Johann Sebastian Bach
Easter & Ascension
Oratorios
Johann Sebastian Bach
Easter & Ascension Oratorios

Matthew Halls conductor
Carolyn Sampson soprano
Iestyn Davies countertenor
James Gilchrist tenor
Peter Harvey bass

recorded 22\textsuperscript{nd} – 25\textsuperscript{th} February 2010
at St Jude’s Church, London, UK
produced by Ben Turner
engineered by Philip Hobbs
post-production by Julia Thomas, Finesplice UK
keyboard technician : Edmund Pickering
pitch : A = 415 Hz

with thanks to
John Ellard, Nick Taylor, Leila Abu-Sharr,
Malcolm Gammie, John Love, Andrew Peck,
Peter King, Charles Henderson, Terence Kyle,
Stephen Page, Alison Brimelow, Philip Britton
and Alan Sainer

(www.fatkoala.biz)
**Easter Oratorio, BWV. 249**

1. *Sinfonia* (3.52)
2. *Adagio* (3.39)
3. *Chorus & Duetto - Kommt, eilet und laufet* (4.41)
4. *Recitativo - O kalter Männer Sinn* (0.52)
5. *Aria - Seele, deine Spezereien* (10.49)
6. *Recitativo - Hier ist die Gruft* (0.37)
7. *Aria - Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer* (7.15)
8. *Recitativo - Indessen seufzen wir* (0.50)
9. *Aria - Saget, saget mir geswinde* (5.40)
10. *Recitativo - Wir sind erfreuet* (0.33)
11. *Chorus - Preis und Dank* (2.16)

**Ascension Oratorio, BWV. 11**

12. *Chorus - Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen* (4.30)
13. *Evangelist - Der Herr Jesus hub seine Hände auf* (0.26)
14. *Recitativo - Ach, Jesu, ist dein Abschied schon so nah?* (1.07)
15. *Aria - Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebestes Leben* (8.12)
16. *Evangelist - Und ward aufgehoben zuzehends* (0.27)
17. *Chorale - Nun lieget alles unter dir* (1.15)
18. *Evangelist - Und da sie ihm nachsahen gen Himmel fahren* (0.55)
19. *Recitativo - Ach ja! So komme bald zurück* (0.33)
20. *Evangelist - Sie aber beteten ihn an* (0.38)
22. *Chorale - Wenn soll es doch geschehen* (4.01)

**TOTAL TIME : 70.26**
Johann Sebastian Bach
Easter & Ascension Oratorios

Seemingly employed to celebrate the central religious festivals in Leipzig’s chief churches during 1734-5, Bach’s three oratorios fulfil the same role within the Lutheran liturgy as a cantata. Numerous attempts have been made to explain their position within the Oratorio genre, but in actual fact they are each unique works of varying magnitude and structure, and do not conform to a set model or blueprint. The Christmas Oratorio is undoubtedly Bach’s best-known Oratorio – it is more often recorded, performed and written about than either the Easter or Ascension Oratorio – and is a monumental work consisting of six individual cantatas, each celebrating different feast-days of the Christmas calendar. The Easter Oratorio was Bach’s first foray into this genre; it is likely that the work was performed on Easter Sunday, 1735, and it comprises a two-movement instrumental *Sinfonia*, followed by alternating choruses, recitatives and arias. This Oratorio was most closely created in the image of the Italianate oratorios of the eighteenth century: it is without an evangelist figure, biblical passages, or chorales. Instead it utilises an entirely poetic text (often attributed to Picander) which is organised in rhyming verse, and is delivered by four characters, Mary Mother of James, Mary Magdalene, Peter and John. The Ascension Oratorio is one of the many works that Bach composed in honour of this part of the Easter cycle; probably performed on the 19th of May 1735, it was incorrectly listed as a ‘sacred cantata’ in the (1852) *Bach-Gesellschaft* (most likely due to its brevity). In contrast with the Easter Oratorio, biblical passages (Luke 24: 50-2 Mark 16: 19 and Acts 1: 9-12) delivered by the tenor Evangelist create a narrative sequence, strongly connecting this work with the Lutheran *historia* tradition, an important predecessor of passions and oratorios. Original poetic verses are presented as choruses, accompanied recitative and arias, and two chorales take prominent positions as the central and final movements of the work. While these three works are disparate in style and structure, they nevertheless conform with Johann Gottfried Walther’s broad definition of the Oratorio as ‘*the musical conception of a sacred history*’. Bach’s treatment of the genre has also been allied to postulations made by
Erdmann Neumeister during his lectures at Leipzig University in 1695, that the Oratorio is ‘a literary genre mixing Biblical verses, aria texts and chorales’.

A common feature of all three oratorios is that they are parodies of earlier works, adapting music that Bach used previously in other contexts. The Easter Oratorio has a particularly complex genesis; in its first guise, the chorus and aria material appeared as a congratulatory cantata (Entfliehet, verschwindet, entweichet, ihr Sorgen BWV. 249a) celebrating the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxony-Weißenfels on the 23rd of February 1725. On the 1st of April of the same year, and with a new text and additional recitatives, the work was performed as an Easter Cantata. Subsequently, on the 25th of August 1726, it was revived in honour of another birthday, this time that of Count Joachim Friedrich von Flemming (Die Feier des Genius, BWV. 249b). It was only upon a revision of the score, sometime in the early-mid 1730s, that the work was entitled ‘Oratorium’. Christoph Wolff suggests that further minor changes to the Easter Oratorio were made in either 1749 or 1750; this was some of the last work carried out by Bach.

