

Royal Academy of Music /
Kohn Foundation
Bach Cantata Series



Royal
Academy
of
Music

J. S. Bach.

The Cantatas 2013

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



Margaret Faultless



Rachel Podger



Madeleine Easton

Shortlisted in the Concert Series and Festivals category at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards 2012

'A satisfying spiritual start to the day... The performance was a model of vitality, concentration and period authenticity'
Sunday Times

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

'One of the distinct pleasures of a London Sunday'
Country Life

'Becoming something of a London cult'
AnOther magazine

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

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

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

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

To these monthly concerts, we welcome people from far and wide. Audiences range from musicians who have a profound knowledge of the cantatas to those experiencing this music for the first time. We know that most listeners fall into this second category, and therefore it seems especially appropriate to

hold these events in an environment where young performers are discovering the cantatas in such a fresh, spirited and communicative way.

The distinguished violinists Rachel Podger, Madeleine Easton and Margaret Faultless form the select roster of leaders in our 'period' band which has, with the choral group, developed a remarkably vibrant and dynamic 'house style', at one with the intimacy and warmth of the Duke's Hall and yet also relishing the lyrical and dramatic ambitions of our exceptional director Iain Ledingham.

Bach's music has perennial relevance to performers of many different traditions and instrumental backgrounds. This year we are again embracing this diversity by incorporating a couple of concerts played on modern instruments – and in a new innovation we have also included two recitals on our new state-of-the-art Duke's Hall organ, which will be installed by the Swiss master builders Kuhn in the summer of 2013.

We are also pleased to welcome a guest artist for this season's programme, following in the illustrious footsteps of our previous special guests Peter Schreier, John Butt, Thomanerchor Leipzig under Cantor Georg Christoph Biller and Sir John Eliot Gardiner. Masaaki Suzuki, founder and director of Bach Collegium Japan, renowned harpsichordist and chamber musician, and winner of the 2012 Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize supported by the Kohn Foundation, will join us to direct November's concert.

No other institution in the country is as steeped in Bach as the Royal Academy of Music, where we have been introducing his music to new audiences since our very early days in the 1820s. The tradition continues thanks to the remarkable commitment of the teachers, students and visiting artists of the Academy and – crucially central to its perpetuation – the close involvement, collaboration and generosity of Sir Ralph Kohn and the Kohn Foundation. All good schemes are a team effort but the Kohns (regular attenders from three generations of the family) are rare birds in the collective pride they feel in giving such unparalleled joy through their inspired support for this mighty project.



Jonathan Freeman-Attwood
Principal

O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, BWV 210

Auspicious day, O longed-for time

Sehet, Welch eine Liebe hat uns der

Vater erzeiget, BWV 64

Behold, what manner of love the Father
has bestowed upon us

**Midday
Duke's Hall**

*Tickets £12 (concessions £9),
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Book now: telephone 020 7873 7300
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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Bach returned to music which he had composed earlier in his life when preparing his wedding cantata 'O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit'. It is no mere 'pièce d'occasion' but a highly sophisticated piece for solo soprano with strings and woodwind. Five colourfully varied arias explore a daunting gamut of vocal technique and expression, ranging from the dazzling virtuosity of the first and concluding arias to the tender utterances in dance rhythm of the second and fourth arias. For whose wedding was this ambitious piece written, probably during the last decade of Bach's life? And who was the accomplished soprano?

The second day after Christmas was traditionally a public holiday in Leipzig and Bach would have been expected to perform music during the main service. 'Sehet, welch eine Liebe' ('Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us') was his choice for this day in 1723, his first Christmas at Leipzig. The chorale element predominates in this powerful cantata which begins with a contrapuntal motet-like chorus, stern, rhetorical and more concerned with death and the afterlife than seasonal cheer. That may be sensed, in varying degrees in the work's two arias, the second of which is dance-like in character with an obbligato oboe d'amore.



