

Royal Academy of Music /  
Kohn Foundation  
Bach Cantata Series



Royal  
Academy  
of  
Music

*J. S. Bach.*

# The Cantatas 2011

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

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'The perfect Sunday lunch for any Bach lover'  
**The Times, January 2009**

'Lots of people have done Bach Cantata cycles... but this one's really interesting'  
**Petroc Trelawny on BBC Radio 3, June 2010**

'The capacity audience enjoyed sparkling period performances, rapturously received... a superb new concert series which has already become a highlight of London's musical calendar and which promises many new treasures. My advice: book early!'  
**Arietta, Spring 2010**

'The Bach Cantata series at the Royal Academy of Music offers London audiences a marvellous new opportunity to hear such masterpieces, many of them rarely heard. I know from my recent experience at the Academy that these talented singers and instrumentalists will produce outstanding results'  
**Sir John Eliot Gardiner, January 2010**

'The Academy is internationally known and recognised as representing the highest values of music and musical society'  
**Daniel Barenboim, February 2010**

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

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I am delighted to launch the third year of our epic Bach cantata journey. 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.

This is a journey of unparalleled richness for both performer and audience. By the end of this calendar year we will have performed around a third of the complete sacred and secular choral works of J.S. Bach. There are so many remarkable cantatas; one often mourns the fact that we won't be traversing a particular piece again in the grand scheme!

We welcome people from far and wide to these monthly concerts. Audiences range from those 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 engaging with Bach 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.

We are also pleased to welcome two guest artists for this season's programme. January's concert will be directed by John Butt, winner of the Royal Academy of Music / Kohn Foundation Bach Prize for 2010; and in April our performers will be directed by Peter Schreier (Bach Prize winner in 2009), celebrated tenor and conductor, whose interpretations of Bach's Oratorios, Passions and Cantatas are renowned for their depth of understanding.

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. We welcome you to the Academy and advise you to book early!



**Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**  
Principal



### Sundays at midday

#### Sunday 16th January

Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131  
Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut, BWV 113

#### Sunday 13th February

Komm, du süße Todesstunde, BWV 161  
Das neugeborne Kindelein, BWV 122  
Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan II, BWV 99

#### Sunday 6th March

Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende, BWV 28  
Ihr, die ihr euch von Christo nennet, BWV 164  
Schweigst stille, plaudert nicht, BWV 211

#### Sunday 3rd April

Kommt, eilet und lauft, BWV 249  
Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft, BWV 50

#### Sunday 15th May

Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ, BWV 67  
Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, BWV 202  
Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen, BWV 11

#### Sunday 26th June

Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, BWV 7  
Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats, BWV 42

#### Sunday 2nd October

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 140  
Erfreute Zeit im neuen Bunde, BWV 83  
Herr, wie du willst, so schick's mit mir, BWV 73

#### Sunday 30th October

Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinem  
Namen, BWV 87  
Ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht, BWV 186

#### Sunday 4th December

Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kömmt, BWV 151  
Christen, ätztet diesen Tag, BWV 63  
Herr Christ, der einge Gottessohn, BWV 96

**Book now: telephone 020 7873 7300 or  
[www.ram.ac.uk/bach](http://www.ram.ac.uk/bach)**



Rachel Podger



Madeleine Easton



Margaret Faultless

### Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131 Out of the depths I cry unto Thee **Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut, BWV 113** Lord Jesus Christ, Thou highest good

#### Midday Duke's Hall

*Tickets £10 (concessions £7),  
season discounts available  
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#### With guest director John Butt

'Aus der Tiefen rufe ich' is one of Bach's earliest surviving cantatas. Though it was commissioned by the pastor of the Marienkirche at Mühlhausen (1707–1708), the occasion for which Bach wrote it remains conjectural. As we might expect there are marked stylistic differences between Bach's earliest formal explorations of the German cantata and those which followed at Weimar, Cöthen and Leipzig. There are no recitatives in this poignantly expressive piece and each of its five principal sections is dominated by choral rather than solo writing. The influence of the earlier generation – composers such as Buxtehude and Zachow – is clear.

'Herr Jesus Christ, du höchstes Gut' is broadly concerned with the theme of repentance. It belongs to Bach's impressive cycle of chorale-based cantatas and was first heard at Leipzig during the Trinity season of the church year in 1724. Four of its eight movements are based on a hymn melody dating from the sixteenth century and, as is customary with most of the works contained in this second annual cycle of Bach's Leipzig period, it forms the nucleus of the melancholy opening choral fantasia in B minor. Among striking features elsewhere in the cantata are a bass aria with oboes d'amore and another for tenor with a dazzling flute obbligato.



