



2010 Bach

THE COMPLETE CHORAL CANTATAS



CANTATAS IX

9 April 2006

BWV 6: Bleib bei uns, denn is will Abend werden

BWV 31: Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert

BWV 66: Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen

Valda Wilson, Soprano
Eliza Newton, Mezzo-Soprano
Luke Redmond, Tenor
Nathan Gilkes, Tenor
Timothy Collins, Bass-Baritone
Christopher Shepard, Conductor

Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist



Like Thee the grave will not hold me
for long in its subjection
from death Thy words have set me free,
they are my resurrection;
For where Thou art, there will I be,
To live forever near to Thee.
So forth I go rejoicing.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
In Him my trust's unshaken.
Though for a time I sleep in death,
With Him I shall awaken.
Himself, the only Son of God,
For us the way of death hath trod,
And now He reigns in Heaven.



BWV 6: BLEIB BEI UNS, DENN IS WILL ABEND WERDEN

1. Chor

Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden, und der Tag hat sich geneiget. (Luke 24:29)

2. Arie A

Hochgelobter Gottessohn,
Laß es dir nicht sein entgegen,
Daß wir itzt vor deinem Thron
Eine Bitte niederlegen:
Bleib, ach bleibe unser Licht,
Weil die Finsternis einbricht.

3. Choral S

**Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ,
Weil es nun Abend worden ist,
Dein göttlich Wort, das helle Licht,
Laß ja bei uns auslöschen nicht.**
(*"Vespera iam venit,"* verse 1)

**In dieser letzt'n betrübten Zeit
Verleih uns, Herr, Beständigkeit,
Daß wir dein Wort und Sakrament
Rein b'halten bis an unser End.**
(Nikolaus Selnecker, 1572)

4. Rezitativ B

Es hat die Dunkelheit
An vielen Orten überhand genommen.
Woher ist aber dieses kommen?
Bloß daher, weil sowohl die Kleinen als die Großen
Nicht in Gerechtigkeit
Vor dir, o Gott, gewandelt
Und wider ihre Christenpflicht gehandelt.
Drum hast du auch den Leuchter umgestoßen.

5. Arie T

Jesu, laß uns auf dich sehen,
Daß wir nicht
Auf den Sündenwegen gehen.
Laß das Licht
Deines Worts uns heller scheinen
Und dich jederzeit treu meinen.

6. Choral

**Beweis dein Macht, Herr Jesu Christ,
Der du Herr aller Herren bist;
Beschirm dein arme Christenheit,
Daß sie dich lob in Ewigkeit.**
(*"Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort,"* verse 2)

1. Chorus

Stay with us, for evening falls, and the day has declined.

2. Aria A

Highly-praised Son of God,
let it be not displeasing to You,
that we now, before Your throne,
lay down a petition:
remain, ah, remain our Light,
because the darkness breaks forth.

3. Chorale S

**Ah remain with us, Lord Jesus Christ,
because evening approaches now,
Your divine Word, the bright light,
let it not be extinguished among us.**

**In these last, troubled times
grant us, Lord, perseverance,
that we may preserve Your word and sacrament
pure until our end.**

4. Recitative B

The darkness has
taken over in many places.
Where, however, does this come from?
Simply enough, since the small as well as the great
do not walk in righteousness
before You, o God,
and work against their Christian duty.
Therefore You have thrown down their lanterns.

5. Aria T

Jesus, let us look upon You,
so that we do not
walk on the paths of sin.
Let the light
of Your word shine brightly upon us,
and continually bring You to mind.

6. Chorale

**Reveal Your strength, Lord Jesus Christ,
You who are Lord of Lords;
protect Your poor Christianity,
so that it praise You in eternity.**

BWV 31: DER HIMMEL LACHT! DIE ERDE JUBILIERET

1. Sonata

2. Chor

Der Himmel lacht! die Erde jubiliert
Und was sie trägt in ihrem Schoß;
Der Schöpfer lebt! der Höchste triumphiert
Und ist von Todesbanden los.
Der sich das Grab zur Ruh erlesen,
Der Heiligste kann nicht verwesen.

3. Rezitativ B

Erwünschter Tag! sei, Seele, wieder froh!
Das A und O,
Der erst und auch der letzte,
Den unsre schwere Schuld in Todeskerker setzte,
Ist nun gerissen aus der Not!
der Herr war tot,
Und sieh, er lebet wieder;
Lebt unser Haupt, so leben auch die Glieder.
Der Herr hat in der Hand
Des Todes und der Hölle Schlüssel!
Der sein Gewand
Blutrot bespritzt in seinem bitterm Leiden,
Will heute sich mit Schmuck und Ehren kleiden.