Gott der Herr is Sonn und Schild, BWV 79

The Lord God is a sun and shield

Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem

Gemüte, BWV 174

I love the Almighty with all my heart

Alles nur nach Gottes Willen, BWV 72

All things according to God's will

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Bach performed his resplendent cantata 'Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn und Schild' at the 1725 Leipzig Lutheran Reformation Festival, which fell on 31st October. The piece is scored for a festive instrumental assembly dominated in its choral movements by two horns. The opening chorus is a magnificent affair, introduced by a thrilling instrumental sinfonia, resonant, rhythmically catchy and spiritually uplifting. The joyful horn motifs of this chorus happily reappear in the choral third movement as an accompaniment to the well-known hymn 'Nun danket alle Gott' ('Now thank we all our God').

Bach prefaced his 1729 Whitsuntide cantata 'Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte' with a sinfonia of imposing dimensions. It is a transcription of the first movement of his Third Brandenburg Concerto (BWV 1048); but whereas the Brandenburg requires only strings Bach introduces horns and oboes to his Sinfonia, adding to the continuo a bassoon, the traditional complement to two- and three-part oboe texture.

Bach performed his Epiphany cantata 'Alles nur nach Gottes willen' at Leipzig in 1726. The music, though, may have originated in Weimar some ten years earlier. The opening chorus is a concertante piece with oboes and strings which Bach later parodied in the Gloria of his Lutheran Missa (BWV 235). A striking feature of the work is a recitative-arioso in which the alto voice declaims a ninefold repetition of the words 'Herr, so du wilt' ('Lord, if Thou wilt').

Bleib bei uns, den es will Abend werden, BWV 6

Abide with us, for it is toward evening

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

Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God

Er rufet seinen Schafen mit Namen, BWV 175

He calleth His own sheep by name

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Bach performed his cantata 'Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden' at Leipzig on the second day of Easter, 1725. Described by Albert Schweitzer as 'a masterpiece of poetry in music', the prevailing mood of the tenderly expressed opening chorus is one of elegy. As well as two arias there is a chorale setting for solo soprano accompanied by a violoncello piccolo, an instrument for which Bach provided an obbligato part in several other cantatas. The music of this beautifully crafted piece may be more familiar in its later arrangement as the fifth of the Schübler chorales for organ.

'Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und Gott' belongs to Bach's innovative series of chorale-based works belonging to his second Leipzig cantata cycle. He performed it on Quinquagesima Sunday in 1725. The opening chorale fantasia is expressively intense and of great lyrical beauty, scored for treble recorders, oboes and strings. The chorale element is provided by a sixteenth-century hymn from which Bach's cantata takes its name. In the two strongly contrasting arias which follow there are some fine instances of word-painting. These include the evocation of funeral bells, and the apocalyptic events of the Last Judgement.

Bach's cantata 'Es rufet seinen Schafen mit Namen' was first performed at Leipzig on Whit Tuesday in 1725. As its title suggests, the imagery is predominantly pastoral – and this is lent further emphasis by the deployment of three treble recorders, traditionally associated with pastoral settings in the Baroque period. The tenor aria, by contrast, features a violoncello piccolo while the bass aria introduces two trumpets which emphasise triumph over mortal death and the forces of evil.



O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort II, BWV 60

Eternity, O word of thunder II

Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209

He knows not what sorrow is

Sei Lob und Ehr dem Höchsten Gut, BWV 117

Give laud and praise to the highest good

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Johann Rist's stern hymn 'O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort' provided Bach with the foundation for two cantatas bearing this title. The present work is the earlier of them, and one of the wholly original cantatas which he performed during his first year at Leipzig on the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity in 1723. It is, as Bach himself described it, a dialogue between Fear (alto) and Hope (tenor). Rist's hymn features only in the opening movement which Bach treats as a duet for the two protagonists. The harmonization of the concluding chorale is among the boldest in all his cantatas. In 1935 Alban Berg affectingly cited it in the finale of his Violin Concerto.

We know little of the date and circumstances which prompted Bach to write his Italian cantata 'Non sa che sia dolore'. Even its authenticity has been questioned though it is hard to imagine any other composer than Bach writing the introductory B minor Sinfonia, or, indeed much else here. The cantata is scored for soprano solo with flute and string accompaniment in both of its arias. The text, perhaps by an Italian, concerns the departure of a friend. Some have suggested that he was Johann Matthias Gesner, whose career had taken him from Weimar, thence to Ansbach (mentioned in the libretto) and finally to Leipzig as Rector of the Thomasschule.

