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CLASSICS

J.S. BACH

**The Complete Solo
Soprano Cantatas
Vol. 1**

*The Wedding Cantatas &
Ich habe genug*

Gillian Keith *soprano*
Armonico Consort
Christopher Monks *director*

J.S. BACH

THE COMPLETE SOLO SOPRANO CANTATAS, VOL. 1

Ich habe genug, BWV 82a

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Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, BWV 202

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O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, BWV 210

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19	<i>Recitativo</i>	So glaubt man denn, dass die Musik verführe	[1.52]

20	<i>Aria</i>	Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt, ihr Töne	[4.31]
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22	<i>Aria</i>	Großer Gönner, dein Vergnügen	[2.50]
23	<i>Recitativo</i>	Hochteurer Mann, so fahre ferner fort	[1.29]
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Total timings:			[71.23]

GILLIAN KEITH SOPRANO
 ARMONICO CONSORT
 CHRISTOPHER MONKS DIRECTOR

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Bach's cantatas hold a special place amongst performers and devotees of his music. Whether sacred or secular, these works provide incredible variety for listeners and players alike. Some contain elements of storytelling similar to arias and recitatives from his great Passions; many have instrumental movements and solo passages that rival any of his concerti, and are indeed borrowed directly from some of the most famous. Not surprisingly, Bach's cantatas are often incredibly virtuosic, demanding as much technical ability, style and understanding of the music as any of his other works.

Throughout his career, as church organist, Kapellmeister, and Cantor, Bach wrote hundreds of cantatas of which over 200 survive. These were mostly written to be performed within in the Lutheran service, with the text based on the liturgical passage for the given Sunday in the church calendar. But some were composed for other official occasions, such as weddings, entertainment of nobility, and political functions.

Cantata BWV 82 was first performed in its version for bass solo with oboe obbligato on

2nd February 1727 for The Purification of Mary, the feast day which celebrates the presentation of Jesus at the temple. In the prescribed readings for that Sunday was the Cantic of Simeon, *Nunc dimittis*, on which the libretto for the cantata is based. Perhaps Bach had the voice of Simeon in mind when he assigned the music to the low vocal register; however for its next three performances he arranged the work for soprano and flute, transposed it into a higher key, and thus introduced it into the soprano repertoire. The first recitative and the aria *Schlummert ein* were copied into the Anna Magdalena Notebook, suggesting she would have played and sung it herself at home, which is an indication of Bach's special affection for the piece.

In the opening movement, the gentle and plaintive phrase which describes the serene acceptance of death is based on a motif of a rising minor sixth. It is heard in both the flute and soprano line, which Bach also used in the aria *Erbarme dich* from the St Matthew Passion as well as in the duet from BWV 140 *Wenn kömst du, mein Heil?* To illustrate the joy of the acceptance of the Saviour and the eager anticipation to meet him, Bach writes extensive florid passages of coloratura on the

word "Freude". The central "slumber aria" illustrates the restful closing of life, with long pedal notes and pauses expressing the cessation of activity and earthly distractions. The closing movement is a jubilant dance full of impatience to reach the final resting place.

BWV 202 *Wiechet nur, betrübte Schatten* is by far the most popular of all Bach's wedding cantatas, and has long been a favourite in the soprano repertoire. But whose wedding was it for? Many suggest that it was performed by Anna Magdalena herself at her own wedding to Bach on 3rd December 1721, when they were "married at home, by command of the Prince", his then-employer. Although it would have been strange even then for a bride to perform in her own marriage ceremony, the fact that the Prince commanded a home wedding gives some credence to the notion that something unconventional happened. The other suggestion is that the cantata was performed in the celebrations after the service, making it less strange for the bride to participate in the music-making. In any case, scholars date the piece between 1717 and 1723 when Bach was Court Concert Master to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen.

