



signum
CLASSICS

BACH CANTATAS

Oxford Bach Soloists

Tom Hammond-Davies

Nick Pritchard

Yu-Wei Hu

Ich habe genug BWV 82.2

Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV 4

Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht BWV 55

BACH CANTATAS

J. S. BACH

Ich habe genug BWV 82.2

- | | | |
|---|--|---------|
| 1 | I. <i>Aria: Tenor</i> Ich habe genug | [6.53] |
| 2 | II. <i>Recitative: Tenor</i> Ich habe genug! Mein Trost ist nur allein | [1.01] |
| 3 | III. <i>Aria: Tenor</i> Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen | [10.23] |
| 4 | IV. <i>Recitative: Tenor</i> Mein Gott! wenn kömmt das schöne Nun | [0.53] |
| 5 | V. <i>Aria: Tenor</i> Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod | [3.24] |

Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV 4

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| 6 | I. <i>Sinfonia</i> | [1.19] |
| 7 | II. <i>Versus I: Coro</i> Christ lag in Todesbanden | [3.56] |
| 8 | III. <i>Versus II: Sopran, Alt</i> Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt | [5.12] |
| 9 | IV. <i>Versus III: Tenor</i> Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn | [1.48] |
| 10 | V. <i>Versus IV: Coro</i> Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg | [1.44] |
| 11 | VI. <i>Versus V: Bass</i> Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm | [4.14] |
| 12 | VII. <i>Versus VI: Sopran, Tenor</i> So feiern wir das hohe Fest | [1.33] |
| 13 | VIII. <i>Versus VII: Coro</i> Wir essen und leben wohl | [1.17] |

Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht BWV 55

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| 14 | I. <i>Aria: Tenor</i> Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht | [5.45] |
| 15 | II. <i>Recitative: Tenor</i> Ich habe wider Gott gehandelt | [1.13] |
| 16 | III. <i>Aria: Tenor</i> Erbarme dich! | [4.58] |
| 17 | IV. <i>Recitative: Tenor</i> Erbarme dich! | [1.12] |
| 18 | V. <i>Choral: Bin</i> ich gleich von dir gewichen | [1.10] |

Total timings: [57.57]

OXFORD BACH SOLOISTS · TOM HAMMOND-DAVIES
NICK PRITCHARD · YU-WEI HU

Bach, in his time, could never have envisioned his music being recorded. When we first embarked on our journey with the Oxford Bach Soloists, our focus was not on recording. We were immersed in the live experience, discovering Bach's vocal works chronologically, in real-time. It was about living the music as all those who performed and heard it did, tracing his steps through each note and phrase. However, as we progressed over the seven years since 2017, our ambition evolved. Our desire to share Bach's genius with a broader audience grew, echoing how Luther harnessed the power of the printing press to reach a vast, almost global audience.

Contemplating this, one wonders: if Bach had access to modern recording technology, would he have seized the opportunity to expand his reach beyond the confines of the Thomaskirche and Nikolaikirche? I believe he would have embraced the chance to share his music with millions worldwide. In this spirit of reaching out, in what can be seen as true Evangelism, we proudly present our first recording – a labour of love that encapsulates seven years of immersive research and exploration in the city of dreaming spires.

Featuring two of our core Soloists, Nick Pritchard (tenor) and Yu-Wei Hu (flute), this album presents three of Bach's Cantatas. These include possibly his earliest vocal work, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (BWV 4), his only extant tenor cantata, *Ich armer Mensch* (BWV 55), and the much-beloved cantata, *Ich habe genug*, showcased here in its arrangement for high voice and flute (BWV 82.2). This recording is a celebration of our journey with Bach, and an invitation to experience his timeless music through our own journey of dedication and discovery.

Tom Hammond-Davies
Oxford, 2024

THE MUSIC OF BACH'S CANTATAS

Nicholas Anderson

BWV 4: "Christ lag in Todesbanden"

In contrast with the rich legacy of Passion music which Bach has left us there is very little surviving music which he intended specifically for Easter Day. We know of only two cantatas originally written for this festival, both of them dating from Bach's youthful years at Mühlhausen and Weimar. "Christ lag in Todesbanden" ("Christ lay in death's bonds") is the earlier of them but, although in existence as early as 1708, Bach made later use of this cantata on Easter Sunday in Leipzig in 1724 and in the following year. And it is the parts for these performances, perhaps with a few alterations, which have survived.