The parody material comprising the Ascension Oratorio is more of a patchwork: the outer choruses and arias No. 4 and No. 10 all draw upon pre-existing material, primarily taken from the lost cantata, Froher Tag, verlangte Stunden (BWV. anh.18, 1732). Most famously, the alto aria No. 4, ‘Ach, bleibe doch’, is based on ‘Entfernet euch, ihr kalten Herzen’ from the lost wedding cantata Auf! süß-entzückende Gewalt (1725, text by Johann Christoph Gottsched). The Agnus Dei from Bach’s B minor Mass is also a parody of this same work, although numerous scholars have exhaustively demonstrated that this movement has been significantly re-composed, rather than being a direct parody of the original aria.

It is Georg Friedrich Handel who has become most famed for this type of self-borrowing, but parody is also common in the music of Bach, and questions have been raised concerning the artistic and practical motivations behind his use of this compositional technique. A possible explanation is the issue of time-management; in order to fulfil
the remit of his position as Kantor, even Bach may have had to take short cuts. Perhaps
the quick turn-around between the birthday cantata BWV. 249a and the reworked
Easter Cantata, which appeared just a few weeks later, would support this. J. C. Bach
later alluded to such harsh realities in his own life, stating that ‘my brother [C. P. E. Bach]
lives to compose, I compose to live’. Malcolm Boyd has also suggested that Bach may have
hoped to ‘give greater permanence to an occasional composition, and for this reason the
ephemeral homage and birthday cantatas for the nobility were frequently fitted out with
fresh texts’. It is certainly clear that Bach sought to eke out the full range of compositional
possibilities offered by both his own music and that of others; he devoted energies
to arranging and transcribing the music of great composers (including, for example, 
Antonio Vivaldi) and was famous for his gift for extemporising on fugal themes,
extracting the full range of potential offered by any given material. Bach’s parody works
can be viewed in this same light, as examples of his ingenuity and inventiveness; C. P. E.
Bach reflected on this aspect of his father’s music when he wrote that ‘those who have
a concept of what is possible in art and who desire original thought and its special, unusual
elaboration will receive from it full satisfaction’.

Embedded in the scholarship that surrounds Bach’s parodies is the issue of whether
works which began life with a secular subject can truly be adapted to express the
central tenants of a sacred text. In 1946 Leo Schrade described ‘a conflict between
the sacred and the secular’ in Bach’s music, and this has subsequently been a hotly
contested aspect of his output. Bach has been lauded as ‘The Fifth Evangelist’, and it has
been strongly argued by the nineteenth-century scholar Philipp Spitta that his ‘secular
occasional compositions were not genuinely secular; as such they scarcely fulfilled their
aim, and the composer only restored them to their native home when he applied them to
church uses’. As a counter to this, Jaroslav Pelikan postulates that Bach could be seen in
another light: ‘would it be more accurate to demythologize this legend and to see in him
a secular modern man who did what he had to do, or more precisely what he was paid to
do, including chorales and church cantatas, but for whom the music was the thing and the
text was incidental?’
In fact, the text is never incidental; how could it be, during a period when works with text were heralded as the most communicative form of music, and instrumentalists were expected to imitate the expressive power of the human voice? Throughout the recording of these works, aspects of rhetoric were called upon in order to shape their interpretation; the art of persuasive speech was one that was repeatedly compared with the composition and performance of music throughout the Baroque period, and a recurring aim was the desire to move the passions of listeners through ‘Affektive’ (or expressive) composition and delivery. C. P. E. Bach wrote that ‘a stirring performance depends on an alert mind which is willing to follow reasonable precepts in order to reveal the content of compositions’; and an organ pupil of Bach was reportedly instructed that a chorale should be played ‘not just offhand but in accordance with the Affekt of the words’. Nikolaus Harnoncourt has stated that ‘in Bach’s hands the rhetorical components are particularly clearly expressed’, and although Bach himself left us little in the way of theoretical writings, enough can be garnered from those who surrounded him and who were taught by him to set parameters for the understanding of his music in rhetorical terms; in this way, we can fully appreciate the ease with which Bach’s eloquent compositional language expresses secular and sacred music alike.

Upon comparing the texts of BWV. 249a and the Easter Oratorio, BWV. 249, the issue of any ‘conflict’ between the religious or profane subject matter becomes subsidiary to the Affekt of the text itself. The two texts regularly share very similar themes, which Bach sets persuasively; this is perhaps most clearly apparent in the central movement of the Easter Oratorio, the tenor aria ‘Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer’, accompanied by a delicate texture of ebbing recorders, muted violins, and throbbing bass line. Albert Schweitzer praises this movement as ‘one of the most beautiful sacred lullabies that Bach ever wrote’. Of course, in its original guise it was a secular lullaby, using a text that likewise draws upon images of sleep; in both settings of the text the word ‘slumber’ or ‘sleep’ comes to rest on a long pedal note. Marcus Fabius Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician who most exhaustively drew parallels between the arts of speech and music, writes that a thought can be ‘expressed through the oration in such fashion that it is perceived as
though it were seen rather than heard; by using the rhetorical figure hypotyposis; here, we are made to experience the stasis of slumber through Bach’s setting of the word.