The text, by an unknown author, compares nature's awakening in spring to the blossoming of love between two people. Scored for strings and continuo with oboe obbligato, in the opening movement the tender warmth of the oboe line is the musical description of the sun emerging to banish the gloomy winter weather. Several mythical characters are evoked in the poetry: Flora, Phoebus, and even Cupid himself do their work to bring joy and blessings to the lovers. With Bach's contrapuntal genius evoking Phoebus' galloping ride in a notably fiendish cello line, and portraying Cupid's "stepping out" with a sprightly walking bass line.

As the longest of all his solo cantatas, Bach wrote BWV 210 *O holder Tag* for a wedding, but once again we are unsure whose it was. Scholars have narrowed it down to four likely occasions, probably between 1738 and 1746, but the text (by an unknown poet) tells us that it was certainly for the wedding of an influential supporter of music and the arts. Written out in elaborate calligraphy, the parts were likely presented as a gift to the couple, the words speaking of marital love, and the role music plays within it. The recitatives which precede each aria are lengthy, almost like mini sermons,

and describe in detail the esteem to which the patron holds music and its effect upon us all.

The cantata is scored for strings with oboe d'amore and flute obbligato. Both flute and oboe have solo movements, and only in the final recitative and aria does the ensemble play all together. The piece begins with a joyful blessing on the nuptial day and a lively aria in bright A major, which colours the "gentle swoon" with a wavy vocal line finishing on a long held E in order to emphasise the lulling effect of the song. The text twice refers specifically to the individual instruments, in the first aria suggesting "the delight of the strings strengthen and uplift" the soul. In the gentle, yet playful middle aria, the command, "Silence, you flutes, silence your tones", goes unheeded as the flute carries on with extended runs which weave around the voice. The lilting E major aria with oboe suggests rest for the "weary notes", each time painted with an elongated and tied note, while "tender harmony" is illustrated with a rising arpeggio. Bach's "Great Patrons" are nobly represented by a courtly dance, and the wedding couple are celebrated in the last movement by a jubilant finale. This bright finale features trills which suggest banners snapping in the

breeze and vocal coloratura sparkling like celebratory fireworks!

I have always been drawn to the music of Bach; his cantatas in particular were a mainstay of my early training and career. This ambitious project to record and perform all nine of Bach's solo soprano cantatas is the realisation of a personal dream that has its roots in my very earliest musical experiences.

I am grateful to Armonico Consort for sharing their excitement and belief in this venture with me. Our 21st century approach to production through an online crowdfunding campaign has brought us into contact with so many supporters and friends we might not otherwise have reached. Thank you to each and every person who helped this project on its way, especially my unfailingly supportive family.

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Ich habe genug, BWV 82a

1 Ich habe genug,

Ich habe den Heiland, das Hoffen der Frommen,
Auf meine begierigen Arme genommen;
Ich habe genug!

Ich hab ihn erblickt,
Mein Glaube hat Jesum ans Herze gedrückt;
Nun wünsch ich, noch heute mit Freuden
Von hinnen zu scheiden.

2 Ich habe genug.

Mein Trost ist nur allein,
Dass Jesus mein und ich sein eigen möchte sein.
Im Glauben halt ich ihn,

I have enough.

*I have held the Saviour, the hope of all peoples,
In my eager arms.*

I have enough.

I have seen him,

*My faith has impressed Jesus on my heart;
Now I wish this very day
To depart from here with joy.*

I have enough.

*My one consolation is this:
that Jesus might be mine and I His own.
In faith, I hold him.*

Da seh ich auch mit Simeon
Die Freude jenes Lebens schon.
Laßt uns mit diesem Manne ziehn!
Ach! möchte mich von meines Leibes Ketten
Der Herr erretten;
Ach! wäre doch mein Abschied hier,
Mit Freuden sagt ich, Welt, zu dir:
Ich habe genug.

3 Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen,
Fallet sanft und selig zu!
Welt, ich bleibe nicht mehr hier,
Hab ich doch kein Teil an dir,
Das der Seele könnte taugen.
Hier muss ich das Elend bauen,
Aber dort, dort werd ich schauen
Süßen Friede, stille Ruh.

