

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685 -1750
Cantatas Vol 16: New York

CD 77:29 For the Sunday after Christmas

Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied BWV 225
Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn BWV 152
Das neugeborne Kindelein BWV 122
Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende BWV 28
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied! BWV 190
(For New Year's Day)

Katharine Fuge, Gillian Keith, Joanne Lunn sopranos
Daniel Taylor *alto*, James Gilchrist tenor
Peter Harvey bass

The Monteverdi Choir
The English Baroque Soloists
John Eliot Gardiner

Live recording from the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage
St Bartholomew's, New York, 31 December 2000

JEG

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SDG 137

Bach Cantatas Gardiner

16

Bach Cantatas
Gardiner



The Bach Cantata Pilgrimage

On Christmas Day 1999 a unique celebration of the new Millennium began in the Herderkirche in Weimar, Germany: the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner set out to perform all Johann Sebastian Bach's surviving church cantatas in the course of the year 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach's death.

The cantatas were performed on the liturgical feasts for which they were composed, in a year-long musical pilgrimage encompassing some of the most beautiful churches throughout Europe (including many where Bach himself performed) and culminating in three concerts in New York over the Christmas festivities at the end of the millennial year. These recordings were made during the course of the Pilgrimage.



Bach Cantatas
Gardiner



Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
Cantatas Vol 16: New York

CD 77:29 For the Sunday after Christmas

12:59 Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied bww 225

1 (12:59) Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied

18:01 Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn bww 152

2 (3:18) 1. Sinfonia

3 (2:47) 2. *Aria: Bass* Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn

4 (1:51) 3. *Recitativo: Bass* Der Heiland ist gesetzt

5 (4:33) 4. *Aria: Sopran* Stein, der über alle Schätze

6 (1:17) 5. *Recitativo: Bass* Es ärgre sich die kluge Welt

7 (4:14) 6. *Duetto: Soprano, Bass* Wie soll ich dich, Liebster der Seelen, umfassen?

14:56 Das neugeborne Kindelein bww 122

8 (3:46) 1. *Coro (Chorale)* Das neugeborne Kindelein

9 (5:07) 2. *Aria: Bass* O Menschen, die ihr täglich sündigt

10 (1:22) 3. *Recitativo: Sopran* Die Engel, welche sich zuvor

11 (2:36) 4. *Terzetto con Choral* Ist Gott versöhnt und unser Freund

12 (1:23) 5. *Recitativo: Bass* Dies ist ein Tag

13 (0:40) 6. *Choral* Es bringt das rechte Jubeljahr

14:05 Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende bww 28

14 (3:57) 1. *Aria: Sopran* Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende

15 (4:25) 2. *Coro (Chorale)* Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren

16 (1:19) 3. *Recitativo ed Arioso: Bass* So spricht der Herr

17 (1:07) 4. *Recitativo: Tenor* Gott ist ein Quell

18 (2:20) 5. *Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor* Gott hat uns im heurigen Jahre gesegnet

19 (0:56) 6. *Choral* All solch dein Güt wir preisen

16:53 Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied! bww 190

(For New Year's Day)

20 (4:26) 1. *Coro* Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!

21 (1:24) 2. *Choral e Recitativo: Bass, Tenor, Alt* Herr Gott, dich loben wir

22 (2:32) 3. *Aria: Alt* Lobe, Zion, deinen Gott

23 (1:22) 4. *Recitativo: Bass* Es wünsche sich die Welt

24 (3:29) 5. *Aria (Duetto): Tenor, Bass* Jesus soll mein alles sein

25 (1:29) 6. *Recitativo: Tenor* Nun, Jesus gebe

26 (2:09) 7. *Choral* Laß uns das Jahr vollbringen



Introduction
John Eliot Gardiner

When we embarked on the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage in Weimar on Christmas Day 1999 we had no real sense of how the project would turn out. There were no precedents, no earlier attempts to perform all Bach's surviving church cantatas on the appointed feast day and all within a single year, for us to draw on or to guide us. Just as in planning to scale a mountain or cross an ocean, you can make meticulous provision, calculate your route and get all the equipment in order, in the end you have to deal with whatever the elements – both human and physical – throw at you at any given moment.

With weekly preparations leading to the performance of these extraordinary works, a working rhythm we sustained throughout a whole year, our approach was influenced by several factors: time (never enough), geography (the initial retracing of Bach's footsteps in Thuringia and Saxony), architecture (the churches both great and small where we performed), the impact of one week's music on the next and on the different permutations of players and singers joining and rejoining the pilgrimage, and, inevitably, the hazards of weather, travel and fatigue. Compromises were sometimes needed to accommodate the quirks of the liturgical year (Easter falling exceptionally late in 2000 meant that we ran out of liturgical slots for the late Trinity season cantatas, so that they needed to be redistributed among other programmes). Then to fit into a single evening cantatas for the same day composed by Bach over a forty-year

span meant deciding on a single pitch (A = 415) for each programme, so that the early Weimar cantatas written at high organ pitch needed to be performed in the transposed version Bach adopted for their revival, real or putative, in Leipzig. Although we had commissioned a new edition of the cantatas by Reinhold Kubik, incorporating the latest source findings, we were still left with many practical decisions to make over instrumentation, pitch, bass figuration, voice types, underlay and so on. Nor did we have the luxury of repeated performances in which to try out various solutions: at the end of each feast-day we had to put the outgoing trio or quartet of cantatas to the back of our minds and move on to the next clutch – which came at us thick and fast at peak periods such as Whitsun, Christmas and Easter.

