

Royal Academy of Music /
Kohn Foundation
Bach Cantata Series



Royal
Academy
of
Music

J. S. Bach.

The Cantatas 2015

The seventh year of a major series celebrating Bach's magnificent works in concert

'Don't miss the Royal Academy of Music's outstanding Sunday lunchtime series surveying all of Bach's cantatas'
TheTimes

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

'A satisfying spiritual start to the day... The performance was a model of vitality, concentration and period authenticity'
The SundayTimes

'one of London's ongoing musical treats'
Country Life

'The Royal Academy of Music / Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata Series has become one of the highlights of the London concert calendar... [it] repeatedly affirms both the promise of young musicians, and the continually renewing inspiration of Bach's genius... performed with stunning virtuosity '
Musical Opinion

'The perfect Sunday lunch for any Bach lover'
The Times

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

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



Welcome to the seventh year of our epic Bach cantata voyage. If you are already a regular supporter — or if you've read the enthusiastic reports about these performances in the press — you'll know that this ambitious series of concerts has become an integral part of life both at the Academy and in the London musical scene. We are now a good way past the half-way point in our travels through the complete sacred and secular choral works of JS Bach, and each year seems to confirm more radiantly than ever an unparalleled journey of richness for performer and audience alike.

We do not follow a strict liturgical path when deciding which works to programme throughout the year: this is a concert series designed for the broadest church of belief. To these monthly concerts we welcome people from far and wide. Audiences range from musicians who have a profound knowledge of the cantatas to those hearing this music for the first time. We know that most listeners fall into this second category — which makes the whole project particularly thrilling as performer and audience experience the bulk of the music without preconceptions. It seems especially appropriate to hold these events in an environment of discovery where young performers can explore the cantatas in such a fresh, spirited and communicative way.

The distinguished violinists Rachel Podger, Madeleine Easton and Margaret Faultless form the select roster of leaders in our 'period' band which has, with the choral group, developed a remarkably vibrant and dynamic 'house style', at one with the intimacy and warmth of the Duke's Hall and yet also relishing the lyrical and dramatic ambitions of our exceptional director Iain Ledingham.

We continue to ring the changes by incorporating a couple of concerts played on modern instruments, in celebration of Bach's continuing inspiration to performers of many different traditions.

We are also delighted to welcome Masaaki Suzuki, recipient of the Royal Academy of Music / Kohn Foundation Bach Prize in 2012, for a special performance in June presented in collaboration with The Juilliard School in New York.

The installation in Summer 2013 of the spectacular Elton John / Ray Cooper Organ provides an opportunity to extend a few of our programmes by adding one of Bach's incomparable works for solo organ. Our February and March audiences are the beneficiaries in the 2015 season.

No other institution in the country is as steeped in Bach as the Royal Academy of Music, where we have been introducing his music to new audiences since our very early days in the 1820s. The tradition continues, thanks to the remarkable commitment of the teachers, students and visiting artists of the Academy and — crucially central to its perpetuation — the close involvement, collaboration and generosity of Sir Ralph Kohn and the Kohn Foundation. All good schemes are a team effort but the Kohns (regular attenders from three generations of the family) are rare birds in the collective pride they feel in giving such unparalleled joy through their inspired support for this mighty project.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Freeman-Attwood".

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood
Principal

All performances start at midday in the Academy's Duke's Hall and last around one hour

Sunday 18th January

Herr Gott, dich loben wir, BWV 16

Lord God, we give Thee praise

Ich habe genug, BWV 82

It is enough

Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt, BWV 112

The Lord is my faithful shepherd

Sunday 22nd February

Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582

Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde, BWV 201

Make haste, make haste, you whirling winds

Sunday 22nd March

Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe, BWV 25

There is no soundness in my flesh

Schau, lieber Gott, wie meine Feind, BWV 153

Behold, dear God, how my enemies

Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 686

Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 38

Out of the depths I cry to Thee

Sunday 19th April

Ich bin in mir vergnügt, BWV 204

I am content in myself

Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes, BWV 76

The heavens declare the glory of God

Sunday 17th May

Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten I,

BWV 59

If a man love me, he will keep my words I

Amore traditore, BWV 203

O treacherous Love

Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten,

BWV 207

United discord of quivering strings

Book at www.ram.ac.uk/bach or telephone
020 7873 7300 (Monday–Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm)
from Monday 6th October 2014

Sunday 21st June

Die Elenden sollen essen, BWV 75

The meek shall eat

Double Violin Concerto, BWV 1043

Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen, BWV 11

Praise God in His kingdoms

Sunday 4th October

Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens, BWV 148

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!, BWV 51

Rejoice unto God in all lands!