Among the most satisfying features of BWV 4 are its expressive homogeneity and its purity of form, which gives the work both a cohesive strength and a powerful sense of direction. Bach achieves this in two ways: first, by setting Luther's text as it stands, an unusual procedure in the later cantatas, and, secondly, by using, in every verse, the chorale variation technique favoured by composers such as Buxtehude, and inherited

from the seventeenth century. In this way a single melody provides the foundation of the entire work. Within this strict framework Bach's music, in the prevailing key of E minor, is strikingly varied and reveals his early and profound mastery of form and technique.

A short, poignant *sinfonia* for strings, containing the first measures of the chorale melody, introduces the work. This is followed by Verse One, which states fully the hymn tune. For this choral movement and the concluding one Bach added in 1725 a cornett and three trombones to the earlier five-strand string texture of two violins, two violas and continuo. The cornett doubles the soprano line, while a single trombone augments each of the three remaining vocal strands. Verse Two is a duet for soprano and alto, supported by cornett and trombone respectively. Verse Three is a tenor solo with an energetic accompaniment of unison violins. Verse Four is a four-part chorale movement in motet style with continuo. In this movement the hymn melody is sustained in the alto line. Verse Five is a solo number for bass and strings, which builds up to a dramatic outburst in the line "Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden" ("The destroyer can no longer harm us"). Verse Six is another duet, this time for soprano and tenor with continuo. The cantata ends with a four-part

chorale whose text celebrates the Passover. This was newly composed by Bach in 1724, seemingly to replace an earlier, now lost setting of the concluding stanza of Luther's hymn.

BWV 55 "Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht"

As far as we know this was the only cantata which Bach wrote for a solo tenor. It appears certain from existing material that only the first two movements of Bach's cantata were newly composed in 1726 for performance on the twenty-second Sunday after Trinity. The music is severe and makes exacting demands on the vocalist. In the opening G minor aria, scored for flute, oboe d'amore, violins in two parts and continuo, the vocal line hardly leaves the upper reaches of the tenor tessitura. By these means Bach accentuates both the urgency and the desperation of the sinner's predicament. In the succeeding simple recitative there is an arresting moment at its close when, for emphasis, the word "Gott" is placed on a high B flat. The second aria, in D minor, is more simply scored than the first, featuring only a flute with basso continuo. A second recitative, accompanied this time, and more extended than the first, speaks of the sinner's prayer answered. The cantata ends with a verse from a hymn by Johann Rist, dating from 1642; its

melody, by Johann Schop, belongs to the same year, is straightforwardly harmonized by Bach and anticipates the same verse that concludes St Peter's denial in the St Matthew Passion, first heard in the year following the performance of this cantata.

BWV 82.2: "Ich habe genug"

Bach wrote this solo cantata in the following year for the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on 2nd February. The work was evidently a favourite of his since he made no less than four versions of it, as well as numerous revisions. In its earliest form the scoring is for bass with oboe, strings and continuo. In about 1731 Bach reworked the cantata in a second version, for soprano, transposing the prevailing C minor key of the original to E minor, and substituting a transverse flute for the oboe. The only surviving manuscript parts are those for flute and voice. It is this version that it is recorded with tenor voice.

Some four or more years later, after 1735, Bach reverted to the key of C minor in a third version, whose tessitura lies within the mezzo soprano/alto range. Finally, sometime between 1735 and 1748 Bach adjusted the cantata for bass voice, once again, but returning to what may well have been

his original intention of adding an oboe da caccia, which doubles the violin in the second aria. In addition to these versions the recitative “Ich habe genug” (No. 2) and the aria “Schlummert ein” (No. 4) are included in arrangements for soprano voice and harpsichord in the Klavierbüchlein compiled by Bach’s second wife Anna Magdalena (1725). So, clearly a family favourite.

The cantata opens with an instrumental prelude leading to the first aria. Above a murmuring string accompaniment the solo flute weaves an expressive melody which is taken up by the soprano. A recitative containing passages of arioso is followed by one of Bach’s most affecting arias, “Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen”. He scores this tender, extended ‘da capo’ slumber aria, with its gently sighing phrases, and in the relative key of G major, for flute, strings and continuo. This beguiling music is followed by a second recitative, which closes with a brief section of arioso. The cantata concludes with a lively dance-like aria scored for flute and strings.

THE TEXT OF BACH’S CANTATAS

Henrike Lähnemann

The texts of the three cantatas come from two very distinct periods in the history of German sacred texts: BWV 4 presents a programmatic hymn by Martin Luther which in 2024 celebrates its quincentenary, BWV 55 and BWV 82 are characteristic products of Bach’s own religious circles 200 years later, in the 1720s. It is on the basis of the continued congregational use of Reformation hymns that the Pietist cantata production in Leipzig developed.

Christ lag in Todesbanden as Programmatic Reformation Hymn



Der Lobsanck Christi ist erstanden
Gebessert.