Similarly, in the fifth movement of the two works, an aria for soprano and obbligato flute, images of circles are conveyed by Bach’s setting of the text; in BWV. 249a the text describes ‘welling’ emotions, while in the Easter Oratorio, Mary Mother of James refers to ‘laurel wreaths’. The rhapsodic and sinuous flute melody predominantly consists of eddying *cirulatio* figures, whereby the theme rises and falls in a sine-wave pattern; throughout the Baroque era this rhetorical figure was a symbol of perfection, representing – in a literal sense – circular concepts. But most pertinently in the case of Mary’s aria, this figure symbolises eternity, infinity, and ultimately, God.

Another feature that pervades the Easter Oratorio is the influence of dance models on many of the movements; it has previously been suggested that the first three movements of this work could originally have been composed as a concerto. Konrad Küster has further proposed that these movements are part of a multi-movement orchestral suite. In this context, No.5 could be interpreted as a minuet, No.7 as a bourrée, No.9 a gavotte, and the final chorus, No.11, a gigue. The appropriateness of using dance movements within a religious work has been questioned in the past; Spitta, for example, wrote that while the first aria of BWV. 176, in the style of a gavotte, is ‘charming as a piece of music’, it is nevertheless ‘quite unsuited to its text’. However, dance forms, like the various figures of rhetoric employed by Bach, actually enhance the Affekt throughout this work. Johann Mattheson’s *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) gives a full account of the Affekt created by the metrical hierarchies of each dance-type: the fast-slow-fast structure of the opening three movements captures the contrast that can be achieved by employing different dance forms. Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, in their study of Bach’s use of dance music, describe the first and third movements of this work as Gigues: Mattheson writes that the ‘English gigue’ is *characterized by an ardent and fleeting zeal* and that the ‘Italian Gige’ proceeds *in a flowing and uninterrupted manner: perhaps like the smooth arrow-swift flow of a stream*. Flanked by the exuberant
energy of No. 1 and No. 3, the second movement is a plaintive Adagio – a performance
direction which for Mattheson indicates distress – for oboe accompanied by strings.
Reminiscent of his Keyboard Partitas BWV. 825-30, also written in Leipzig, Bach adopts
the dotted rhythms of a French sarabande to complement the free and ornamental solo
melody. Patricia Ranum has unearthed an account of a dancer, who ‘became to express
the emotions of his soul through the motions of his body’ during a sarabande: ‘Sometimes
he would cast languid and passionate glances throughout a slow and languid rhythmic
unit, and then, as though weary of being obliging, he would avert his eyes, and if he wished
to hide his passion and, with a more precipitous motion, would snatch away the gift he had
tendered’.

Mattheson, in a description of the passions that can be raised by music, captures the
overall Affekt that Bach creates with these opening three movements of the Easter
Oratorio:

‘If I hear the first part of a good overture, then I feel a special elevation
of soul…and if a serious [passage] follows, then everything is brought
together to a normal restful conclusion. It seems to me that this is a
pleasantly alternating movement which an orator could scarcely
surpass. Whoever pays attention can see in the features of an attentive
listener what he perceives in his heart… If I hear a solemn sinfonia in
the church, then a prayerful trembling comes over me; if a powerful
instrumental choir is also worked in, then great admiration is aroused
in me by this … then if everything is closed by a joyous hallelujah, my
heart jumps in my body; even if I should know neither the meaning of
the word nor should otherwise understand anything else, on account of
the distance or for other reasons; indeed, even if words were not used,
merely the effort of instruments and expressive sounds’.

Bach’s Ascension Oratorio begins with a jubilatory D Major movement, scored for
trumpets, timpani, flutes, oboes, strings and continuo: within the first two bars, Bach
presents rhetorical figures which summarise the subject matter and Affekts that are dealt with by this work. Notably, this reflects the instructions given to an orator, whereby the opening passage of a speech (the *Exordium*), should contain the purpose and meaning of the discourse, which is subsequently elaborated on throughout the rest of the work. An energetic rising *corta* rhythm (a three-note figure, where one note equals the length of the other two notes combined, and which is often used to express joy) is announced by the trumpets; rising themes (known as the rhetorical figure *anabasis*) such as this are associated with elevated passions, and Johann Gottfried Walther wrote in 1732 that they are used ‘for example on the words: *He is risen; God has ascended; and similar texts*’. Immediately, however, this rising gesture which is so appropriate to the subject of Jesus’ ascension, is countered by a descending scale emphatically presented by the strings in unison: although the key is D Major – described by Bach’s pupil Johann Philipp Kirnberger as a ‘class 1’ major key, and therefore expressive of joy – descending figures (or *catabasis*) are associated with negative Affekts.

This duality represents the crux of the work: Christ is risen up, but throughout the Oratorio we are witness to characters who implore him to return to Earth. The juxtaposition of literal rising and descending is also mirrored by the internal struggle of the characters: while the glory of the ascension is played out in some movements (notably No. 6, 10 and 11), the loss, pain and suffering induced by Jesus’ departure is also explored (No. 3 and 4). The expression of opposing Affekts in this way is the rhetorical figure *antithesis*.

