



BACH EDITION



CANTATAS/KANTATEN

Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben

BWV 147

Leichtgesinnte Flattergeister

BWV 181

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen

BWV 66

BRILLIANT
CUTS

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

CANTATAS BWV 147, 181 & 66

BWV 147 (2 July 1723, but based on an earlier version of 20 December 1716) is one of Bach's most popular cantatas. It starts with a fine fugue, the fugue theme having been prepared by the orchestral introduction. The words 'Furcht' and 'Heuchelei' are painted musically regardless of the word 'without' that goes before. The da capo has the voices entering in reverse order, the trumpet once again playing its tune as a quasi fifth entry. In the following tenor recitative 'Er' gets the highest note, except for the word 'Urteil' later on - an indication of the seriousness of judgement. In the alto aria, the oboe d'amore plays a fine tune which is then taken up by the alto, slightly modified. 'Vor des Vaters Angesicht' has an ascending figure, repeated by the oboe, as have 'kömmt' and 'Herrlichkeit'. An expressive bass recitative, with descending lines on 'vom Stühle stösst', ascending ones on 'erhebt', trembling notes on 'erbebt' and a high note on 'hochbeglückete', is followed by a soprano aria with a delightful violin tune. It has the scheme so often found in the cantatas: the singer takes up the beginning of the instrumental introduction, the obbligato instrument repeating the second half, then the singer starts for a second time, now developing into new material with the original obbligato line as counterpoint. The lovely pastoral atmosphere of the chorale makes it a great favourite with many, and the piano transcription as 'Jesu, joy of man's desiring' gave it a worldwide fame. Part II starts with a tenor aria characterised by the 'hilf, Jesu, hilf!' motive; the triplets probably illustrate the flames of the burning love. In the alto recitative the words 'hüpf und springet' are selected for special treatment, and then the bass sings a song of joyful thankfulness. It is not entirely clear whether he sings of Jesus's wounds ('Wunden') or miracles ('Wundern'). Both would be appropriate. The closing chorale is a repeat of the first one with new words.

BWV 181 (13 February 1724) is based on the parable of the sower, one of the readings for this Sunday, and there are references to the story everywhere. The opening aria discusses Jesus's description of how birds take away the seed of faith, explaining that it is the devil who takes the word out of our hearts. The music is as 'leichtgesinnt' as the 'Flattergeister' who rob themselves of the word of God. The 'flatter-' in 'Flattergeister' may well have connected in Bach's mind to the fowls of the air of which the parable speaks; the music has an unmistakable 'fluttering' quality. More somber tones appear when 'Belial' enters, but the musical ideas remain the same: it is Belial who does the robbing. A fine alto recitative full of dissonances is followed by a tenor aria in which the many obstacles on a Christian's road are present; the triplets as so often are inspired by the word 'Feuer'. A straightforward recitative for soprano brings us to the final chorus, a delightful song of comfort.

If BWV 66 (10 April 1724) had been the only surviving Bach composition, it would have been enough to secure him a place as one of the greatest of composers. The opening chorus is pure joy, with shouts of 'herrscht' stressing the reign of the conqueror Jesus that has started now that He has risen from the grave. The vocal entries vary continually: altos and tenors, tenors and basses, altos and basses. Wind and strings alternate. Further on in the movement the motives of 'erfreut' and 'herrscht' are cleverly combined. Then follows a superbly chromatic middle part for solo alto and bass, interrupted a number of times by the choir singing a chorale-like tune. The following bass recitative has an intense ending leading up to one of Bach's most cheerful arias. The 'Danklied' does indeed resound, and when the bass sings about God's everlasting faithfulness, the instrumental joy is continued above the long note. The rest of the cantata (apart from the delightful short final chorale) is a dialogue between Fear and Hope. They sing contrasting texts (kein/mein, noch/nicht) to the same musical ideas, which is illogical, but it is all very beautiful. The music is so fitting to the words that if we did not know all this was based on a worldly cantata in which 'Glückseligkeit Anhalts' and 'Fama' have their conversation, we would never have guessed.