The recordings which make up this series were a corollary of the concerts, not their *raison d'être*. They are a faithful document of the pilgrimage, though never intended to be a definitive stylistic or musicological statement. Each of the concerts which we recorded was preceded by a 'take' of the final rehearsal in the empty church as a safety net against outside noise, loud coughs, accidents or meteorological disturbance during the performance. But the music on these recordings is very much 'live' in the sense that it is a true reflection of what happened on the night, of how the performers reacted to the music (often brand new to them), and of how the church locations and the audiences affected our response. This series is a tribute to the astonishing musicality and talent of all the performers who took part, as well as, of course, to the genius of J.S.Bach.



St Bartholomew's, New York
Manhattan was magical in the first serious snowfall it had experienced in five years. It was New Year's Eve and the festively lit trees in Park Avenue were weighed down with snow. Bach's great double-choir motet *Singet dem Herrn* (BWV 225), with which we began our 59th and final programme of the pilgrimage, refers to the cutting wind which can wither grass and cut off life, and the temperature outside the church had fallen to minus 10 degrees. But then this is the time of year when vegetative growth habitually comes to a standstill. There is a direct parallel here in the way religious (and not just Christian) belief sees this darkest moment of mid-winter as a period of suspended animation and so an auspicious time to reflect on the fundamental mysteries of existence.

Bach captures that mood most poignantly in the contemplative middle section of his motet. The atmosphere in St Bart's was exceptional, the packed audience rapt and mercifully cough-free. The mood of the choir and orchestra was a strange mixture of fragility and elation, as though the huge effort of reaching the finishing post had brought all the pent-up emotion to the surface. It found release in the joyous, spirited singing of the outer sections of *Singet dem Herrn* with strong emphasis on 'ein NEUES Lied'. The engagement, zest and sense of complicity amongst both the singers and players was palpable, a climax to a year-long venture in which new friendships had been formed and cemented through collective experience. Edward Said said to me afterwards that the performance of the motet was for him the high point of the evening.

For others, though, it may have been the first cantata we performed, BWV 152 *Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn*. It really is a minor miracle, this intimate chamber piece for just two singers (soprano and bass) and six instruments (recorder, oboe, viola d'amore and viola da gamba, with cello and organ continuo), to which we added a seventh (a harpsichord) in the final movements. The Lutheran liturgy for the Sunday after Christmas distances itself from the mood of the incarnation and anticipates Christ's coming Passion, crucifixion and death. Salomo Franck's libretto is based on the contrast of opposites: it focuses on the image of the stone, the cornerstone of faith set by God in Jesus' incarnation, but also the stumbling block to human inclination. Bach's setting makes much play of this duality, humanity's initial fall and the need for spiritual

abatement on the one hand, the triumph of faith and the soul's attainment of the crown as the terminus of the 'Glaubensbahn' on the other. Right from the off, in the four slow introductory bars leading to one of the most spirited and purely instrumental of fugues (a rarity in Bach's cantatas), one senses Bach's purpose in pitting four such distinctive instruments against each other and the pleasure he takes in the mixing and blending of colours. All his youthful fantasy, his eagerness to experiment, as well as an already formidable command of counterpoint, are brought into play here. Bach shapes his cantata as a spiritual and musical journey. First, we are urged by the bass soloist to step onto the path of faith (No.2); then along the way, either side of the soprano's aria which venerates the stone of faith (No.4), we are given stern admonitions, a warning of the fate of the 'wicked world' as it 'stumbles over it into hell' (No.3), and a denunciation of worldly wisdom (No.5). In the face of faith, reason has no persuasive power or strength. The heart needs to turn towards holy unity, symbolised by Bach in the convergence of his four chosen instruments as a foil to the dialogue between Jesus and the Soul.

Achieving a convincing balance between the forward-moving, gigue-like melody of the four instruments and the space needed by the vocal lines to encompass the text is just one of the interpretative challenges of this intriguing cantata, a gem along with those other precious survivors of Bach's later Weimar years (1714-17). Yet who really knew these new works in Bach's day outside the immediate court circle? To his peers and contemporaries he was recognised primarily as a virtuoso organist and

then as a composer of instrumental music. *What* were they missing, and how many other vocal works from these years have been lost to us – perhaps more than 50%? The most likely explanation is that they were impounded by Weimar's cantankerous duke when he locked the door to the organ loft where Bach kept his scores, and threw him into jail a month before his departure.

