmore and Christopher Purves sang with The Sixteen for many years after joining the group straight from university; The Sixteen has always been and indeed continues to be a source of great and exciting talent.

Harry  
Anispa,

As Cantor of St. Thomas's School, and Leipzig's *Director Musices* Bach was in charge of music both for the four principal churches and that required for any special occasion such as, for example, the annual election of the town council. Between 1723 and 1729 he assembled three complete annual cycles for the church year, possibly four, while even a fifth may have been completed during the 1730s and 1740s. Cantatas - Bach himself seldom used the term in the context of sacred works of this kind preferring 'Concerto' or 'Stück' (piece) - formed an integral part of the Lutheran liturgy in Leipzig; their texts were usually related to the appointed Gospel and they were sung after the Gospel reading before the sermon.

Although most of Bach's cantatas date from the Leipzig years, mainly between 1723 and 1729, a significant number belong to the period between 1708 and 1717 when he was employed at the Weimar court first as *Hoforganist* then as *Konzertmeister*, too. Among the Weimar cantatas we find a rich variety of forms and techniques incorporating elements of motet, chorale, strophic aria and concerto. Their texts were mostly provided by the Weimar court poet and priest, Salomo Franck whose Pietistic inclinations emphasising subjectivity of thought, intimacy of sentiment and preoccupation with death as a longed for release from earthly suffering drew fervent musical responses from Bach.

### **Cantata No.50 *Nun is das Heil und die Kraft.***

This exceptionally powerful choral movement is almost certainly a lone survivor from a lost cantata. Until fairly recently it had been assumed that the piece dated from the later Leipzig years, but it is probably unwise to assign to it a particular period of composition even though, stylistically, it appears to be a work of maturity. Since its text is taken from the appointed epistle for St. Michael's Day, it seems likely that Bach intended it for this festival, one that on three other occasions inspired music which contained pictorial imagery of an arresting kind. The epistle begins with the words, "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels; and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angel were cast out with him..." This colourful story seems to have stirred Bach deeply in much the same way as it had done Milton over half a century earlier. Here we have the only eight-part chorus in the entire range of his cantatas. The ceremonial orchestration consisting of three trumpets, timpani, three oboes, strings and continuo is identical with that Bach used for the *Sanctus* of the *B minor Mass*. The eight strand chorus is presented in a fugue of vast and complex architectural splendour. The subject is

announced initially by the basses of the first group and taken up by the tenor, altos and lastly the sopranos. As they complete the seven bar subject the four vocal strand of the second group enter together presenting the initial scheme in inversion whilst all the time the movement gains momentum from the growing profusion of quaver and semi-quaver motives, culminating in a glittering D major close.

**Cantata No.34 *O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe*.** Although this work belongs to Bach's last phase of activity as a sacred cantata composer all its music but that of the two unaccompanied recitatives goes back to the mid 1720s when it served as a wedding cantata. In its later "parody" version, dating from 1740 or perhaps a little after, Bach performed it at Leipzig on Whitsunday. The unidentified librettist, perhaps Bach himself was involved, made a skilful adaptation of the original text to suit the Whitsuntide Festival.

The opening movement is lavishly scored for three trumpets, drums, a pair of oboes, strings and continuo and begins with a brilliant orchestral statement leading into the chorus *O ewiges Feuer*. This contrapuntal piece is richly coloured, vivid in word-painting and tautly constructed in *da capo* form with instrumental interludes punctuating the vocal sections. A brief but declamatory tenor recitative follows, leading to the cantata's only aria. Here Bach contrasts the instrumental

colours of the choruses by introducing two transverse flutes with muted violins and viola to accompany the alto voice. Bach's second biographer, Philipp Spitta, remarked of this beautiful, transparently textured movement "in no part ...can the original bridal feeling pass unnoticed. For its pure and ardent atmosphere, its magic charm of tone, its lovely melodies, it is indisputably fitted to rank at the head of all Bach's works of this kind, and to be considered an unapproachable model". A bass recitative follows before a second chorus, similarly scored to the opening one, with brilliantly coloured instrumental figures brings the cantata to a festive conclusion.