4. Arie B

Fürst des Lebens, starker Streiter,
Hochgelobter Gottessohn!
Hebet dich des Kreuzes Leiter
Auf den höchsten Ehrenthron?
Wird, was dich zuvor gebunden,
Nun dein Schmuck und Edelstein?
Müssen deine Purpurwunden
Deiner Klarheit Strahlen sein?

5. Rezitativ T

So stehe dann, du gottergebne Seele,
Mit Christo geistlich auf!
Tritt an den neuen Lebenslauf!
Auf! von des Todes Werken!
Laß, daß dein Heiland in der Welt,
An deinem Leben merken!
Der Weinstock, der jetzt blüht,
Trägt keine tote Reben!
Der Lebensbaum läßt seine Zweige leben!
Ein Christe flieht
Ganz eilend von dem Grabe!
Er läßt den Stein,
Er läßt das Tuch der Sünden Dahinten
Und will mit Christo lebend sein.

6. Arie T

Adam muß in uns verwesen,
Soll der neue Mensch genesen,
Der nach Gott geschaff'n ist.
Du mußt geistlich auferstehen
Und aus Sündengräbern gehen,
Wenn du Christi Gliedmaß bist.

7. Rezitativ S

Weil dann das Haupt sein Glied
Natürlich nach sich zieht,
So kann mich nichts von Jesu scheiden.
Muß ich mit Christo leiden,
So werd ich auch nach dieser Zeit
Mit Christo wieder auferstehen

1. Sonata

2. Chorus

Heaven laughs! Earth exults
and all she bears in her lap;
the Creator lives! The Highest triumphs
and is freed from the bonds of death.
He who has selected the grave for rest,
the Holy One, can not be corrupted.

3. Recitative B

Longed-for day! O soul, be happy again!
The A and O,
the first and also the last,
who placed our heavy guilt in the prison of death,
is now wrested from danger!
The Lord was dead,
and behold, He lives again;
if our Head lives, so also the limbs live.
The Lord has in His hand
the key to death and hell!
He whose garment
was sprinkled blood red in his bitter suffering,
will robe Himself today with adornment and honor.

3. Aria B

Prince of life, strong fighter,
highly-praised Son of God!
Does the ladder of the Cross raise You
up to the highest throne of honor?
Does that which previously bound You
now become Your adornment and jewel?
Shall Your purple wounds
be now the rays of Your brilliance?

5. Recitative T

So rise up then, you God-given soul,
with Christ in spirit!
Step onto the new course of life!
Up! Away from the works of death!
Let your Savior take notice
of your life in the world!
The vine, that now blooms,
bears no dead fruit!
The tree of life lets its branches live!
A Christian flees
with great haste from the grave!
He leaves the stone,
he leaves the cloth of sin behind
and wishes to be living with Christ.

6. Aria T

Adam must decay in us,
so the new person can be born,
who is created in God's image.
You must be resurrected spiritually
and go forth from the tombs of sin,
if you are one of Christ's members.

7. Recitative S

Because the head naturally
draws the limbs after it,
so I cannot part myself from Jesus.
If I must suffer with Christ,
so also hereafter I will
be resurrected again with Christ

Zur Ehr und Herrlichkeit
Und Gott in meinem Fleische sehen.

to honor and glory
and see God in my own flesh.

8. Arie (mit instrumental Choral) S

Letzte Stunde, brich herein,
Mir die Augen zuzudrücken!
Laß mich Jesu Freudenschein
Und sein helles Licht erblicken,
Laß mich Engeln ähnlich sein!
Letzte Stunde, brich herein!

8. Aria (with instrumental Choral) S

Last hour, break forth,
to press closed my eyes!
Let me gaze upon Jesus' joyous glow
and His bright light,
let me be like the angels!
Last hour, break forth!

(Instrumental Chorale:

Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist,
Werd ich im Grab nicht bleiben;
Dein letztes Wort mein Auffahrt ist,
Todsforcht kannst du vertreiben.
Denn wo du bist, da komm ich hin,
Daß ich stets bei dir leb und bin;
Drum fahr ich hin mit Freuden.
("Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist," verse 1)

(Instrumental Chorale:

Since you have arisen from death,
I will not stay in the grave;
Your last word is my departure,
You can drive away the fear of death.
For where You are, there will I come,
so that I will always live and be with You;
therefore I depart from here with joy.)

9. Choral

So fahr ich hin zu Jesu Christ,
Mein' Arm tu ich ausstrecken;
So schlaf ich ein und ruhe fein,
Kein Mensch kann mich aufwecken,
Denn Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
Der wird die Himmelstür auftun,
Mich führn zum ewgen Leben.
("Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist," verse 5)

9. Chorale

Thus I go away to Jesus Christ,
stretching out my arm;
thus I fall asleep and rest sweetly,
no one can awaken me,
for Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
will open the gate of heaven,
leading me to eternal life.

