Johann Sebastian Bach

Secular cantatas

Vol. 1

The two vocal works by Johann Sebastian Bach on this CD belong to the genre of secular cantatas, an area of Bach's output that – although it cannot be compared in quantitative terms with his substantial œuvre of some 200 sacred cantatas – does not lag behind in artistic quality. Just over twenty such works have survived; to these we may add almost thirty cantatas that can be shown (partly on the evidence of the surviving texts) to have been lost. In all probability, however, the number of lost works is very much higher.

A peculiarity of the surviving secular cantatas is that, almost without exception, they are commissioned or occasional pieces – ordered and written (both text and music) for an outstanding, festive event in family, social, academic or political life, for example a wedding or a tribute to a prince. The cantatas generally reflect their purpose clearly; the texts in particular are entirely tailored to the event in question, and the suitability of the text and music for the specific situation was, according to the generally held view of the time, a wholly desirably and self-evident quality. Such occasional pieces had the aim and the purpose of transcending the perceived solemnity of the moment by reflecting it in art, ennobling it, thrusting greatness upon it, and taking away some of its transience and ephemeral nature.

The tailor-made nature of the text for a specific festive event had the consequence that, unlike with Bach's sacred music, subsequent performances on other occasions were virtually impossible. After the festivities for which it was intended, the music was normally put aside and this often sealed its fate. Many pieces were lost in this way – but luckily not all of them: Bach himself was evidently as keen to preserve his secular works as his religious pieces, and was inclined to use either part or all of them again, in modified form, wherever the possibility arose. Much music that originated in such occasional pieces was thus transferred to his sacred output with a new text, using the so-called 'parody' principle (well-known examples of this can be found in the *Christmas Oratorio*), or indeed to other secular cantatas. In individual cases Bach could re-use entire secular cantatas with only small changes to the text, such as replacing the name of the original dedicatee with a new one. On some other occasions it was sufficient to rework part of the text, which tended to affect the recitatives (which needed to be recomposed) more than the arias, which could remain musically unchanged.

O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit, BWV 210

(O lovely day, o hoped-for time)

Hochzeitskantate, 1738/1741

Text: anon.
Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano, Violone, Continuo, Cembalo

1. Recitativo (Soprano). O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit...
Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)
2. Aria (Soprano). Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder...
Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)
3. Recitativo (Soprano). Doch, haltet ein...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)

4. Aria (Soprano). Ruhet hie, matte Töne...
Oboe d'amore, Violino, Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
5. Recitativo (Soprano). So glaubt man denn, dass die Musik verführe...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
6. Aria (Soprano). Schweigt, ihr Flöten, schweigt, ihr Töne...
Flauto traverso, Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
7. Recitativo (Soprano). Was Luft? was Grab?...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
8. Aria (Soprano). Großer Gönner, dein Vergnügen...
Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)
9. Recitativo (Soprano). Hochteurer Mann, so fahre ferner fort...
Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)
10. Aria (Soprano). Seid beglückt, edle beide...
Flauto traverso, Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)

The cantata *O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit* (*O lovely day, o hoped-for time*; BWV 210) is a perfect example of Bach's re-use of an occasional piece. It appears that he used the piece on no less than five different occasions, in more or less modified form. The existence of the first version, from the period before 1729, cannot be proved from documentary or other sources, but is a hypothetical deduction as a common starting point for the later arrangements, including the parody version of an aria (based on the eighth movement of the cantata), which appeared in 1737 with a new text in a celebratory work, 'Angenehmes Wiederau, freue dich in deinen Auen' (BWV 30a). As evidence of three further applications of the lost original we have a single solo soprano part, containing three versions of the text for a cantata starting with the words 'O angenehme Melodei' ('O sweet and charming melody'; BWV 210a). For a long time the oldest text, in which names and salutations were later rubbed out and altered, posed problems for Bach researchers – until, some ten years ago, a text print came to light that indisputably confirms a performance in Leipzig on 12th January 1729 in honour (and in the presence) of Duke Christian of Sachsen-Weißenfels. It was his name, therefore, that was subsequently erased in the soprano part. The corrections at these points are proof of a performance in honour of the Leipzig Stadtkommandant, Joachim Friedrich Graf von Flemming; as he died on 11th October 1740, this must have taken place at the latest on his 75th birthday, 25th August 1740. Further amendments, and the removal of all salutations to people of noble rank, indicate a later performance paying tribute to unidentified but evidently bourgeois musical benefactors.

In the version heard on this CD – the only one to have survived intact – the cantata appears with all kinds of textual adjustments as wedding music for a couple whose identities are not specified; from the context, we gather that the bridegroom was a 'mighty patron' of music who possessed 'wisdom's treasures', i.e. who had received an academic education (eighth movement) and who apparently was at the start of a promising career (ninth movement).

Bach scholars have speculated widely as to the identity of the bride and groom for whose wedding the cantata was destined. Bach edited the parts of the cantata with remarkable care – also a copy that may have been intended for the couple in question, containing the vocal line and basso continuo, beautifully hand-written, raising the suspicion that the occasion was a wedding in Bach's own circle of friends. Marriages in 1742 and 1744 involving the Bose family – Leipzig patricians who were linked with Bach's family not only by friendship but also by godparenthood – were considered, but more recent research into the source materials dated the work precisely to 1741. To which couple might the work have been addressed in 1741, therefore? One possibility is the Berlin court doctor, Dr. Georg Ernst Stahl the younger (1713–1772), who married Johanna Elisabeth Schrader (1725–1763), the daughter of a Berlin court apothecary, on 19th September 1741. Stahl was on good terms with Carl

Philipp Emanuel Bach and apparently also with Wilhelm Friedemann, who dedicated his first published keyboard sonata to him in 1744. Johann Sebastian Bach had been in Berlin in the summer of 1741 and had stayed at Stahl's house. It is easy to imagine that the cantata could have been a token of his gratitude for his host, that could have been performed at the ceremonies under the direction of Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel. A striking line of text in the ninth movement also suggests Stahl as a possible recipient: 'Dein Ruhm wird wie ein Demantstein, ja wie ein fester Stahl beständig sein' ('Thy fame will like a diamond-stone, yea, like the hardest steel steadfast endure' ['Stahl= steel]).

The secret of the cantata's reusablility lies in the generalized natue of its content: it is about music, about the eternal theme of the power of musical sounds: their ability to beguile and bewitch, to invigorate and to comfort, to refresh and to encourage, but also about those who are contemptuous of music (whose views, unsurprisingly, are contradicted). Only at the end does it allude to the recipient of the cantata, the connoisseur and patron of music, who cannot be praised enough and who deserves all our good wishes. For its application as wedding music the recitative texts were rewritten and, where necessary, recomposed. In the case of the aria texts, however, only minor adjustments were normally necessary; at any rate the metre and rhyme schemes were retained, so the music could remain unchanged. In addition, a reference to the new function (if a rather forced one) was created by posing the question in the text of whether music is compatible with the love of a young married couple.

In the five arias, Bach has aimed for to the greatest variety both of expression and of instrumentation. The first aria (second movement) stands for 'beseelte Lieder' ('lively anthems'), the second (fourth movement) for 'matte Töne' ('notes so weary') but also for 'Harmonie' ('harmony'), expressed in full-toned parallel thirds and sixths. The third aria, 'Schweigt, ihr Flöten' ('Hush, ye flutes now'; sixth movement), represents of a paradox: the flute duly falls silent repeatedly, but becomes all the more animated in the interludes. The folk-like aria 'Großer Gönner, dein Vergnügen' ('Mighty patron, thy diversion'; eighth movement) follows, in the manner of a stylized polonaise, a dance pattern imported from Slavic folk music, which was then enjoying great popularity in Saxony, where the rulers were bound to the Polish royal family. In the hymn-like final aria, 'Seid beglückt, edle beide' ('Live in bliss, noble couple'; tenth movement), Bach also gives some of the instruments – the flute, *oboe d'amore* and first violin – the opportunity to take on a soloistic role alongside the soprano.