John Butt



'A satisfying spiritual start to the day...  
The performance was a model of vitality,  
concentration and period authenticity'  
**Sunday Times, March 2009**



### **Komm, du süße Todesstunde, BWV 161**

Come, O sweet hour of death

### **Das neugeborne Kindelein, BWV 122**

The newborn infant child

### **Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, BWV 99**

What God Doth, is well done

#### **Midday Duke's Hall**

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In 1708 Bach took up duties as organist at the ducal court of Weimar. Six years later he was further promoted to the rank of Konzertmeister, in which capacity he was required to perform a cantata each month for the court chapel. 'Komm, du süße Todesstunde' belongs to the comparatively small number of surviving cantatas from this period and was probably sung in 1716. The text, whose central tenet is the believer's longing for death and union with Christ in heaven, is poignantly enlivened by Bach's music which contains passages of great expressive intensity.

'Das neugeborne Kindelein' is a Christmas piece first heard at Leipzig in 1724. It is, though, rather more severe in its language than Bach's more familiar music belonging to this festive season in the church year. This is further emphasised by an almost unbroken sequence of minor key movements. Notwithstanding its somewhat uncompromising text, Bach's often contrapuntal musical rigour contains subtle delights — among which is the apposite but unexpected appearance of three treble recorders in the soprano recitative.

'Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan' is the first of three cantatas by Bach associated with this hymn. Its opening choral fantasia is a splendid affair whose substantial *tuttis* give the movement something of the character of an instrumental concerto. The scoring for flute, oboe d'amore and strings sparkles with luminosity and the melody is of such carefree appeal that once heard is unlikely to be forgotten. Flute and oboe d'amore enter partnership once again in a duet for soprano and alto voices in which Bach scales the heights of expressive subtlety.

### **Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende, BWV 28**

Praise God! the year now draws to a close

### **Ihr, die ihr euch von Christo nennet, BWV 164**

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?

### **Schweig stille, plaudert nicht, BWV 211**

Be quiet, stop chattering

#### **Midday Duke's Hall**

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'Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende' was first performed at Leipzig on the Sunday after Christmas in 1725. Its text is by Erdmann Neumeister, whose mixture of chorales, biblical texts and operatic aria was influential in the development of German cantata libretti. The second movement provides a focal point: a setting in motet style of a thanksgiving hymn in which Bach follows a Christmastide tradition in Leipzig.

'Ihr, die ihr euch von Christo nennet' is a Trinity cantata first performed at Leipzig in 1725. The libretto is closely linked to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The choral element is confined to the concluding hymn, but even without an opening chorus Bach achieves a rewarding variety of form and colour in each of the cantata's three arias.

During two periods at Leipzig, Bach was director of a mainly student Collegium Musicum which had been founded by Telemann in 1702. Its concerts took place in and outside Gottfried Zimmermann's two coffee houses and it was for one of these that Bach wrote his Kaffeekantate or Coffee Cantata. The slender story is not without charm and Picander's libretto provided Bach with an opportunity to write music that is witty, robust and sophisticated. The piece is introduced by a narrator whose brief simple recitative commands his audience to pay attention. Thereafter the two protagonists, a dyspeptic father and his wilful daughter, act out their little *contretemps*. The narrator joins in for the concluding spirited *terzetto*.



**Kommt, eilet und laufet, BWV 249**

Come, hasten and run

**Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft, BWV 50**

Now is come salvation and strength

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Duke's Hall**

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**With guest director Peter Schreier**

Bach's Easter cantata 'Kommt, eilet und laufet' was first performed at Leipzig in its finally revised version during the mid-1730s, when the composer gave it the title 'Easter Oratorio'. The piece is introduced by a splendid orchestral Sinfonia in two contrasting movements, the first of them sumptuously scored for trumpets, drums, oboes and strings. After a joyful chorus follow three arias of which one, for tenor, has a pastoral accompaniment of two treble recorders and muted strings.

'Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft' is almost certainly a lone survivor of a lost cantata for St Michael's Day, a festival which drew some notably colourful music from Bach's pen. This mighty chorus is no exception. It is a fugue in eight vocal parts, unique in this respect among his cantatas, accompanied by trumpets, drums, oboes and strings. Much ink has been spilt over Bach's original intentions concerning a piece which is preserved only in posthumous copies, but there is no denying its breathtaking architectural ingenuity and its power to stir our emotions.