4 Mein Gott! wenn kömmt das schöne:
Nun!
Da ich im Friede fahren werde
Und in dem Sande kühler Erde
Und dort bei dir im Schoße ruhn?
Der Abschied ist gemacht,
Welt, gute Nacht!

5 Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod,
Ach, hätt er sich schon eingefunden.
Da entkomm ich aller Not,
Die mich noch auf der Welt gebunden.

*For in Simeon, I already see
The joy of life to come.
Let us go with this man!
Ah! If only the Lord would free me
from the chains of my body;
Ah! if only my departure were soon,
With joy I would say to you, O World,
I have enough.*

*Slumber, you weary eyes,
fall softly and close in contentment.
World, I will remain here no more.
I own no part of you
that could matter to my soul.
Here I am resigned to misery,
but there, there I shall see
sweet peace, quiet rest.*

*My God! When will I hear that precious word:
"Now!"
when I will journey in peace,
and rest both here in the cool soil of earth
and there within your bosom.
My departure is made,
O world, good night!*

*I delight in my death,
Ah! If only it had already come.
Then shall I escape all the suffering
that still enslaves me now on earth.*

Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, BWV 202

6 Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten,
Frost und Winde, geht zur Ruh!
Florens Lust
Will der Brust
Nichts als frohes Glück verstatten,
Denn sie trägt Blumen zu.

*Be gone, you troublesome shadows,
frosts and winds go to rest!
Flora's delight
will grant our breast
nothing but joyful fortune,
for she comes bearing flowers.*

7 Die Welt wird wieder neu,
Auf Bergen und in Gründen
Will sich die Anmut doppelt schön verbinden,
Der Tag ist von der Kälte frei.

*The world becomes new again,
in the mountains and the valleys
the loveliness clings with doubled beauty,
the day is free from cold.*

8 Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden
Durch die neugeborne Welt,
Ja, weil sie ihm wohlgefällt,
Will er selbst ein Buhler werden.

*Phoebus races with rapid horses
through the new-born world,
yes, since this delights him,
he himself will become a lover.*

9 Drum sucht auch Amor sein Vergnügen,
Wenn Purpur in den Wiesen lacht,
Wenn Florens Pracht sich herrlich macht,
Und wenn in seinem Reich,
Den schönen Blumen gleich,
Auch Herzen feurig siegen.

*Therefore Love himself also seeks his delight,
when the meadow laughs with purple flowers,
when Flora's splendour is gloriously arrayed
and when in her kingdom,
like beautiful flowers,
hearts, too, passionately triumph.*

10 Wenn die Frühlingslüfte streichen
Und durch bunte Felder wehn,
Pfleget auch Amor auszuschleichen,

*When the springtime breezes blow
and waft through the colourful fields,
Love steals forth,*

Um nach seinem Schmuck zu sehn,
Welcher, glaubt man, dieser ist,
Daß ein Herz das andre küßt.

11 Und dieses ist das Glücke,
Daß durch ein hohes Gunstgeschicke
Zwei Seelen einen Schmuck erlanget,
An dem viel Heil und Segen pranget.

12 Sich üben in Lieben
In Scherzen sich herzen
Ist besser als Florens vergängliche Lust.
Hier quellen die Wellen,
Hier lachen und wachen
Die siegenden Palmen auf Lippen und Brust.

13 So sei das Band der keuschen Liebe,
Verlobte Zwei,
Vom Unbestand des Wechsels frei!
Kein jäher Fall,
Noch Donnerknall
Erschrecke die verliebten Triebe!