Klaus Hofmann 2004 (Vol. 1)

Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht, BWV 211
(Be quiet, chatter not)

Kaffeekantate, 1734/35

Text: [1–8] Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander) 1732; [9, 10] anon.
Flauto traverso, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Liesgen), Tenore, Basso (Schlendrian), Cembalo, Continuo

1. Recitativo (Tenore). Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
2. Aria (Basso). Hat man nicht mit seinen Kindern...
Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)
3. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Du böses Kind, du loses Mädchen...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
4. Aria (Soprano). Ei! wie schmeckt der Coffee süße...
Flauto traverso, Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)

5. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Wenn du mir nicht den Coffee lässt...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
6. Aria (Basso). Mädchen, die von harten Sinnen...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
7. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Nun folge, was dein Vater spricht!...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
8. Aria (Soprano). Heute noch, Lieber Vater, tut es doch!...
Violino I, II, Viola, Cembalo, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso)
9. Recitativo (Tenore). Nun geht und sucht der alte Schlendrian...
Continuo (Violoncello, Cembalo)
10. Chorus (Soprano, Tenore, Basso). Die Katze lässt das Mausen nicht...
Flauto traverso, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo (Violoncello, Contrabasso, Cembalo)

Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht (*Be quiet, chatter not*; BWV 211), the so-called 'coffee cantata', is by some margin the most popular of Bach's secular cantatas. The witty text is by his Leipzig 'poet in residence', Christian Friedrich Henrici (alias Picander, 1700–1764), who published the libretto in the third part of his collection *Ernst-, Schertzhaffte und Satyrische Gedichte* (*Serious, Amusing and Satirical Poems*). Bach's composition probably dates from 1734. The work is a little 'dramma per musica', the plot of which makes satirical reference to the drinking of coffee, a practice that had been popular since the late seventeenth century. The origins of the cantata seem to be associated with this specific content: it is assumed that Bach wrote the work for a performance either in the Zimmermann Coffee House or in its coffee garden. The premises of the Leipzig coffee-house proprietor Gottfried Zimmermann also served as a concert venue, and since 1729 Bach had made regular weekly appearances there with his Collegium musicum.

The plot of this little family comedy is almost self-explanatory: the daughter, Liesgen, is an enthusiastic coffee drinker who does not want to give up her passion at any cost. The father, Schlendrian, refuses to drink coffee and attempts in vain, using all kinds of threat, to prevent his daughter from indulging. Finally, however, he works out a cunning plan and promises to find her a husband if she renounces coffee – and, indeed, she agrees to the deal. But she employs a trick of her own: Liesgen secretly lets it be known that she will only entertain a suitor who is prepared to allow her to drink coffee. Overall, the conclusion 'Die Katze lässt das Mausen nicht' ('A cat its mousing never quits') seems to mean that all the paternal education has been in vain: everything will remain as it was, and Liesgen – like her mother and grandmother – will soon be eagerly consuming her coffee again.

Bach set the libretto to music with a sure sense of the effect it would have upon the audience. The recitative-like dialogues are lively and articulated; the arias characterize the people and situations with unerring accuracy: the resigned ranting of the father in the first aria (second movement), the capricious daughter in her solo 'Ei! wie schmeckt der Coffee süße' ('Ah! How sweet the coffee's taste is'; fourth movement) introduced by the flute in the style of a minuet. In Schlendrian's second aria, 'Mädchen, die von harten Sinnen' ('Maidens who are steely-hearted'; sixth movement), with a melodically bizarre and persistently recurring *basso ostinato* theme that is shot through with chromaticism, the expression of stubbornness is combined with that of lamentation. Liesgen's second aria, 'Heute noch' ('This day, still'; eighth movement), a charmingly animated siciliano, is filled with writing that conveys naïve effusiveness.

At the end we find the tercet about the girls who remain 'coffee sisters'. Bach knew what he owed his audience, and wrote a movement that is lively and easily understood. The theme, heard in association with the words 'Die Katze lässt das Mausen nicht' ('A cat its mousing never quits'), at times virtuosically from the flute and repeatedly from the other instruments, leaves an indelible

impression on the listener. Many members of Bach's audience in Leipzig must have hummed it on their way home from the Zimmermann Coffee House and wondered if the Thomaskantor might possibly be secretly concealing the soul of an opera composer.

Klaus Hofmann 2004 (Vol. 1)

Vol. 2

Alongside Bach's production of church music – around 200 cantatas, the oratorios, masses and motets – his secular vocal works occupy a modest place in his output.

Today we know of the existence of some fifty secular cantatas, but only about half of these have survived in performable condition. The original total of such works was probably significantly larger, but it seems that the secular cantatas in particular had a habit of going astray. They were occasional pieces, mostly tailored especially to the situation that engendered them – und thus (unlike the church cantatas) they could not be performed again in unaltered form in other circumstances. Thus, for Bach's heirs, they were of little practical interest.

Their close association with a unique festive occasion, with specific people, the conventions of the time and historical circumstances is a further reason why Bach's secular cantatas have to this day remained overshadowed by his sacred works. In addition, modern listeners are often unfamiliar with the context (especially the mythological context) of the subject matter – which once would have been common knowledge. Furthermore, an important role is played by a prejudice dating back to the nineteenth century: the belief that Bach's true artistry manifested itself in his church music, whilst his secular compositions were from an artistic point of view merely by-products of minor importance.

This narrow-minded view has, however, long been disproved. In Bach there is no difference in quality between sacred and secular music. Bach always approached the challenges inherent in commissioned works of a secular nature with the same artistic vigour that we find in his church music. All of the surviving secular cantatas testify to this, including the two works on this recording.

Klaus Hofmann 2012 (Vol. 2)

Sinfonia in F major, BWV 1046a/1

Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd, BWV 208

(What Gives Me Pleasure Is Only The Lively Hunt)

Jagdkantate · Hunt Cantata

Glückwunschkantate zum Geburtstag des Herzogs Christian von Sachsen-Weißenfels (27. Februar 1713)
Text: Salomo Franck 1716
Corno da caccia I, II, Flauto dolce I, II, Oboe I, II, Taille (Oboe da caccia), Bassono, Violino I, II, Viola, Violoncello, Soprano I (Diana), Soprano II (Pales), [Alto], Tenore (Endymion), Basso (Pan), Continuo, Violone grosso

1. Recitativo (Soprano I). Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd! ...
2. Aria (Soprano I). Jagen ist die Lust der Götter ...
3. Recitativo (Tenore). Wie? schönste Göttin? wie? ...
4. Aria (Tenore). Willst du dich nicht mehr ergötzen ...
5. Recitativo (Soprano I, Tenore). Ich liebe dich zwar noch! ...
6. Recitativo (Basso). Ich, der ich sonst ein Gott ...
7. Aria (Basso). Ein Fürst ist seines Landes Pan! ...