Christ lag yn todes banden fur vnser
sund gegebē. Der ist widder erstandē
vnd hat vns bracht das leben. Des wir
sollen frolich seyn. Got loben vñ dāckē
bar seyn vnd singen Alleluia.

Den todt niemāt zwingen kund / bey allē mensche
kyndē. Das macht alles vnser sund / keyn vnshult
war zu finden. danon kam der tod so bald vñ nam
vber vns gewalt hielt vns yn seyn reich gefangē.

The 'Enchiridion' with the hymn 'Christ lag in Todesbanden'
(Erfurt 1524)

In BWV 4, Johann Sebastian Bach set all seven verses of Martin Luther's chorale "Christ lag in Todesbanden" which is based on two medieval Easter chants, the Latin "Victimae Paschali Laudes" and the German "Christ ist erstanden". The medieval Latin source for Luther's chorale is a so-called Sequence, a highly elaborate form used from the 10th century by monastic poets such as Notker of St Gall for compositions for the feast days of the church year. This particular text-music ensemble for Easter was probably written by Wipo of Burgund in the early 11th century. The form consists of an introduction followed by pairs of verses which work like acts in a miniature drama, giving particularly voice to Mary Magdalene who announces the resurrection to the amazed disciples.

The dramatic piece with its Easter proclamation called for a congregational response. As early as the 12th century, "Christ ist erstanden" developed as a vernacular summary of the Sequence, making it the oldest known German hymn which is still sung today. The text "Christ is risen" picks up the lines of Mary Magdalene in the Latin and the tune is based on the introduction to the Sequence. On Easter day, lay people would answer with the vernacular response after each verse.

Martin Luther realised the potential of these popular song to spread the gospel and complex theological messages in an accessible way. He marketed his hymn “Christ lag in Todesbanden” in the very first printed hymnals in 1524 as “Christ ist erstanden, gebessert”, i.e. “an updated version of Christ is Risen”. Luther expands and restructures the tune to conform to the norms established in Germany by the Meistersinger. This means taking the signature first line, expanding its ambitus and making it the A part which is repeated. The B part is then formed of musical material which is partly taken from the Latin Sequence. For the text, Luther expands the biblical references to emphasize the central theological insight of the Reformation, salvation by grace alone.

The hymn proved highly influential, being included in every German hymnbook for the last 500 years; Bach’s congregation would have almost certainly have known it by heart since the hymnbooks were also the textbooks for learning to read. They could easily join in the last verse which appropriately starts with a communal statement: “Wir essen und wir leben wohl!” – “We eat and live well” and leading to the final “Hallelujah” as confirmation of this fact.

Christoph Birkmann, the Student Librettist for J S Bach



Christine Blanken (2015), Bach-Jahrbuch 101, p. 57.

The text for both BWV 55 and BWV 82 was written by Christoph Birkmann, a mathematics student at Leipzig in 1724–1727 who published the libretti of the cantatas under the title “Gott-geheiligte Sabbaths-Zehnden” (“God-devoted Sunday Tithes comprising Sacred Cantatas for all High Feast Days and Sundays, dedicated to the congregation at Hersbruck for God-blessed devotion by Christoph Birkmann, candidate for the ministry, printed in Nuremberg by Lorenz Bieling”) when he became a curate near Nuremberg in 1728. The preface to this and his autobiography give a rare insight into how cantatas were conceived, performed and edited and the importance of the student scene in Leipzig for Bach’s oeuvre.

There were practical reasons for involving the 23-year-old student as adviser, singer, and instrumentalist: the Leipzig authorities had just cut down on choral provisions through the Thomasschule and J S Bach had to provide the Sunday music with reduced forces. He turned to talented and cash-strapped students at the renowned local university whom he invited to his house for music and discussions. But there was also clearly a shared religious interest expressed in the cantata-coproduction. Birkmann came from a poor Nuremberg family but with an excellent education as a chorister of classical and modern

languages, mathematics, music theory and practice and a religious education provided by a teacher who had trained with the Pietists in Halle. He worked with Bach, remodelling older libretti such as the one for the St John’s Passion with a focus on the emotional expression of religious feeling and writing new texts mainly for the solo-singing soul – perfect expression of the devout Christian (and saving money on performers).

The two cantatas on the album show the range of music which Bach used for setting these chamber-pieces of Christian life: from tormented recitatives jumping up and down the scale to reflect the gulf of sin between God and the singer to the joyful dance-of-death rhythms of the aria ‘Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod’ (BWV 82). Birkmann’s text are direct dialogues of the individual soul with God, lamenting the wretched state of being a ‘servant to sin’ (BWV 55) and longing to be brought to heavenly joy by ‘death, brother of slumber’ – a phrase from another cantata (BWV 56) by Birkmann which is put into music by the ‘Schlummert ein’ aria (BWV 82). Ultimately it was this lullaby with its repetition of soothing ‘sanft und selig’ (sweet and serene/blessed) which was copied into Anna Magdalena’s notebook – the perfect combination of personal piety and an ingeniously simple setting.