Bach wrote his cantata 'Sei Lob und Her den höchsten Gut' for an unspecified occasion. It dates from a period between 1728 and 1731, the nine strophes of the hymn text being set verse by verse, each ending with the same line: 'Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre' ('Give honour to our God'). The elaborate, dance-like ritornello with which Bach identically adorns the first and last movements establishes the prevailing spirit of the cantata as well as providing what Alfred Dürr describes a majestic framework. Especially delightful among the arias is that for alto with flute and strings, the most lyrically conceived of three such pieces.

Der Himmell lacht! die Erde jubilieret, BWV 31

The heavens laugh! the earth rejoices

Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200

I shall acknowledge His name

Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten II, BWV 74

If a man love me, he will keep my words II

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Iain Ledingham director
Madeleine Easton leader

'Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubilieret' is one of two surviving cantatas for Easter Day. It is a Weimar piece, dating from 1715, but Bach later revised it for at least two subsequent performances at Leipzig. Though concerned with mortality and earthly transience the music is predominantly festive, reflecting the joyful Easter message. The mood is established at the outset with a richly scored 'Sonata' for trumpets, drums, oboe, strings and continuo.

'Bekennen will ich seinen Namen' is an aria for alto, two violins and continuo. It is almost certainly a lone survivor of a lost cantata dating from about 1742. No liturgical designation is known, nor has the author of the text been identified. Had the entire work survived it would have been one of the very latest of Bach's cantatas but at least we may treasure this very beautiful fragment.

'Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten' is the later of two cantatas by Bach carrying this title. It was performed at Leipzig on Whit Sunday, 1725. The joyful message of Whitsuntide is reflected both in the 'occasional' splendour of Bach's opening chorus: trumpets, drums, oboes, strings and continuo, and in the carefree agility of the vocal writing. The cantata's four arias are characteristically varied in character and in colour. Vocal and instrumental virtuosity reach dazzling heights in the dance-like aria for tenor with obbligato violin.



Es erhub sich ein Streit, BWV 19

There arose a war

Tue Rechnung! Donnerwort, BWV 168

Give an account of thyself! Thundrous words

Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg, BWV 149

The voice of rejoicing and salvation

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

'Es erhub sich ein Streit' is the second of three complete surviving cantatas that Bach wrote for the feast of St Michael. The vivid Biblical account of the battle which Michael and his cohorts fought against Satan has inspired both painters and poets. It also inspired Bach to great heights of pictorial imagery and nowhere is this more evident than in the great fugal chorus with which this cantata begins. Bach illustrates the conflict between heaven and hell with sustained rhythmic tension and a confrontational vigour that is almost startling in its ferocity. This splendid battle music gives way to gentler, more reflective images contained in the work's two arias.

'Tue Rechnung! Donnerwort' is a Trinity cantata which Bach first performed at Leipzig in July 1725. The text is based on the parable of the unjust steward and Bach begins his cantata with a declamatory bass aria rather than the usual chorus. Salomo Franck's text calling mankind to account is uncompromising and Bach responds with a portentous, unyielding chordal dotted-rhythm against an almost unceasing continuo of semi-quaver triplets. There is colourful word-painting here and also in the duet for soprano and alto.

'Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg' is the latest of Bach's surviving cantatas for the feast of St Michael and All Angels. He probably performed it at Leipzig in 1729. The music of the colourfully scored opening chorus was not entirely new, since Bach had used it, albeit differently scored, as the conclusion to his Weimar congratulatory cantata BWV 208. The work contains two especially appealing arias, a lyrical, dance-like movement for soprano and strings, and a duet for alto and tenor with obbligato bassoon whose diverting serpentine figurations are taken up by the voices in canon.



Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV 177

I call to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ

Der Friede sei mit dir, BWV 158

Peace be unto you

Meine Seel erhebt den Herren, BWV 10

My soul doth magnify the Lord

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

'Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ' is a late-comer to the main body of Bach's cantatas. Bach performed it at Leipzig on the fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1732, reviving it ten years later. This is a chorale-based cantata in which the hymn's unaltered text appears, verse by verse in each movement. Only the movements which frame the work are treated chorally, the intervening verses being assigned to soloists. These are well-contrasted arias for alto with continuo, soprano with obbligato oboe da caccia and tenor with obbligato violin and bassoon.