8. Recitativo (Soprano II). Soll denn der Pales Opfer hier das letzte sein? …
9. Aria (Soprano II). Schafe können sicher weiden …
10. Recitativo (Soprano I). So stimmt mit ein …
11. Chorus. Lebe, Sonne dieser Erden …
12. Duetto (Soprano I, Tenore). Entzücket uns beide …
13. Aria (Soprano II). Weil die wollenreichen Herden …
14. Aria (Basso). Ihr Felder und Auen …
15. Chorus. Ihr lieblichste Blicke, ihr freudige Stunden …

Bach's 'Hunt' Cantata is his earliest surviving secular cantata. It takes us to 1713 and Weimar, where the composer had worked since 1708 as court organist, and from Weimar it immediately takes us onwards to Weißenfels, where the birthday of Duke Christian of Sachsen-Weißenfels (1682–1736) was celebrated on 23rd February of each year. In fact the celebrations were not confined to that day alone, but went on for days or even weeks – and, as the Duke was passionate about hunting, the celebrations were always associated with hunt gatherings. This cantata was heard at the birthday celebrations in 1713 'after a hunting contest at the Prince's hunting lodge, as *musique de table*' – at least according to a volume of poetry published in 1716 by Salomo Franck (1659–1725), author of the cantata's text, who was employed at the Weimar court. The performance probably took place after the festive programme at Weißenfels; in the court records for this day we find the remark: 'Pleasure hunt… In the evening a banquet in the hunting lodge'.

The cantata's outline was fine-tuned for its position in the festive programme. The preceding 'hunting contest' provided the poet with a keyword from which he developed a modest dramatic plot in which four divinities from ancient mythology appear, offering birth day congratulations. It is set in motion by Diana, goddess of the hunt, who avows her zeal for hunting and – with a hint of a flattering sideways glance towards the Duke – declares the hunt to be the domain of the gods and goddesses. Next Endymion arrives, Diana's lover, with the gift of eternal youth. He feels neglected and remonstrates with Diana, but she explains to him that on this day she must devote herself entirely to the Duke. Thereupon they decide to bring the Duke a 'tribute of joy'. Pan, the goat-footed god of the forests and fields, appears and, as a sign of his subservience, places his shepherd's crook before the Duke, paying him the compliment that, as 'durchlauchter Pan' ('illustrious Pan') (thus in a sense a princely fellow-god) he imbues the country with joy and happiness. Indeed – as he continues, in exaggerated terms – a country without its prince would be like a lifeless body without a soul. Pales, the goddess of shepherds and fields, joins the ranks of wellwishers, praising the Duke's abilities as a ruler with the image of a good shepherd in whose care the sheep safely graze, i.e. his subjects live happily in peace and calm. Diana calls for everyone to shout 'Vivat', and every one joins in: 'Lebe, Sonne dieser Erden' ('Live, sun of this earth'). This concludes the main part of the plot. In a sort of concluding tableau, Diana and Endymion (as a duet), Pales and Pan (each with a solo aria) all convey their congratulations one more time, before joining together in the finale to sing of the 'freudigen Stunden' ('joyful hours') and future happiness.

Bach has done his bit to endow the scenario with variety and rich tonal colours. The aria portraying Diana's arrival is accompanied by two hunting horns – symbols of princely rank as well as of the Duke's passion for hunting – which later also play a prominent role in the cantata's two *tutti* movements. Although Endymion's first aria is backed by continuo alone, the continuo writing itself features an agile, skilful *basso ostinato*, which illustrates Love's 'traps' (as described in the text) with intricate rhythms and melodies. In Pan's first aria, he is allocated a trio of oboes which, with its fanfare-like opening ritornello, alludes to the princely rank of the celebrant. Pales, in her first aria, is accompanied by recorders – typical shepherds' instruments. Moreover, Bach strikes a folk-like tone: the two recorders move simply in thirds and sixths; the pedal-point-like beginning from the basso

continuo alludes to the sound of bag pipes; and the vocal part has the character more of a song than of an aria. The congratulatory chorus 'Lebe, Sonne dieser Erden', intoned by all the singers, begins in the manner of a canon for communal singing, but then makes way for the instruments in a songful, homophonic middle section that contrasts with the polyphonic, *concertante* opening. In their duet, Diana and Endymion display unity through the constant parallel writing of their vocal lines, accompanied by the sweeping arabesques of a solo violin. Virtuosic continuo writing characterizes Pales' second aria, whilst that of Pan features dance-like rhythms. The final chorus is imbued with charm and harmony. In the process, a leading role is given to the two horns. A signal-like horn motif is heard at the beginning and runs through the entire instrumental writing – which, however, is dominated throughout by the lively interplay of the two horns, three oboes and strings (plus bassoon). The predominantly homophonic vocal writing strikes a cheerful, gracious tone; only in passing does Bach briefly emphasize the words 'was Trauren besieget' ('what conquers sadness') with a darkening of the harmony.

Bach must have valued this work highly: he had it performed on at least two subsequent occasions in honour of other people, with minor adjustments to the text. He also used 'parody' versions of various movements in sacred cantatas, for example in 1725, when he incorporated Pan's first aria, and – in extensively modified form – Pales' second aria into the cantata *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt* (BWV 68: movements 4 and 2). Similarly, in 1728 he used the finale of the birthday cantata as an introductory chorus in the cantata *Man singet mit Freuden* (BWV 149); much later, in 1740, he reused the same movement as the final chorus of the election cantata *Herrscher des Himmels, König der Ehren* (BWV Anh. 193 – now lost).

Klaus Hofmann 2012 (Vol. 2)

Production Notes (BWV 208)

The only surviving material in connection with this cantata is the full score in the composer's own hand in the collection of the National Library in Berlin; the parts used for the original performances are no longer extant. On the final page of the score is inscribed a separate instrumental movement (BWV 1040), thought to be related to the aria 'Weil die wollen reichen Herden' (No. 13). When that aria was adapted for use in the church cantata BWV 68 in 1725, the instrumental section was included as a postlude, and it seems likely therefore that it should be included here too. Until recently there were no other known examples of Bach using such an instrumental ritornello as the postlude to an aria, but a very similar case – *Alles mit Gott*, BWV 1127 – was discovered in Weimar in 2005.

The next question we need to consider is that of who sang the choral movements (11 and 15). The instrumentation of both movements is indicated in Bach's own manuscript of the full score, but there are no indications in the vocal parts. However, since the first and second vocal parts are both written in the soprano clef, one might imagine that they were sung by the sopranos who took the two solo roles of Diana and Pales. The problem is that the tessitura of the second part (c' to d'') is much lower than that of the solo movement sung by Pales (e' to a flat''), making it unlikely that this part would have been taken by the same soloist who sang the role of Pales. Instead it falls within the typical range employed by Bach in alto parts, and on purely musical grounds it is thus natural to assume that it was sung by other singers. Taking the extra-musical context into consideration, there is nothing intrinsically strange about letting the people present – or indeed a larger assembly of gods – praise Duke Christian, and we have therefore decided to add members of the BCJ choir to these movements.

As an opening of this disc, we have chosen to per form the Sinfonia BWV 1046a/1, from the earlier version of *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*. This movement has exactly the same orchestration as the 'Hunt' Cantata and may well have been performed together with that work at the time.