After Bach's death in 1750 the score of this cantata passed into the hands first of his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, then into the possession of Anna Amalia (1739-1807), Duchess of Saxe-Weimar and niece of Frederick the Great. She had lively intellectual interests, above all in literature and music, and was a noted patron of poets and musicians.

**Cantata No.147 *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*** is made up of music both from the Weimar and the Leipzig periods. In its earlier form Bach intended it for performance in 1716 on the fourth Sunday in Advent; this version lacked recitatives but included the opening chorus and the arias for alto, soprano and tenor. For the Leipzig performance in 1723 Bach added recitatives, the elaborate chorale which ends each half of the cantata

and, perhaps the bass aria, too. In this form he performed it on the Feast of the Visitation of Mary the Virgin on July 2nd. The text for the Weimar music was provided by Franck while an unidentified poet, perhaps Bach himself may have been responsible for the words of the remaining sections of the cantata.

The cantata begins with a radiant, elaborately constructed chorus introduced by trumpet fanfares with bassoon, followed by strings whose divided violin parts are doubled by oboes. The vocal element, predominantly fugal, falls into two sections. In the first the four strands enter from the top downwards (S-A-T-B), but in the second Bach reverses the scheme, starting with the bass strand and working upwards. The chorus is masterly and a splendid example of Bach's consummate skill in sensitive and affective deployment of vocal instrument resources to create a unified ensemble.

The tenor recitative which follows the opening chorus is accompanied by the strings and is a tenderly expressive piece of writing in striking contrast with the preceding movement. This meditative, intimate quality is shared by the alto aria with its vacillating rhythmic pattern and warmly coloured oboe d'amore accompaniment - an early appearance of the instrument in Bach's music. The second recitative of the cantata is for bass but unlike the first is accompanied by basso continuo only. The piece has a marked arioso element and Bach's continuo writing no less

than the vocal part illustrates images of the text. The soprano aria with violin obligato provides a lyrically expressive high point in the work. Here the vocal line suggests a beguiling innocence and almost child-like simplicity while the violin, the contours of whose melody can be found in several other of Bach's compositions provides an elaborate accompaniment, predominantly in triplets. The first part of the cantata concludes with a verse of a hymn by Martin Jahn, *Jesu, meinem Seelen Vonne* (1661). Bach's celebrated setting, inspired by and ingeniously derived from the chorale melody requires no introduction.

Part Two begins with a declamatory tenor aria with a busy continuo accompaniment whose initial suppository four-note statement is taken up by the voice. Here the love of Christ is expressed with considerable intensity and economy of means. The alto recitative, whose vocal line is gently punctuated by two oboes da caccia, evokes the atmosphere of Bach's Passion recitatives and contains passages which engagingly colour the words of the text. The last of the arias, for bass with trumpet and strings with doubling oboes in the violin parts is a supple and robust piece proclaiming Christ's wonders. Bach ends the cantata with another verse of Jahn's hymn in a setting identical with that which concludes Part One.

Nicholas Anderson

## JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

1	<b>CANTATA No.50: Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft</b>	3.49
2	<b>CHORALE PRELUDE: Vater unser im Himmelreich</b>	1.24
	<b>CANTATA No.34: O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe</b>	
3	Chorus - O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe	7.20
4	Recit (Tenor) - Herr, unsre Herzen	0.48
5	Aria (Alto) - Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Seelen	5.55
6	Recit (Bass) - Erwählt sich Gott	0.32
7	Chorus - Friede über Israel	2.08
8	<b>CHORALE PRELUDE: Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr'</b>	2.32
	<b>CANTATA No.147: Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben</b>	
9	Chorus - Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben	4.20
10	Recit (Tenor) - Gebenedeiter Mund!	1.49
11	Aria (Alto) - Schäme dic, o Seele, nicht	3.46
12	Recit (Bass) - Verstockung kann Gewaltige verblenden	1.38
13	Aria (Soprano) - Bereite dir, Jesu, noch itzo die Bahn	5.25
14	Chorale - Wohl mir, daß ich Jesum habe	2.38
15	Aria (Tenor) - Hilf, Jesu, hilf	3.08
16	Recit (Alto) - Der höchsten Allmacht Wunderhand	2.34
17	Aria (Bass) - Ich will von Jesu Wundern singen	2.53
18	Chorale - Jesus bleibet meine Freude	2.47
	Total playing time	56.01