'Der Friede sei mit dir' bucks any known trend in Bach's cantata production. To all intents and purposes it is a work for solo bass, though in the second movement Rosenmuller's beautiful chorale melody is sung by soprano. No definite date of composition is known though the mid to late 1720s seems a likely hypothesis. No autograph is preserved but surviving manuscript copies indicate that the piece was intended both for the third day of Easter and for the Feast of the Purification. It has been suggested that this short cantata is only a fragment of what might have been a work of greater substance.

Bach performed his cantata 'Meine Seel erhebt den Herren' at Leipzig in July 1724 on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Its text is based on Luther's German version of the Latin Magnificat. Unlike his well-known Latin Magnificat (BWV 243), Bach's cantata includes recitative as well as arias and chorally treated movements. Its tautly constructed opening chorus is declamatory in character and incorporates the 'tonus peregrinus' plainchant melody. A splendidly robust bass aria, full of theatrical gesture, breathes the air of the opera house, as Bach paints a picture of the temporal mighty hurled from their seats into the sulphurous pool of the text.



Wo soll ich fliehen hin?, BWV 5

Whither shall I flee?

Jesu, nun sei gepreiset, BWV 41

Jesus, now be praised

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Masaaki Suzuki director
Margaret Faultless leader

This guest appearance celebrates the award of the Royal Academy of Music/Kohn Foundation Bach Prize for 2012 to Masaaki Suzuki, founder and director of Bach Collegium Japan, renowned harpsichordist and chamber musician. The prestigious Bach Prize, sponsored by the Kohn Foundation, is presented annually to recognise an outstanding contribution to the performance and/or scholarly study of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

'Jesu, nun sei gepreiset' dates from 1725 when Bach performed it at Leipzig on New Year's Day. The cantata opens with a festive chorale fantasia on a grand scale with an instrumental arsenal of trumpets, drums, oboes and strings accompanying the choir. Two arias follow of which the first, for soprano with oboes, is especially engaging for its dance-like character. The concluding chorale is related to the opening chorus and contains brilliant flashes of colour from brass and timpani. We may imagine that Bach himself was pleased with his setting since he used it once more in another New Year cantata, four years later.

'Wo soll ich fliehen hin' is a Trinity cantata which Bach performed at Leipzig in 1724. It belongs to his great cycle of chorale-based works whose basis, in this instance, derives from a hymn by the seventeenth century writer, Johann Heermann. The opening chorus is a piece of consummate artistry, with subtle word-painting and whose unified structure derives in part from material shared between vocal and instrumental parts. The two arias are in their different ways both memorable. The first, a lyrical piece for tenor, is lent distinction by the rare occurrence in Bach's cantatas of a viola obbligato. The second, for alto, features a high trumpet, oboes and strings and is declamatory in character.



Masaaki Suzuki

Pièce d'Orgue, BWV 572
Partite diverse sopra O Gott,
du frommer Gott, BWV 767
Trio Sonata No.1 in E flat, BWV 525
Nun danket alle Gott, BWV 657
Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr', BWV 662
Prelude and Fugue D, BWV 532

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Bine Bryndorf organ

Acclaimed Danish organist Bine Byndorf plays the first of two organ recitals dedicated to the works of JS Bach on the Academy's new Kuhn organ. This magnificent instrument, carefully designed to the detailed requirements of the Academy, will be installed in Summer 2013 thanks to the generosity of Sir Elton John, former Junior Exhibitioner at the Academy.

In a beautiful programme of contrasting well-known pieces, Bryndorf presents Bach at his most daring, contemplative and virtuosic.