BWV 122 *Das neugeborne Kindelein*, a chorale cantata composed in 1724 as part of Bach's second mini-Christmas cycle for Leipzig, is surely about as close as he ever got to the traditional Christmas carol-like image of the infant Jesus. And yet the anonymous librettist bypasses the set readings for the day, and in following closely to a hymn by Cyriakus Schneeggass (1597) sticks to an old tradition which conflates the celebrations for Christmas and the New Year. Bach opens with the gentlest imaginable chorale fantasia, a lyrical tune by Melchior Vulpius, the hymn text just four lines long, divided by a delicate *ritornello* for three oboes and strings in the form of a pastoral lullaby, yet very different from the ones we are used to in Part II of the *Christmas Oratorio*. What this does is to make the eruption of the cello continuo and organ all the more dramatic as a prelude to the bass singer's exhortation, 'Mortals, you who sin each day, you should share the angels' gladness'. Where the low pitch and dark tone colour of the bass soloist in dialogue with the *basso continuo* emphasises a mortal, earthly perspective, the soprano (whose first vocal entry mirrors that of the bass) then describes that of the angels, initially recoiling from accursed humanity. But at her words 'erfüllen nun die Luft' ('now throng the air'), three recorders, the highest

instruments available to Bach, begin to harmonise Vulpus's tune. Bach's purpose is clear: to show that the opposing realms of men and angels can and will now be reconciled. It put me in mind of Botticelli's 'Mystic Nativity' in London's National Gallery, surely one of his most inspired compositions. There, right in the foreground, are angels embracing men. Just a few years before Botticelli put brush to this canvas in 1500, Savonarola had berated the Florentines very much like Bach's bass soloist: 'Repent of what you have done, repent of your sins, distance yourself from the Demon, let yourself be won over by the angels, the only ones who can bring you to the Saviour'. It may be that Botticelli's painting was intended to serve as an illustration of Savonarola's sermon, just as Bach's cantata could be interpreted as an aural representation of Botticelli's painting. The Schneegass hymn returns as the filling in the sandwich of the following trio: soprano and tenor singing the text of the 'aria', the altos that of the chorale doubled at the octave by violins and violas. 'This is a day the Lord Himself has made' declares the bass (No.5), rousing the choir to celebrate 'the true year of jubilation... now is the time to SING!'.

A similar injunction to render thanks to God for all the good things experienced in the course of the year lies at the heart of the cantata Bach composed a year later as part of his third Leipzig cycle: BWV 28 **Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende**, a fitting title to sum up the parallel sense of loss and fulfilment, relief and regret within the group at the very end of a year-long life-changing experience. The cantata begins as a spirited concerto-like movement with an antiphonal deployment of oboes and upper strings providing a

backcloth to the soprano's dance-like call for a song of thanks. That song of thanks ('Danklied') is none other than the motet 'Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren', which I had first learnt as a seven-year-old treble at a German summer school directed by a once-famous German choral conductor, Georg Götsch, then very frail. We sang it every day for a week, and I think I was profoundly bored; but half a century later I found myself galvanised by its *stile antico* sobriety and complexity, its buried treasures and subtleties, especially those that occur in its last fifty bars, in which you sense some immense cosmic struggle being played out. I fear the choir, too, may have been bored during rehearsal; but in performance, with the vocal lines doubled by strings, oboes, cornetto and sackbuts, they rose to the occasion in this penultimate *Te Deum laudamus* of the Pilgrimage. I found it immensely stirring. After that great chorus the remaining movements inevitably come as a bit of an anticlimax. Fine though the tenor *accompagnato* (No.4) and imitative duet for alto and tenor (No.5) undoubtedly are, it is the concluding chorale which makes the strongest impression. Paul Eber's New Year hymn 'Helft mir Gotts Güte preisen' has cropped up several times in the course of the year, but never so powerfully or so movingly as in Bach's harmonisation of this prayer for protection and sustenance in the year to come.

In many ways it felt appropriate to be ending our Pilgrimage here in New York in the snow and on the cusp of the turning year. Anywhere in Germany it might have felt repetitive, inviting comparison with Weimar from where we had set out the previous Christmas. Anywhere in Britain people might have

been inclined to sit at home around the Christmas tree or in front of the telly. Here, on the other hand, was a new audience won over for Bach's prodigious cantatas, and a challenge met by this hand-picked, travel-hardened team of pilgrims, who through an intensive, year-long exposure to this music had made such impressive individual and collective strides. The music we had spent a year grappling with is technically challenging: it is often a high-wire act demanding phenomenal precision, flexibility and virtuosity, as well as a responsiveness to your fellow musicians. It requires you to soak yourself in the idiom, and you need 'Bach miles' on the clock before you feel able to interpret these cantatas with relative ease and full conviction.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the final cantata of the tour. BWV 190 **Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied!**, composed for New Year's Day 1724, has come down to us in fragmentary form, at least as regards its first two movements, of which only the voice lines and the two violin parts have survived. All the remaining orchestral parts have to be reconstructed. Various attempts have been proposed and printed, none of them wholly convincing and some not very idiomatic. At least it is possible to extrapolate Bach's intended instrumentation for the opening movement from the extant scoring of the final chorale. Everyone got to work, our two brilliant keyboard players, Howard Moody and Silas Standage, taking the lead filling in the missing figured bass lines with minimal fuss. Right up to the last moment in rehearsal we were adjusting new instrumental lines for the three oboes, three trumpets and timpani. With more time and skill we might have made a better job of it, but

when it came to the performance all the singers and players seemed intent on capturing the infectious joy and festiveness of this ebullient New Year piece. And of course the psalm text being almost identical to that of the motet we had sung at the start of the programme gave it added spice. Between the psalm verses Bach inserts two lines from Luther's vernacular version of the *Te Deum* (1529). These he assigns to the traditional liturgical plainchant delivered in long notes by the choir in octaves, a technique of musical relief of which he was a master – and which is hugely imposing in performance.