These simple musical-rhetorical figures resonate throughout the rest of the work; in the Evangelist’s first recitative (No. 2), the text ‘*the Lord Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples*’ is punctuated by a rising scale, and the sorrow accompanying ‘*while He blessed them, He was parted from them*’ is represented by a descending scale. Even more vividly, the ‘*two men in white apparel*’ who appear in No. 7 sing the words ‘*which is taken up from you into Heaven*’ with an *anabasis* figure, while the prediction that Jesus shall come to Earth again is represented by a *catabasis* figure. The final movement
– a glorious concerted chorale which recalls the scoring of the opening movement – impatiently implores, *But when shall it come to pass… O day, when will you dawn, That we may greet the Saviour… Come, then, and appear!*, all the while accompanied by tumbling and emphatically repeated descending scales.

No. 3, a bass recitative accompanied by flutes, and No. 4, the alto aria which is famously a parody of ‘Entferten euch, ihr kalten Herzen’, present the most unambiguous expression of suffering in this work. Descending sobbing figures pervade the bass recitative, illustrating rolling tears and the sorrow induced by Jesus’ departure. In both the recitative and subsequent aria, the difficult sounding interval leaps in the melody line (known in rhetorical terminology as *saltus duriusculus*) are described by Kirnberger as representing *‘sad, intense, tender, melancholy, imploring and caressing’* Affekts. Joachim Burmeister, the first German author to produce a full compendium of musical-rhetorical figures, wrote that *‘pathopoeia [the use of chromaticism in music] occurs when the text is expressed through semitones in such fashion that no one appears to remain unmoved by the created affection’. The portrayal of pain and suffering is the main feature that is shared by both the ‘Entferten euch, ihr kalten Herzen’ and *Agnus Dei* versions of this movement, and although compositionally there are structural and thematic differences between this aria and the *Agnus Dei*, they are both dominated by a combination of angular and crawling melodic lines. A striking addition to the Ascension Oration is the descending corta rhythm in the second bar (accompanying the word ‘doch’ in the vocal entry): here, the rising trumpet figure that was presented at the start of the work is inverted. This transforms its Affekt, and rather than portraying joy, it represents the agitation of this text.

In stark contrast, the soprano aria ‘Jesu, deine Gnadenblicke’, depicts the Heavenly exultance of Jesus’ Ascension. Malcolm Boyd has postulated that *‘Christ’s departure from Earth is suggested by the absence of a continuo part, but the power of his loving spirit remains and is reflected in the hovering accompaniment for upper instruments’. This ethereal aria opens with a mirror rhythm (crotchet-quaver-quaver-crotchet, which
is created by Bach’s use of slurs) similar to that at the start of ‘Mein teurer Heiland’ of the St John Passion: this feature is related to the chiasmic figures which symbolise the cross, and are prevalent in Bach’s music. A three-part (trinity) texture pervades much of the movement; during instrumental interludes, the flutes, oboe and strings engage in an interlocking trio. Furthermore, the movement is written in triple time – as is, relatively unusually, the chorale which is at the centre of this Oratorio – and a predominant feature of the melody is the repeated three-note rising figure (anabasis) which is associated with the text ‘I can continually see’. The contrary motion which is so often featured between the melody lines perhaps summarises and resolves the conflict between the rising and falling figures which persist throughout the work.

Regardless of profane origin of much of the music that constitutes these two works, Bach sets the text of his oratorios with all the skill of a great orator. He must surely have been aware of the plaudits offered to the power of music by Luther himself: ‘I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone… even that transcends the greatest eloquence of the most eloquent, because of the infinite variety of its forms and benefits. We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise’. Perhaps most significant, though, are Bach’s own notes in the margin of his Abraham Calov Bible, whereupon reading 2 Chronicles 5:11-15, ‘How the Glory of the Lord appeared After Beautiful Music’, he added ‘NB. Where there is devotional music, God with his Grace is always present’.

© Dr Nia Lewis, 2010

Translations from Johann Sebastian Bach: The Complete Church and Secular Cantatas. Translated by Richard Stokes and reproduced with permission from Long Barn Books.
Easter Oratorio Translations, BWV. 249

Kommet, eilet und laufet (1725)
Osteroratorium
Maria Jacobi (s), Maria Magdalena (a),
Peter (t), John (b)

① Sinfonia
② Adagio
③ Chorus & Duetto (t,b)
Kommt, eilet und laufet,
ihre flüchtigen Füße,
Erreichet die Höhle, die Jesum bedeckt!
Lachen und Scherzen
Begleitet die Herzen
Denn unser Heil ist auferweckt.

④ Recitativo (a,s,t,b)

Alt:
O kalter Männer Sinn!
Wo ist die Liebe hin,
Die ihr dem Heiland schuldig seid?

Sopran:
Ein schwaches Weib muß euch beschämen!