CANTATA TEXTS

A note by the translator: The translations are meant as a crib for the German, hence not poetic but retaining as much syntactic and etymological

features of the original German as possible without contorting the sense; I paid special attention to highlighting Early New High German special meanings and biblical or literary references.

BWV 82.2 “Ich habe genug”

Mariae Reinigung (Purification of Mary)

1 Aria: Tenor

Ich habe genug,
Ich habe den Heiland,
das Hoffen der Frommen,
auf meine begierigen Arme genommen;
Ich habe genug!
Ich hab ihn erblickt,
mein Glaube hat Jesus ans Herze gedrückt;
nun wünsch ich, noch heute mit Freuden
von hinnen zu scheiden.

2 Recitativo: Tenor

Ich habe genug.
Mein Trost ist nur allein,
dass Jesus mein und ich sein eigen möchte sein.
Im Glauben halt ich ihn,
da seh ich auch mit Simeon
die Freude jenes Lebens schon.
lasst uns mit diesem Manne ziehn!

1 Aria

*I am satisfied,
I have taken the Saviour,
the hope of believers,
into my eager arms;
I am satisfied!
I have beheld him,
my faith has pressed Jesus to my heart;
now I wish, still today with joy
to depart from here.*

2 Recitative

*I am satisfied.
My consolation is this alone,
that Jesus should be mine and I his own.
In faith I hold him,
there I see with Simeon
already the joy of that life.
Let us go with this man!*

Ach! möchte mich von meines Leibes Ketten
der Herr erretten;
ach! wäre doch mein Abschied hier,
mit Freuden sagt ich, Welt, zu dir:
Ich habe genug.

3 | Aria: Tenor

Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen,
fallet sanft und selig zu!

Welt, ich bleibe nicht mehr hier,
hab ich doch kein Teil an dir,
das der Seele könnte taugen.
Hier muss ich das Elend bauen,
aber dort, dort werd ich schauen
süßen Friede, stille Ruh.

4 | Recitativo: Tenor

Mein Gott! wenn kömmt das schöne Nun,
da ich im Friede fahren werde
und in dem Sande kühler Erde
und dort bei dir im Schoße ruhn?
Der Abschied ist gemacht,
Welt, gute Nacht!

5 | Aria: Bass

Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod,
ach, hätt er sich schon eingefunden.
Da entkomm ich aller Not,
die mich noch auf der Welt gebunden.

*Ah! if only the Lord delivered me
from the chains of my body;
ah! if only my farewell were here,
with joy I would say, world, to you:
I am satisfied.*

3 | Aria

*Fall asleep, you weary eyes,
close softly and blissfully!
World, I will remain no longer here,
I have no part in you,
that could be good for the soul.
Here I must dwell in misery,
but there, there I shall see
sweet peace, quiet rest.*

4 | Recitative

*My God! when comes the beautiful Now,
when I shall depart in peace
and in the sand of cool earth
and there with you in your bosom rest?
The farewell is done,
world, good night!*

5 | Aria

*I look forward to my death,
ah, would that it had already come.
Then I escape all distress
that still binds me in the world.*

BWV 4 "Christ lag in Todesbanden"

Ostertag (1st Day of Easter) 24 April 1707

6 Sinfonia

7 Versus I: Coro

Christ lag in Todesbanden,
für unsre Sünd gegeben;
er ist wieder erstanden
und hat uns bracht das Leben;
des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
Und singen halleluja:
Halleluja!

8 Versus II: Sopran, Alt

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
bei allen Menschenkindern;
das macht' alles unsre Sünd,
kein' Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
und nahm über uns Gewalt,
hielt uns in seinem Reich gefangen.
Halleluja!

9 Versus III: Tenor

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
An unser Statt ist kommen
Und hat die Sünde weggetan,
damit dem Tod genommen

6 Sinfonia

7 Versus I

*Christ lay in death's bonds,
given for our sins;
He is risen again
and has brought us the life;
therefore we should rejoice,
praise God and be grateful to him
and sing hallelujah:
Hallelujah!*

8 Versus II

*No one could overpower death
among all the children of men;
our sin made that,
no guiltlessness could be found.
Because of this, death came so soon
and took power over us,
held us captive in his kingdom.
Hallelujah!*

9 Versus III

*Jesus Christ, Son of God,
has come in our place
and has taken away the sin,
with this taking away from death*

all sein Recht und sein Gewalt;
da bleibet nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
Den Stach'l hat er verloren.
Halleluja!