Luther's clauses return, this time harmonised, in the litany-like second movement with 'troped' recitative interpolations for the three lower soloists. There is a dance-like aria in triple time for alto (No.3), to which we added the three oboes to double the homophonic string lines prompted by the plausibly secular origin of this fandango-like movement. But the pick of all the movements is the tender duet for tenor and bass 'Jesus soll mein Alles sein' ('Jesus shall be my all'). Here again there is a problem: the sources offer no clue as to what instrument Bach intended for the ravishing obbligato, one which shares only the opening phrase, heard no less than six times, with the voice parts; for the rest it is made up of chains of wistful, gestural arabesques bouncing off a silent main beat. We experimented with oboe d'amore and then violin and found that it lay uncomfortably low for both instruments. Then remembering the viola d'amore called for in BWV 152, I asked Katherine McGillivray whether she would be willing to try it out. At first she demurred: her instrument was tuned to A=392 and it would entail either playing in E flat major

(with no open strings) or of tuning up. But when it came to the concert, and accompanied by her sister Alison on cello, Katherine brought just the right meditative and elegiac mood to this touching duet, sung with amazing restraint and control by James Gilchrist and Peter Harvey. In the end I had no hesitation in choosing this movement as our (second) encore. So the very last notes of the Cantata Pilgrimage, with everyone choked and fighting back the tears, were of Katherine's hauntingly beautiful viola d'amore.

With the Gospel reading (Luke 2:21) for New Year's Day focussing on the circumcision and naming of Jesus, every line of this duet begins with the word 'Jesus'. Bach's intent is clear: to call attention to the believer's eschatological hopes of ending his life, as he begins and ends the year, with the name 'Jesus' on his lips. Just as he does in many of his cantatas written for other pivotal moments in the church year – Annunciation (BWV 1), Easter (BWV 31) and the beginning (BWV 75, 76 and 20) and ending (BWV 60 and 70) of the Trinity season – Bach gives particular emphasis, here at the turning of the year, to the cyclic course of life, the inevitable progression from beginning to end. In the duet this is what lies behind the reference to Christ's forthcoming Passion, 'Jesus helps me through His blood', a shadow passing across the music and clearing only for the last line, 'Jesus makes my ending good'.

As Eric Chafe has noted, acceptance of the cycle of life and death was and is the most natural and inevitable of human responses to existence. By beginning and ending his New Year cantata in the key of D major Bach seizes on the most readily

audible symbol to establish a solid framework against which the listener can measure the bumpy happenings and disturbances of the year gone by and the one about to begin. No doubt this was also his reason (as with two of his other New Year's Day cantatas) for ending with a verse of Johannes Herman's chorale, 'Jesu, nun sei gepreiset'. With its fourteen-line strophes this hymn is the perfect symbol of the span from Alpha to Omega, the journey from beginning to end and its resumption at the moment of the year's turning.

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From a journal written in the course of the
Bach Cantata Pilgrimage

For the Sunday after Christmas Day

Epistle Galatians 4:1-7

Gospel Luke 2:33-40

BWV 225

Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied (1727)

- 1** Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, die Gemeinde der Heiligen sollen ihn loben. Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat. Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich über ihrem Könige, sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihen; mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.

Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet
Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
über seine junge Kinderlein,
so tut der Herr uns allen,
so wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.
Er kennt das arm Gemächte,
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.

BWV 225

Motet: Sing unto the Lord a new song

- Sing unto the Lord a new song; let the congregation of saints praise Him. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him, and let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.

Just as a father has mercy –
O God, continue to sustain us –
on his little children,
so the Lord does unto us all,
if we fear Him with pure childlike awe.
He knows this feeble race,
God knows we are but dust,
for without Thee nothing is achieved
with all our activity.

Gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
ein Blum und fallend Laub.
Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
so ist es nicht mehr da,
drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
so wirst du's ferner machen.
Also der Mensch vergehet,
sein End, das ist ihm nah.
Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.

Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten, lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit! Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn. Halleluja!

Text: Psalm 149:1-3; Psalm 150:2,6; Johann Gramann

BWV 152

Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn (1714)

- 2** **1. Sinfonia**
- 3** **2. Aria: Bass**
Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn,
Gott hat den Stein geleet,
der Zion hält und trägt,
Mensch, stoße dich nicht dran!
Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn!
- 4** **3. Recitativo: Bass**
Der Heiland ist gesetzt
in Israel zum Fall und Auferstehen.

We are like grass from the rake,
a flower and falling leaves:
the wind has only to blow over it
and it is no longer there.
Therefore be our shield and light,
and if our hope does not deceive us,
Thou shalt continue to be so.
So man too passes,
his end is always near.
Happy is he who, steadfastly and firmly,
relies on Thee and on Thy benevolence.

Praise the Lord in His mighty acts, praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Alleluia!

BWV 152

Tread the path of faith

- 1. Sinfonia**
- 2. Aria**
Tread the path of faith,
God has laid the stone
which holds and bears up Zion,
man, do not stumble on it!
Tread the path of faith!
- 3. Recitative**
The Saviour has been placed in Israel
for the fall and resurrection.