14 Sehet in Zufriedenheit
Tausend helle Wohlfahrtstage,
Daß bald in der Folgezeit
Eure Liebe Blumen trage!

*to seek after his treasure,
which, people believe, is this:
that one heart kisses another.*

*And this is happiness,
when through a lofty gift of fate
two souls achieve a single treasure,
shining with abundant happiness and blessings.*

*To become accustomed in love,
to embrace in high spirits,
is better than Flora's fleeting delights.
Here the waves swell
here laugh and watch
the palms of victory on lips and breast.*

*So shall the bond of chaste love,
committed pair,
be free from the inconstancy of change!
May no sudden fall
or thunderclap
frighten your amorous desires!*

*See in contentment
a thousand bright and prosperous days,
so that soon in coming time
your love will blossom!*

O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, BWV 210

15 O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit,
Willkommen, frohe Stunden!
Ihr bringt ein Fest, das uns erfreut.
Weg, Schwermut, weg, weg, Traurigkeit!
Der Himmel, welcher vor uns wachet,
Hat euch zu unsrer Lust gemachet:
Drum lasst uns fröhlich sein!
Wir sind von Gott darzu verbunden,
Uns mit den Frohen zu erfreun.

16 Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder,
Werfet die entzückte Brust
In die Ohnmacht sanfte nieder!
Aber durch der Saiten Lust
Stärket und erholt sie wieder!

17 Doch, haltet ein,
Ihr muntern Saiten;
Denn bei verliebten Eheleuten
Soll's stille sein.
Ihr harmoniert nicht mit der Liebe;
Denn eure angeborenen Triebe
Verleiten uns zur Eitelkeit,
Und dieses schickt sich nicht zur Zeit.
Ein frommes Ehepaar
Will lieber zu dem Dankaltar
Mit dem Gemüte treten

*O gracious day, longed for time,
welcome, happy hours!
You bring a celebration that delights us.
Away, sorrow, away, away, sadness!
Heaven, which watches over us,
has created you for our pleasure:
so let us be joyful!
We are commanded by God,
to rejoice with the joyful.*

*Play, you lively songs,
cast the enchanted breast
into a gentle swoon!
But through the strings' delight
strengthen and revive it again!*

*Yet cease now,
you lively strings;
for around this loving betrothed couple
all should be quiet.
You do not harmonise with love;
for your innate urgings
mislead us into vanity,
and this does not befit the time.
A devout pair of newly-weds
would rather approach the altar of thanks
with deep feelings*

Und ein beseeltes Abba beten;
Es ist vielmehr im Geist bemüht
Und dichtet in der Brust ein angenehmes Lied.

18 Ruhet hie, matte Töne,
Matte Töne, ruhet hie!
Eure zarte Harmonie
Ist vor die beglückte Eh'
Nicht die wahre Panacee.

19 So glaubt man denn, dass die Musik verführe
Und gar nicht mit der Liebe harmoniere?
O nein! Wer wollte denn nicht ihren Wert
betrachten,
Auf den so hohe Gönner achten?
Gewiss, die gütige Natur
Zieht uns von ihr auf eine höhere Spur.
Sie ist der Liebe gleich, ein großes Himmelskind,
Nur, dass sie nicht, als wie die Liebe, blind.
Sie schleicht in alle Herzen ein
Und kann bei Hoh' und Niedern sein.
Sie lockt den Sinn
Zum Himmel hin
Und kann verliebten Seelen
Des Höchsten Ruhm erzählen.
Ja, heißt die Liebe sonst weit stärker als der Tod,
Wer leugnet? die Musik stärkt uns
in Todes Not.
O wundervolles Spiel!

*and pray a devout "Abba;"
their spirits are much more deeply stirred
and compose in their breast a pleasant song.*

*Rest here, weary notes,
weary notes, rest here!
Your tender harmony
Is for this glad marriage
not the true panacea.*

*So is it thought that music leads us astray,
and does not harmonize with love at all?
Oh no! Who would not consider its
worth,
recognised by such lofty patrons?
Indeed, generous Nature
draws us with it to a higher path.
It resembles love, a great child of heaven,
yet it is not, like love, blind.
It steals into all hearts
and can dwell with the high and the humble.
It calls the mind
up to heaven
and can to loving souls
describe the glory of the Highest.
Indeed, love is called far stronger than death
and who would deny it? Music strengthens us
during death's suffering.
O marvelous playing!*

Dich, dich verehrt man viel.
Doch, was erklingt dort vor ein Klagelied,
Das den geschwinden Ton beliebter Saiten
flieht?