Tenor:
Ach, ein betrübtes Grämen

Bass:
Und banges Herzeleid

Tenor, Bass:
Hat mit gesalznen Tränen
Und wehmütvollem Sehnen
Ihm eine Salbung zugedacht,

Come, hasten and run
Easter Oratorio
Mary, Mother of James (s), Mary Magdalen (a),
Peter (t), John (b)

① Sinfonia
② Adagio
③ Chorus & Duet
Come, hasten and run,
you who are fleet of foot,
Make for the cavern, where Jesus lies hidden!
Laughter and banter,
Attend now our hearts,
For our Saviour has been raised up.

④ Recitative

Alto:
O men so cold of heart!
Where has that love gone,
Which you owe the Saviour?

Soprano:
A weak woman must put you to shame!
Tenor:
Ah, our sad grieving

Bass:
And anxious sorrow

Tenor, Bass:
Intended to anoint Him here
With salty tears
And melancholy yearning,
Sopran, Alt:
Die ihr, wie wir, umsonst gemacht.

Aria (s)
Seele, deine Spezereien
Sollen nicht mehr Myrrhen sein.
   Denn allein
   Mit dem Lorbeerkranze prangen,
   Stillt dein ängstliches Verlangen.

Recitativo (t,b,a)
Tenor:
Hier ist die Gruft
Bass:
Und hier der Stein,
Der solche zugedeckt.
Wo aber wird mein Heiland sein?
Alt:
Er ist vom Tode auferweckt!
Wir trafen einen Engel an,
Der hat uns solches kundgetan.

Aria (t)
Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer,
Nur ein Schlummer,
Jesu, durch dein Schweißtuch sein.
   Ja, das wird mich dort erfrischen
   Und die Zähren meiner Pein
   Von den Wangen tröstlich wischen.

Soprano, Alto:
But it was for you, like us, in vain.

Aria
O soul, your spices
Should consist no more of myrrh.
   For only
   With resplendent laurel wreaths
   Will you still your anxious longing.

Recitative
Tenor:
Here is the tomb
Bass:
And here the stone
Which covered it.
But where might my Saviour be?

Aria
My final agony shall be gentle,
Just a slumber,
O Jesus, due to Thy sweat-cloth.
   Yea, it will refresh me there
   And wipe the tears of my pain
   Consolingly from my cheeks.
Recitativo (s,a)
Indessen seufzen wir
Mit brennender Begier:
Ach, könnt es doch nur bald geschehen,
Den Heiland selbst zu sehen!

Aria (a)
Saget, saget mir geschwinde,
Saget, wo ich Jesum finde,
Welchen meine Seele liebt!
   Komm doch, komm, umfasse mich;
   Denn mein Herz ist ohne dich
   Ganz verwaiset und betrübt.

Recitativo (b)
Wir sind erfreuet,
Daß unser Jesus wieder lebt,
Und unser Herz,
So erst in Traurigkeit zerflossen
und geschwebt,
Vergißt den Schmerz
Und sinnt auf Freudenlieder;
Denn unser Heiland lebet wieder.

Coro (s,a,t,b)
Preis und Dank
Bleibe, Herr, dein Lobgesang.
Höll und Teufel sind bezwungen,
Ihre Pforten sind zerstört.
Jauchzet, ihr erlösten Zungen,
Daß man es im Himmel hört.
Eröffnet, ihr Himmel, die prächtigen Bogen,
Der Löwe von Juda kommt siegend gezogen!

Recitative
Meanwhile we sigh
With burning desire:
Ah, if only we could soon
See the Saviour Himself!

Aria
Tell me, tell me quickly,
Tell me where I might find Jesus,
Whom I love with my soul!
   Come now, come, embrace me;
   For my heart without Thee
   Is quite orphaned and distressed.

Recitative
We rejoice
That our Jesus lives again,
And that our heart,
Which once drifted in such sadness,
Now forgets the pain,
And turns to joyful anthems;
For our Saviour lives again.

Chorus
May laud and thanks
Remain, O Lord, Thy song of praise.
Hell and the devil are vanquished,
Their gates are destroyed.
Rejoice, ye ransomed voices,
That ye be heard in heaven.
Spread open, ye heavens, your glorious arches,
The Lion of Judah shall enter in triumph!
Ascension Oratorio Translations, BWV. 11

Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen (1735)
Himmelsfahrtsoratorium
Kantate zu Himmelfahrt

12 **Coro** (s,a,t,b)

Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen,
Preiset ihn in seinen Ehren,
Rühmet ihn in seiner Pracht;
Sucht sein Lob recht zu vergleichen,
Wenn ihr mit gesamten Chören
Ihm ein Lied zu Ehren macht!

13 **Evangelist** (t)

*Der Herr Jesus hub seine Hände auf und segnete seine Jünger, und es geschah, da er sie segnete, schied er von ihnen.*

14 **Recitativo** (b)

Ach, Jesu, ist dein Abschied schon so nah?
Ach, ist denn schon die Stunde da,
Da wir dich von uns lassen sollen?
Ach, siehe, wie die heißen Tränen
Von unsern blassen Wangen rollen,
Wie wir uns nach dir sehnen,
Wie uns fast aller Trost gebricht.
Ach, weiche doch noch nicht!