Die Zeit, die Tag und Jahre macht, BWV 134a
(Time, Maker of Days and Years)

Serenata

Glückwunschkantate zum Neujahrstag 1719 für das Haus von Anhalt-Köthen (1. Januar 1719)
Text: Christian Friedrich Hunold (Menantes) 1719
Oboe I, II, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano, Alto (Göttliche Vorsehung), Tenore (Zeit), Basso, Continuo, Violone

1. Recitativo (Tenore, Alto). Die Zeit, die Tag und Jahre macht …
2. Aria (Tenore). Auf, Sterbliche, lasset ein Jauchzen ertönen …
3. Recitativo (Tenore, Alto). So bald, als dir die Sternen hold …
4. Aria (Alto, Tenore). Es streiten, es siegen die künftigen Zeiten …
5. Recitativo (Alto, Tenore). Bedenke nur, beglücktes Land …
6. Aria (Alto). Der Zeiten Herr hat viel vergnügte Stunden …
7. Recitativo (Tenore, Alto). Hilf, Höchster, hilf …
8. Chorus. Ergetzet auf Erden …

The years 1717–23, during which Bach was employed as *Hofkapellmeister* in the service of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen (1694–1728), were the only period in his career during which he had no duties to perform as regards church music. The court was Reformist and, as figurative music had no place in Calvinist church services, we do not have any sacred cantatas from this time. Bach did, however, write secular cantatas for specific occasions, in particular congratulatory cantatas for New Year's Day and for the Prince's birthday on 10th December. Six of each fell within Bach's period of work in Köthen, so twelve such cantatas ought to have been composed. Only two, however, have survived in their entirety: BWV 134a and BWV 173a. For two others we possess only the texts (BWV Anh. 6 and 7), although clear traces of them can be found in three 'parody' cantatas from the composer's Leipzig period (BWV 66/66a, BWV 184/184a and BWV 194/194a). In addition, the two Köthen cantatas that have survived intact were also parodied in Leipzig. A reworked version of the present cantata – *Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß*, BWV 134 – was performed there on Easter Sunday of 1724, and a few weeks later, on the second day of Whitsun, the Köthen birthday cantata *Durchlauchtster Leopold*, BWV 173a, was reused as *Erhöhtes Fleisch und Blut*, BWV 173.

In the course of preparing the parody version, the original score of the present cantata was damaged. The entire first movement and much of the second and third as well, was lost, with the consequence that the work was listed only as a fragment in the complete edition produced by the Bachgesellschaft in 1881. At around the same time, however, the Bach researcher Philipp Spitta (1841–1894) discovered a copy of the text in a collection of poetry, which provided at least a complete picture of the wording of the cantata. Not until the 1950s, in the course of work on the Neue Bach-Ausgabe, did re searchers become aware of a partial manuscript, evidently prepared at Bach's instigation, which contained a copy of the missing passages. This manuscript contains only the music, without the text; but the text can easily be filled in from the contemporary printed version. Together, therefore, the three pieces of the puzzle come together to produce the complete work.

The contemporary printed version of the text tells us about the cantata's occasion and purpose. It is included in a collection of poetry published in Halle in 1719 as 'Salutation to the New Year 1719, to the Most Serene House of Anhalt-Cöthen', the work of a certain 'Menantes'. 'Menantes' was in fact

the editor of the collection himself, Christian Friedrich Hunold (1680–1721), a prominent figure in German literature of the period.

The cantata's libretto is set out in dialogue form. As the dialogue partners Hunold has chosen two allegorical figures, 'Time' and 'Divine Providence': the former looks back into the past; the latter looks forward into the future. These changing perspectives give rise to a lengthy conversation that places the past, present and future of the country and its Prince in a most flattering light. As is stated in their duet aria, 'Time' and 'Divine Providence' enjoy a friendly rivalry when it comes to presenting the principality's past and future as a golden age.

The musical character of the work is largely determined by the four aria movements. With its dance-like rhythms, 'Time's' first aria, after the brief opening recitative in which the two protagonists introduce themselves, is infused with the spirit of courtly music. It epitomizes the *passepied*, a fashionable dance at the time, described by Bach's learned Hamburg contemporary Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) as a pleasant 'frivolity' – intending it in the positive sense of the word as 'joyful grace', which is certainly radiated by the text and music of this exhortation to grateful praise of God.

If the first aria made use of the full orchestra, the instrumental part in the duet of 'Time' and 'Divine Providence' is allocated to the strings, corresponding with the text: 'This lovely conflict moves our hearts to touch the strings…' in a metaphorical way typical of the baroque period. The strings are then indeed touched with some vigour, especially by the first violin, which – in the manner of a *perpetuum mobile* – brings the concept of 'konzertieren' to the fore – and the musically well-educated Prince would have understood the image: the original meaning of the word *concertare* was 'to fight each other'.

In the following aria, the only one in a minor key, 'Providence' utters a promise. Bach clothes the meditative words in a simple musical setting, accompanied only by the continuo above a *basso ostinato*, the constant repetitions of which lend the text emphasis and a solemn earnestness. In the final movement Bach returns not only to the key but also to the dance-like metre of the beginning. The full orchestra is now joined by four vocalists, and 'Time' and 'Providence' – in a lively alternation of soloists and choir, and with the same 'frivolity' as in the first aria – sing of the 'glückseligen Zeiten' ('joyous times') of the house of Anhalt-Köthen.

Klaus Hofmann 2012 (Vol. 2)

Production Notes (BWV 134a)

The main materials for this cantata are the composer's own, but incomplete manuscript of the full score in the library of the Paris Conservatoire, and the original parts that were used in the 1724 performance of the church cantata BWV 134, *Ein Herz, das seinen Jesum lebend weiß*, housed in the National Library in Berlin. The Berlin manuscripts (St 18) include a total of sixteen parts, seven of which had already been used in performances of BWV 134a during the composer's Cöthen period. Two of these are continuo parts, differing from each other in that one of them has rests inscribed in the latter half of the eighth movement, corresponding to the sections sung solely by alto and tenor. This would suggest that the part was intended for performance on the double bass, which consequently would also have been used in all the other movements, including recitatives. The only way to find out whether this is effective is, as always, actually to try it out in practice.

Masaaki Suzuki 2012 (Vol. 2)

Vol. 3

Durchlauchtster Leopold, BWV 173a (Serenata)

(Most illustrious Leopold)

Glückwunschkantate zum Geburtstag des Fürsten Leopold von Anhalt-Köthen (10. December 1722?).
Text: anon.
Soprano, Basso, Flauto traverso I, II, Violino I, II, Viola, Bassono, Violoncello, Continuo

1. [Recitativo] (Soprano). Durchlauchtster Leopold …
2. Aria (Soprano). Güldner Sonnen frohe Stunden …
3. [Aria] (Basso). Leopolds Vortrefflichkeiten …
4. Aria (Soprano, Basso). Unter seinem Purpursaum …
5. Recitativo (Soprano, Basso). Durchlauchtigster, den Anhalt Vater nennt …
6. Aria (Soprano). So schau dies holden Tages Licht …
7. Aria (Basso). Dein Name gleich der Sonnen geh …
8. Chorus (Soprano, Basso). Nimm auch, großer Fürst, uns auf …

During the years 1717–23, when Bach was *Hofkapellmeister* in the service of Prince Leopold von Anhalt-Köthen (1694–1728), his duties included providing congratulatory cantatas each New Year's Day and on the Prince's birthday, 10th December. *Durchlauchtster Leopold* is one of these birthday cantatas.

The identity of the librettist remains unknown, but in his text the people of Anhalt and Köthen pay homage to their Prince with the solicitude typical of the era. In this context, the two singers may be interpreted as allegorical figures, the soprano perhaps as an embodiment of providence, the bass as an allegory of renown.

Despite the limited instrumental and vocal forces, Bach succeeded in setting the multi-faceted text to music of great variety. It starts with an *accompagnato* for the soprano, addressing the Prince by name; at the end, the Prince's title 'Durchlauchtster' ('Most illustrious') is effectively ornamented with a brilliant coloratura. The soprano sings of a golden age under the Prince's rule in a lively aria with a rhythmically concise theme. The bass joins in too, praising 'Leopold's excellent attributes'; the words 'machen uns itzt viel zu tun' ('give us now much to do') are reflected in the bustling activity in the accompanying string parts.