20 Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt, ihr Töne,
Denn ihr klingt dem Neid nicht schöne,
Eilt durch die geschwärzte Luft,
Bis man euch zu Grabe ruft!

21 Was Luft? was Grab?
Soll die Musik verderben,
Die uns so großen Nutzen gab?
Soll so ein Himmelskind ersterben,
Und zwar für eine Höllenbrut?
O nein!
Das kann nicht sein.
Drum auf, erfrische deinen Mut!
Die Liebe kann vergnügte Saiten
Gar wohl vor ihrem Throne leiden.
Indessen lass dich nur den blassen Neid
verlachen,
Was wird sich dein Gesang aus Satans Kindern
machen?
Genug, dass dich der Himmel schützt,
Wenn sich ein Feind auf dich erhitzt.
Getrost, [noch fehlt's nicht an] es leben noch
Patronen,
Die gern bei deiner Anmut wohnen.
Und einen solchen Mäzenat

*You, you we greatly honor.
Yet, what is that which sounds like a lament,
which flees from the brisk sound of the beloved
strings?*

*Silence, you flutes, silence your tones,
for you do not sound beautiful to envy.
Hurry through the darkened air,
until you are called to the grave!*

*What air? What grave?
Shall the music be destroyed
that was of such service to us?
Shall such a child of heaven perish,
and only for a hellish brood?
O No!
That cannot be.
So rise, renew your courage!
Love can endure very well the
delightful strings before its throne.
Meanwhile only laugh at the pale
envy;
what concern are Satan's children to your
song?
It is enough, that heaven protects you,
when an enemy is hot upon you.
Be comforted that there are many
patrons
who would gladly live among your charms.
And to such a Maecenas*

Sollst du auch itzo in der Tat
An seinem Hochzeitfest verehren.
Wohlan, lass deine Stimme hören!

[22] Großer Gönner, dein Vergnügen
Muß auch unsern Klang besiegen,
Denn du verehrst uns deine Gunst.
Unter deinen Weisheitsschätzen
Kann dich nichts so sehr ergötzen
Als der süßen Töne Kunst.

[23] Hochteurer Mann, so fahre ferner fort,
Der ecken Harmonie wie itzt geneigt zu bleiben;
So wird sie dir dereinst die Traurigkeit vertreiben.
So wird an manchem Ort
Dein wohlverdientes Lob erschallen.
Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein,
Ja wie ein fester Stahl beständig sein,
Bis dass er in der ganzen Welt erklinge.
Indessen gönne mir,
Dass ich bei deiner Hochzeit Freude
Ein wünschend Opfer zubereite
Und nach Gebühr
Dein künftig Glück und Wohl besinge.

[24] Seid beglückt, edle beide,
Edle beide, seid beglückt!
Beständige Lust
Erfülle die Wohnung, vergnüge die Brust,
Bis daß euch die Hochzeit des Lammes erquickt.

*shall you even now
at his wedding feast give honour.
Come forth, let your voice be heard!*

*Great patrons, your pleasure
must also vanquish our sounds,
since you grant us your favour.
Among the treasures of your wisdom
nothing can bring you such delight
as the art of sweet music.*

*Most honoured Sir, strongly continue,
remaining gracious as now to noble harmony;
for it will henceforth drive away your sadness.
Thus, in many a place
your well-deserved praise will resound.
Your fame will endure like a diamond stone,
yes, like hardest steel,
until it echoes throughout the entire world.
Meanwhile permit me
amidst the celebration of your wedding
to prepare a heart-felt offering,
and as is proper,
singing to your future health and happiness.*