Christ lag in Todesbanden, BWV 4

Christ lay in the bonds of death

Sunday 1st November

O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad, BWV 165

O sacred spring of water and the spirit

Ich bin ein guter Hirt, BWV 85

I am the good shepherd

Mass in G, BWV 236

Sunday 29th November

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, BWV 91

All praise to Thee, Jesus Christ

Ich habe meine Zuversicht, BWV 188

I have put my trust

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben, BWV 248iv

With thanks and praise prostrate yourselves

(Christmas Oratorio part iv)

Herr Gott, dich loben wir, BWV 16

Lord God, we give Thee praise

Ich habe genug, BWV 82

It is enough

Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt, BWV 112

The Lord is my faithful shepherd

Midday

Duke's Hall

Tickets £13 (concessions £10),

season discounts available

Book from Monday 6th October 2014:

By telephone 020 7873 7300 and in person

(Monday–Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm)

Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director

Madeleine Easton leader

Performed on modern instruments

Written for the New Year's Day service in 1726, 'Herr Gott, dich loben wir' BWV 16 is mostly celebratory in style. Instead of drawing on the readings of the day, Bach uses a text by Georg Christian Lehms which emphasises the Janus-like notions of the season. Such sentiments infiltrate the musical structure: the first bass recitative gives thanks for the past, whilst a second recitative for alto is a prayer for the future. Brass fanfares and choral interruptions enliven the structure with interjections of praise and thanksgiving.

One of the most adored solo-voice cantatas, 'Ich habe genug' BWV 82 was composed for performance on 2nd February 1727. Indeed, Bach himself clearly expressed a fondness for the work: he performed it repeatedly, reviving it on several occasions over the next twenty years, and changed the scoring for each occasion. As with all the other cantatas written for the Feast of the Purification, Bach focuses on the story of Simeon. Typical Lutheran themes of longing for death (or 'sleep') and the departure from worldly goods are beautifully crafted into the writing: lullaby-like figurations, soothing pedal point, and dramatic pauses enhance the rhetorical and emotional gravitas of the text.

The textual link in 'Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt' BWV 112 with the Sunday Gospel is clear. Bach, however, uses a paraphrase of Psalm 23 by Wolfgang Meuslin published in 1530. The images of the psalm are clearly delineated through the structure of the cantata: the opening chorus casts the 'faithful shepherd' with brilliant fanfares from pairs of horns and oboes d'amore; the 'still waters' are produced by the flowing counterpoint in the alto aria; and the wanderings through the 'dark valley' are met by dissonant chords from the strings. Rhythmic and harmonic stability is re-established at the comfort of the Lord's 'staff and rod'.



Passacaglia in C minor, BWV 582
Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde, BWV 201
Make haste, make haste, you whirling winds

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Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Performed on period instruments

Michael Papadopoulos organ

In 1737 Johann Adolph Scheibe criticised the 'bombastic and confused substance' of Bach's music and his general tendency to obscure with 'too much art'. This attack on Bach's music may seem peculiar to our modern ears, but such themes were not in isolation. Indeed, Bach was caught up in a polemical clash: in 1749 Bach defended against charges that an intense musical education was harmful to youth. It is in the light of these attacks that Bach's 'Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde' BWV 201 comes alive with political and cultural meaning.

The cantata is based on the Greek myth in which Phoebus Apollo is challenged to a musical contest. Bach uses a text by Picander, who adopts Ovid's original, for his dramatic portrayal of musical conflict. With six solo vocal parts, two flutes, two oboes and strings, this *dramma per musica* is a story of striking contrast and emotional intensity.



Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe, BWV 25
There is no soundness in my flesh
Schau, lieber Gott, wie meine Feind, BWV 153
Behold, dear God, how my enemies
Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 686
Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, BWV 38
Out of the depths I cry to Thee

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Performed on period instruments

Jemima Stephenson organ

Bach's first cycle in Leipzig included 'Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe' BWV 25, composed for 29th August 1723. The opening chorus, one of three cases in which Bach writes for three recorders, is a structural masterpiece. Chorale quotations in the continuo are weaved within a web of elaborate counterpoint; a double fugue in the choir is dramatically reinforced by three trombones and cornett which provide interjections of four-part chorale. Bach contrasts such density with moments of transparency: a bass aria describing leprosy and boils is plaintive and lucid, yet bubbles with rhythmic energy.