15 **Aria** (a)

Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebstes Leben,
Ach, fliehe nicht so bald von mir!
Dein Abschied und dein frühes Scheiden

Praise God in His kingdoms
Ascension Cantata
Ascension Day

12 **Chorus**

Praise God in His kingdoms,
Praise Him in His honour,
Laud Him in His splendour;
Seek to tell His praise correctly,
When with assembled choirs
You sing to His honour!

13 **Evangelist**

*The Lord Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples, and it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them.*

14 **Recitative**

Ah, Jesus, is Thy parting now so near?
Ah, is the hour already come,
When we must let Thee leave us?
Ah, see how the burning tears
Are rolling down our pale cheeks,
How we are yearning for Thee,
How we lack almost all comfort.
Ah, do not yet go from us!

15 **Aria**

Ah stay, my dearest life,
Ah, do not flee so soon from me!
Thy parting and Thy early leaving
Bringt mir das allergrößte Leiden,  
Ach ja, so bleibe doch noch hier;  
Sonst werd ich ganz von Schmerz umgeben.

Evangelist (t)
Und ward aufgehoben zusehends und fuhr auf gen Himmel, eine Wolke nahm ihn weg vor ihren Augen, und er sitzet zur rechten Hand Gottes.

Choral (s,a,t,b)
Nun lieget alles unter dir,  
Düch selbst nur ausgenommen;  
Düe Engel müssen für und für  
Dür aufzuwarten kommen.  
Düe Fürsten stehn auch auf der Bahn  
Und sind dir willig untertan;  
Luft, Wasser, Feuer, Erden  
Muß dir zu Dienste werden.

Evangelist (t, b)
Und da sie ihm nachsahen gen Himmel fahren, siehe, da stunden bei ihnen zwei Männer in weißen Kleidern, welche auch sagten:  
Beide:  
Ihr Männer von Galiläa, was stehet ihr und sehet gen Himmel? Dieser Jesus, welcher von euch ist aufgenommen gen Himmel, wird kommen, wie ihr ihn gesehen habt gen Himmel fahren.

Evangelist
And while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight, and He sits on the right hand of God.

Chorale
All now dwell beneath Thee,  
Thyself the sole exception;  
The angels must for evermore  
Come to wait upon Thee.  
Princes too stand by the path  
And are Thy willing servants;  
Air, water, fire and earth  
Must now do Thy bidding.

Evangelist
And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said:  
both:  
Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.
Recitativo (a)
Ach ja! so komme bald zurück:
Tilg einst mein trauriges Gebärden,
Sonst wird mir jeder Augenblick
Verhaßt und Jahren ähnlich werden.

Evangelist (t)
Sie aber beteten ihn an, wandten um gen Jerusalem von dem Berge, der da heißt der Ölberg, welcher ist nahe bei Jerusalem und liegt einen Sabbater-Weg davon, und sie kehreten wieder gen Jerusalem mit großer Freude.

Aria (s)
Jesu, deine Gnadenblicke
Kann ich doch beständig sehn.
   Deine Liebe bleibt zurücke,
   Daß ich mich hier in der Zeit
   An der künftgen Herrlichkeit
   Schon voraus im Geist erquicke,
   Wenn wir einst dort vor dir stehn.

Coro (Choral) (s,a,t,b)
Wenn soll es doch geschehen,
Wenn kömmt die liebe Zeit,
Daß ich ihn werde seen
In seiner Herrlichkeit?
Du Tag, wenn wirst du sein,
Daß wir den Heiland grüssen,
Daß wir den Heiland küszen?
Komm, stelle dich doch ein!

Recitative
Ah yes! so come back soon again:
Efface at last my sad demeanour,
Otherwise each moment will be for me
Despised and seem to last for years.

Evangelist
And they worshipped Him and returned unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

Aria
Jesus, I can continually see
Thy looks of mercy.
   Thy love remains behind,
   So that I here on earth
   Might already refresh my soul
   With the glory that is to come,
   When we one day shall stand before Thee.

Chorus (Chorale)
But when shall it come to pass,
When shall the dear day dawn
That I behold Him
In all His glory?
O day, when will you dawn,
That we may greet the Saviour,
That we may kiss the Saviour?
Come, then, and appear!
Launched on 1 May 2009, Retrospect Ensemble gave its inaugural UK performance at the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, opening the festival with a critically acclaimed performance of Handel’s late masterpiece, Jephtha. Shortly afterwards they made their Edinburgh Festival Debut with soprano Carolyn Sampson.

Founded by Matthew Halls, Retrospect Ensemble is embarking on a new journey both for its musicians and audiences – exploring the repertoire of four centuries and embracing the practices, styles and aesthetics of former ages with renewed vigour and a fresh approach. The choice of the name Retrospect Ensemble ensures that the group need not restrict itself to one particular historical period nor to a rigid configuration; concerts range from small chamber ensemble to full orchestra and choir.

