



J. S. BACH

**Sacred Cantatas
for Alto**

**Nos. 54, 169
170 and 200**

**Marianne Beate
Kielland, Alto**

**Cologne Chamber
Orchestra**

**Helmut Müller-Brühl
Deutschlandfunk**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sacred Cantatas for Alto

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170 20:22

for the 6th Sunday after Trinity

Texts by Georg Christian Lehms

Scored for Alto, Oboe d'amore, obbligato Organ (two Organs)

Strings and Continuo

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Aria: Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust | 6:16 |
| 2 | Recitative: Die Welt, das Sündenhaus | 1:13 |
| 3 | Aria: Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen | 6:20 |
| 4 | Recitative: Wer sollte sich demnach wohl hier | 1:00 |
| 5 | Aria: Mir ekelt mehr zu leben | 5:33 |

Widerstehe doch der Sünde, BWV 54 11:13

for the 7th Sunday after Trinity

Texts by Georg Christian Lehms

Scored for Alto, Strings and Continuo

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|---|--|------|
| 6 | Aria: Widerstehe doch der Sünde | 7:05 |
| 7 | Recitative: Die Art verruchter Sünden | 1:14 |
| 8 | Aria: Wer Sünde tut, der ist vom Teufel | 2:54 |

Gott soll allein mein Herze haben, BWV 169 * 22:23

for the 18th Sunday after Trinity

Texts from a Chorale by Martin Luther

Scored for Alto, Four-part Chorus,

2 Oboes, Oboe da caccia, Bassoon,

Concertante Organ, Strings and Continuo

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|----|--|------|
| 9 | Sinfonia | 7:51 |
| 10 | Arioso: Gott soll allein mein Herze haben | 2:08 |
| 11 | Aria: Gott soll allein mein Herze haben | 5:26 |
| 12 | Recitativo: Was ist die Liebe Gottes | 0:45 |
| 13 | Aria: Stirb in mir Welt | 4:45 |
| 14 | Rezitativo: Doch meint es auch dabei | 0:23 |
| 15 | Choral: Du süße Liebe, schenk uns deine Gunst | 1:05 |

Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200 2:33

for the Feast of the Virgin Mary

Anonymous Text

Scored for Alto, 2 Violins and Continuo

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|----|---|------|
| 16 | Aria: Bekennen will ich seinen Namen | 2:33 |
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Schlage doch gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53 5:49

For a funeral service

Text attrib. to Salomo Franck

Scored for Alto, 2 Bells, Strings and Continuo

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|----|---|------|
| 17 | Aria: Schlage doch gewünschte Stunde | 5:49 |
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Marianne Beate Kielland, Alto

Cologne Bach Choir *

Cologne Chamber Orchestra

Helmut Müller-Brühl

Christian Hommel, Oboe d'amore (BWV 170)

Renée Ohldin, Violin (BWV 200)

Sonja Wiedebusch, Violin (BWV 200)

Gerhard Anders, Cello Continuo (BWV 54/169/170)

Mercedes Ruiz, Cello Continuo (BWV 53/200)

Harald Hoeren, Organ

Wiebke Weidanz, Organ (BWV 170)

Thomas Welsch, Bells (BWV 53)

(Positive Organ: Mebold Truhenorgeln 1995

4 Register

Ged. 8', Flöte 4', Prinzipal 2', Regal 8')

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sacred Cantatas for Alto

Bach's cantatas make up the greatest body of his work, if imperfectly preserved and only later successful in the eyes of posterity. A total of some two hundred cantatas have so far between confirmed, sacred as well as secular functional music (seemingly only three fifths of all his compositions in this genre), written by Bach in over four decades.

The church cantatas are not only associated with the particular readings for each Sunday and feast day in the established church calendar, but also have particular relevance to a leading principle of Lutheran theology, the living proclamation of the Gospel. This, then, is all to do with the word of God, that it is followed and that it raises souls up and refreshes them so that they do not become weary. For Luther, characteristically looking to the simple and the young, that is the true purpose. To this end he writes in 1526 that one must read, sing, preach, write and write poetry, and 'if it were helpful and necessary I would let it sound out with all the bells and play out with all the organs and let everything that can sound, sound out'. Hence music had its direct legitimation in the Protestant rite and indeed in close relationship with the central sermon. It was then predetermined as an effective functional art, to drive the word of God into hearts, as Luther demanded, and it did this over the centuries in changing forms as 'florid music' together with the obligatory congregational singing. Motet forms, sacred concertos, the Protestant song tradition and the influence of opera came together in text and music in some complexity, until about 1700 the definitive form of what was possible was reached (Konrad Küster). Here Bach entered with unparalleled command and created a universe of overwhelming artistic diversity.