Weinachts-Oratorium 'Und es waren Hirten
in derselben Gegend', BWV 248ii
Christmas Oratorio 'And there were in the same
country shepherds'
Sie warden euch in den Bann tun II, BWV 183
They shall put you out of the synagogues II
Christum wir sollen loben schon, BWV 121
To Christ we should sing praises

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Bach composed his Christmas Oratorio for the Leipzig Christmas festival of 1734/5. The music is partly original and partly 'parody', two secular cantatas which he had written a year or so earlier, providing him with much of his borrowed material. Although the Oratorio is cast in six autonomous parts, Bach has nevertheless achieved a unified work within itself. Each of its Parts can be performed separately and with complete propriety – as Bach did himself. Part Two is scored for a four-part chorus with alto, tenor and bass soloists and an instrumentarium of flutes, oboes d'amore, oboes da caccia and strings. The text is concerned with the announcement of the Birth of Christ to the shepherds. The Evangelist tells the story in biblical narrative, while arias, duets and trios for the soloists, choruses for the choir and chorales, perhaps for the congregation to join in, meditate upon the events taking place.

'Sie werden euch in den Bann tun' is the later of two cantatas by Bach bearing this title. He performed the present work at Leipzig on the first Sunday after Ascension in May 1725. Its text by the Leipzig poet Mariane von Ziegler is concerned with the fear of persecution, assuaged by the Holy Spirit. The layout is untypical and the cantata begins with a bass recitative rather than a choral movement. This piece and the single remaining recitative feature an unusual accompaniment of oboes d'amore and oboes da caccia, while the tenor aria is lent distinction by an obbligato violoncello piccolo.

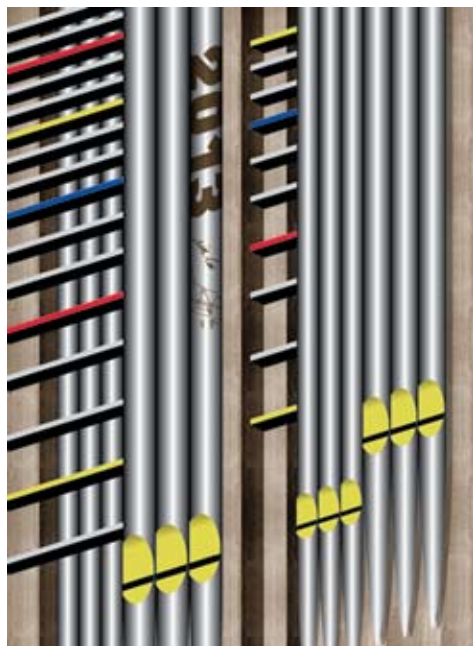
The first performance of the cantata 'Christum wir sollen loben schon' took place at Leipzig on the second day of Christmas 1724. Its text is based on Luther's translation of the ancient Latin Christmas hymn 'A solis ortus cardine'. The opening chorale fantasia in the character and form of a motet is colourfully scored for cornett, three trombones, oboe d'amore and strings. The remainder of the work strikes a more modern note with a tenor aria accompanied by oboe d'amore and another for bass with full string accompaniment. This last-mentioned aria is a robust and joyful movement, spaciouly laid out with an extended instrumental ritornello.

Prelude and fugue in G, BWV 541
Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659
Trio super Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 660
Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland in organo pleno, BWV 661
Trio Sonata no.6 in G, BWV 530
Canonic variations on Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her, BWV 769
Prelude and Fugue in C, BWV 547

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Wolfgang Zerer organ

Wolfgang Zerer, widely acknowledged as one of the leading performers of Bach's organ works, plays the second of two recitals on the Academy's new Kuhn organ. His programme features works based on two of the great Lutheran hymns for Advent and Christmas, giving a seasonal mood to this Sunday lunchtime recital.



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Each cantata concert begins at midday and lasts around one hour. The Academy's restaurant will be open for light refreshments from 10.30am until the start of each concert.

Box Office

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

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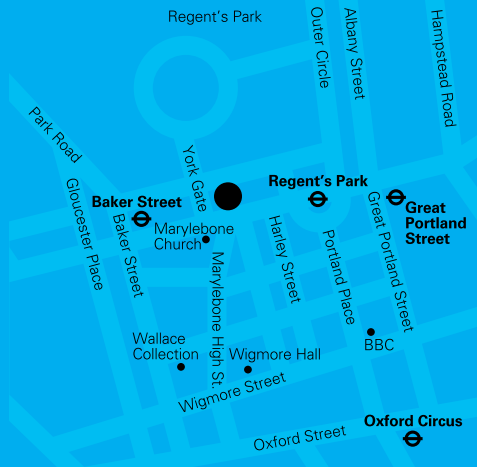
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