Written for 2nd January 1724, 'Schau, lieber Gott, wie meine Feind' BWV 153 is inspired by the Sunday Gospel and describes enemies of the Christians. The opening is particularly unusual. Bach does not open with a grand or solemn chorus, like so many other cantatas, but instead with a plain four-part chorale. Indeed, the choir is assigned only plain chorale settings, and the rest of the ensemble is similarly restricted in scope. Such limitations, however, allow for splendid moments of intimacy. Bach uses the two arias to contrast earth and heaven, and their theological counterparts of suffering and comfort. Unison strings create the tumultuous atmosphere of stress and strain in the tenor aria, whilst the alto aria soothes with gentle minuet rhythms — enlivened by a spirited Allegro section.

Martin Luther's hymn of 1524, a paraphrase of Psalm 130, forms the basis of Bach's chorale cantata 'Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir' BWV 38. Written for 29th October 1724, the text reflects the Sunday Gospel's themes of a call for help in times of deep distress. Bach emphasises the austerity of the text through the motet-style arrangement. The antiquated atmosphere is also achieved through dense counterpoint and a particular attention to motivic development. The organicism of the vocal and instrumental writing is almost Beethovenian, with melodic intervals deriving from the chorale tunes. Such contrapuntal craft is highlighted in the soprano recitative in which the bass-line is a chorale.

Ich bin in mir vergnügt, BWV 204

I am content in myself

Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes, BWV 76

The heavens declare the glory of God

Midday
Duke's Hall

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season discounts available
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(Monday–Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm)
Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach*

Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Performed on period instruments

'Ich bin in mir vergnügt' BWV 204 is concerned with a favourite Lutheran theme: contentment with our fate as ordained by God. Composed in either 1727 or 1728, this cantata is likely to have been for domestic performance within Bach's immediate circle. Despite being set for single solo soprano, Bach achieves contrast through radical changes in the instrumental scoring: the series of arias feature different obligato lines (two oboes, violin and flute respectively), only to be combined in the fourth and final aria depicting 'divine contentment'. An overall atmosphere of calm is created through figurations of oscillating motion and reposed passages of pedal points.

Performed on 6th June 1723, 'Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes' BWV 76 is the second cantata that Bach wrote as Thomascantor in Leipzig. As with the first cantata of his new appointment (BWV 75), Bach shows a dedication and determination to the role through the work's large dimensions and complex musical construction. The text, which refers to the Sunday Gospel, is a glorification of God's handiwork. This is met with musical generosity: the large-scale opening chorus is texturally vibrant with independent orchestral parts. The second part of the cantata is more meditative, emphasising chamber music timbres, with obligato writing for oboe d'amore and viola da gamba.

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



Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten I, BWV 59

If a man love me, he will keep my words I

Amore traditore, BWV 203

O treacherous Love

Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten, BWV 207

United discord of quivering strings

Midday
Duke's Hall

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Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Faultless leader

Performed on modern instruments

The autograph score of 'Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten I' BWV 59 is dated 1723; however, it is more likely that it was performed on Whit Sunday on 28th May 1724. The freely versified text is prefaced by a famous passage from the Gospel of John. Bach's instrumentation is somewhat peculiar: an ensemble of strings and continuo is bolstered by two celebratory trumpets and drums; however, Bach does not use woodwind as one would expect in such festive instrumentation. The cantata also serves a fascinating historical purpose: Bach expanded BWV 59 to create the cantata BWV 74 for Whit Sunday the following year, and so it is through this work we are able to observe an example of the master's compositional procedures.

Only one of two cantatas with Italian texts, the authenticity of 'Amore traditore' BWV 203 is still questioned by Bach scholars today. However, if we accept that the work belongs to the German fashion of emulating Italian secular solo cantatas, it is likely that the cantata originates from Bach's period in Cöthen (1717–23), where Italian chamber cantatas were part of the performing tradition. The text, a lament bewailing the pains of love, is sung by solo bass, with a unique closing aria with obligato harpsichord.

'Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten' BWV 207 belongs to the group of cantatas composed for celebrations at the University of Leipzig. This cantata was written in December 1726 in honour of Dr Gottlieb Korte, and for performance at his inaugural lecture as Professor of Jurisprudence. This *dramma per musica* uses the four solo singers as allegorical characters: Fortune (soprano), Gratitude (alto), Diligence (tenor) and Honour (bass). Joyous in character, the cantata is for large forces, depicting 'jubilant notes' and the 'rolling drums' penetrating boom'.