This openness in the sense of a continuing independence of musical 'church devotions' together with formal traditions, as was generally perceived by contemporaries and explored with varying degrees of enthusiasm for experiment, is reflected also in Bach's work indications. Given that he generally designated his

church pieces according to the plain annual church calendar, he preferred to call them 'concerto'. The term 'cantata' appears only seldom and is found most, not inadvertently, in the titles of his solo cantatas, for example *BWV 54, 56, 82 and 170*. Although Bach here too anticipates in masterly fashion each form, the use of only a single voice part in alternating aria and recitative, the integration of concertante elements as well as the omission or mere indication of the congregational chorus with the final chorale, relates these to the Italian chamber cantata, to which the title 'Cantata' was then given.

The works here included mark various stages in Bach's writing of cantatas. While *BWV 54* comes from the composer's period at Weimar, *BWV 170* and *169*, as parts of the so-called third Leipzig cycle, belong to a later period. They have a virtuosic element in the treatment of the organ as a solo instrument, which is a characteristic of Bach's later years, like the unusual form of the aria *Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200*, setting verse by an unknown poet. The texts of *BWV 54* and *170* are taken from the cantata collection of the Darmstadt court librarian Georg Christian Lehms's *Gottgefälliges Kirchen-Opffer* (Church Offering Pleasing to God) of 1711. The writer of the text of *BWV 169* is unknown. The cantata fragment *Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53*, was formerly attributed to Bach (namely by Forkel), but as a result of more recent research is now thought to be the work of the Leipzig organist Melchior Hoffmann and has therefore not been included in the Neue Bach Gesamtausgabe.

Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170, (Happy rest, beloved pleasure of the soul) was written in 1726 for the sixth Sunday after Trinity. Here Bach for the first time uses the organ as an obligato instrument in a cantata, freeing it from the continuo group and entrusting it with an independent (soloistic) function. The central aria is as regards its musical meaning especially obvious: '*Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen*' ('How yet I pity hearts perverted')

writes Lehms, and plays therewith on a central message of the text of the Sermon on the Mount (St Matthew 5, 20-26), the petty righteousness of the scribes and pharisees in contrast with the Christian command for reconciliation. Bach underlines this sad forsaking by God of the unbeliever by withholding in the music the bass foundation, which, in sacred baroque music, and particularly in Bach's compositions, is the symbol of firm faith. Violins and violas in unison form the comparatively thin basis of the quartet movement filled out by the solo alto and the organ part on two manuals. A *secco* recitative, clear and scored with strings, comes between the opening and closing arias, which serve one another also as rhetorical antecedent and consequent.

It cannot be said for certain for which Sunday Bach composed the cantata *Widerstehe doch der Sünde, BWV 54*, (Yet resist sin), since Lehms's text from the first allows a variable application with its clear denunciation, exposure and rejection of sin. As most probable terminal dates to be considered, however, are the seventh Sunday after Trinity or Oculi Sunday [the third Sunday in Lent], on which there are readings on the theme of sin from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Romans 6, 19-23) and his Epistle to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5, 1-9). With two arias framing a recitative the work represents the simplest type of the form. Only violins and violas with the continuo accompany the vocal part and form in the first aria, through the division of the violas, a five-part texture, while the second aria is an impressive fugato four-part movement in free da capo form, the immediate imaginative power of which is unequalled. Like a dragon the 'Devil' waltzes in close chains of semiquavers with the alto part. The contrite theme, at first descending in semitones ('*Wer - Sün - de - tut*: E flat, D, D flat, C) always presses on, until the place where sin is abandoned, seemingly after resistance, 'with true devotion', and the Devil protests far below in the bass. In this way, specifically through the total spiritual penetration of the material, Bach has here, in all the movements, far exceeded the seemingly limited possibilities of a small-scale composition.

With the composition of the cantata *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben, BWV 169*, (God alone shall have my

heart), for the eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, generously scored for three oboes, strings, obligato organ and basso continuo, Bach, in 1726, fell back again on a lost instrumental concerto written earlier. Both the introductory *Sinfonia* and the second aria represent new versions of this original material that later was used again for the *Harpsichord Concerto in E major, BWV 1053*. A simple chorale on the melody of Luther's *Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist* (Now we pray the Holy Ghost) forms the conclusion.

In *Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53*, (Strike then, desired hour), at the beginning of the aria, which is only part of a larger mourning cantata, the orchestral *ritornello* states, in heavily breathing 3/2 metre, slowed by pauses, the material of the text setting, based on a descending E major triad, and then makes room over the dominant pedal for a violin rocking motion, which later forms the second section of the simple da capo form; a rocking motion that could be taken also as symbolic expression for the tolling of the bells. Yet 'two little bells' are here the chief attraction of an otherwise rather unpretentious composition with two violins, one viola and basso continuo. Threefold repetition of the first two lines of the text with constant shortening of the note values in the first part and the sometimes very high *tessitura* of the vocal part in the second part of the aria duly show the urgency of the desire for death to its best advantage.