The most remarkable movement in the cantata is the three-strophe duet for soprano and bass 'Unter seinem Purpursaum' (fourth movement). It is marked *Al tempo di minuetto*, and is indeed a genuine minuet that could be danced to. The three strophes are written as a set of variations, the key signatures rising stepwise according to the circle of fifths in each verse while at the same time the music becomes increasingly condensed. The first strophe begins in G major; the minuet melody is given to the solo bass, accompanied by the strings. In the second strophe, in D major, the soprano takes up the melody, and flutes are added to the orchestra. In the third strophe, in A major, the orchestra is augmented by a richly figured violin part; both vocal soloists take part, the bass once again with the minuet melody and the soprano with a free accompaniment.

Another duet in minuet form concludes this birthday cantata. These two dance movements give the work the character of a courtly serenade, and it is therefore slightly surprising that Bach had no qualms about reusing such clearly secular music – slightly shortened, with its last movement now set for four vocal parts, and with a new sacred text – as a church cantata for Whit Monday in Leipzig (*Erhöhtes Fleisch und Blut*, BWV 173).

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 3)

Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten, BWV 202
(Merely yield, sorrowful shadows)

Hochzeitskantate | Wedding Cantata (before 1730).
Text: anon.
Soprano solo (all movements), Oboe, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo

1. [Aria]. Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten …
2. [Recitativo]. Die Welt wird wieder neu …
3. Aria. Phoebus eilt mit schnellen Pferden …
4. Recitativo. Drum sucht auch Amor sein Vergnügen …
5. Aria. Wenn die Frühlingslüfte streichen…
6. Recitativo. Und dieses ist das Glücke …
7. Aria. Sich üben im Lieben …
8. Recitativo. So sei das Band der keuschen Liebe …
9. Gavotte. Sehet in Zufriedenheit …

This charming wedding cantata would have been lost forever if a 13-year-old boy, Johannes Ringk, in the province of Thuringia had not made a copy of it in 1730. Might this same boy – who later became a respected musician as organist of the Marienkirche in Berlin – have been the soprano soloist in the cantata?

We know nothing about the origins of the work; the name of the librettist is unknown, as are the identities of the bride and groom for whom the piece was intended. Clearly, however, they were from the bourgeoisie; otherwise the focus would have been more on display and the sounds of trumpets and drums, whilst charm, grace, amiability and humour might possibly have been replaced by convention and stately manners. A stroke of luck, in other words.

The cantata text, which the poet presented to the bride and groom as a wedding present, is a loosely arranged set of tableaux in baroque style. Clearly referring to the seasonal events at the time of the wedding, it depicts a landscape that gradually becomes populated with some well-known mythological figures. It is the season in which the 'sorrowful shadows' of the long winter nights and spring mists yield, and the 'frost and winds' attain 'peace'; 'the world becomes new once more', 'spring breezes flutter' – in short: spring has arrived. Flora appears, the goddess of flowers, with a cornucopia of blooms. And she is not alone: Phoebus Apollo, 'hastens with swift horses through the new-born world' (third movement). He is followed by Amor (fourth and fifth movements), sneaking through the fields and keeping a lookout for loving couples – and hey presto! here is one: our bride and bridegroom.

After that, the poet himself puts in an appearance with the recommendation: 'To become proficient at love, to embrace with good humour…' (seventh movement) and with the friendly wish: 'May the band of virtuous love, o betrothed pair, thus be free from the fickleness of changeability' (eighth movement), in other words that their love should be long-lasting and unshakeable – neither by 'sudden mis chance', giving the composer an implicit cue, nor by 'clap of thunder' (at which point the composer promptly includes a rumbling in the continuo). The end of the work is full of good wishes: 'gratification', 'a thousand bright days of prosperity' and, of course, that love should 'bring forth blossom' – in other words, that children should ensue.

Bach was inspired by the sprightly libretto to produce some beautiful music, and has charmingly coloured the poetic images with the broad palette of his formal, descriptive and expressive artistry. The weightiest piece in the cantata is without question the opening aria. It is astonishing how Bach begins the movement, preparing the listener for the first words of the aria even before they are heard

by means of a musical depiction full of nature poetry. Before the oboe and vocal line enter, the strings' calmly rising chords portray the shadows which – as the text will soon inform us – yield and, as Bach's music shows, are in fact already lifting like spring mists. Then the oboe comes in and, with its long-held note immediately followed by the soprano's entry, sunbeams seem to penetrate the walls of cloud.

In the other movements, too, Bach writes in an unusually descriptive way. On occasion he appears very folksy, as in the next aria (third movement), in which he sets Phoebus's horses galloping in an *Allegro assai* in 12/8-time. And in the next aria (fifth movement) Amor seems to want to tease the lovers with the solo violin's playful little echo phrases.

In the last movements the dance-like element comes to the fore. The oboe aria 'Sich üben im Lieben' (seventh movement) is a sung passepied with folk-like traits. The finale is not even called an 'aria' any more, but rather a 'gavotte' – which is entirely apt; indeed it is a particularly attractive example of the form which, more over, must have indicated to the wedding party that it was now time to push the tables to one side and start dancing.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 3)

Schwingt freudig euch empor…, BWV 36c
(Soar joyfully upwards…)

Kantate zum Geburtstag eines Lehrers (1725).
Text: anon. (Picander?)
Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Viola d'amore, Continuo

1. [Chorus]. Schwingt freudig euch empor und dringt bis an die Sternen …
2. Recitativo (Tenore). Ein Herz, in zärtlichem Empfinden …
3. Aria (Tenore). Die Liebe führt mit sanften Schritten …
4. Recitativo (Basso). Du bist es ja, o hochverdienter Mann …
5. Aria (Basso). Der Tag, der dich vordem gebar …
6. Recitativo (Soprano). Nur dieses Einz'ge sorgen wir…
7. Aria (Soprano). Auch mit gedämpften, schwachen Stimmen …
8. Recitativo (Tenore). Bei solchen freudenvollen Stunden …
9. Chorus [e Recitativo] (Soprano, Tenore, Basso). Wie die Jahre sich verneuen …

Bach's score, from the spring of 1725, tells us nothing about the occasion and purpose of this congratulatory cantata. Some information can, however, be gleaned from the text: the congratulations are addressed to a teacher, and the day of the celebration is when 'the years renew themselves' (ninth movement), in other words his birthday. The references to the 'constant teachings' and the 'silver embellishment of age' suggest many years of ser vice and a man who has reached a considerable age; the reference to him as a 'man of outstanding merit' and of 'highest honour' (fourth movement) indicates that he had attained an elevated rank. Remarks concerning his renown as a teacher (second movement) and his wide spread recognition (ninth movement) reinforce this impression. So far, however, all of these hints – plus other references in the text – have proved insufficient to permit us to identify this learned gentle man.

From the very first bar, Bach's music is infused with cheerful animation. Introduced by a solo from the oboe d'amore – as songful as it is invigorating, and further enlivened by triplet figures – the choir enters, one part after another. Figuratively and literally it is 'upward-soaring' from the bass, via the tenor and alto, to the soprano, with a melodic idea that in itself rises upwards, reaching a top a" in the soprano on the words 'und dringt bis an die Sternen' ('and reach out towards the stars'). The text

allows for a particularly striking dramaturgical effect with the words 'Doch haltet ein!' ('But stop!'): this is the sudden revocation of all the previous encouragement to 'soar upwards', and for a moment the orchestra falls silent as well.

The oboe d'amore also dominates the instrumental texture of the tenor aria (third movement), symbolically illustrated by the text 'Die Liebe führt mit sanften Schritten ein Herz, das seinen Lehrer liebt' ('Love, with gentle steps, leads a heart that loves his teacher'). The solo bass, with baroque exuberance, compares the beloved teacher's birth day with the First Day of Creation and God's command 'Let there be light!' (fifth movement). The soprano aria (seventh movement), a display piece exquisitely scored with viola d'amore and with all sorts of echo effects in the middle section, proclaims that we can praise the teacher fittingly 'even with hushed, faint voices' (although, as is suggested, he would have merited praise with trumpets and drums). The work is rounded off by a chorus in fleet-of-foot gavotte style, summarizing all the good wishes and also allowing the three aria soloists one more chance to stand out.