*Be happy, noble couple,
noble couple, be happy!
May constant joy
fill your home, delight your breast,
until you are refreshed at the Feast of the Lamb.*

ARMONICO CONSORT

Armonico Consort

Director Christopher Monks

Soprano Gillian Keith

Oboe Geoff Coates

Flute Eva Caballero

Violin I Miles Golding

Violin II Emma Lake

Viola Joanne Miller

Cello Gabriel Amherst

Double Bass Andrew Durban

Organ William Whitehead



Armonico Consort began life in 2001, set up by Christopher Monks and a group of university colleagues with a shared passion for music from the Renaissance to Baroque, coupled with the imagination to find new and unusual ways to present concerts.

Audiences seemed to love their engaging and imaginative approach, and most concerts in the first year sold out. “That gave us confidence, energy and self-belief to carry on and do more, also to take more risks with our programming, and keep on experimenting,” says Christopher.

The ideas kept flowing, as did the titles (“many of them were created down the pub”) including the concert programmes Naked Byrd and Supersize Polyphony, and newly-created operas Monteverdi’s Flying Circus, Too Hot to Handel and Baroque Around the Block. Their horizons broadened to include later repertoire but at the heart remained music of the Baroque and Renaissance, including some rarely-heard gems, performed by the finest singers and players using period instruments. “We take great care to craft programmes which bring as much little-known music to life as possible, and find new and imaginative ways to bring this music to audiences. I’m particularly proud of

Supersize Polyphony where we perform 40 and 60-part works by Tallis and Striggio completely in the round, interspersed with Hildegard of Bingen”. It earned the group their first 5 star review, from The Times, and there were plenty more to follow.

Among many notable events were their Wigmore Hall debut in 2003, performing at the Hampton Court Palace Festival with violinist Nicola Benedetti (beginning a continuing musical friendship), Mozart’s The Magic Flute at the Barbican and giving the first performances of Francesco Scarlatti’s music in Italy (Naples) and Tel Aviv.

An education programme was fundamental to Armonico Consort from the outset and now encompasses six AC Academy after-school choirs and an in-school Choir Creation programme which trains teachers as choir leaders, leaving a strong legacy in each school. This Choir Creation scheme became the backbone of AC Academy reaching 15,000 children a year. By 2020, Armonico Consort aims to create 300 children’s choirs and 300 new choir leaders.

Armonico Consort count Dame Judi Dench, Jeremy Irons, Nicola Benedetti, Sir Willard White, Ian

Bostridge and Catrin Finch among their many guest artists. They have developed relationships with major concert halls across the UK and their recordings are regularly featured on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and radio stations across the world. They continue to produce innovative new projects including Oz & Armonico Drink to Music with wine writer and broadcaster Oz Clarke, as well as touring their flagship programmes and seeking out new relationships. On the horizon are concerts in Europe, and exciting plans for future collaborations with the University of Cambridge, the Royal Albert Hall and the BBC.

GILLIAN KEITH

A past winner of both the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Award and the ROSL Singing Prize, and a distinguished graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, soprano Gillian Keith made her Royal Opera House, Covent Garden debut as Zerbinetta in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* and has gone on to repeat the role with great success at Ópera de Oviedo and Welsh National Opera. Her most celebrated roles include Poppea in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, The Woodbird in Wagner's *Siegfried*, Pretty Polly in Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy*,



© Clare Park

Philine in Thomas' *Mignon*, and Ginevra in Handel's *Ariodante*, in international opera houses and festivals including English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Netherlands Opera, Geneva Opera and Boston Early Music Festival.