Der edle Stein ist sonder Schuld,
wenn sich die böse Welt
so hart an ihm verletzt,
ja, über ihn zur Höllen fällt,
weil sie boshaftig an ihn rennet
und Gottes Huld
und Gnade nicht erkennt!
Doch selig ist
ein auserwählter Christ,
der seinen Glaubensgrund auf diesen Eckstein leget,
weil er dadurch Heil und Erlösung findet.

5 4. Aria: Sopran

Stein, der über alle Schätze,
hilf, dass ich zu aller Zeit
durch den Glauben auf dich setze
meinen Grund der Seligkeit
und mich nicht an dir verletze,
Stein, der über alle Schätze!

6 5. Recitativo: Bass

Es ärgre sich die kluge Welt,
dass Gottes Sohn
verlässt den hohen Ehrenthron,
dass er in Fleisch und Blut sich kleidet
und in der Menschheit leidet.
Die größte Weisheit dieser Erden
muss vor des Höchsten Rat
zur größten Torheit werden.
Was Gott beschlossen hat,
kann die Vernunft doch nicht ergründen;
die blinde Leiterin verführt die geistlich Blinden.

The precious stone is not at fault,
even if the wicked world
sorely wounds itself on it,
yea, stumbles over it into hell,
because it spitefully collides with it,
and does not acknowledge
God's grace and mercy!
But blessed is
a chosen Christian
who lays his faith's foundation on this cornerstone,
for thus he finds salvation and redemption.

4. Aria

Stone, surpassing every treasure,
grant that I may always
through my faith build on you
my foundation for supreme happiness,
and not wound myself on you,
stone, surpassing every treasure!

5. Recitative

May the clever world be vexed
that the Son of God
leaves the lofty throne of honour
and clothes Himself in flesh and blood
and suffers as a mortal.
The greatest wisdom on earth
becomes before the will of God
the greatest folly.
What God has decreed,
reason cannot fathom;
the blind leader leads astray the blind in spirit.

7 6. Aria (Duetto): Soprano, Bass

Seele, Jesus

Seele

Wie soll ich dich, Liebster der Seelen, umfassen?

Jesus

Du musst dich verleugnen und alles verlassen!

Seele

Wie soll ich erkennen das ewige Licht?

Jesus

Erkenne mich gläubig und ärgre dich nicht!

Seele

Komm, lehre mich, Heiland, die Erde verschmähen!

Jesus

Komm, Seele, durch Leiden zur Freude zu gehen!

Seele

Ach, ziehe mich, Liebster, so folg ich dir nach!

Jesus

Dir schenk ich die Krone nach Trübsal und Schmach.

Text: Salomo Franck

BWV 122

Das neugeborne Kindelein (1724)

8 1. Coro (Chorale)

Das neugeborne Kindelein,
das herzeliebe Jesulein
bringt abermal ein neues Jahr
der auserwählten Christenschar.

6. Duet

Soul, Jesus

Soul

How shall I, dearest of souls, embrace Thee?

Jesus

You must deny yourself and abandon all!

Soul

How shall I recognise eternal life?

Jesus

Recognise me with faith and be not angered!

Soul

Come, teach me, Saviour, to disdain the earth!

Jesus

Come, soul, and walk through suffering to joy!

Soul

Ah, draw me on, Beloved, and I shall follow after!

Jesus

I'll give you the crown after grief and shame.

BWV 122

The newborn infant child

1. Chorus (Chorale)

The newborn infant child,
the dearly-beloved little Jesus
brings once more a New Year
to the chosen Christian throng.

9 2. Aria: Bass

O Menschen, die ihr täglich sündigt,
ihr sollt der Engel Freude sein.
Ihr jubilierendes Geschrei,
dass Gott mit euch versöhnet sei,
hat euch den süßen Trost verkündigt.

10 3. Recitativo: Sopran

Die Engel, welche sich zuvor
vor euch als vor Verfluchten scheuen,
erfüllen nun die Luft im höhern Chor,
um über euer Heil sich zu erfreuen.
Gott, so euch aus dem Paradies
aus englischer Gemeinschaft stieß,
lässt euch nun wiederum auf Erden
durch seine Gegenwart vollkommen selig werden:
So danket nun mit vollem Munde
vor die gewünschte Zeit im neuen Bunde.

11 4. Terzetto: Sopran, Alt, Tenor con Choral: Alt

Ist Gott versöhnt und unser Freund,
O wohl uns, die wir an ihn glauben,
was kann uns tun der arge Feind?
sein Grimm kann unsern Trost nicht rauben;
Trotz Teufel und der Höllen Pfort,
ihr Wüten wird sie wenig nützen,
das Jesulein ist unser Hort.
Gott ist mit uns und will uns schützen.

12 5. Recitativo: Bass

Dies ist ein Tag, den selbst der Herr gemacht,
der seinen Sohn in diese Welt gebracht.
O sel'ge Zeit, die nun erfüllt!

2. Aria

O mortals, you who sin each day,
you should share the angels' gladness.
Their joyful shouts
that God is reconciled with you
have proclaimed to you sweet comfort.