The ensemble records for the innovative Linn Records and this is their second disc for the label recently named Label of the Year by Gramophone, following their critically acclaimed debut recording of Purcell Trio Sonatas (CKD 332):

‘The playing is immaculate — expressive and alert to all the nuance and variety of this superb music. An absolute winner for the Purcell year…’

**Hugh Canning, The Times, 31st May 2009**

‘Delightfully expressive and sensitively ornamented playing and a rewarding recording as well. One of the best new contributions to Purcell’s discography I’ve heard so far in this 350th anniversary year…’

**Andrew McGregor, BBC Radio 3 CD Review, 30th May 2009**

The ensemble’s current diary includes appearances at two of London’s foremost festivals, the Spitalfields Festival and Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music. The ensemble has an annual Wigmore Hall series; concerts across Europe and the Far East; has established an exciting partnership with the Korean National Opera, following an initial collaboration for performances of Gluck Orfeo ed Euridice in Spring 2010; and has a flourishing Young Artist Programme.
RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE
RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE

Matthew Halls conductor
Carolyn Sampson soprano
Iestyn Davies countertenor
James Gilchrist tenor
Peter Harvey bass

Andrew Skidmore cello
Emily Robinson double bass
Timothy Amherst organ
Mark Williams recorder
Rebecca Miles
Katy Birch flute
Rachel Brown oboe
Alexandra Bellamy bassoon
Hannah McLaughlin

Zoë Shevlin trumpet
Neil Brough
crispian steele-perkins
John Hutchins
timpani
Charles Fullbrook soprano

Ildikó Allen
Julie Cooper

Alison Hill
Charlotte Mobbs
Rebecca Outram
Helen Parker

Ian Aitkenhead
Stephen Carter
David Martin
Richard Wyn-Roberts

Nicholas Keay
Tom Phillips
Roy Rashbrook
Angus Smith

Ben Davies
Charles Pott
Richard Savage
William Townend

Lucy Russell
Sarah Sexton
Daniel Edgar
Tuomo Suni
Jorge Jimenez violin 1

Claire Duff
Andrea Morris
Rebecca Miles
Nia Lewis

viola

Jane Rogers
Louise Hogan

violin 2

Clare Brown
Katy Birch
cello

Ben Davies
Charles Pott

William Townend

double bass

Hannah McLaughlin

William Townend

Julie Cooper

Alison Hill

Charlotte Mobbs
Rebecca Outram

Helen Parker

Ian Aitkenhead
Stephen Carter

David Martin
Richard Wyn-Roberts

Nicholas Keay
Tom Phillips
Roy Rashbrook

Angus Smith

Ben Davies
Charles Pott

Richard Savage

William Townend

Alison Hill
Charlotte Mobbs

Rebecca Outram

Helen Parker

Ian Aitkenhead
Stephen Carter

David Martin

Richard Wyn-Roberts

Nicholas Keay
Tom Phillips

Roy Rashbrook

Angus Smith

Ben Davies
Charles Pott

Richard Savage

William Townend

Alison Hill
Charlotte Mobbs

Rebecca Outram

Helen Parker

Ian Aitkenhead
Stephen Carter

David Martin
Richard Wyn-Roberts

Nicholas Keay
Tom Phillips
Roy Rashbrook
Angus Smith
Ben Davies
Charles Pott
Richard Savage
William Townend
MATTHEW HALLS conductor

Matthew Halls has established himself as one of today’s leading young conductors. A former Artistic Director of The King’s Consort, he has conducted in prominent venues including the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; the Cité de la Musique, Paris; and the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels. Beyond the early repertoire in which he has initially established his reputation, Halls is known for his passion for the Germanic repertoire, particularly Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann and Schubert. As a conductor of choral music he has conducted an eclectic cross section of the repertoire, juxtaposing composers as diverse as Byrd and Britten, Gesualdo and Schoenberg.

Now firmly established as a conductor of international repute, Halls’ guest conducting includes significant debuts with orchestras such as Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Hessischer Rundfunk Sinfonie Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo, Bach Collegium Stuttgart, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic, Het Residentie Orkest, Houston Symphony and National Symphony Orchestra, Washington DC.
Having initially established his reputation as a keyboard player, Halls has worked extensively with many of Europe’s foremost early music groups and in opera houses including The Netherlands Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper and Komische Oper Berlin. Building on this long established pedigree, Halls has made recent debuts with opera companies such as Handelfestspiele Halle, Salzburg Landestheater, Central City Opera Colorado and Korean National Opera.

An Oxford graduate, Halls subsequently taught at the University for five years. Passionately committed to education and working with young musicians, the development of Retrospect Ensemble’s Young Artist Programme has been a priority for him. He is also a tutor for the European Union Baroque Orchestra and regularly teaches on summer schools and courses such as the Jerusalem Early Music Workshop and the Dartington International Summer School.

**CAROLYN SAMPSON soprano**

Carolyn Sampson has established a reputation as one of the most exciting sopranos to emerge in recent years. A consummate performer of opera she has appeared at English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opéra de Paris, Opéra de Lille, Opéra de Montpellier and Opéra National du Rhin.
Embracing a wide repertoire from the baroque to the contemporary Carolyn Sampson has appeared with some of the great orchestras and conductors in the world. These have included The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bach Collegium Japan, The English Concert, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, WDR Symphonieorchester Köln, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra e Coro dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and St Paul Chamber Orchestra and such conductors as Riccardo Chailly, Sir Mark Elder, Philippe Herreweghe, Gustav Leonhardt, Andris Nelsons, Trevor Pinnock and Maasaki Suzuki.

Carolyn Sampson is a regular guest at the BBC Proms and gives frequent recitals at Wigmore Hall. Her many recordings appear on the Hyperion, Harmonia Mundi, Virgin Classics, BIS, DG Archiv and Linn Records labels.