10 Versus IV: Coro

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg,
da Tod und Leben rungen.
Das Leben behielt den Sieg,
es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
wie ein Tod den andern fraß,
ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Halleluja!

11 Versus V: Bass

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
davon Gott hat geboten.
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
in heißer Lieb gebraten.
Das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür,
das hält der Glaub dem Tode für.
Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Halleluja!

12 Versus VI: Sopran, Tenor

So feiern wir das hohe Fest
mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
das uns der Herre scheinen lässt.

*all its right and power;
there remains nothing but death's form,
he has lost his sting.
Hallelujah!*

10 Versus IV

*It was a miraculous war,
when death and life wrestled.
Life kept the victory,
it swallowed up death.
Scripture has prophesized this,
how one death devoured the other,
death has become a mockery.
Hallelujah!*

11 Versus V

*Here is the true paschal lamb,
of which God has commanded.
That is high on the tree of the cross
roasted in hot love.
The blood marks our door,
with which faith confronts death.
The slayer can harm us no more.
Hallelujah!*

12 Versus VI

*Thus we celebrate the high feast
with gladness of heart and joy
which the Lord lets shine for us.*

Er ist selber die Sonne,
der durch seiner Gnade Glanz
erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz.
Der Sünden Nacht ist verschwunden.
Halleluja!

13 Versus VII: Choral

Wir essen und leben wohl
In rechten Osterfladen.
Der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
sein bei dem Wort der Gnaden.
Christus will die Koste sein
Und speisen die Seel allein,
Der Glaub will keins andern leben.
Halleluja!

BWV 55 “Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht”

22. Sonntag nach Trinitatis (22nd Sunday
after Trinity) 17 November 1726

14 Aria: Tenor

Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht,
ich geh vor Gottes Angesichte
mit Furcht und Zittern zum Gerichte.
Er ist gerecht, ich ungerecht.
Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht!

*He himself is the sun,
who by his grace's splendour
illuminates our hearts completely.
The night of sin has vanished.
Hallelujah!*

13 Versus VII

*We eat and live well
of true paschal bread.
The old leaven shall not
be with the word of grace.
Christ will be the food
and feed the soul on his own.
Faith wants to live for none other.
Hallelujah!*

14 Aria

*I poor man, I servant of sin,
I go before the face of God
with fear and trembling to judgement.
He is just, I am unjust.
I poor man, I servant of sin!*

15 Recitativo: Tenor

Ich habe wider Gott gehandelt
und bin demselben Pfad,
den er mir vorgeschrieben hat,
nicht nachgewandelt.
Wohin? soll ich der Morgenröte Flügel
zu meiner Flucht erkiesen,
die mich zum letzten Meere wiesen,
so wird mich doch die Hand des Allerhöchsten
finden
und mir die Sündenrute binden.
Ach ja!
Wenn gleich die Höll ein Bette
vor mich und meine Sünden hätte,
so wäre doch der Grimm des Höchsten da.
Die Erde schützt mich nicht,
sie droht mich Scheusal zu verschlingen;
und will ich mich zum Himmel schwingen,
da wohnt Gott, der mir das Urteil spricht.

16 Aria: Tenor

Erbarme dich!
Lass die Tränen dich erweichen,
lass sie dir zu Herzen reichen;
lass um Jesu Christi willen
deinen Zorn des Eifers stillen!
Erbarme dich!

15 Recitative

*I have acted against God
and the same path,
which he has prescribed for me,
I have not followed.
Whither? If I choose the wings of the dawn
for my flight,
that led me to the furthest sea,
the hand of the Most High will still find me
and tie for me the switch of sin.
Alas yes!
Even if hell had a bed
for me and my sins,
the wrath of the Most High would still be there.
The earth does not shield me,
it threatens to swallow up me, a monster;
and if I want to swing myself up to heaven,
God dwells there, who pronounces judgement
on me.*

16 Aria

*Have mercy!
Let the tears soften you,
let them reach your heart;
let, for the sake of Jesus Christ,
the fury of your zeal be quenched!
Have mercy!*

17 Recitativo: Tenor

Erbarme dich!

Jedoch nun

tröst ich mich,

ich will nicht für Gerichte stehen

und lieber vor dem Gnadenthron

zu meinem frommen Vater gehen.

Ich halt ihm seinen Sohn,

sein Leiden, sein Erlösen für,

wie er für meine Schuld

bezahlet und genug getan,

und bitt ihn um Geduld.