3. Recitative with Instrumental Chorale

The angels who have till now
shrunk from you as though you were accursed,
now throng the air in a lofty choir
to rejoice at your salvation.
God, who drove you out of Paradise,
you and the angelic throng,
allows you once more on earth
to achieve perfect blessedness through His presence:
so now give thanks with hearty voices
for this long-awaited new order.

4. Trio with Chorale

If God is appeased and is our friend
How blessed are we who believe in Him,
how can the cruel foe harm us?
his rage cannot deprive us of our comfort;
Despite the devil and the gate of hell,
their fury will avail them little,
the infant Jesus is our refuge.
God is with us and will protect us.

5. Recitative

This is a day the Lord Himself has made,
who brought His Son into the world.
O blessed moment, now fulfilled!

O gläubigs Warten, das nunmehr gestillt!
O Glaube, der sein Ende sieht!
O Liebe, die Gott zu sich zieht!
O Freude, so durch die Trübsal dringt
und Gott der Lippen Opfer bringt!

13 6. Choral

Es bringt das rechte Jubeljahr,
was trauern wir denn immerdar?
Frisch auf! itzt ist es Singenszeit,
das Jesulein wend't alles Leid.

Text: Cyriakus Schneegaß (1,4,6); anon. (2-5)

BWV 28

Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende (1725)

14 1. Aria: Sopran

Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende,
das neue rücket schon heran.
Gedenke, meine Seele, dran,
wie viel dir deines Gottes Hände
im alten Jahre Guts getan!
Stimm ihm ein frohes Danklied an;
so wird er ferner dein gedenken
und mehr zum neuen Jahre schenken.

15 2. Coro (Chorale)

Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren,
was in mir ist, den Namen sein!
Sein Wohltat tut er mehren,
vergiss es nicht, o Herze mein!

O faithful waiting, now at an end!
O belief, that sees its goal!
O love, that draws God to itself!
O joy, that breaks through sorrow
and brings our lips' offering to God!

6. Chorale

It brings this true year of jubilation,
so why do we continue to mourn?
Quick, rise! Now is the time to sing;
the infant Jesus wards off all woe.

BWV 28

Praise God! The year now draws to a close

1. Aria

Praise God! The year now draws to a close,
the New Year is approaching.
Consider this, O my soul,
the good that God's hands wrought you
in the year now past!
Strike up for Him a joyous song of thanks,
and He will continue to think of you
and grant you more in this New Year.

2. Chorus (Chorale)

Now praise, my soul, the Lord,
let all in me now praise His name!
His goodness he increases,
forget it not, O heart of mine!

Hat dir dein Sünd vergeben
und heilt dein Schwachheit groß,
errett' dein armes Leben,
nimmt dich in seinen Schoß.
Mit reichem Trost beschüttet,
verjüngt, dem Adler gleich.
Der Kön'g schafft Recht, behütet,
die leid'n in seinem Reich.

16 3. Recitativo ed Arioso: Bass

So spricht der Herr: Es soll mir eine Lust sein, dass
ich ihnen Gutes tun soll, und ich will sie in diesem
Lande pflanzen treulich, von ganzem Herzen und
von ganzer Seele.

17 4. Recitativo: Tenor

Gott ist ein Quell, wo lauter Güte fließt;
Gott ist ein Licht, wo lauter Gnade scheint;
Gott ist ein Schatz, der lauter Segen heißt;
Gott ist ein Herr, der's treu und herzlich meinet.
Wer ihn im Glauben liebt, in Liebe kindlich ehrt,
sein Wort von Herzen hört
und sich von bösen Wegen kehrt,
dem gibt er sich mit allen Gaben.
Wer Gott hat, der muss alles haben.

18 5. Aria (Duetto): Alt, Tenor

Gott hat uns im heurigen Jahre gesegnet,
dass Wohltun und Wohlsein einander beegnet.
Wir loben ihn herzlich und bitten darneben,
er woll' auch ein glückliches neues Jahr geben.
Wir hoffen's von seiner beharrlichen Güte
und preisen's im Voraus mit dankbar'm Gemüte.

Your sins He has forgiven you,
He heals your great weakness,
saves your wretched life,
takes you in His embrace.
He pours His blessings on you,
making you young, like the eagle.
The King is just, and He protects
those who suffer in His realm.

3. Recitative and Arioso

Thus saith the Lord: I will rejoice over them to do
them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly
with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

4. Recitative

God is a spring, where naught but kindness flows;
God is a light, where naught but mercy shines;
God is a treasure, which naught but blessing gives;
God is a Lord with true and kind intent.
Who loves Him in faith, honours Him in childlike love,
takes His word to heart
and turns from the path of evil,
to him He gives Himself abundantly.
He who has God has everything.

5. Aria (Duet)

God has blessed us in the past year,
with good deeds and prosperity alike.
We praise Him from our hearts, and beseech Him
that He may also grant us a happy New Year.
We hope for this of His constant goodness
and praise Him already with thankful hearts.

19 6. Choral

All solch dein Güt wir preisen,
Vater ins Himmels Thron,
die du uns tust beweisen
durch Christum, deinen Sohn,
und bitten ferner dich:
Gib uns ein friedsam Jahre,
für allem Leid bewahre
und nähr uns mildiglich.