BACH EDITION



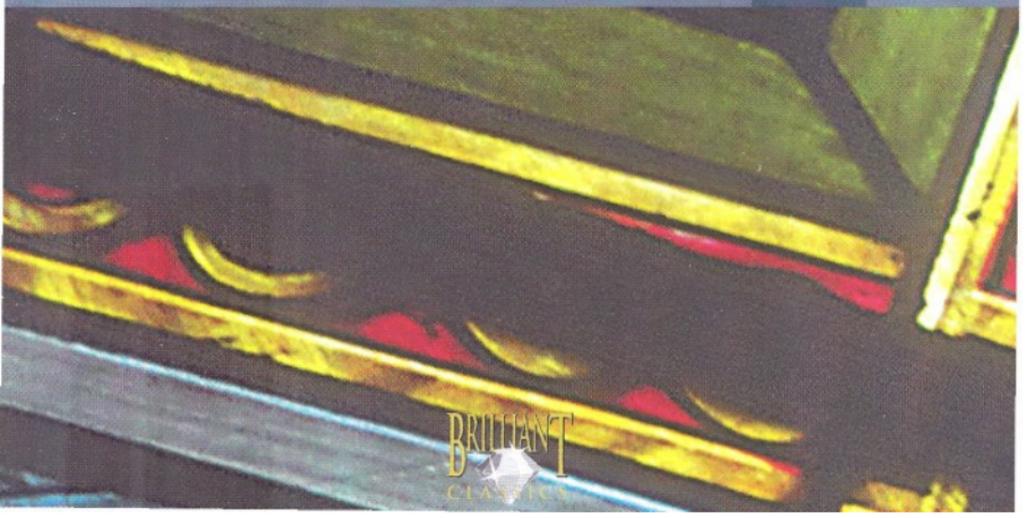
CANTATAS/KANTATEN

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens BWV 148

Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte BWV 174

Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt BWV 112

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt BWV 68



BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

CANTATAS BWV 148, 174, 112 & 68

BWV 148 (19 September 1723?) starts off to fine, festive opening tunes. These return in the choir, are repeated, and then turn into a splendid fugue with the trumpet as fifth voice. The intimate second fugue on 'betet an' has the trumpet as entry number four, before the basses! The tenor aria explains why going to church is a good thing: we should hurry each Sunday to bring praises to God. As usual with Bach, the 'eile' is expressed in the music. An accompanied recitative for alto follows, which has a mystical quality, the idea of 'Ruh' being painted in the beautiful string parts. In the alto aria with three oboes the idea of 'Ruh' returns; in the words 'ich in dich und du in mich' Bach takes care to give 'ich/mich' always low notes and 'du/dich' high ones. A tenor recitative and simple chorale end this fine cantata.

The Easter cantata BWV 174 begins with a spectacular surprise: a *sinfonia* which is the first movement of the third Brandenburg Concerto in a completely new guise, with horns and oboes added. This absolutely fantastic piece of music threatens the balance of the work as a whole, but no one would have wanted to miss out on it. The love of God of which the gospel for the day speaks leads to an aria on the love we should feel towards God, a quiet song of love and trust. In the tenor recitative the trembling of hell's doors is illustrated. The bass aria with unisono strings expresses the gripping of salvation with our hands of faith. The love of God returns in the final chorale.

BWV 112 (8 April 1731) is a chorale cantata. The chorale 'Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt' is a rhymed version of Psalm 23. The hymn tune in the opening movement is in the sopranos; the horns and the general musical atmosphere make for an intensely beautiful pastorate. Orchestra and continuo refer to the chorale melody, as do the other three voices. The alto aria with oboe *d'amore* keeps the pastoral atmosphere: after the grass of the Lord's wholesome Word we now encounter the straight paths of his commandments. An *arioso* and recitative for bass paints the dark valley in dark colours, and then one of Bach's most fascinating duets follows. The violin twice plays a delightful motive followed by a downward run. This is then sung by the soprano and tenor, continually changing roles. Both sing very high notes, and everything echoes the chorale melody, which is then heard in full in the final chorale to which the horns give an added glow.