Hinfüro will ich's nicht mehr tun.

So nimmt mich Gott zu Gnaden wieder an.

18 Choral

Bin ich gleich von dir gewichen,

stell ich mich doch wieder ein;

hat uns doch dein Sohn verglichen

durch sein Angst und Todespein.

Ich verleugne nicht die Schuld,

aber deine Gnad und Huld

ist viel größer als die Sünde,

die ich stets bei mir befinde.

17 *Recitativo*

Have mercy!

But for now

I comfort myself,

I will not stand at the law court

*and rather go before the throne of grace
to my righteous father.*

I hold up his Son to him,

his suffering, his redemption,

how he, for my guilt

has paid and done enough,

and ask him for patience.

From henceforth, I will not do it any more.

Then God accepts me again in grace.

18 *Choral*

Even if I have strayed from you,

yet I will return again;

since your son has paid for us

through his anguish and mortal pain.

I do not deny the guilt

but your grace and favour

is far greater than the sin,

which I always find within me.

Translations: Henrike Lähnemann.

Henrike Lähnemann is Professor of Medieval German Literature and Linguistics at the University of Oxford and has worked with OBS on a number of projects contextualising Bach's cantatas within the Protestant German tradition.



★★★★★

This virile, collegiate approach to Bach is the most exciting I've heard in a very long time. If you can't get to hear OBS live, recordings will soon be available. Snap them up.

The Guardian

Bringing together performers and audiences in an immersive experience of the complete vocal works of Johann Sebastian Bach.

The Oxford Bach Soloists (OBS) is a Baroque ensemble whose ambition is to perform, in sequence, the complete canon of J. S. Bach's vocal works over 12 years. Founded by Tom Hammond-Davies (Artistic Director) in 2017, OBS offers a unique musical experience that converges composer, performer, and audience.

THE OBS MISSION

Our mission is distinctive and pioneering: while there have been many recordings and performances of the complete vocal works of J. S. Bach, no ensemble has ever mounted a cycle of performances in chronological order, programmed in real-time, and in the context for which they were conceived. OBS has set out to perform

Bach's works as he himself would have realised them with performers, instruments, and venues that echo the university and churches of Bach's hometown of Leipzig.

OUR COMMUNITY

Bach's music is community music. He was famously networked amongst an extended family of musicians in northern Germany. Today, OBS champions our local students, scholars, players, soloists, and amateurs in performances that mirror the diversity of our community.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

OBS is creating long-term sustainable relationships with state-supported schools to improve numeracy and literacy skills. With the help of our regular interventions, we empower educators to use music as a transformative teaching tool.

CHORAL SCHOLARSHIPS

OBS provides the next generation of young aspiring singers with the opportunity to develop their solo singing within the musical programme

of the Oxford Bach Soloists. Funded by the generosity of our donors and foundations, 10 competitively appointed Choral Scholars develop their skills by taking on step-out solos during our concerts, and receive professional German language coaching. They transfer their learning experience to the rest of the chorus by making up its core and contribution to its musical integrity.

OUR IMPACT

As a laboratory for current research, OBS draws from a number of world experts in Oxford, including specialists from the Faculties of Music, Theology, History, and Modern Languages. Our historically informed musicianship allows for a lively interplay between committed performance and an immersive experience for the audience.



TOM HAMMOND-DAVIES

Tom is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Oxford Bach Soloists.

As a leading specialist in choral conducting, Tom studied music at the University of Oxford before honing his skills under the tutelage of Paul Spicer at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Since then, he has gained global acclaim as one of the world's top choral conductors.

In 2017, Tom founded the Oxford Bach Soloists (OBS) with a mission to perform the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach chronologically and in real-time. The ensemble aims to provide an authentic experience by recreating the original liturgical, ecclesiastical, instrumental, and choral settings of Bach's music.

Under Tom's leadership, the baroque ensemble and singers have performed concerts celebrated worldwide, capturing the hearts of both seasoned and new Bach enthusiasts while nurturing the next generation of soloists.

Tom's love for Bach wasn't immediate. As a child and teenager, he found Bach's works uninspiring and difficult. It wasn't until he began singing



© Nick Rutter

Lutheran chorales that the genius of Bach became apparent, marking the beginning of a lifelong appreciation.

Beyond OBS, Tom has appeared at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, the Three Choirs Festival,

and the Oxford International Song Festival. His other roles include serving as a Trustee of the Sir George Dyson Trust, Director of Music at the City Church of St Michael at the North Gate, Oxford, and as a faculty member for the Oxford Cultural Leaders programme.