*Text: Erdmann Neumeister (1, 4, 5);
Johann Gramann (2); Jeremiah 32:41 (3); Paul Eber (6)*

BWV 190

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied! (1724)
(for New Year's Day)

20 1. Coro

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied! Die Gemeinde
der Heiligen soll ihn loben!
Lobet ihn mit Pauken und Reigen, lobet ihn mit
Saiten und Pfeifen!
Herr Gott, dich loben wir!
Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn!
Herr Gott, wir danken dir!
Halleluja!

21 2. Choral e Recitativo: Bass, Tenor, Alt

Herr Gott, dich loben wir,
Bass
Dass du mit diesem neuen Jahr
uns neues Glück und neuen Segen schenkest
und noch in Gnaden an uns denkst.

6. Chorale

We praise Thee for all Thy kindness,
Father on heaven's throne,
that Thou showest us
through Christ, Thy Son,
and we beseech Thee now as well
to grant us a peaceful year,
to protect us from all sorrow
and gently to sustain us.

BWV 190

Sing unto the Lord a new song

1. Chorus

Sing unto the Lord a new song; let the congregation
of saints praise Him. Praise Him with the timbrel
and dance, praise Him with stringed instruments
and organs!
Lord God, we give Thee praise!
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Lord God, we give Thee thanks!
Alleluia!

2. Chorale and Recitative

Lord God, we give Thee praise,
Bass
That Thou with this new year
dost grant us new happiness and blessing,
and still thinkest on us with favour.

Herr Gott, wir danken dir,
Tenor
Dass deine Gütigkeit
in der vergangnen Zeit
das ganze Land und unsre werthe Stadt
vor Teurung, Pestilenz und Krieg behütet hat.
Herr Gott, dich loben wir,

Alt
Denn deine Vätertreu
hat noch kein Ende,
sie wird bei uns noch alle Morgen neu.
Drum falten wir,
barmherz'ger Gott, dafür
in Demut unsre Hände
und sagen lebenslang
mit Mund und Herzen Lob und Dank.
Herr Gott, wir danken dir!

22 3. Aria: Alt

Lobe, Zion, deinen Gott,
lobe deinen Gott mit Freuden,
auf! erzähle dessen Ruhm,
der in seinem Heiligtum
fernerhin dich als dein Hirt
will auf grüner Auen weiden.

23 4. Recitativo: Bass

Es wünsche sich die Welt,
was Fleisch und Blute wohlgefällt;
nur eins, eins bitt ich von dem Herrn,
dies eine hätt ich gern,
dass Jesus, meine Freude,
mein treuer Hirt, mein Trost und Heil
und meiner Seelen bestes Teil,

Lord God, we give Thee thanks,
Tenor
That Thy kindness
in the days now past
has protected the whole land and our worthy city
from famine, pestilence and war.
Lord God, we give Thee praise,

Alto
For Thy paternal faith
is boundless,
it is renewed each morning with us.
And so we fold,
merciful God,
our hands in humility
and praise and give thanks throughout our lives
with mouth and heart.
Lord God, we give Thee thanks!

3. Aria

Praise, O Zion, Thy God,
praise thy God with gladness,
rise! and speak now of His fame,
who shall lead you, as your shepherd,
to graze in His sanctuary
on green pastures.

4. Recitative

Let the world desire
what pleases flesh and blood;
just this, this only I ask of the Lord,
just this one thing would I like,
that Jesus, my joy,
my true shepherd, my comfort and salvation
and my soul's best portion,

mich als ein Schäfflein seiner Weide
auch dieses Jahr mit seinem Schutz umfasse
und nimmermehr aus seinen Armen lasse.
Sein guter Geist,
der mir den Weg zum Leben weist,
Regier und führe mich auf ebner Bahn,
so fang ich dieses Jahr in Jesu Namen an.

24 5. Aria (Duetto): Tenor, Bass

Jesus soll mein Alles sein,
Jesus soll mein Anfang bleiben,
Jesus ist mein Freudenschein,
Jesus will ich mich verschreiben.
Jesus hilft mir durch sein Blut,
Jesus macht mein Ende gut.

25 6. Recitativo: Tenor

Nun, Jesus gebe,
dass mit dem neuen Jahr auch sein Gesalbter lebe;
er segne beides, Stamm und Zweige,
auf dass ihr Glück bis an die Wolken steige.
Es segne Jesus Kirch und Schul,
er segne alle treue Lehrer,
er segne seines Wortes Hörer;
er segne Rat und Richterstuhl;
er gieß auch über jedes Haus
in unsrer Stadt die Segensquellen aus;
er gebe, dass aufs neu
sich Fried und Treu
in unsern Grenzen küssen mögen.
So leben wir dies ganze Jahr im Segen.

might embrace me as a lamb of His pasture
this year too with His protection
and never more let me from His grasp.
May His kindly spirit,
that shows me the way to life,
govern and lead me on an even course,
and I shall begin this year in Jesus' name.

5. Aria (Duet)

Jesus shall be my all,
Jesus shall be my beginning,
Jesus is my light of joy,
to Jesus I would devote myself.
Jesus helps me through His blood,
Jesus makes my ending good.