Salomon Franck 1715; "Weil du vom Tod erstanden bist," verse 1: Nikolaus Herman 1560 (mov't. 8); "Wenn mein Stündlein vorhanden ist," verse 5: Nikolaus Herman 1575 (mov't. 9)

BWV 66: ERFREUT EUCH, IHR HERZEN

1. Chor

Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen,
Entweicht, ihr Schmerzen,
Es lebet der Heiland und herrschet in euch.
Ihr könnet verjagen
Das Trauren, das Fürchten, das ängstliche Zagen,
Der Heiland erquicket sein geistliches Reich.

1. Chorus

Rejoice, you hearts,
fade away, you sorrows,
the Savior lives and rules within you.
You can drive away
mourning, fear, anxious despair,
the Savior revives his spiritual kingdom.

2. Rezitativ B

Es bricht das Grab und damit unsre Not,
Der Mund verkündigt Gottes Taten;
Der Heiland lebt, so ist in Not und Tod
Den Gläubigen vollkommen wohl geraten.

2. Recitative B

The grave is broken and with it our suffering,
our mouth proclaims God's deeds;
the Savior lives, therefore in suffering and death
it has come out completely well for the faithful.

3. Arie B

Lasset dem Höchsten ein Danklied erschallen
Vor sein Erbarmen und ewige Treu.
Jesus erscheinet, uns Friede zu geben,
Jesus berufet uns, mit ihm zu leben,
Täglich wird seine Barmherzigkeit neu.

3. Aria B

Let a song of thanks ring forth to the Highest
for His mercy and eternal faith.
Jesus appears, to give us peace,
Jesus calls us to live with Him,
daily His mercy is renewed.

4. Rezitativ (Dialog) und Arioso (Duett) T A

Bei Jesu Leben freudig sein
Ist unsrer Brust ein heller Sonnenschein.
Mit Trost erfüllt auf seinen Heiland schauen
Und in sich selbst ein Himmelreich erbauen,
Ist wahrer Christen Eigentum.
Doch weil ich hier ein himmlisch Labsal habe,

4. Recitative (Dialogue) and Arioso (Duet) T A

To be happy in Jesus' life
is bright sunshine in our breasts.
To behold his Savior filled with consolation
and to build in himself a heavenly kingdom,
is the true possession of a Christian.
Yet since I have here a divine foretaste,

So sucht mein Geist hier seine Lust und Ruh,
Mein Heiland ruft mir kräftig zu:
Mein Grab und Sterben bringt euch Leben,
Mein Auferstehn ist euer Trost.
Mein Mund will zwar ein Opfer geben,
Mein Heiland, doch wie klein,
Wie wenig, wie so gar geringe
Wird es vor dir, o großer Sieger, sein,
Wenn ich vor dich ein Sieg- und Danklied bringe.

Mein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,
Es hält ihn nicht der Tod in Banden.
- Kein Auge sieht den Heiland auferweckt,
Es hält ihn noch der Tod in Banden. -
Wie, darf noch Furcht in einer Brust entstehn?
- Läßt wohl das Grab die Toten aus? -
Wenn Gott in einem Grabe lieget,
So halten Grab und Tod ihn nicht.
- Ach Gott! der du den Tod besieget,
Dir weicht des Grabes Stein, das Siegel bricht,
Ich glaube, aber hilf mir Schwachen,
Du kannst mich stärker machen;
Besiege mich und meinen Zweifelmuth,
Der Gott, der Wunder tut,
Hat meinen Geist durch Trostes Kraft gestärket,
Daß er den auferstandnen Jesum merket. -

5. Arie (Duett) A T

Ich fürchte zwar des Grabes Finsternissen
- Ich fürchte nicht des Grabes Finsternissen
Und klagete mein Heil sei nun entrissen.
- Und hoffete mein Heil sei nicht entrissen. -
Nun ist mein Herze voller Trost,
Und wenn sich auch ein Feind erbost,
Will ich in Gott zu siegen wissen.

6. Choral

Alleluja! Alleluja! Alleluja!
Des solln wir alle froh sein,
Christus will unser Trost sein.
Kyrie eleis.
("Christ ist erstanden," verse 3)

my spirit seeks here its pleasure and rest,
my Savior calls powerfully to me:
My grave and death brings you life,
my Resurrection is your consolation.
My mouth indeed will make an offering,
my Savior, yet how small,
how little, how completely insignificant
will it be before You, o great Conqueror,
if I bring before You a song of triumph and thanks.