## SOLOISTS

SOPRANO	Gillian Fisher
ALTO	David James
TENOR	Ian Partridge
BASS	Michael George
ORGAN	Paul Nicholson

## THE SIXTEEN

SOPRANO	Fiona Clarke, Ruth Dean, Sally Dunkley, Patricia Forbes, Nicola Jenkin, Carys Lane
ALTO	Robin Barda, Michael Lees, Philip Newton, Christopher Royall
TENOR	Peter Burrows, Philip Daggett, Duncan MacKenzie, Mark Padmore
BASS	Simon Birchall, Roger Cleverdon, Christopher Purves, Laurence Whitehead

## THE SYMPHONY OF HARMONY AND INVENTION

VIOLIN	Roy Goodman (Guest Leader), Theresa Caudle, Marc Ashley Cooper, James Ellis, Fiona Huggett, Stephen Jones, Jean Paterson, Pauline Smith
VIOLA	Jane Compton, David Brooker
CELLO	Jane Coe, Helen Verney
BASS	Tim Lyons
THEORBO, LUTE	Robin Jeffrey
ORGAN	Paul Nicholson
FLUTE	Rachel Beckett, Utako Ikeda
OBOE, OBOE DA CACCIA, OBOE D'AMORE	Sophia McKenna, Cherry Forbes, Matthew Dixon
BASSOON	Sally Jackson, Julia Cunynghame
TRUMPET	Crispian Steele-Perkins, David Blackadder, Michael Harrison
TIMPANI	Janos Keszei

## CANTATA No.50

### 1 Chorus

*Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft und das Reich  
und die Macht unsers Gottes seines Christus  
worden, weil der verworfen ist, der sie  
verklagete Tag und Nacht vor Gott.*

Now is come salvation, and strength, and the  
kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:  
for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,  
which accused them before our God day and night.

Revelation 12:10

## CANTATA No.34

### 1. Chorus

*O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe,  
Entzünde die Herzen und weihe sie ein.  
Laß himmlische Flammen  
durchdringen und wallen,  
Wir wünschen, o Höchster,  
dein Tempel zu sein,  
Ach, laß dir die Seelen  
im Glauben gefallen.*

O fire everlasting, O fountain of loving,  
Enkindle our hearts now and consecrate them.  
Let heavenly flames  
now envelop and flood them,  
We wish now, O Highest,  
thy temple to be,  
Ah, let thee our spirits  
in faith ever please thee.

### 2. Recitative (Tenor)

*Herr, unsre Herzen halten dir  
Dein Wort der Wahrheit für:  
Du willst bei Menschen gerne sein,  
Drum sei das Herze dein;*

Lord, these our hearts hold out to thee  
Thy word of truth to see:  
Thou wouldst midst mankind gladly be,  
Thus let my heart be thine;

*Herr, ziehe gnädig ein.  
Ein solch erwähltes Heiligtum  
Hat selbst den größten Ruhm.*

Lord enter graciously.  
For such a chosen holy shrine  
Hath e'en the greatest fame.

### 3. Aria (Alto)

*Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Seelen,  
Die Gott zur Wohnung ausersehn.  
Wer kann ein größer Heil erwählen?  
Wer kann des Segens Menge zählen?  
Und dieses ist vom Herrn geschehn.*

Rejoice, all ye, the chosen spirits,  
Whom God his dwelling did elect.  
Who can a greater bliss be wanting?  
Who can his blessings; number reckon?  
And this is by the lord fulfilled.