Bach must have been extremely fond of this cantata. Soon after composing it, he reworked it as the Advent cantata *Schwingt freudig euch empor*, BWV 36, which he revised and extended again in 1731. Before that, in 1726, the work had served as a birthday cantata for Countess Charlotte Friederike Wilhelmine von Anhalt-Köthen (with the parody text *Steigt freudig in die Luft*, BWV 36a), and later on, around 1735, starting with the text *Die Freude reget sich*, BWV 36b, as a tribute to a member of the Rivinus family of Leipzig scholars.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 3)

Quodlibet, BWV 524

Hochzeitsquodlibet (1707/08?).
Text: anon.
Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Continuo

...Steiß. / Was seind das vor große Schlösser ...

As with *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten*, this is a piece of wedding music, albeit of an entirely different kind and on a wholly different stylistic level. As for the genre, this is not a cantata as such but rather a socalled 'catalogue quodlibet', a folk form of humorous character, close to impro visation, that derives much of its effect from juxtaposing unrelated fragments, together with topical allusions. Traditionally such works combine quotations from songs, toasts, market traders' and nightwatchmen's calls, proverbs, puns and so on with witty, often boisterous and coarse references to the reason for and participants in a social gathering. Such quodlibets were especially popular at weddings, where they frequently got out of hand. In 1730 the literary scholar Johann Christoph Gottsched wrote in his *Critische Dichtkunst* with obvious reservations: 'At weddings this sort of witty poem has its uses, if it does not become merely offensive.'

This Quodlibet poses all kinds of riddle. A fair copy from 1707/08, in Bach's own hand, has survived but it is not intact. Apparently at some stage the outer sheets were removed, thereby depriving us of the beginning and ending of the piece – including the title as well as information about whose wedding it was performed at. Above all, the name of the composer is missing, and it is thus by no means certain that it is Bach's own work. It may, for instance, have been a collaboration between several of the wedding guests.

The type of occasion for which the piece was written is clear. The text mentions 'Große Hochzeit, große Freuden' ('Great wedding, great joy') and there are various intimations that leave no possibility for doubt. We do not know, however, whose wedding it was; nor can we be certain of the sort of

people who were the guests, despite a whole series of indirect references, including one to 'Salome', possibly Bach's sister Maria Salome, whose married name was Wiegand (1677−1727). Also unclear is the nature of a certain event to which ironic allusions are constantly being made, and which is associated with sea journeys to the Dutch East Indies. Apparently it concerned a spectacularly unsuccessful attempt − maybe by the bridegroom himself – to use a baker's trough as a boat.

Almost as though it had been designed with subsequent Bach research in mind, the text of this Quodlibet contains a very precise chronological indication. Towards the end of the piece the tenor sings: 'This year we have two eclipses of the sun'. There were two total eclipses in each of the years 1705, 1706 and 1708, and two slightly less impressive partial eclipses in 1707 too. This limits the possible dates of composition. The piece cannot, however, have been composed for Bach's own marriage to Maria Barbara Bach in October 1707, as he himself wrote out the fair copy of the score that was in all probability intended as a dedication example for the bride and groom.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 3)

Production Notes (BWV 524)

Here I would like give a few brief comments in connection with the Quodlibet, BWV 524.

As Klaus Hofmann mentions in his commentary, this work has been handed down in the form of J. S. Bach's own manuscript of the full score, but at least one of the sheets of this score in folio is missing. The extant score consists of three sheets, each containing four pages of notation, and it would appear thus that the first two pages and the final section of approximately two pages has been lost. The composer's name, which should of course appear at the head of the work, is missing, and the current situation is that only the central part of the work has been handed down for performance purposes. But the section that has survived is of considerable musical interest, and I decided therefore to include it in the programme. The fragment opens with a four-part chord on the word *Steiß*, meaning 'backside' and often referring to the tail of a bird or animal, but it is unclear what it could mean in this context. At the very end of the manuscript, the final line of text reads 'What a nice fugue this is!' in a passage on the dominant key, implying that this section was originally followed by a fugue. Unfortunately this fugue is now lost, meaning that all we can do is imagine it.

Masaaki Suzuki 2013 (Vol. 3)

Vol. 4 (Academic cantatas)

Introduction

This recording explores the modestly proportioned genre of secular cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach. Nowadays this group of works, which suffers more than most from the loss of many of its members, contains only slightly more than twenty completely preserved cantatas. In addition there are a dozen or so cantata texts that Bach set but for which the music itself has not survived. In total we know of around fifty secular cantatas that Bach composed; in fact, however, their number must have been significantly larger.

Most if not all of Bach's secular cantatas were envisaged as occasional pieces, their text and music written to order, in exchange for a fee, and intended for specific occasions of widely varying character. They included festive and congratulatory music for court, political tributes (for instance to the Prince of Saxony and his relatives) and also works for celebrations among Leipzig's bourgeoisie or academia.

Among the various literary forms used in secular cantatas, Bach accorded particular significance to the so-called 'dramma per musica'. In such works the libretto is constructed dramatically, i.e. the

cantata has a plot, and the singers embody various roles. The proximity of opera is unmistakable, although the 'drammi per musica' do without the scenic element, confining themselves to verbal interaction.

The libretti of these 'dramatic' cantatas are often based on mythological stories from antiquity, as told by Latin Classical poets such as Virgil (70–19 B.C.) or Ovid (43–18 B.C.). It was common to juxtapose the gods, demigods and other characters from this world of legend with freely invented allegorical figures – personi fications of ideas that embody specific human characteristics or of abstract concepts such as time or fate. The 'dramma per musica' was especially widespread in the lofty realms of princely tribute and academic festivity: educated people were familiar with these literary traditions. And by delegating the unavoidable flattery to literary, fictional figures, it be came easier for all involved not to take things too literally. The two works on this recording exemplify this type of dramatic cantata.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 4)

Zerreißet, zersprenget, zertrümmert die Gruft, BWV 205
(Tear Asunder, Smash, Lay Waste to the Vault)

Der zufriedengestellte Äolus – Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Namenstag des Universtätsprofessors Dr. August Friedrich Müller (3. August 1725)
Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander)
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Corno I, II, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe I auch Oboe d'amore, Oboe II, Violino I, II, Viola, Viola d'amore, Viola da gamba, Soprano (Pallas), Alto (Pomona), Tenore (Zephyrus), Basso (Äolus), Continuo

1. [Chorus]. Zerreißet, zersprenget, zertrümmert die Gruft …
2. Recitativo (Basso). Ja! ja! Die Stunden sind nunmehro nah …
3. Aria (Basso). Wie will ich lustig lachen …
4. Recitativo (Tenore). Gefürcht'ter Äolus …
5. Aria (Tenore). Frische Schatten, meine Freude …
6. Recitativo (Basso). Beinahe wirst du mich bewegen …
7. Aria (Alto). Können nicht die roten Wangen …
8. Recitativo (Alto, Soprano). So willst du, grimmger Äolus …
9. Aria (Soprano). Angenehmer Zephyrus …
10. Recitativo (Soprano, Basso). Mein Äolus …
11. Aria (Basso). Zurücke, zurücke, geflügelten Winde …
12. Recitativo (Soprano, Alto, Tenore). Was Lust! …
13. Aria (Alto,Tenore). Zweig und Äste …
14. Recitativo (Soprano). Ja, ja! ich lad euch selbst zu dieser Feier ein…
15. Chorus. Vivat August, August vivat …

The cantata with the subtitle 'Aeolus Appeased' was written for the name day of the Leipzig academic and later university professor Dr August Friedrich Müller (1684–1761) on 3rd August 1725, and was probably commissioned by the student body. Müller taught law and philosophy at the university and enjoyed exceptional popularity among his students. It appears that some special event in his academic career was celebrated together with his name day in 1725, but we have no details of what that event might have been. The cantata text is by the Leipzig poet Christian Friedrich Henrici, also known as Picander (1700–64), who shortly after wards would begin a closer collaboration with

Bach. One could well imagine the performance taking place outdoors during the evening, perhaps accompanied by a torchlight procession of students.