My eye beholds the Savior reawakened,
Death does not hold Him in its bonds.
- No eye beholds the Savior reawakened,
Death still holds Him in its bonds. -
What, does fear still arise in any breast?
- Can the grave indeed release the dead? -
If God lies in a grave,
then grave and death does not hold Him.
- Ah God! You who have conquered death,
the grave stone withdraws for You, the seal breaks,
I believe, but help my weakness,
You can make me stronger;
conquer me and my doubtful will,
the God who works wonders,
has strengthened my spirit through the power of comfort,
so that it beholds the resurrected Jesus. -

5. Aria (Duet) A T

I truly fear the darkness of the grave
- I do not fear the darkness of the grave -
and lament that my Savior is now torn from me.
- and hope that my Savior is not torn from me. -
Now my heart is full of comfort,
and if the enemy also rages,
I will know how to triumph in God.

6. Chorale

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Over this we should all rejoice,
Christ will be our consolation.
Kyrie eleison.

"Christ ist erstanden," verse 3: Passau around 1090 (mov't. 6)

PERFORMERS

Valda Wilson, Soprano

A Bachelor of Science graduate from the University of Sydney, Valda has just commenced her second year of studies at the Conservatorium of Music in the Diploma of Opera, under the tuition of Stephen Yalouris. She has a penchant for all styles of music from Bach through to twentieth century jazz, and a great love of performing.

Valda has performed with several of Sydney's amateur musical societies, in roles such as Aline in Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Sorcerer", Edith in "The Pirates of Penzance", Pitti-Sing in "The Mikado", Musetta and Mimì in Puccini's "La Bohème", Pamina in Mozart's "The Magic Flute", and Blonde in Mozart's "Seraglio". Valda has also performed in concerts for the Castlecrag Haven Amphitheatre, Willoughby Civic Centre, and will be playing the role of Susan in the Conservatorium Opera School's May production of "A Dinner Engagement" – a light operatic comedy composed by Sir Lennox Berkeley.

A highlight for Valda this year will be performing a live broadcast recital programme on classical Sydney radio station 2MBS-FM in mid-May, as a semifinalist in their Young Performers Awards.

Eliza Newton, Mezzo-Soprano

Eliza left Ascham in 2001 having been involved regularly in plays and musical productions, as well as Madrigal and Senior Choir conducted by Chris Shepard. While at school, Eliza was awarded a choral scholarship to Eton College where she performed at Cambridge with the Eton Chapel Choir under the direction of Ralph Allwood and Ben Parry, and was taught privately by David Lowe for the duration of the course.

After leaving school, Eliza studied at the University of Sydney and has recently completed her Master of Corporate and Political Strategic Public Relations. Throughout her years at university Eliza lived on campus at The Women's College where she took part in various revues, cabaret productions, and vocal recitals. She currently works as the Community Relations Officer for The Women's College. Eliza continues to study singing with Andrew Dalton.

Luke Redmond, Tenor

Luke made his debut as a Bach soloist in the Sydneian Bach Choir's performance of the *Christmas Oratorio* in 2005, for which he sang the role of the Evangelist. In the same year, he was a soloist in the world premiere of George Palmer's Christmas Mass, 'A Child is Born'. Luke has appeared with Coro Inominata and was a soloist in Beethoven's Choral Fantasia with the Sydney University Graduates Choir. Since 2000, Luke has been a member of the award-winning vocal quartet, The Voice Squad. The Voice Squad released their debut CD "Ocean Street" in 2004.

Luke graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1997, studying voice under Stephen Yalouris and Michael Halliwell. Since graduating, Luke has studied with Anthea Moller and Steven Ostrow, with whom he currently studies.

Nathan Gilkes, Tenor

An Old Sydneian, Nathan recently completed a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Nathan has studied voice with Barry Ryan and has performed with many choral groups in and around Sydney including the Sydneian Festival Choir, the Willoughby Symphony Choir, Springwood Choral Society, St Swithun's Church Choir, Pymble, the choirs of SCEGGS Darlinghurst, and the Georgian Singers; in works such as *Messiah*, Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G Minor*, Brahms' *Lieblieder Waltzes*, and Stainer's *Crucifixion*. He has performed tenor solos in Bach's *B Minor Mass* and the Monteverdi *Vespers* with the Sydneian Bach Choir.

Nathan graduated from NIDA in music theatre in 2002. His stage roles include Tony in *West Side Story*, Albert Peterson in *Bye Bye Birdie* and

Alfred/Sam in *Romance/Romance*, as well as serving as musical director and conductor for several other productions, as well as serving as Music Director of the *a cappella* group Back in Black. Nathan is a teacher of singing and acting in music theatre, at the Julie Melrose School of Dance, and at his own studio. He conducts the choir at Sydney Grammar School's St Ives Preparatory School and North Sydney Boys' High School.