6. Recitative

Now Jesus grant that with the new year
His anointed one too may flourish;
may He bless both trunk and branches,
that their fortune rise to the clouds.
Let Jesus bless both church and school,
may He bless all true teachers,
may He bless those who hear His teaching;
may He bless both council and court;
may He pour over every house
in our town the springs of blessing;
may He grant that once again
both peace and faith
may embrace within our borders.
Thus we shall live throughout the year in blessing.

26 **7. Choral**

Lass uns das Jahr vollbringen
zu Lob dem Namen dein,
dass wir demselben singen
in der Christen Gemein;
wollst uns das Leben fristen
durch dein allmächtig Hand,
erhalt deine lieben Christen
und unser Vaterland.
Dein Segen zu uns wende,
gib Fried an allem Ende;
gib unverfälscht im Lande
dein seligmachend Wort.
Die Heuchler mach zuschanden
hier und an allem Ort!

*Text: Psalm 149:1, Psalm 150:4,6 (1);
Johannes Herman (7); anon. [?Picander] (2-6)*

7. Chorale

Let us complete this year
in praise of Thy name,
that we may sing to it
in the Christian fold;
extend our life
through Thine almighty hand,
preserve Thy beloved Christians
and our fatherland.
Turn Thy blessing upon us,
give peace to all around,
give throughout the land
Thy pure and joy-inspiring Word.
Destroy all hypocrites
here and everywhere!

*English translations by Richard Stokes
from J. S. Bach: The Complete Cantatas, 1999,
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www.bach-cantatas.com*



This recording is dedicated to the memory of Katherine McGillivray (1970-2006) who was principal viola of the English Baroque Soloists. Katherine played viola d'amore obbligato in Cantata BWV 190, No.5.

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Howard Moody *harpsichord*

Our Christmas in New York was the first time the pilgrimage had moved outside Europe. No ghosts of the master here, unlike the old towns and cities we had played where Bach himself had lived and worked. The snow and glitz provided a relaxing antidote to the depth and intensity of our music making. I was travelling with my wife and two very young children, and the practical implications were a constant reminder of Bach's own domestic situation, with numerous children and a job in which he not only played, but wrote the music too! Being surrounded by my own children helped me connect with the images of awe and wonder that pervade the texts of these Christmas Cantatas.

The concerts in New York brought us full circle, back to Bach's Christmas music. It had been a huge musical and physical journey since the first pilgrimage concerts in Weimar exactly a year earlier and for me it had become almost an obsession to be part of as much of the pilgrimage as possible, relishing the unique opportunity to get inside such extraordinary music.

Musically, there was a real sense that by this point in the pilgrimage both orchestra and choir were speaking exactly the same language. It felt as if we were carrying a new-found knowledge and inner experience of Bach's music that was waiting to be shared by audiences. John Eliot's passion for the music, texts and dramatic flow of each cantata had moulded us into a group where the musical ensemble and intention were on a radiant high. As with musicians of Bach's time, who tended only to play contemporary music, we had been given an

opportunity over the year to focus on a single set of stylistic demands, rather than covering the usual span of music from five centuries expected of so many musicians today. Playing keyboard continuo in the middle of this was thrilling, being the only section in the orchestra allowed to improvise freely (as Bach would have done himself) around the textures and feel of the music. The opportunity to be free amidst such structure and discipline is a rare privilege.

A lasting memory of the New York concerts was the exquisite viola d'amore obbligato by Katherine McGillivray in Cantata 190. My ear had got used to Bach's beautiful vocal lines, but at these moments in his cantatas, when voices and instruments become one, something unique happens. As the encoored piece in the final concert, it was a fitting conclusion to a fabulous year of music making.

CD 77:29

For the Sunday after Christmas

1 (12:59)
2-7 (18:01)
8-13 (14:56)
14-19 (14:05)
20-26 (16:53)

Motet: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied BWV 225
Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn BWV 152
Das neugeborne Kindelein BWV 122
Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende BWV 28
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied! BWV 190
(For New Year's Day)

Gillian Keith *soprano* BWV 152, Katharine Fuge *soprano* BWV 122
Joanne Lunn *soprano* BWV 28, Daniel Taylor *alto*
James Gilchrist *tenor*, Peter Harvey *bass*

The Monteverdi Choir
The English Baroque Soloists
John Eliot Gardiner

Live recording from the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage
St Bartholomew's, New York, 31 December 2000

The Monteverdi Choir

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Suzanne Flowers
Katharine Fuge
Joanne Lunn
Gillian Keith
Elin Manahan Thomas
Charlotte Mobbs

Altos

William Towers
Robin Tyson
Frances Jellard
James Burton

Tenors

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Robert Murray
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Basses

Julian Clarkson
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Penelope Spencer
Matthew Truscott
Debbie Diamond

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Violas

Annette Isserlis
Jane Rogers
Katherine McGillivray
Rosemary Nalden

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Alison McGillivray
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Xenia Löffler
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The harpsichord used for the project, made by Andrew Wooderson, and the organ, made by Robin Jennings, were bought and generously made available to the Monteverdi by Sir David and Lady Walker (harpsichord) and Lord and Lady Burns (organ).

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Soli Deo Gloria

Bach Cantatas Gardiner

CD 77:29 Vol 16: St Bartholomew's, New York
For the Sunday after Christmas

BWV 225 / 152 / 122 / 28 / 190

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