BWV 68 (21 May 1727) quotes the gospel for the day, John 3, 16-21, literally. Verse 16, a verse of which Luther once said that it ought to be painted in golden letters on every home's wall, is turned into a beautiful *scilliano*. The sopranos sing the chorale melody, but with so many decorations as to be hardly recognisable; the other voices sing imitations. 'Bleibet ewig unverloren' has long sustained notes, and dramatic breaks on 'unverloren'. One of Bach's most delightful soprano arias now follows. One wonders which of the two is most unforgettable: the *violoncello piccolo*'s tune or the soprano's. The aria is based on one in BWV 208, but transformed into something very special; the *ritornello* extends the delight for almost as many bars as already went before. A fine bass recitative leads to another parody from the Hunting Cantata, in which the bass expresses his relief that Jesus has done enough ('genung!') for us. The final chorus is a grand fugue, the sternness of which lives up to the solemn words. The long runs on 'gerichtet' are positive for those who believe but threatening for those who do not. The opening theme returns on the closing words 'denn er glaubet nicht an den Namen des eingebor'nen Sohn Gottes'. The seriousness of it all is stressed by the ending which is marked 'Piano'.



BACH EDITION



CANTATAS/KANTATEN

Du sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben	BWV 77
Ein ungefärbt Gemüte	BWV 24
Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort	BWV 126
Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ	BWV 67



BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

CANTATAS BWV 77, 24, 126 & 67

BWV 77 (22 August 1723) opens with one of Bach's most amazing choruses. It is a sermon on the words from the scripture reading (the parable of the Good Samaritan): you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind, and your neighbour as yourself. Bach connects this verse from Luke with Matthew 22, where Jesus says that on this 'great commandment' hangs all the law and the prophets. He does this by adding the melody of the chorale 'Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot'. Not satisfied with just adding the tune, he has it played in canon, a symbol of the law; and by augmentation, the continuo playing at half the speed of the trumpet - does not Matthew say that this is the great commandment? Furthermore he uses (unusual elsewhere) the highest and the lowest instrument: the great commandment encompasses all of the law and the prophets. And to complete the sermon the trumpet enters exactly ten times, once for each of the ten commandments! Amazing as all of this may be, the most amazing thing is that it makes for absolutely glorious music, a hundred percent thrilling even if one does not know a thing of all this. After a bass recitative the soprano sings a heartfelt love song for God, two oboes playing in contented thirds. The tenor prays for a 'Samariterherz', referring to the gospel reading, and then the alto sings a fine aria with an imaginative trumpet part; the message of the law (is this why Bach employs the trumpet here?) can make us feel inadequate, our love being so imperfect. There is a fine closing chorale.

BWV 24 (20 June 1723) is a truly baroque emotional outburst against the lack of 'Redlichkeit' in this world. The 'German truth and goodness' referred to may makes us smile, but the 'Falschheit, Trug und List' we encounter is vividly evoked in Bach's music. The opening aria starts with five staccato notes and then a run up and down which comes back in the continuo and in the alto part. There is a long coloratura on 'Handel' and, naturally, a long sustained note on 'stehn'. The tenor recitative explains that the lack of reason and integrity in our lives is because we should pray more to receive it; a sensible advice. Then comes the chorus, right at the heart of the cantata, in which the cries of 'Alles! Alles!' play a fine part, as do the calls of 'Das thut! Das thut!' An almost aggressive bass recitative, indicating that the Bad One is everywhere ('So geht es dort', upward swing; 'So geht es hier', downward swing), ends with a mild arioso praying to be protected from it all. A tenor aria with a long and beautiful introduction for two oboes *d'amore*, leads to the final chorale with tender interludes for strings, which retain their independence during the singing of the hymn.

BWV 126 (4 February 1725) is a truly exciting chorale cantata. The opening chorus begins with an huge battle cry, the trumpet playing a fanfare based on the tune of the chorale which is then taken up by the choir, leading to dramatic long sustained notes. The sopranos sing the chorale tune while the other voices have free material that fits the text. The trumpet signal returns a number of times, and the trumpet has another stirring melody which rings high above the lively voices. Next two oboes sing a wonderful duet to which the tenor adds his pleading for God's blessings to come down - which they already do in the music. A unique recitative follows, in which alto and tenor take turns singing recitatives, while in between the chorale is sung in two parts, both voices once again taking turns to sing the decorated melody. One of Bach's most furious arias is then sung by the bass, the 'stürze zu Boden' vividly pictured: the fierce downward runs (fifty in all) are impressive even on paper in the score. A tenor recitative brings us to the closing chorale ending with a beautiful 'Amen'.