In September 2023, Tom was appointed Director of Music at Wadham College, Oxford. The College is renowned for its strong musical tradition, particularly through the Holywell Music Room, Europe's oldest purpose-built concert hall, and Wadham's highly regarded chapel choir.

NICK PRITCHARD tenor

Tenor Nick Pritchard is gaining fast recognition for his performances of the music of Bach and in particular his interpretation of the Evangelist in the Passions. Described as a 'Masterly Evangelist' in *The Guardian*, he has sung the role in Bach's *St John* and *Matthew* Passions around the world, including with St Paul Chamber Orchestra in Minnesota and his recording of the *St John Passion* (Evangelist) for Deutsche Grammophon with Sir John Eliot Gardiner was nominated for a Grammy Award for best Choral Performance (2023). Recent performances of the piece include those with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra



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at the Concertgebouw under Jonathan Cohen, for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Polyphony and Antwerp Symphony Orchestra.

On the concert platform he has performed with Ensemble Pygmalion, Concerto Köln, Les

Talens Lyriques, Les Violons du Roy, L'Orchestre du Chambre de Paris, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Concert, Early Opera Company, Les Talens Lyrique, Philharmonia Orchestra, The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Gabrieli Consort, Residentie Orkest, Stavanger Symfoniorkester, Flemish Radio Choir, the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra, Early Opera Company and he made his BBC Proms debut with Britten Sinfonia under David Bates performing Mozart's Requiem and he performed George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (John/Angel 3) with the Finnish Radio Symphony conducted by the composer and Britten's St Nicolas at the Aldeburgh Festival.

He has performed under conductors including Harry Bicket, John Butt, Laurence Cummings, Jonathan Cohen, Christian Curnyn, Richard Egarr, Maxim Emelyanychev, Adam Fischer, Emmanuelle Haïm, Simon Halsey, George Petrou, Raphaël Pichon, Christophe Rousset, Sir Andrés Schiff, Masato Suzuki, Ryan Wigglesworth and Peter Whelan.

A fine actor and equally at home on the operatic stage, roles have included Oronte, *Alcina* in a new Tim Albery production for Opera North, Lysander,

A Midsummer Night's Dream as part of the Aldeburgh Festival's 70th anniversary, Tamino, *Die Zauberflöte* for Glyndebourne on Tour and for Irish National Opera and Peter Whelan, Prologue *The Turn of the Screw* and Ferrando, *Così fan tutte* for Opera Holland Park, Amphinomos, *The Return of Ulysses* for the Royal Opera House, Purcell's *The Indian Queen* for the Opéra de Lille, Théâtre de Caen, Opera Vlaanderen and Grand Theatre Luxembourg all under Emmanuelle Haïm as well as Albert *Albert Herring*, John/Angel 3, *Written on Skin*, Colonel Fairfax, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Acis, Acis and Galatea* and the title role in *Candide*. A regular performer of New Music he has also given several World Premieres, including creating the role of Matthew in Mark Simpson's opera *Pleasure* (Opera North, Aldeburgh and The Royal Opera House).

Nick has performed in major concert halls including Carnegie Hall in New York, Konzerthaus Vienna, Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Chapelle Royale, Versailles, Bozar Brussels, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam.

In August 2023 Nick gave his Edinburgh International Festival recital debut with pianist Ian Tindale which was broadcast on BBC Radio

3 including works by Gabriel Fauré, Francis Poulenc and Benjamin Britten. He has also given recitals with Gary Matthewman, James Bailieu, Simon Lepper, Sholto Kynoch, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson and Malcolm Martineau at Wigmore Hall, Oxford International Song Festival, Leeds Lieder Festival, Ryedale Festival, Lammermuir Festival and Two Moors Festivals.

YU-WEI HU flute

Born in Taipei, flautist Yu-Wei Hu discovered her passion for early music while studying at the National Taiwan Normal University, which later brought her to the Royal College of Music in London. Supported by a Taiwanese Government Scholarship, Yu-Wei studied historical flute with Lisa Beznoziuk and Rachel Brown, as well as modern flute with Susan Thomas and Daniel Pailthorpe at the RCM, where she was awarded the MMus in Performance with Distinction and an Artist Diploma degree.