Timothy Collins, Bass-Baritone

Tim Collins studied voice at the Queensland Conservatorium under the tutelage of Professor Jan Delpratt, where he was the recipient of 12 scholarships and prizes. After singing as a member of the Young Artists' Programme with Opera Queensland, he moved to Sydney. He has been a finalist in many national aria and singing competitions and has made several national broadcasts for the ABC, singing lieder recitals, Chamber music, Oratorio and Australian contemporary music. He has also performed as a solo recitalist in Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand and across Australia.

Formerly Head of Vocal Studies at McDonald Performing Arts College, Tim is currently a private singing teacher at Sydney Grammar School, The Ascham School, St. Andrews Cathedral School and SCEGGS, Darlinghurst. He has recently become an AMEB Singing Examiner.

As a young singing voice specialist, Tim has published a number of papers and articles in Australian music education, choral and vocal journals, newsletters and publications. He will present his research at the biennial National conference of The Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing in Melbourne in October. As a teacher of Raja Yoga Meditation, he has developed meditation programmes combining, values education, meditation techniques and vocal education and exercise.



Christopher Shepard, Conductor

Foundation conductor of the Sydneian Bach Choir, Christopher Shepard is Director of Music at Sydney Grammar School, and holds degrees in Music Education (piano) and Choral Conducting from the Hartt School of Music and Yale University. He has studied conducting with Marguerite Brooks, James Jordan and Helmuth Rilling, and Baroque performance practice with Jaap Schroeder, Paul Brainard and Roslyn Tureck.

Before moving to Sydney in 1996, Chris was Head of Fine and Performing Arts at the Taft School (USA). He has served as Music Director of several community choirs and has conducted many choirs and orchestras in the greater New York metropolitan area. He has served as music director of the Georgian Singers and as chorusmaster for the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, in addition to conducting the Senior Choir at Ascham School. He has conducted the SBS Youth Orchestra on several occasions, including the Brahms *German Requiem* and a televised broadcast of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. With the Sydneian Bach Choir, he has conducted several Bach works, including the *St John Passion*, *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio*. In February 2005, he began BACH 2010, a six-year project to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas with the Bach Sydneian Choir and Orchestra.

Chris is Music Director of the Hotchkiss Summer Chamber Program, an intensive chamber music program for advanced young players and singers from around the world, held each July in America's Berkshire Mountains. As Director of the program, he conducts the chamber orchestra and teaches alongside several guest musicians, including the Tokyo String Quartet, Ying Quartet and the Philadelphia Singers.

Sydneian Bach Choir

In February 2005, the Sydneian Bach Choir embarked on BACH 2010, a musical journey to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas, in a series of 50 concerts through December 2010. The choir was formed in 2000 as part of the Sydneian Festival Choir, in order to raise money for local charities through fundraising concerts. Although their repertoire is wide and varied, the fifty voice Bach Choir uses the choral music of J.S. Bach as its touchstone. In residence at Sydney Grammar School, the choir performs the closing work of the School's biennial Bach Festival, including Bach's *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and *B Minor Mass*. They have also performed the music of Schütz, Taverner, Mendelssohn, Whitacre and many others, and gave the Australian premiere of Shostokovich's *Rayok* as part of a new music festival at the University of Sydney. Each year, the choir commissions new works from Australian composers, including Anna Jacobs, Richard Charlton and James Humberstone.

In combination with the Sydneian Festival Choir, they have performed several large works for choir and orchestra, including the Brahms *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Britten's *Saint Nicolas*. The Bach Choir sang Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Nova Chamber Orchestra in 2003, and performed the Monteverdi *Vespers (1610)* in 2004 as part of the Organ Festival inaugurating Sydney Grammar School's new Mander organ.

SYDNEIAN BACH CHOIR

Nathan Gilkes, Assistant Conductor

Fiona McCabe, Accompanist

Soprano

Sarah Ax
Eleanor Babcock
Janet Bagnall
Elizabeth Barrett
Georgina Bitcon
Shamistha De Soysa
Rachel Dulson
Sally Glover
Jodie McGuren
Jane Phillips
Elizabeth Wilton

Alto

Jane Boyd
Robyn Bradley
Fiona Charlton
Ricky Davis
Lisa Dow
Suellen Enestrom
Lara Kostakidis-Lianos
Sandy Libling
Georgia Luikens
Helen Pedersen

Tenor

Matthew Allchurch
Rabin Bhandari, OS
Peter Dettmann, OS
Nathan Gilkes, OS
Philip Moore, OS
Mathew Roberts, OS
Edward Steiner, OS
Vignan Thiru, OS

Bass

Matthew Allan, OS
Samuel Allchurch, V
Henry Fraser, OS
David Gal, OS
Peter Gilkes, OS
Daniel King, OS
Robert Marks
Christopher May, OS
Peter Phillips, OS
Dan Potts
Charles Voyagis, OS
Edward Wilson, OS

In December 2004, the Bach Choir travelled to Venice, where they performed sections of the Monteverdi *Vespers* at San Marco; to Leipzig, where they performed in Bach's churches; and to America, where they met with renowned Bach expert Christoph Wolff of Harvard University. The choir recently joined forces with the choirs of Sydney Grammar School in a programme of Mozart choral music for an SBS Television documentary aired in January 2006.