Her concert repertoire is wide and varied, and has taken her to some of the most prestigious stages around the world, including the BBC

Proms, Boston Symphony Hall, Sydney Opera House, Bregenz Festival, Edinburgh Festival and London's Wigmore Hall, in works ranging from Bach Cantatas, to Mozart's *C Minor Mass*, to Oliver Knussen's *Symphony No. 2*. She has forged successful creative partnerships with many orchestras and organisations, including the BBC Philharmonic, The Sixteen, Tafelmusik, Florilegium, Armonico Consort, and the Buxton Festival.

Gillian's recordings include Handel's *Gloria* and Bach Cantatas with John Eliot Gardiner, Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *C Minor Mass* with Harry Christophers, and Handel's German Arias with Florilegium. She has recorded the role of Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Sir Richard Armstrong, as well as orchestral songs by Dallapiccola, Nielsen's 3rd Symphony, and Casella's *Le convent sur l'eau* with Gianandrea Noseda and the BBC Philharmonic, all for Chandos. Her recital discs include Schubert Lieder on Marquis, *Gillian Keith – bei Strauss* for Champs Hill Records, and two volumes of Debussy songs for Deux-Elles.

www.gilliankeithsoprano.com

CHRISTOPHER MONKS

The founder and Artistic Director of Armonico Consort and its ground-breaking education programme AC Academy, Christopher Monks has established himself as a versatile and prolific conductor and keyboard player.

Specialising in the performance of music from the Baroque and late Renaissance, Christopher is equally at home with major and modern choral repertoire, and during his career he has conducted at many of the greatest concert halls in the UK, including the Royal Albert Hall, the Barbican, Wigmore Hall and Cadogan Hall in London, the Symphony Hall in Birmingham, and the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Christopher performs regularly at major national festivals and has worked extensively abroad, including in Israel, Italy, Ireland and France. Alongside his work with Armonico Consort, he has conducted internationally renowned orchestras and ensembles such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia and the European Union Chamber Orchestra.



A chorister at the age of eight, through that world Christopher was introduced to the music of Byrd, Tallis, Bach, Monteverdi and Handel, of which today he is a highly acclaimed champion.

After graduating from Cambridge University, where he was organ scholar at Gonville and Caius College, Christopher went on as an organist under David Hill at Winchester Cathedral. Through David's inspiration, he developed a

passion and a talent for choral conducting. Although he admits to be cautious of much contemporary music, Christopher has commissioned many new works, including the ambitious *Prodigal Son* by Girling, premiered with Dame Evelyn Glennie, and *Beowulf*, an epic drama by Toby Young which will be premiered during Armonico Consort's 2017 season.

Christopher's latest recordings, including his rendition of Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*, have earned him several five star reviews in *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*.

A passionate advocate of reaching out to children of all backgrounds through the creation of youth choirs, Christopher has founded and developed AC Academy, a music education programme which offers life-changing experiences and first-class performance opportunities.

When not conducting, Christopher loves fine cooking and after a long day of music preparation, he often enjoys going for a cycle.

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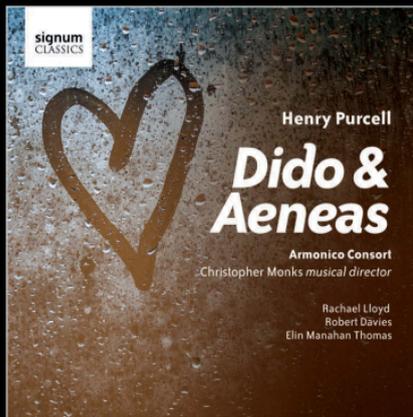
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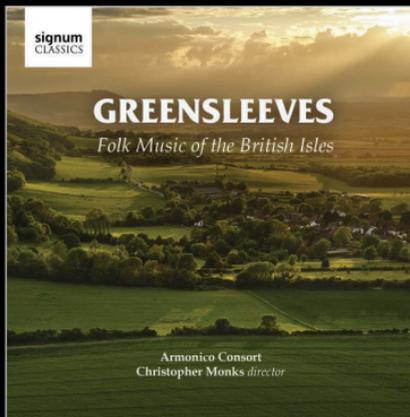
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