BWV 67 (16 April 1724) centers on the doubt of St. Thomas about Christ's resurrection, a doubt clearly refuted in the music. The opening chorus with its 'Halt, halt, halt' to underline the necessity not to forget, shows how Christ did indeed rise with long upward runs on 'auferstanden'. The following tenor aria literally teems with ascending motives, starting with a delightful run in the continuo and continuing all the time in violin, oboe and continuo while the tenor sings of the resurrection. Two alto recitatives surround a fine chorale and then comes one of Bach's most dramatic movements, a battle between the doubts of the believer (instigated by hell and Satan) and Christ who brings us peace. Once again there are dramatic upward flights in the violins. The closing chorale is a prayer to the 'Friedfürst'.



BACH EDITION



CANTATAS/KANTATEN

O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe
Der Himmel lacht! die Erde jubiliert
Es erhub sich ein Streit

BWV 34
BWV 31
BWV 19

BRILLIANT

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

CANTATAS BWV 34, 31 & 19

BWV 34 (1746/47) for Pentecost is based on a wedding cantata of 1726, but the reworking has fitted it well for the feast of the Spirit. The music of the opening chorus finds its inspiration in the idea of fire and heavenly flames, the movement of the first violin being contrasted to the long notes on 'Ewig'. 'O Ursprung der Liebe' has a nice rising figure which moves through all voices. A tenor recitative with high notes on 'Herr' and on 'grössten' leads to a deeply, deeply moving alto aria singing of God taking His habitation in our hearts (which is what Pentecost is about). The music to the word 'Wohnung' could not be more beautiful or intimate. The pastoral scoring for flutes and muted strings finds an explanation in the original from the wedding cantata: 'Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Schafe, die ein getreuer Jacob liebt', the bridegroom being a pastor. The idea of God living within us is taken up by the tenor recitative and then the closing chorus bursts in with a homophoneous 'Friede über Israel!'. There are reminiscences of the opening chorus in the trumpets; after a rising figure the choir sings 'Dank!' three times, there is a sustained 'Friede' and there are fine runs on 'dank!'.

BWV 31, another exhilaratingly joyful early work, written for Easter (21 April) 1715, celebrates Christ's rising from the dead with music full of upward moving figures. The opening sinfonia begins with a mighty unisono which returns at the close. The same instrumental forces, joined by a five-part choir (as good as unique in the cantatas), takes up the laughing in heaven with joyful, laughing music. Fugatic passages for just a few voice parts alternate with the full choir. The adagio middle part draws our attention to Christ's grave before a da capo, in which the orchestra plays what the choir has sung before, brings back the feast. The bass recitative/arioso divides into several different sections of allegro, adagio and andante, with an upward run on 'ist nun gerissen aus den Tod'. In a continuo aria the bass sings of the Cross's ladder leading the 'Höchster' to the throne of glory, ample material for rising figures. In the tenor recitative we are invited to rise with Christ into a new life, again all of the music is striving upward. A brief tenor aria with a delightful string orchestra expands on this idea (Adam must die in us for the new man to be able to rise) and then another turn is made in the librettist's line of thought: the soprano recitative sings of our own death and resurrection, with high notes on 'Herrlichkeit' and 'Gott'. One of Bach's 'death arias' follows, as always bringing out the best of what he has to offer: a superb oboe melody, a pizzicato death knell in the cello, and a chorale melody in the strings ('Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist'). The opening motive, sung by the soprano on 'letzte Stunde' and 'brich herein', is heard all through the aria. The hymn tune we've just heard now returns for the final chorale, which is enriched by a moving extra part for trumpet and violin.