Die Elenden sollen essen, BWV 75

The meek shall eat

Double Violin Concerto, BWV 1043

Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen, BWV 11

Praise God in His kingdoms

Midday

Duke's Hall

Special price: tickets £18 (concessions £14), season discounts available

Book from Monday 6th October 2014:

By telephone 020 7873 7300 and in person (Monday–Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm)

Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Masaaki Suzuki conductor

Rachel Podger leader

Royal Academy of Music and Juilliard School Baroque Orchestra

Performed on period instruments

The first cantata that Bach would perform as the new Thomascantor in Leipzig, 'Die Elenden sollen essen' BWV 75, represents a dramatic statement of intent. Performed on the first Sunday after Trinity in May 1723, the cantata takes the thematic dualism of the Gospel reading (the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus) as its musical inspiration. Bipartite in structure, Bach takes us on a tour de force, with dance-like arias, dense orchestral polyphony, and virtuosic writing for trumpet.

The Concerto for two violins, strings and continuo in D minor, BWV 1043, more commonly known as the 'Bach Double', was composed between 1717 and 1723, whilst Bach was Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold at Anhalt-Köthen. During this time Bach indulged in instrumental forms, also composing the Brandenburg concerti and the solo works for violin and cello. The Double Concerto is strongly modelled on the Vivaldian concerto, and exemplifies Bach's refined contrapuntal style. The outer movements boast textural ingenuity and rhythmic vivacity. However, the jewel of the concerto is the central slow movement: long melodic lines pass between the solo violins with the generosity and intimacy of two friends that finish each other's sentences.

Evidence suggests that 'Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen' BWV 11 was performed on 19th May 1735, on the Feast of Ascension. This would mean that the cantata, known as the Ascension Oratorio, was written only a few months after the completion of the enormous Christmas Oratorio. And like its Christmas counterpart, the cantata BWV 11 opens with a chorus in dazzling D major with full festive orchestra including three trumpets, timpani, two flutes, two oboes, strings and continuo. The work closely follows the shape of the parts of the Christmas Oratorio, with large choruses framing a central section containing biblical narrative set in aria, recitative and chorale form.

This concert follows performances in New York and at the Boston Early Music and Leipzig Bach Festival.



Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens, BWV 148

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name

Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen!, BWV 51

Rejoice unto God in all lands!

Christ lag in Todesbanden, BWV 4

Christ lay in the bonds of death

Midday

Duke's Hall

Tickets £13 (concessions £10), season discounts available

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Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director

Margaret Faultless leader

Performed on period instruments

For such an 'ordinary' Sunday (the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity), 'Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seines Namens' BWV 148 uses a gloriously festive ensemble, including trumpet and three oboes. The text is an adaptation of Picander's 1725 text *Weg, ihr irdischen Geschäfte* (Away, you worldly affairs!). However, evidence points to a performance of 19th September 1723, suggesting that Bach perhaps used an unpublished version of the poem. The entire cantata exudes warmth and joyfulness, in particular, the tenor aria with a violin obligato part of lively and dancing semiquavers.

The original performing circumstances of 'Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen' BWV 51 are obscure; indeed, Bach at one point stated on the performing parts of the cantata that it was 'in ogni tempo' ('at any time'). However, the brilliantly festive trumpet writing and soprano part of extreme virtuosity and range — exceeding all Bach's Leipzig church music in technical demands — point to a celebratory occasion such as a royal birthday at the court of Weißenfels. The climactic 'Alleluia' finale can be seen as not only a summation of praise and thanksgiving, but also the baroque compositional principles of concerto, monody, variation, chorale and fugue.

One of the few surviving works written by Bach for Easter Sunday, 'Christ lag in Todesbanden' BWV 4 is also considered one of his earliest cantatas. The text is wholly comprised of Martin Luther's Easter hymn of 1524, which is set in chorale variation form. Such simplicity of form allows Bach's exquisite word-setting to shine through: throughout are examples of vivid textures and figurations that bring the text to life.



O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad, BWV 165

O sacred spring of water and the spirit

Ich bin ein guter Hirt, BWV 85

I am the good shepherd

Mass in G, BWV 236

**Midday
Duke's Hall**

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Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director
Margaret Fautless leader

Performed on period instruments

'O heiliges Geist- und Wasserbad' BWV 165 is thought to have been composed in Weimar for 16th June 1715; however, it was also revived during Bach's first year in Leipzig. The text deals with a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus which describes that humans are born in sin through Adam's fall, but are reborn through baptism. Bach's musical construction indulges in the biblical symbolism; for example, fugal techniques delineate the 'inversion' of spiritual rebirth, and the obligato violin weave the *moto perpetuo* slithering of the 'serpent of salvation'.