### 4. Recitative (Bass)

*Erwählt sich Gott die heiligen Hütten,  
Die er mit Heil bewohnt,  
So muß er auch den Segen auf sie schütten,  
So wird der Sitz des Heiligtums belohnt.  
Der Herr ruft über sein geweihtes Haus  
Das Wort des Segens aus:*

If God doth choose the holy shelters  
Where he with health doth dwell,  
Then must he, too, his blessing pour upon them,  
And thus the holy temples seat reward.  
The Lord proclaims above his hallowed house  
His word of blessing now:

### 5. Chorus

*Friede über Israel.  
Dankt den höchsten Wunderhänden,  
Dankt, Gott hat an euch gedacht.  
Ja, sein Segen wirkt mit Macht,  
Friede über Israel,  
Friede über euch zu senden.*

Peace be over Israel.  
Thank the lofty hands of wonder,  
Thank, God hath you in his heart.  
Yea, his blessing works with might,  
Peace be over Israel,  
Peace upon you all he sendeth.

# CANTATA No.147

## PART ONE

### 9 1. Chorus

*Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben  
Muß von Christo Zeugnis geben  
Ohne Furcht und Heuchelei,  
Daß er Gott und Heiland sei.*

Heart and mind and deed and life  
must bear witness,  
without fear or hypocrisy,  
to Christ as God and Saviour.

### 10 2. Recitative (Tenor)

*Gebenedeiter Mund!  
Maria macht ihr Innerstes der Seelen  
Durch Dank und Rühmen kund;  
Sie fänget bei sich an,  
Des Heilands Wunder zu erzählen,  
Was er an ihr als seiner Magd getan.  
O menschliches Geschlecht,  
Des Satans und der Sünden Knecht,  
Du bist befreit  
Durch Christi tröstendes Erscheinen  
Von dieser Last und Dienstbarkeit!  
Jedoch dein Mund und dein verstockt Gemüte  
Verschweigt, verleugnet solche Güte;  
Doch wisse, daß dich nach der Schrift  
Ein allzuscharfes Urteil trifft!*

Blessed voice!  
Mary declares her inmost soul  
with thanks and praise;  
she recounts to herself  
the Saviour's miracle,  
which he has realised through her, his handmaiden.  
O humankind,  
slave to Satan and to sin,  
you are delivered  
by the solace of Christ's presence  
from this burden, this yoke!  
Yet your voice and your obdurate heart  
disavow, deny such grace;  
yet know, the Scripture tells  
of exceeding judgement awaiting you!

### 11 3. Aria (Alto)

*Schäme dich, o Seele, nicht,  
Deinen Heiland zu bekennen,*

Be not ashamed, O soul,  
to acknowledge your Saviour,

*Soll er dich die seine nennen  
Vor des Vaters Angesicht!  
Doch wer ihn auf dieser Erden  
Zu verleugnen sich nicht scheut,  
Soll von ihm verleugnet werden,  
Wenn er kommt zur Herrlichkeit.*

should he name you as his own  
in the presence of the Father!  
Yet whoever on this earth  
fears not to deny him,  
shall by him be denied,  
when he comes to glory.

### 12 4. Recitative (Bass)

*Verstockung kann Gewaltige verblenden,  
Bis sie des Höchsten Arm vom Stuhle stößt;  
Doch dieser Arm erhebt,  
Obschon vor ihm der Erde Kreis erbebt,  
Hingegen die Elenden,  
So er erlöst.  
O hochbeglückte Christen,  
Auf, machet euch bereit,  
Itzt ist die angenehme Zeit,  
Itzt ist der Tag des Heils:  
Der Heiland heißt  
Euch Leib und Geist  
Mit Glaubensgaben rüsten,  
Auf, ruft zu ihm in brünstigem Verlangen,  
Um ihn im Glauben zu empfangen!*

Obduracy may blind the powerful  
till unseated by the arm of the Almighty;  
yet this arm,  
though the world tremble before it,  
exalts the wretched,  
whom he redeems.  
O most blessed Christians,  
arise, make ready;  
now is the fortunate time,  
now is the day of salvation;  
the Saviour bids  
you array body and soul  
with offerings of faith;  
arise, call to him in fervent longing,  
that you may receive him in faith!

### 13 5. Aria (Soprano)

*Bereite dir, Jesu, noch itzo die Bahn,  
Mein Heiland, erwähle  
Die gläubende Seele,  
Und siehe mit Augen der Gnaden mich an!*

Prepare your way even now, Jesus  
appoint, my Saviour,  
the faithful soul  
and look on me with eyes of mercy!