IESTYN DAVIES countertenor
Iestyn Davies studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, where he was a choral scholar at St John’s College, before pursuing his vocal studies at the Royal Academy of Music.
Since making his debut as Ottone in *L’incoronazione di Poppea* for Zürich Opera with Harnoncourt, operatic roles have included Armindo (Handel’s *Partenope*) for English National Opera; Ottone for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Purcell’s *King Arthur* for New York City Opera and English National Opera; Hamor (Handel’s *Jephthah*) and L’Humana Fragilità and Pisandro (Monteverdi’s *II ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*) for Welsh National Opera; Voice of Apollo (Britten’s *Death in Venice*) for English National Opera; Azul (Nadaira’s *Madrugada*) for the Schleswig-Holstein Festival; Corrado (Vivaldi’s *Griselda*) in Paris, Oberon in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* for Houston Grand Opera and his Covent Garden debut as the Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas*. He has worked with directors including Warner, Mitchell, Alden and Flimm and will soon be making his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

He made his debut at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, in a concert performance of Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* with the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala under Dudamel. Appearances at Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Concertgebouw, Snape Maltings and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées have included performances of Britten’s *Canticles*, Bach’s *Mass in B minor* and Handel’s *Messiah* and *Flavio*. He has sung with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Matheus and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and he regularly works with conductors including Layton, Gardiner, Harnoncourt, Nagano, Alessandrini, Spinosi, Koopman, Hogwood and Bruggen.

**JAMES GILCHRIST tenor**

James Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. As a recitalist, James has appeared with Malcolm Martineau, with Stephen Varcoe and Della Jones at St John’s, Smith Square, and with John Constable performing Britten *Canticles*, Quilter *To Julia* and Tippett *The Heart’s Assurance*. In his partnership with the pianist Anna Tilbrook, he has performed Schumann *Liederkreis* (Op. 24), Finzi *Till Earth Outwears* and Poulenc *Metamorphoses*. Operatic performances include Quint in Britten’s *Turn of the Screw*, Ferrando in *Cosi Fan Tutte*, Scaramuccio in Strauss’ *Ariadne Auf Naxos*, and many more.
Amongst his many recordings are title roles in Albert Herring and Vaughan William’s *A Poisoned Kiss*, Bach *St Matthew Passion* and Bach *St John Passion*. In 2009 James released *The Songs on Muriel Herbert* (CKD 335) which joins his other acclaimed recordings on Linn Records, *Oh Fair To See* (CKD 253) and the Classic FM Gramophone Award Finalist *On Wenlock Edge* (CKD 296). In 2010, James released the first modern recording of Leighton’s *Earth, Sweet Earth* and Britten’s *Winter Words* on his album titled *Leighton Earth, Sweet Earth* (CKD 329).

Other engagements include Haydn *The Seasons* and *Creation* with the Monteverdi Choir on tour in Europe and the US, *Messiah* with the St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Bach *Cantatas* with NDR Hannover, *St Matthew Passion* in Koln and Amsterdam, *B minor Mass* for the Bach Choir and Mozart *Requiem* for the Academy of Ancient Music and with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

**PETER HARVEY baritone**

Peter Harvey studied music at Magdalen College, Oxford, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Having initially set out to read French and German, his commitment to language has always been at the heart of his singing. Although he sings a wide
repertoire, he has become especially associated with music from the High Baroque, and the works of J.S. Bach in particular.

With the English Baroque Soloists and the Monteverdi Choir, directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, he was a key participant in the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage. A long-standing soloist with Paul McCreesh’s Gabrieli Consort, The King’s Consort, The Sixteen and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has seen Peter perform in prestigious venues internationally.

He is returning increasingly to the Song repertoire, in 2010, Peter made his Linn Records debut with his recording of Franz Schubert’s Winterreise (CKD 371) and has performed this song-cycle at festivals in Cambridge and Lugo, Spain. He has given recitals in festivals in Britain, Canada and France whilst other recitals include early Lieder with Laurence Cummings, Mozart in Barcelona and a programme of Lute Songs and Lieder in London’s Purcell Room with Matthew Wadsworth (lute and 19th century guitar) and Gary Cooper.

Peter is founder and director of the Magdalena Consort, which focuses on the vocal music of J.S. Bach.
Linn Records
Label of the Year

“Linn is the very model of a modern record company, ensuring that the highest standards are maintained from the studio right through the company’s very impressive digital store.”

JAMES JOLLY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, GRAMOPHONE

Discover the world of Linn Records
Download at www.linnrecords.com

Now you can explore Linn music on-line with even greater ease by using our innovative download facility. Linn albums and tracks are available to download at studio master and CD quality – the quality you desire to achieve the best possible sound. MP3 downloads are also available.

linnrecords.com is a multi-format music delivery system that delivers music on vinyl, CD and download. Register online today at www.linnrecords.com to keep up to date about our latest releases and to find out more about our artists.

LINN RECORDS, GLASGOW ROAD, WATERFOOT, GLASGOW G76 0EQ UK
t: +44 (0)141 303 5027/9 f: +44 (0)141 303 5007 e: info@linnrecords.co.uk