The summer weather that would have been desirable for such an occasion is also – indirectly – the subject of the cantata's dramatic happenings. First of all it takes us back to the world of antiquity and legend, to the Mediterranean, to the islands near Sicily, to Aeolia. There – according to Virgil's *Aeneid* – Aeolus, the King of the Winds, holds the mighty autumn storms captive, letting them loose on the world at the appointed time. In the opening chorus they are already raging, stirring each other up, ready to break free from their prison, burst out and overcome the air, water and earth with their havoc. Aeolus appears and announces that, 'after summer has soon ended', he will release his 'loyal subjects', and give them free rein to cause chaos. Aeolus, himself rather churlish, is al ready looking forward to the time 'when everything becomes disordered' (third movement).

Then, however, supplicants of all kinds make an appearance: Zephyrus, the soft west wind and god of mild summer breezes, asks Aeolus for compassion and invokes memories of idyllic summer evenings in the open air – without, however, fully managing to convince the King of the Winds (movements 4–6). Pomona too, goddess of fruitful abundance, attempts in vain to win over Aeolus. Finally Pallas Athene, god dess of wisdom and the arts, succeeds in making Aeolus relent, requesting that Zephyrus alone should attend the feast 'upon my hilltops' (i.e. on Mount Helicon, home of the Muses), and that no other wind should disrupt the celebrations in honour of the famous scholar August Müller (movements 7–10).

Aeolus then summons the winds to return and to blow more gently, to the delight of Pomona, Zephyrus and Pallas, who immediately turn their attention to preparations for the feast (movements 11–13). Pallas invites everybody to the celebration (movement 14) and finally there is a vivat for August Müller.

Wealthy patrons seem to have played a part in the work's origin, as Bach's festive orchestra is unusu ally lavishly proportioned. In addition to the standard complement of strings and continuo, two flutes and two oboes, he calls for three trumpets and timpani as well as two horns – not to mention the viola d'amore, viola da gamba and oboe d'amore, all of which are featured as solo instruments in the arias. Bach could hardly have wished for a more colourful orchestra. The libretto, too, left nothing to be desired, giving Bach the opportunity to frame the entire piece with two splendid choral movements and to portray a very wide range of emotions in a series of musical images – from the raging of the wind at the beginning to the mellow lament of Zephyrus (fifth movement). It also provided plenty of opportunities to illustrate the events by means of numerous musical details.

In this work Bach writes one display piece after another. The opening chorus is a colossal portrayal of the powerfully raging winds, angrily rattling their prison gate. These are depicted musically by wild rising and falling scales, in the same and opposite directions, a turmoil into which the choir injects lively coloraturas and shouts of 'tear asunder'. At the same time this movement, from a purely musical point of view, is a skilfully written polychoral concerto in which the various groups of musicians are effectively contrasted. Right at the outset the trumpets, strings and horns, in lively alternation, play the motif that is later associated with the words 'tear asunder' in the choir, while the flutes strike up the scale motif and immediately pass it on to the oboes, who in turn relay it to the strings. The interplay of the various groups of performers, in con stantly changing combinations of motifs and colours, dominates the entire movement.

The second movement, a recitative in which Aeolus addresses the winds, is vividly illustrated by the orchestra. Almost untameable, the winds constantly rise up in protest; every time there is a pause in the King of the Winds' speech, they make themselves heard vociferously. The following aria, 'How

I shall laugh merrily', depicts Aeolus as a ruffian, looking forward to the chaos that the storms will cause. His laughter is heard in striking coloraturas, and the string orchestra portrays the general confusion.

Then, however, Zephyrus's recitative (fourth movement) shifts the musical emphasis: the roaring of the winds and the blustering of the King of the Winds yield to the quieter tones of the supplicant. Now we hear chamber music of a most exquisite kind. Quiet instruments – viola d'amore and viola da gamba – accompany Zephyrus's gentle lament (fifth movement). The oboe d'amore, the personification of sweetness, supports Pomona's attempt to soften the King of the Winds (seventh movement). And in Pallas's aria (ninth movement), Bach uses a solo violin to illustrate the wish that the 'pleasant Zephyrus' might, with his gently breeze, fan the summit of Helicon; the charming solo line explores the instrument's very highest register.

In the dialogue between Pallas and Aeolus (tenth movement), the turning point of the action, Bach can not resist surrounding the name of the learned Dr August Müller with a halo of flute sound. The taming of the winds in Aeolus's aria (eleventh movement) is presented by Bach in a musical costume that is with out equal: it is accompanied only by continuo, trumpets, timpani and horns. Such an exquisite piece for wind instruments had surely never before been heard in Leipzig.

At the end, nothing but joy prevails among the successful supplicants. The finale is a merry march in a concise rondo form, dominated by calls of 'Vivat'. One can almost see the assembled party raising their glasses and drinking the health of the learned professor – and the instruments, too, constantly add their own 'vivat' motif to the festive mayhem.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 4)

Production Notes (BWV 205)

The only extant material for this composition is the original full score (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Mus. ms. Bach P 173). The orchestral parts no longer exist, but the instrumentation can be ascertained, since it is quite clearly written down at the beginning of the manuscript.

An interesting question concerns the viola d'amore in the fifth movement. In Bach's time, the leader usually played such solos. In this case, however, he would have been required to play the violin in the *tutti* in the third movement, change instrument to the viola d'amore during the short recitative in the fourth movement, while having an extremely challenging solo for the violin ahead of him in the ninth movement. This would seem like a nearly impossible demand on the player. Apart from in this work, the viola d'amore appears in Bach's vocal music only in BWV 36c, BWV 152 and the *St John Passion*, but in none of these works is it clear who in the orchestra played this instrument. In BWV 205/5 the viola da gamba is also required, so in the case of this instrument, too, one of the players must have switched instruments in the course of the work.

A final brief remark regards the trumpets and horns. Following our recent practice, the brass instruments adopted for this recording are constructed entirely according to original baroque practice, which means that they lack the so-called tone holes (or venting holes) with which the intonation may be adjusted on a modern-day 'baroque trumpet'. In consequence, it is physically impossible for their 11th (Fa) and 13th (La) overtones to be completely in tune. It is, however, our firm belief that the sound, undisturbed by the use of any holes, remains rounded and vivid, and that the player is able to achieve a more legato and singing character. We hope that the listener will enjoy this 'natural' character which should also be close to the original sound that Bach himself will have heard.