BWV 19 (29 September 1726) wastes no time in presenting the story of the fight between archangel Michael and Satan: repeated notes hammer out the fierceness of the battle which is stressed also by long runs on 'Streit'. The twists of the snake are given to the word 'rasende' just before it. The da capo after Michael has won the field may seem strange, but the bass recitative removes any remaining doubt: the dragon lies defeated as is shown in the descending music. It is a reason for praise (a high 'Gottlob'), even though we may sometimes still be terrified ('schrecket!'). A quiet soprano aria sings of the hosts of angels that guard the christian from all evil. After a recitative the next aria starts with a magnificent melody for strings (using what has been called the 'angel rhythm') which is then sung by the tenor. The trumpet plays the chorale 'O Gott lass dein lieb' Engeln' of St. John Passion fame. A soprano recitative brings us to the final chorale; again there are angels, their victory stressed by the three independent trumpets.

Dingeman van Wijnen



BACH EDITION



CANTATAS/KANTATEN

Jesu, nun sei gepreiset

BWV 41

Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir

BWV 29

Gott, man lobet dich in der Stille

BWV 120

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

CANTATAS BWV 41, 29 & 120

BWV 41 (for New Year's Day 1725), richly scored for three trumpets, three oboes and strings, is based on the very long chorale 'Jesu, nun sei gepreiset'. Not only is this hymn quite long, but many of the lines are repeated. Bach achieves variety in changing the scoring of the different parts, and the tempo as well. Still, many fine runs are repeated; but we don't mind: the final result is a memorable and splendid chorus. Three oboes accompany the soprano in its aria, a fleeting melody the first part of which is sung twice by the soprano before being varied over fragments of the introduction in the accompaniment. Easily as peaceful and warm is the tenor aria, which follows a fine alto recitative. The violoncello piccolo plays a wonderfully long line, some of the long descending runs probably indicative of the awaited blessings coming down. The middle part stresses that blessings on earth are not the be-all and end-all: the high notes on 'dort' speak for themselves. It remains a mystery how millions upon millions know the Matthew Passion by heart and have never even heard a sublime piece like this. In the next recitative for bass there is a sudden outburst against Satan from the litany. The closing chorale succeeds in breaking up the long hymn tune by modifying the metre; it links up with the opening chorus by reusing the trumpet fanfare of the beginning.

We encounter Bach the transcriber once more in the opening sinfonia of the Ratwechsel cantata BWV 29: a solo violin piece (the preludio from BWV 1006) is turned into a full-blooded orchestral movement scored for trumpets, oboes and strings with the solo organ taking the original solo violin part. The result is unforgettable; especially exciting are a series of downward runs in the oboes and violins towards the end. The magnificent chorus which follows was later used by Bach for the Mass in B minor, the text 'Wir danken dir, Gott' quite fitting to the 'Gratias agimus tibi'. It is in old motet style, the instruments doubling the vocal lines, fugatic with two themes, one for 'Wir danken dir' and one for 'und verkündigen'. The trumpets come in late, first doubling the sopranos and only later being allotted entries of their own. There follows an aria with solo violin in which the tenor becomes quite enthusiastic when he sings of God's most high name. A fine bass recitative leads to one of Bach's most moving creations, a siciliano for soprano and orchestra praying for the work of the town council. A breathtakingly beautiful melody is first played by oboe and strings, then repeated in full by the soprano; the same happens with the second phrase, after which the second half of this second line is repeated in the orchestra - an unusual procedure but adding to the atmosphere of utter peace. An alto recitative which dramatically ends in 'Amen' leads to a curious repetition of the tenor aria in an abbreviated form, this time for alto and organ. In the closing chorale the trumpets have a fine independent role.

BWV 120, a Ratwechsel cantata of around 1742, starts not with the usual festive music but with a quiet alto aria - evidently because of the 'Stille' of which the text speaks. The silence is characterised both by long sustained notes on 'Stille' (even longer ones in the da capo) and one dramatic pause. Next is the postponed opening chorus, with 'Jauchzet' as its characterising idea. There is continuous alternation between soloruns and the full forces coming in. Bach later reused the chorus for the Mass in B minor (Et expecto). The bass recitative sings of the blessings for the 'Lindenstadt' (these trees are never absent when the praises of Leipzig are sung), and then there is a fine soprano aria, based on an earlier piece for violin and harpsichord, BWV 1019a. It is a peaceful song of 'Heil und Segen'. A tenor recitative and simple chorale, Luther's Te Deum, end this cantata with which the town councillors ought to have been well contented.