Nova Camerata

Nova Camerata Sydney is a chamber string ensemble which was formed in 2001 at the instigation of Martin Smith, to perform at the tenth anniversary concert of the Nova Youth Orchestra. It is comprised of players who grew up as members of the community based Nova Youth Orchestra, which provided them with a rich musical environment and opportunities to perform locally and internationally. Among the players there are also friends of the orchestra, willing to give their time to commit to the performance. There are players who have mapped out wonderful individual careers, some have gone on to become professional musicians, while others, who are gifted players, have pursued different careers. All players, however, have a passion for their music and hope to inspire the younger players who are now progressing through the Nova Youth Orchestra, showing them what can be achieved through commitment to their music.

SYDNEIAN BACH ORCHESTRA & NOVA CAMERATA

Oboe

Anna Rodger
Emmanuel Cassimatis, V
Timothy Lee, VI

Trumpet

David Pye*
Mark Edwards
Robert Hansen, IV

Timpani

Jeremy Barnett, OS

Violin I

Quyen Le
Richard Nelson
Nicole Greentree

Violin II

Alasdair Vickers*
Philip Nelson
Kimberly Lai

Viola

David Nelson
Andrew Wakeling, OS

Cello

Belinda Manwaring
Kirsty Vickers

Double Bass

David Campbell, OS*

Chamber Organ

Fiona McCabe

Harpichord

Christopher Berensen

* *SGS staff*

*OS indicates Old Sydneian
Roman numeral indicates Form in
School*

PROGRAMME NOTES

Bach and Easter

After the sobriety of the Lenten season and the profundity of the *Passion* presentations on Good Friday, one expects the musical heavens to break open to celebrate the Resurrection. Certainly, in these three cantatas for Easter—one for Sunday and two for Monday—there is celebration. But it is important to remember the central position of the Cross in Lutheran theology. Even in the Easter celebrations, we never quite leave it behind. The Lutheran “analogy of faith” means that every biblical story should be worked out by analogy in the life of the believer. So although it is true for the Lutheran that Christ died on the cross and rose again, it is also true the “old man” (often typified by Adam) in the believer must *continually* be put to death in order to rise with Christ. This helps to explain why we keep encountering in these libretti references to Satan, to sin and to death, rather than simply finding joyful celebrations.

BWV 6: Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden

Of our three Easter cantatas for this concert, BWV6 is particularly perplexing in its subdued and intense *Affekt*. The Gospel reading for Easter Monday 1725 was the story of the two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They think the story is over—Jesus has died and they are bereft. As they are mulling over the events in Jerusalem, the risen Christ walks with them, but they don’t recognise him. The anonymous librettist chooses their words to Jesus as his text’s starting point: “Stay with us, for it is evening and the day is now far spent.” This becomes the prayer in the opening chorus, a moving sarabande that is reminiscent of *Ruh’ wohl* from the *St John Passion*, suggesting that the disciples’ minds are still at the foot of the Cross.

There are some extraordinary musical effects in this opening chorus. The plaintive tone of the oboe section, including the cor anglais, provides most of the melodic material which is later taken up by the choir. The strings pulse on repeated unison quavers, adding a sense of anxiety to the mourning figure. The choir implores God to “stay with them” in series of short phrases which build in intensity. The middle section is completely different, with Bach reverting to the *stile antico* that often uses to refer to the “old order”—in this case, Jesus’ death before the disciples acknowledge the resurrection. Bach builds an ever-shifting collage from three musical elements: a descending, lyrical setting of “denn es will Abend werden”; a more detached phrase for “und der Tag hat sich geneiget”; and an almost trumpet-like plea on three long repeated notes for “bleib bei uns.” There is no primacy amongst the parts for this section; instead, the themes are interwoven in imitative counterpoint until an impassioned climax featuring a unison choral “bleib bei uns” before returning to the original sarabande.

In the internal recitatives and arias, the librettist pursues the juxtaposed themes of the darkness of sin and the power of God’s light to dispel the darkness. In the alto solo, the singer prays that God will “remain our Light”, while the deep-voiced cor anglais (originally corno di caccia) plays the role of the darkness that “breaks in.” Atypically, the cor anglais never plays the full ritornello after first introducing it; instead, representing the “breaking in,” the instrument plays fragments of the ritornello, constantly interrupting the singer’s prayer.