Peter Schreier

*'An epoch-making opportunity to hear some of Bach's greatest and least familiar music complete, as if you were part of a uniquely privileged congregation... prompt booking is recommended'*  
**Country Life, April 2009**

**Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ, BWV 67**

Remember that Jesus Christ

**Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, BWV 202**

Begone, dismal shadows

**Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen, BWV 11**

Praise God in His kingdoms

**Midday  
Duke's Hall**

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'Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ' is an Eastertide cantata which Bach performed at Leipzig in April 1724. The piece begins with a joyful chorus whose spirit is largely maintained throughout the remaining movements. Most notable, perhaps, is the bass aria containing Christ's Easter greeting 'Peace be unto you': the answering chorus represents mankind. Alternating time signatures, dynamic contrasts and distinct instrumental groupings serve to heighten the symbolic effect.

'Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten' was written for the wedding of an unidentified couple. It is scored for solo soprano, oboe and strings and begins with one of the composer's most inspired arias, reflecting the passing of winter and the arrival of spring. The librettist provided Bach with a pastoral poem lightly peopled with figures from classical legend in an Arcadian landscape. There is not a weak moment here and if the captivating Gavotte which concludes the cantata has a fault it is that it is quite simply too short — we want to hear it many times over.

Bach wrote his 'Ascension Oratorio' in 1735 and performed it at Leipzig on the Feast of the Ascension that year. The opening chorus is generously scored and mirrors this joyful festival of the Church Year. The alto aria which follows will be familiar as the 'Agnus Dei' of the B minor Mass — yet this profound piece once formed part of a secular cantata which Bach had written a decade earlier. A chorale-based chorus provides a notably contemplative and satisfying conclusion.



### Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, BWV 7

Christ our Lord came to the Jordan

### Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats, BWV 42

Then the same day at evening

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'Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam' was first performed at Leipzig in 1724, on the Feast of St John the Baptist. It begins with an elaborately constructed choral fantasia setting the scene of Christ's own baptism. A pervasive feature lies in the restless, lapping motif of the *ripieno* strings which would seem to evoke the undulating water of the Jordan. Bach's accommodation of the sixteenth-century hymn melody is handled with virtuosity, providing us with yet another example of a technique in which his pupil Kirnberger considered that his master 'excelled all the composers in the world'. Perhaps the most satisfying of the cantata's three arias is that for tenor, with its soaring lines for two concertante violins and its captivating gigue-like rhythm.

'Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats' is an Eastertide cantata which Bach first performed at Leipzig in 1725. Its choral element is confined to the single hymn verse that concludes the work. Bach introduces the piece with an elaborate and alluring Sinfonia for strings with oboes and bassoon. Of the Cantata's three strongly contrasting arias it is that for alto which contains its contemplative heart. Its concerto-like structure and dimensions suggest that it once belonged to a lost instrumental work, or was an aria in a lost secular cantata. The outer sections of this *da capo* movement yield an almost hypnotic atmosphere of tranquillity.

'A wonderful sense  
of binding intimacy...  
surely a glimpse of heaven'  
**Evening Standard,  
February 2009**



Iain Ledingham

### Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 140

Wake up, cries the watchmen's voice

### Erfreute Zeit im neuen Bunde, BWV 83

Joyous time of the new order

### Herr, wie du willst, so schick's mit mir, BWV 73

Lord, deal with me as Thou wilt

#### Midday Duke's Hall

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'Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme' was performed at Leipzig on the 27th Sunday after Trinity in 1731. Bach was clearly attracted by the parable's drama and theme of heavenly love since the opening choral fantasia is charged with anticipation, and a strong sense of theatre. Following this vividly evocative chorus are two warmly sustained duets which frame a verse of Philip Nicolai's hymn. This melody has ensured for the cantata a place of special affection among performers and audiences alike.

'Erfreute Zeit im neuen Bunde' was performed in Leipzig in 1724 on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It begins with a spaciouly proportioned alto aria with horns, oboes, concertante violin and strings. The aria contains lively instances of word-painting with extended *tuttis* punctuating the vocal line. The uniquely-constructed movement which follows is of particular interest.

'Herr, wie du willst, so schicks mit mir' is an Epiphany cantata first performed at Leipzig in 1724. Its elaborate opening chorus has a part for obbligato horn, though for a later performance Bach substituted an organ. This chorus also contains passages of recitative which are interspersed with homophonically sung lines of the sixteenth century hymn from which the Cantata takes its title. A moment of heightened expressive intensity is realised in the linked recitative and aria for bass, which includes an evocation of the tolling death knell.





**Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinem Namen, BWV 87**

Hitherto have ye asked for nothing in my name

**Ärgre dich, o Seele, nicht, BWV 186**

Fret not, O soul

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'Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinen Namen' is an Easter cantata which Bach performed at Leipzig in 1725. Its brooding, minor-mode key sequence remains virtually unbroken until the sixth section, when Bach introduces a B flat tenor aria in the rhythm of a siciliana. The effect, in the context of an otherwise darkly coloured cantata, is luminous, radiant and joyful, providing the strongest of contrasts with the grave but revelatory character of the bass aria with which Bach begins his cantata. The text is one of nine which he set to librettos by Christiane Mariane von Ziegler, a leading Leipzig poet.

'Ärgre dich, O Seele, nicht' was first performed in its expanded version during Trinity at Leipzig in 1723. This substantial piece, which Bach divided into two parts, begins with an elaborate chorus in which fugal writing alternates with homophonic texture. The two chorale settings which conclude each part are also set elaborately giving us a hint, perhaps, of the splendid choral fantasias which provide the focal point of Bach's second Leipzig annual cycle of cantatas. Among other alluring features in this infrequently heard work is a dance-like soprano and alto duet.



**Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kömmt, BWV 151**

Sweet comfort, my Jesus comes

**Christen, ätzt diesen Tag, BWV 63**

Christmas, engrave this day

**Herr Christ, der einge Gottessohn, BWV 96**

Lord Christ, the only Son of God

**Midday  
Duke's Hall**

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'Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kömmt' was first performed at Leipzig during the 1725 Christmas season. The text focuses on the coming of Christ and the hope of salvation to which Bach responded with an opening aria that can justifiably be considered among his most sublime creations for the solo voice. The soprano is translucently accompanied and Bach suffuses this meditation on the significance of Christ's birth with poesy and a multi-layered radiance. The second aria belongs to the alto voice and, though symbolically related to the first, provides an effective contrast.

'Christen, ätzt diesen Tag' is a cantata for Christmas Day which Bach wrote for Weimar and included it in the main Christmas Day service at Leipzig in 1723. The piece is festively scored for four trumpets, drums, three oboes, strings and continuo with bassoon. The two choruses which frame the work are imposingly proportioned and together occupy almost two-thirds of Bach's pleasingly symmetrical score. The two arias are cast as duets, the second of them a joyful dance with string accompaniment.

'Herr Christ, der einge Gottessohn' is a Trinity cantata which Bach performed at Leipzig in 1724. Its opening choral fantasia is an engaging one not only in respect of its diversely colourful instrumentation, which includes horn and soprano recorder, but also for the contrasting simplicity of the chorale melody and for its carefree dance character. The scene-setting here is vivid, as the smallest member of the recorder family evokes the twinkling of the morning star. The two arias of the Cantata are effectively contrasted, one of them containing an airy obbligato for flute, the other rich in word-painting and more fully accompanied.

*'A superb new concert series which promises to form a highlight of London's musical calendar... book early!'*

**Music and vision daily,  
January 2009**

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[www.marylebonevillage.com](http://www.marylebonevillage.com)



'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, performer and tutor**

## How to Book

12/13

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### Box Office

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### Discover more

You can find more about the Academy's history of Bach performances at [www.ram.ac.uk/bach](http://www.ram.ac.uk/bach)

The Royal Academy of Music is where many leading musicians learn their trade. Our student community is truly international, representing more than fifty countries. The Academy's wide range of concerts and events includes jazz, opera, musical theatre, twenty-first-century music and 'period' performance

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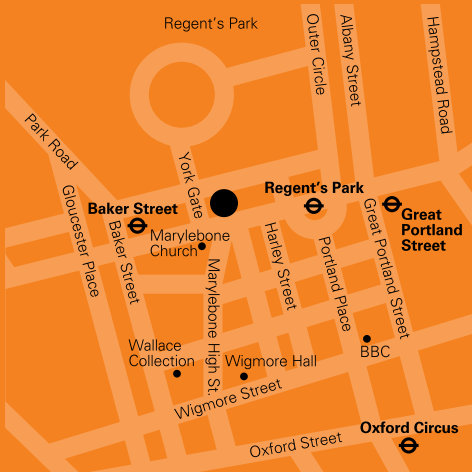
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