## 14 6. Chorale

*Wohl mir, daß ich Jesum habe,  
O wie feste halt ich ihn,  
Daß er mir mein Herze labe,  
Wenn ich krank und traurig bin.  
Jesum hab ich, der mich liebet  
Und sich mir zu eigen gibet;  
Ach drum laß ich Jesum nicht,  
Wenn mir gleich mein Herze bricht.*

Happy am I that I have Jesus,  
oh how I shall cleave to him,  
that he may restore my heart  
when I am ill and in sorrow.  
I have Jesus, who loves me  
and makes me his own;  
ah, I'll thus not leave Jesus,  
even if my heart should break.

## PART TWO

## 15 7. Aria (Tenor)

*Hilf, Jesu, hilf, daß ich auch dich bekenne  
In Wohl und Weh, in Freud und Leid,  
Daß ich dich meinen Heiland nenne  
Im Glauben und Gelassenheit,  
Daß stets mein Herz von deiner Liebe brenne.  
Hilf, Jesu, hilf!*

Help me, Jesus, help me, that I too may acknowledge  
you in well-being and misfortune, in joy and  
suffering, that I may call you my Saviour  
in faith and serenity,  
that my heart will ever burn with your love.  
Help me, Jesus, help me!

## 16 8. Recitative (Alto)

*Der höchsten Allmacht Wunderhand  
Wirkt im Verborgenen der Erden.  
Johannes muß mit Geist erfüllt werden,  
Ihn zieht der Liebe Band  
Bereits in seiner Mutter Leibe,  
Daß er den Heiland kennt  
Ob er ihn gleich noch nicht  
Mit seinem Munde nennt,*

The wondrous hand of the Almighty  
is at work in the hidden mysteries of the earth.  
John the Baptist must be filled with the spirit,  
the bond of love draws him  
even in his mother's womb,  
that he may know the Saviour,  
though he may not yet  
name him.

*Er wird bewegt, er hüpfet und springet,  
Indem Elisabeth das Wunderwerk ausspricht,  
Indem Mariae Mund der Lippen Opfer bringet.  
Wenn ihr, o Gläubige,  
des Fleisches Schwachheit merkt,  
Wenn euer Herz in Liebe brennet,  
Und doch der Mund  
den Heiland nicht bekennet,  
Gott ist es, der euch kräftig stärkt,  
Er will in euch des Geistes Kraft erregen,  
Ja Dank und Preis auf eure Zunge legen.*

He moves, he leaps and skips  
as Elizabeth gives voice to the miracle,  
as Mary's voice delivers her words' offering.  
When you, believers,  
know the weakness of the flesh,  
when your heart is aflame with love  
and yet your voice  
acknowledges the Saviour not,  
it is God who strengthens us;  
he shall rouse in you the power of the spirit,  
lay thanks and praise upon your tongue.

## 17 9. Aria (Bass)

*Ich will von Jesu Wundern singen  
Und ihm der Lippen Opfer bringen,  
Er wird nach seiner Liebe Bund  
Das schwache Fleisch, den irdschen Mund  
Durch heiliges Feuer kräftig zwingen.*

I will sing of the wonders of Jesus  
and bring him my words' offering;  
he will impose his love  
on my weak flesh, my mortal voice,  
by his holy fire

## 18 10. Chorale

*Jesum bleibt meine Freude,  
Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,  
Jesus wehret allem Leide,  
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,  
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,  
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;  
Darum laß ich Jesum nicht  
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.*

Jesus remains my joy,  
the solace and nurture of my heart;  
Jesus forbends all suffering;  
he is the strength of my life,  
the pleasure and sun of my eyes,  
the prize and joy of my soul;  
thus I'll not let Jesus  
from my heart and sight.

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The Sixteen is an Associate Artist of London's South Bank Centre and also well known as the "The Voices of Classic FM". The Sixteen's own CD label CORO releases the group's recordings.



Recording Producers: Mark Brown  
Recording Engineer: Antony Howell  
Recorded at St Jude's on the Hill, Hampstead, 1990

Language Adviser: Franziska Roth  
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