As both a recitalist and orchestral musician, Yu-Wei has performed modern and period flutes throughout the UK and Europe, including concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Palace of Versailles, and MuTh - Konzertsaal der Wiener



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Sängerknaben. Festival appearances include the BBC Proms, London Handel Festival, London Festival of Baroque Music, Radio France Festival in Montpellier, Bachwoche Festival in Vienna, and Carinthischer Sommer Festival in Austria. Her performances have been broadcast on BBC Radio

3, Radio France, and Austrian Radio Ö1. As part of Flauguissimo, the ensemble she co-founded with guitarist/theorbo-player Johan Löfving, Yu-Wei has recorded several albums released under Resonus Classics to great critical acclaim. Currently the Principal Flute of Oxford Bach Soloists and Opera Warberg, Yu-Wei has also performed and recorded as part of many renowned period chamber ensembles and orchestras, including Arcangelo, the Academy of Ancient Music, Florilegium,

Gabrieli Consort & Players, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

In 2021, Yu-Wei was appointed Modern and Historical Flute Professor at the London Performing Academy of Music. Additionally, as a regular historical flute teacher at the Wermland Early Music Festival in Sweden, she is committed to teaching and inspiring the next generation of musicians.

Ich habe genug BWV 82.2

Tenor soloist

Nick Pritchard

First Violins

Davina Clarke

Liz MacCarthy

Iona Davies

Second Violins

Beatrice Scaldini

Claudia Norz

Dominika Fehér

Viola

Fran Gilbert

Aliye Cornish

Cello

Henrik Persson

Double Bass

Rosie Moon

Flute

Yu-Wei Hu

Bassoon

Mark Wilson

Organ

Dónal McCann

Harpsichord

Anhad Arora

Christ lag in Todesbanden BWV 4

Sopranos

Sam Cobb *

Hilary Cronin

Lucy Cronin

Lucy Knight

Elspeth Piggott *

Altos

Steph Franklin *

Austin Haynes *

Becca Leggett

Tom Lilburn *

Tenors

Joseph Hancock *

Samuel Jenkins

Tom Kelly

Nick Pritchard

Basses

Ben Kazez

Thomas Lowen *

Samuel Pantcheff

Florian Störtz *

First Violins

Davina Clarke

Liz MacCarthy

Iona Davies

Second Violins

Beatrice Scaldini

Claudia Norz

Dominika Fehér

Viola

Fran Gilbert

Aliye Cornish

Cello

Henrik Persson

Double Bass

Rosie Moon

Bassoon

Mark Wilson

Organ

James Johnstone

Harpsichord

Anhad Arora

* Alumni of the Oxford Bach Soloists' Choral Scholarship programme



Oxford Bach Soloists, St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, 10th February 2023

Ich armer Mensch, ich Sündenknecht BWV 55

Tenor soloist

Nick Pritchard

Sopranos

Daisy Livesey †

Saskia Bibb †

Lizi Vineall †

Altos

Katie Ambrose

Charlotte Sleet †

Tenors

Colin Danskin †

Nick Pritchard

Basses

Charlie Epps †

Ben Gilchrist †

First Violins

Davina Clarke

Liz MacCarthy

Iona Davies

Second Violins

Beatrice Scaldini

Claudia Norz

Dominika Fehér

Viola

Fran Gilbert

Aliye Cornish

Cello

Henrik Persson

Double Bass

Rosie Moon

Flute

Yu-Wei Hu

Oboe

Mark Baigent

Bassoon

Mark Wilson

Organ

Dónal McCann

Harpichord

Anhad Arora

† Choral Scholar 2022-23



**Vegan
Capital**

Tom Hammond-Davies and the Oxford Bach Soloists extend immense gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our debut album. Special thanks to

our principal sponsors, David Hodges, Sebastiano Cossia Castiglioni, and Jane Patterson, as well as Vegan Capital. We are also grateful to our Friends of OBS, Leipzig Circle, and Dresden Court supporters.

Recorded 8th to 10th February 2023 at St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, London. Producer – Isabella de Sabata. Recording Engineer – Tom Lewington. Editor – Tom Lewington. Translations – Henrike Lähnemann.

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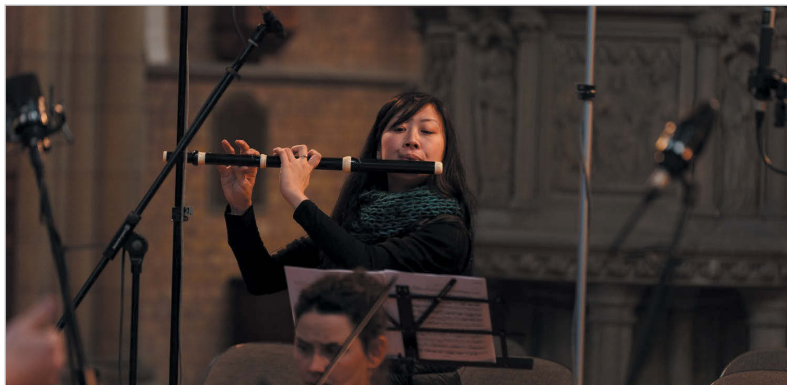
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