The prayer continues in another form in the following chorale, with the soprano singing two verses of a hymn that was sung in church the same day that this cantata was performed. Like the alto in the previous solo, the soprano asks for God’s presence—through his Word and sacraments—in the midst of the world’s trials. The instrumental solo was originally written for the violoncello piccolo, whose smaller size and fifth string made the highly figured part much easier to play than on the cello. Just as with the cor anglais solo, one gets the impression that the instrument represents the activity of the world, as against the steadfastness of God’s help as represented by the unadorned soprano chorale. Bach must have thought highly of this movement; he arranged it for organ in the final years of his life, where it became one of the Schübler Chorales, BWV 649.

We descend even further into darkness in the bass recitative and tenor aria that follow. The bass lays the blame at our feet: with tortured harmonies and a huge range, he asserts that darkness has descended because we have not walked in righteousness. The remedy? Bach hides the answer in the opening motto of the tenor aria: with the ascending G-D and descending Bb-F#, he creates a musical cross, telling the believer that it is the cross of Jesus that will bring light. The first half of the sober tenor aria explores the wrenching chromaticism of the cross until the light appears in more lyrical writing and major tonalities in the B section, in which the tenor prays, “let the light of thy Word shine more brightly to us.” Since we cannot return to sinfulness, Bach closes the aria with the ritornello, rather than using the characteristic *da capo* form of the Leipzig arias.

Throughout the cantata, Bach and his librettist seem to making the point that the resurrection is meaningless as an event unless the believer takes hold of it in a personal way. It may seem odd to have such dour music for Easter, but this is the Lutheran way—and indeed, it is the core message of the Reformation: faith is a personal, rather than corporate, decision. The cantata closes with the corporate prayer: “show your power” and “preserve your church”. This is Easter as only a Lutheran could conceive of it.



BWV 31: Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubiliert

In his work as *Konzertmeister* at the Weimar ducal court, Bach was required to compose a cantata about once a month. BWV31 was written for Easter Sunday 1715, and was later reworked for use in Leipzig. Unlike the cantatas that originate in the post-1723 Leipzig years, which come to follow the general pattern of chorus—2 recit/*da capo* aria pairs—chorale, the Weimar cantatas (as well as those from Mülhausen and Cöthen) feature more inventive structures and often use more imaginative instrumental combinations.

The opening sonata announces from the start that this cantata is different from the Leipzig cantatas. Indeed, the *concerto grosso* style of the opening orchestral movement reminds the listener of the Brandenburg Concerti that would be written a few years later. The festive, fanfare-like opening accords perfectly with the Gospel reading of the day, which tells the story of Jesus' resurrection. The opening sonata segues into the spectacular opening chorus, in which the vocal melismas beautifully illustrate the "laughing" of heaven. The vocal fugue is presented first to the text "the heavens laugh..." and is then repeated verbatim to the text "the creator lives..." The adagio section provides a contrast in every possible way, bringing the listener back to the grave, before Bach introduces a short second fugue on the text "the Most Holy One cannot see corruption." In a nod towards the *da capo* form, a solo trumpet and violin return to the first fugal subject in the coda.

Although there are more solo movements than we usually find in Bach cantatas, this setting of the Saloman Franck libretto is notable for the fact that there is not a single *da capo* aria. In the first recit-aria pair, sung by the bass, the text explores the idea that the pain of Jesus' death has been converted into the glory of his everlasting life through the resurrection. The aria does this with a particularly ingenious example of word-painting. The text, celebrating Jesus' kingship, asks the question of Christ: "Does the cross' ladder lift you to the highest throne of heaven?" The dotted semi-quavers and demi-semi-quavers capture not only illustrate the French idea of pomp and kingship, but also resemble a ladder on the page. This is a wonderful example of *Augenmusik* ("eye music") in the music of Bach.

At this point in the cantata, the focus shifts from Christ's resurrection to its application for the individual believer—the Luther "analogy of faith." In his recit-aria pair, the tenor implores the listener to "speed from the grave"—that is, just as Christ leaves His grave behind, the believer needs to leave behind his "grave of sin" and live with Christ. The two parts in the binary aria explore this dichotomy. Set in a courtly string dance, the A section talks about how "Adam must decay" in us, while the B section calls us to move from our graves of sin to become part of Christ's body.

The soprano recit-aria pair picks up this theme of being part of Christ's body, but leads us even further into the analogy of faith, from suffering to death to the honour and splendour of everlasting life. Here we find a paradox that has troubled lovers of Bach's music for centuries: logic dictates that if the believer is to enjoy everlasting life, then he or she must die first. In that context, we become a bit more comfortable with the somewhat maudlin text of the soprano aria. In a beautiful lullaby duet with the oboe, the soprano asks for her "final hour to break forth". By having her eyes closed by God, they will eventually be reopened in heaven, where she will "become like the angels." The soothing slurred quaver pairs of the oboe throughout lull us into a deep sense of peace, somehow only deepened by the *pizzicato* technique of the double bass. As we find in several of

the Weimar arias, Bach weaves a wordless chorale into this texture, having the unison violins and violas play the tune of the chorale with which the choir will close the cantata in the next movement. This chorale, which would have been well-known to the congregations in both Weimar and Leipzig, speaks of rising again with Christ and living with Him in eternity—the perfect complement to the soprano's prayer.