Composed for performance on 15th April 1725, 'Ich bin ein guter Hirt' BWV 85 follows the Sunday Gospel of John 10:12–16 closely. But despite the image of the 'good shepherd', the cantata does not enter the mood of the pastorale until the concluding aria for tenor and strings in triple compound metre. Generally considered one of the most vividly impressive arias in Bach's oeuvre, the setting of Jesus' crucifixion is intensely woven to the shepherd that gives up his life for his sheep.

'A wonderful sense of
binding intimacy... surely
a glimpse of heaven'
Evening Standard

The Mass in G BWV 236 is one of four masses that Bach wrote between 1737 and 1748 (with the fifth Mass in C minor only existing as a fragment). All four are parody works: they are based on and constructed from pre-existing material. In this mass, Bach uses music from at least six of his earlier cantatas. Opening with a meditative fugue, Bach references traditions of the renaissance motet and highly polyphonic mass. The work's symmetrical Gloria frames a duet for soprano and alto which is just as much a conversation with the violins and continuo: arpeggiac lines weave through the texture as voices and instruments answer one another.



Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, BWV 91

All praise to Thee, Jesus Christ

Ich habe meine Zuversicht, BWV 188

I have put my trust

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben, BWV 248iv

With thanks and praise prostrate yourselves

(Christmas Oratorio part iv)

**Midday
Duke's Hall**

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Online at www.ram.ac.uk/bach

Iain Ledingham director
Rachel Podger leader

Performed on period instruments

Performed on Christmas Day in 1724, 'Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ' BWV 91 employs a typically festive ensemble to bring the text of Luther's hymn (1524) vividly to life. Bach creates the sense of competing choirs of sound: the vocal choir is juxtaposed against the bodies of strings, brass and wind. Sparkling scalic passages convey the rejoicing of angels and contrapuntal writing recreates the atmosphere of celebration. A duet for soprano and alto indulges in melodic and textural contrasts to delineate the visual imagery and theological themes of the Nativity.

Like many of Bach's cantatas from the 1728–29 cycle, the autograph manuscript of 'Ich habe meine Zuversicht' BWV 188 suffered the historical fate of being cut up into numerous sections and distributed to many; its fragments are now located in various libraries across the world. As a result, parts of the score are missing, and have been completed from later manuscript sources. The text by Picander emphasises the need for trust in God. Bach's setting creates an air of simplicity through dance rhythms and full-textured string writing.

In eighteenth-century Leipzig, New Year's Day was celebrated as the Feast of the Circumcision. Bach's commemoration of this feast with 'Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben' BWV 248, part iv stands out from the other five parts of the Christmas Oratorio; indeed, Craig Smith deems the cantata the 'most perfect' of the six. Completed around the Christmastime of 1734, the work is expectedly festive. However, Bach sets part iv out from the rest of the Oratorio: the opening chorus in F major sounds otherworldly in contrast to the bright D major of the preceding parts. Whilst Bach relies on pre-composed music for much of the cantata's material, in particular BWV 213, its resetting here is truly sublime. An 'echo' aria for soprano and oboe indulges in pure simplicity, whilst the tenor aria with violin duet soars with rhythmic and melodic vibrancy.

Sundays in Marylebone

The Academy's building is just across Marylebone Road from Marylebone Village.

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www.marylebonevillage.com



'Preparing and performing the Bach Cantatas is one of the great privileges of being a musician. Doing so with the Academy's talented and passionate young musicians enriches the experience still further. This is an extraordinary project — a great gift to our cultural well-being'

Margaret Faultless, Head of Historical Performance

How to Book

12/13

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Each cantata concert begins at midday and lasts around one hour. The Academy's restaurant will be open for light refreshments from 10.30am until the start of each concert.

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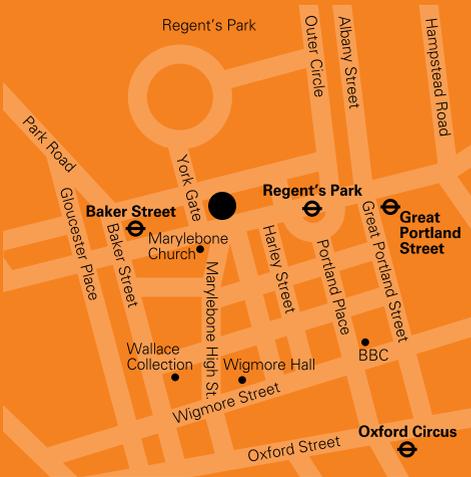
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