Dingeman van Wijnen

THE ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, ELBURG

St. Nicholas Church of Elburg was the venue where all the sacred cantatas were recorded. Acoustically as well as with regard to size, it resembles Bach's Thomaskirche at Leipzig. One wonders at the fact that in a small city like Elburg such a large building as this church with its striking belltower could have been erected. It bears witness of the piety of the mediaeval Elburger. Building started in 1395, and in the years to follow, many believers would bequeath their earthly possessions to the church in order to make continuation of the construction possible, thus hoping to gain eternal salvation. Much of its former glory was lost during the Iconoclasm of March 1572. Characteristic of the church is its impressive 40 metres tall belltower, which lost its spire in a fire in 1693. It is a cruciform church, originally built in perpendicular style.



Fotostudio Ger Hup, Elburg



Holland Boys Choir recording
of Cantata 127 in St. Nicholas
Church, ~~Elburg~~

Photo right: Peter Frankenberg (left) and Ofer Frenkel (right) in Cantata 133

Photo left: Pieter Jan Leusink
conducting Cantata 108

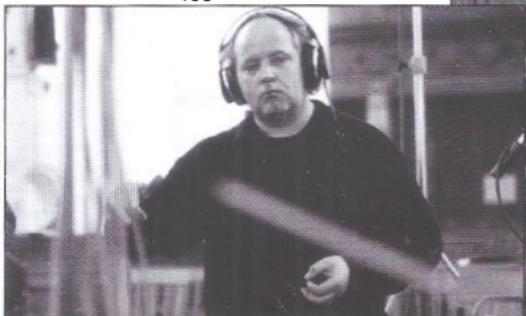


Photo left: Netherlands Bach Collegium
at the recordings of Cantata 146

Photo right:
Bas Ramselaar recording Cantata 82

NETHERLANDS BACH COLLEGIUM

VIOLIN John Wilson Meyer (concertmaster), Laura Johnson, Pieter Affourtit, Elin Eriksson, Mimi Mitchel, Annabelle Ferdinand, Rachael Beesley, Antoinette Lohmann, Alida Schat

VIOLA Jan Willem Vis, Simon Murphy, Örsze Adam, Marten Boeken

VIOLONCELLO Frank Wakelkamp, Bas van Hengel

DOUBLE-BAS Maggie Urquhart, Robert Franenberg, Jan Hollestelle

OBOE Peter Frankenberg, Ofer Frenkel, Diego Nadra, Eduard Wesley, Kristin Linde, Vincent van Ballegooien, Riekie Puyenbroek, Nico de Gier, Fernando Souza

BASSOON Trudy van der Wulp, Norbert Kunst

TRAVERSO Marion Moonen, Doretthe Janssens, Frederique Chauvet, Oeds van Middelkoop

NATURAL TRUMPET Susan Williams, William Wroth, Frank Anepool, Geerten Rooze, Hendrik Jan Houtsma

NATURAL HORN Teunis van der Zwart, Erwin Wieringa

TIMPANI Frank Aarnink

ORGAN Rien Voskuilen, Vaughan Schlepp, Stephen Taylor

HOLLAND BOYS CHOIR

TREBLE Jelle Stoker, Gerwin Zwep, Anne Jan Leusink, Herjan Pullen, Hans van Roest, Aalt Jan van Roest, Tanny Koomen, Claude Paelinck, Erik Guldenaar, Nicky Westerink, Peter van de Kolk

COUNTERTENOR Arjan Dokter, Gerald Engeltjes, Vincent Groeneveld, Jan Zwerver, Arjen Nap, Jan Willem Prins, Arjan Heikoop

TENOR Martinus Leusink, Cor van Twillert, Marijn Takken, Peter Bloemendaal

BASS Jeroen Assink, Edwin Smit, Jim Groeneveld, Sebastian Holz, Klaas Alberts, Richard Guldenaar, Huib van Hinsbergen



St. Nicholaschurch Elburg

Fotostudio Ger Hup, Elburg

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Producer / editing Jean van Vugt
Balance & recording engineer Louis van Emmerik
Editing Louis van Emmerik
Organ J. Elbertse, Soest

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