If the opening movement of BWV6 is reminiscent of the penultimate chorus in the *St John Passion*, then the last movement of BWV31 is reminiscent of the passion's final chorale. In this *Barform* (AAB) chorale, the first half speaks of falling asleep in Christ, with the "door of heaven opening up" in the second half, finishing with a scene of eternal life. Only such a master as Bach could traverse such vast theological ground in only 60 seconds! But traverse it he does: the *piano* opening gains momentum through the second half, with the harmony opening up and the inner parts increasing in energy. The beautiful violin descant gives us a glimpse of heaven, acting as the angel of whom the soprano sings in her aria.



BWV 66: Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen

Just as BWV31 is instantly recognisable as a Weimar cantata by its shorter arias, broader instrumentation range and opening sonata, there are a number of characteristics of BWV66 that mark its origin in Cöthen. In his work as *Kapellmeister* to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, Bach wrote a great deal of instrumental music (including the Brandenburg Concertos) between 1717 and 1723. But he also wrote homage cantatas for the prince's birthday, as well as New Year's cantatas, and these cantatas were often reworked by Bach in Leipzig so that they could be useful for the sacred services. BWV134, which we performed in Concert VIII, was one such cantata. These cantatas tend to be more instrumentally florid, feature dance rhythms, have extended *da capo* arias, and often present duets between allegorical characters—in this case, the alto and tenor.

The composer of the opening of BWV66 is clearly the same composer of the Brandenburg Concerti! We find the same brilliant orchestral writing in the ritornello of the opening chorus that we hear in Bach's instrumental writing of the period, with florid violin parts and especially festive oboe writing. For Easter Monday of 1724, Bach reworked this secular cantata that originated in 1718. In music redolent of the opening of the *Christmas Oratorio*, we get a sense of exhilaration and rushing. This illustrates the Gospel for the day, in which the angel tells the women at the tomb that Christ is risen and that they need to "go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead." The contrasting duet of the middle section leaves behind the feeling of praise and joy, focusing instead on the what has been "put to flight"—grieving, fear and anxious trepidation. But the joy returns in the massive *da capo* of the chorus.

In similarly instrumentally-conceived music, the bass sings a song of thanksgiving in the large-scale aria that follows an accompanied recitative. The listener is struck by the large amount of *Fortspinnung* in the opening ritornello—the use of repetition and sequences to extend the opening idea. Bach takes this to the extreme in this movement, perhaps representing the multitudes heaping thanks upon thanks. There is an especially attractive example of word-painting in the middle section: after the bass sings "Jesus appears", the strings and oboes play a series of staccato arpeggios in B minor descending over a two octave range. Musicologist Eric Chafe contends that Bach often uses the key

of B minor to represent Jesus' humanity: in this case, it could then represent Jesus' resurrection in the flesh.

The alto-duet recitative and aria could only have come from a secular cantata—in this pair of movements, the singers take on the roles of Fear (alto) and Hope (tenor). In the original Cöthen birthday cantata, the characters were Fame and Happiness. Here, the alto doesn't quite believe that Christ has risen, and the tenor is trying to convince her. After a lovely arioso duet in which she remains unconvinced, he asks in exasperation, "What—how could fear still arise in any breast?!" She follows with the classic Augustinian construction: "Lord, I believe— help me in my unbelief." This tussle continues in the

da capo duet. The singers are accompanied by a violin part typical of Bach's virtuoso violin writing from the Cöthen years.

The cantata closes with a chorale that is less about the triumph of Easter than it is about the comfort and mercy that God brings through the resurrection. The chorale, the third verse of *Christ ist erstanden*, may begin with a Paschal *Alleluia*, but it finishes with a penitential *Kyrie eleison*. Perhaps that is the perfect way to encapsulate the dichotomy found in Bach's music for Easter.

C.P. Shepard



REMAINING 2006 CONCERTS:

X. 28 MAY, *SGS Schola Cantorum*: BWV 11, 123, 124

XI. 20 AUGUST, *Chamber Choir*: BWV 16, 73, 92

XII. 24 SEPTEMBER, *Full Choir*: BWV 72, 126, 181

XIII. 19 NOVEMBER, *Solo Ensemble*: BWV 4, 18, 182

XIV. 3 DECEMBER, *Full Choir*: BWV 65, 127, 143