In face of the unusual formal structure of the aria *Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200*, (I will acknowledge his name), it is the more regrettable that we have here only a fragment of a late Bach cantata, written about 1740 for the Feast of the Purification. In contrast to the complete surviving cantatas on a similar subject here it is not Simeon's desire for death that stands in the foreground but the acknowledgement of the Lord by all people. Two obligato violins accompany the solo alto through a concise movement, in neither concerto nor da capo form, but a four-part movement in bar-form with homophonic and imitative passages.

Peter Reichelt

English version by Keith Anderson

8.557621

Marianne Beate Kielland

The Norwegian mezzo-soprano Marianne Beate Kielland studied at the Norwegian State Academy of Music in Oslo, graduating in the spring of 2000. She has quickly established herself as one of Scandinavia's foremost singers and regularly appears with orchestras and in festivals throughout Europe, working with conductors of international distinction. For the season 2001/02 she was a member of the ensemble at the Staatsoper in Hanover. Marianne Beate Kielland is especially sought after as a concert singer, with a wide repertoire ranging from the baroque to Berlioz, Bruckner, and Mahler. Her career has brought not only performances in Europe, but further engagements as far afield as Japan. Her recordings include Bach's *St Mark* and *St Matthew Passions*, *Mass in B minor*, and the complete solo cantatas for alto, as well as songs from German, English and Norwegian repertoire.



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Cologne Chamber Orchestra

Conductor: Helmut Müller-Brühl

The Cologne Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1923 by Hermann Abendroth and gave its first concerts in the Rhine Chamber Music Festival under the direction of Hermann Abendroth and Otto Klemperer in the concert-hall of Brühl Castle. Three years later the ensemble was taken over by Erich Kraack, a pupil of Abendroth, and moved to Leverkusen. In 1964 he handed over the direction of the Cologne Chamber Orchestra to Helmut Müller-Brühl, who, through the study of philosophy and Catholic theology, as well as art and musicology, had acquired a comprehensive theoretical foundation for the interpretation of Baroque and Classical music, complemented through the early study of conducting and of the violin under his mentor Wolfgang Schneiderhahn. In the autumn of 1964 the orchestra, under Helmut Müller-Brühl, embarked on a concert tour of Switzerland with the great pianist Wilhelm Kempff, the start of collaboration with international soloists. Since then there have been guest appearances throughout Europe, North and South America and Asia, with numerous recordings, broadcasts and television appearances.

From 1976 until 1987 the ensemble played on period instruments under the name Capella Clementina. With this Baroque formation Helmut Müller-Brühl, in numerous concerts and opera and oratorio performances, set a standard for historical performance-practice and the revival of Baroque music-theatre. Since 1987 the orchestra, as the Cologne Chamber Orchestra, has played according to the principles of historical performance-practice on modern instruments and so can meet the needs of modern concert halls. The presentation of the rising generation of young musicians has always been a particular concern of Helmut Müller-Brühl and many now well-known soloists enjoyed their first success with the Cologne Chamber Orchestra. In 2001 the Cologne Chamber Orchestra won a Cannes Classical Award for its recording of Telemann's *Darmstadt Overtures* (Naxos 8.554244), one of a number of acclaimed recordings in association with Naxos.



Helmut Müller-Brühl



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DDD

Playing Time
62:40

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Bach's two hundred cantatas – comprising large-scale works for soloists and chorus as well as solo cantatas – are amongst his greatest works. Intimately bound up with the Lutheran tradition, the sacred cantatas defy a generalised description such is their infinite variety, wealth of musical invention, technical mastery and religious devotion. Of particular interest are *Vergnügte Ruh* (Cantata No. 170), where for the first time Bach uses the organ as an obbligato instrument given its own line, and the extraordinarily poignant *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* (Cantata No. 54) with its clear denunciation and rejection of sin.

Johann Sebastian
BACH
(1685-1750)

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|------|---|--------------|
| 1-5 | Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170 | 20:22 |
| 6-8 | Widerstehe doch der Sünde, BWV 54 | 11:23 |
| 9-15 | Gott soll allein mein Herze haben, BWV 169 * | 22:23 |
| 16 | Bekennen will ich seinen Namen, BWV 200 | 2:33 |
| 17 | Schlage doch gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53 | 5:49 |

Marianne Beate Kielland, Alto
Cologne Bach Choir * • Cologne Chamber Orchestra
Helmut Müller-Brühl
Deutschlandfunk

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A co-production with DeutschlandRadio • Please see the booklet for a complete track list

Cover Picture: *Mary with Child and the Infant St John the Baptist* by Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688)
(Münster, Westfälisches Landesmuseum / AKG Images)