Masaaki Suzuki 2014 (Vol. 4)

Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten, BWV 207
(United Division of Changing Strings)

Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Antritt der Professur des Dr. Gottlieb Kortte (11. December 1726?)
Text: Heinrich Gottlieb Schellhafer?
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe [d'amore] I, II, Taille, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Glück), Alto (Dankbarkeit), Tenore (Fleiß), Basso (Ehre), Continuo

1. Chorus. Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten …
2. Recitativo (Tenore). Wen treibt ein edler Trieb zu dem, was Ehre heißt …
3. Aria (Tenore). Zieht euren Fuß nur nicht zurücke …
4. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Dem nur allein …
5. Aria Duetto (Basso, Soprano). Den soll mein Lorbeer …
5a. Ritornello
6. Recitativo (Alto). Es ist kein leeres Wort …
7. Aria (Alto). Ätzet dieses Angedenken …
8. Recitativo (Tenore, Basso, Soprano, Alto). Ihr Schläfrigen, herbei …
Anhang: Marche
9. [Chorus]. Kortte lebe, Kortte blühe …

This cantata, too, takes us into the ambit of Leipzig University. It was composed for the jurist Dr Gottlieb Kortte (1698–1731). The occasion was Kortte's appointment as a professor extraordinarius. The festive performance probably took place on 11th December 1726, the day on which Kortte gave his in augural address – from memory, as absent-mindedly he had left his manuscript at home. Kortte had just celebrated his 28th birthday – hardly older than his students – and he enjoyed particular popularity among the young academics. The instigators of the cantata performance were probably to be found among his students. Even the text may have been written by one of his students, namely Heinrich Gott lieb Schellhafer (1707–57), later a professor of law in his own right, who in his later years also wrote texts for works by Telemann.

As was popular at the time, the text of this congratulatory cantata is placed in the mouths of four allegorical characters, and in Bach's music these are distributed between the four vocal registers. The characters represent four academic virtues: Happiness (soprano), Gratitude (alto), Diligence (tenor) and Honour (bass). Bearing this distribution of roles in mind, it is by no means difficult to follow the events in the cantata. According to the opening chorus, the cantata is all about saying 'with your exultant notes… what is the reward of virtue here'. First to speak is Diligence: addressing himself to the students, he canvasses for allegiance and promises his followers happiness and honour (movements 2–3). Then Happiness and Honour themselves appear and confirm: indeed, for those who are diligent, the dwellings of honour and the cornucopia of happiness will not remain locked away (movements 4–5). After that, Gratitude joins in and points out Kortte: these are no empty promises; in this man everything has come true. Preserve his memory, etch it into marble or, better still, raise a memorial to him by means of your own actions (movements 6–7). In the last recitative Diligence, Honour and Happiness attest how deeply they feel devoted to Kortte, and Gratitude urges the friends of the appointee to join in with the good wishes of the four allegorical figures: 'Long live Kortte, may Kortte flourish!'

Bach set this attractively conceived libretto in music that is even more appealing, and he did so – as always – with great care and artistry. Admittedly profundity and depth of meaning were not uppermost in his mind – and there is no reason why they should have been, in such cheerful

'Studentenmusik'. At two places in the score he had recourse to an earlier work: the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*; its third movement appears here, skilfully transformed, as the opening chorus, whilst its second trio (originally for horns and oboes) is rescored as a postlude to the duet aria of Happiness and Honour (fifth movement).

Bach's musical style reacts to the text, as usual, with great agility – to the 'rolling drums' mentioned in the opening chorus and which do in fact 'roll' – and likewise, in the middle of the final chorus, to the 'laurel', the tendrils of which curl mellifluously in the two flute parts. In the seventh movement there is a particularly original illustration of the text. Gratitude demands a memorial for Kortte: 'Etch this remembrance into the hardest marble!' Bach sets this as a beautiful, contemplative aria with two flutes. Within this music, however, he already depicts the stone-mason working on the marble: we hear his hammer blows chiselling the name into the stone, quietly but unmistakably, in the unison strings. One wonders if Bach ever imagined that his music might serve as a musical memorial, making the professor's name familiar in centuries to come.

Klaus Hofmann 2013 (Vol. 4)

Production Notes (BWV 207)

BWV207

The original full score (Mus. ms. Bach P 174) and the orchestral parts (St 93) at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin are the reference materials that remain of this cantata. Although the original manuscript has survived, many questions arise regarding the performance of the piece. Several problems must be addressed, for example in the woodwind parts for the first movement, which include notes outside of the instruments' ranges. Also, the two parts marked for the oboe have not been transposed and we can only assume that they were written for oboe d'amore. As for the flutes, the second part often descends below the instrument's lower register so that the player must double the first flute part each time this occurs.

Another problem is that in the original full score, there is an independent movement called *Marche*; however, it is unclear where it should be inserted within the composition. For this performance, we have decided to play the movement as a prelude to the final chorus.

Masaaki Suzuki 2014 (Vol. 4)

Vol. 5 ('Birthday cantatas')

Lasst uns sorgen, lasst uns wachen, BWV 213

(Let us take care, let us keep watch)

Herkules auf dem Scheidewege – Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Geburtstag des Kurprinzen (5. September 1733)
Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander) 1737
Corno da caccia I, II, Oboe I auch Oboe d'amore, Oboe II, Violino I, II, Viola I, II, Soprano (Wollust), Alto (Herkules), Tenore (Tugend), Basso (Merkur), Continuo

1. Chorus. Lasst uns sorgen, lasst uns wachen…
2. Recitativo (Alto). Und wo? Wo ist die rechte Bahn…
3. Aria (Soprano). Schlafe, mein Liebster, und pflege der Ruh…
4. Recitativo (Soprano, Tenore). Auf! folge meiner Bahn…
5. Aria (Alto). Treues Echo dieser Orten…
6. Recitativo (Tenore). Mein hoffnungsvoller Held!…

7. Aria (Tenore). Auf meinen Flügeln sollst du schweben…
8. Recitativo (Tenore). Die weiche Wollust locket zwar…
9. Aria (Alto). Ich will dich nicht hören…
10. Recitativo (Alto, Tenore). Geliebte Tugend, du allein…
11. Aria Duetto (Alto, Tenore). Ich bin deine…
12. Recitativo accompagnato (Basso). Schaut, Götter…
13. Chorus [e Arioso (Basso)]. Lust der Völker, Lust der Deinen…

The cantatas *Lasst uns sorgen, lasst uns wachen and Tönet, ihr Pauken, erschallet, Trompeten* belong to a series of festive works that Bach performed in 1733–34 in honour of the Saxon Prince-Elector Friedrich August II and his family; these were played by the Collegium musicum in Leipzig that had been founded by Telemann and had been directed by Bach since 1729. The death of Augustus the Strong on 1st February 1733 marked the end of an era for Saxony, and expectations were high for his son, who succeeded him as Prince-Elector and shortly afterwards as King of Poland. Bach, too, hoped for improvements. In the summer of 1733 he delivered his Missa, BWV 233 I (consisting of the Kyrie and Gloria of what was to become the Mass in B minor), to his new ruler, along with a request to be granted a court title. The festive performances in Leipzig that soon followed allowed him to keep his application fresh in the minds of the ruling family and to gain their goodwill. Finally he was successful: after a renewed application he was given the title of court composer.

The cantata *Lasst uns sorgen* was written for the eleventh birthday of the Saxon Electoral Prince Friedrich Christian on 5th September 1733. The previous day, the following announcement was placed in the *Leipziger Zeitungen*: 'Bach's Collegium Musicum will tomorrow, 5th September, most humbly celebrate the illustrious birthday of His High ness the Electoral Prince of Saxony with solemn music from 4 until 6 in the afternoon in the Zimmermann Garden by the Grimm Gate.'

The performance was therefore a festive open-air occasion in the coffee garden of Café Zimmermann, which was a regular concert venue for the Collegium musicum. Those who attended discovered what sort of 'solemn' [i.e. festive] music was to be played with the help of a printed programme, probably very similar to the reprint of the texts in a book of poetry that Bach's 'poet in residence' Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700–64), known as Picander, was later to publish in Part IV of his *Ernst-Schertzhafften und Satyrischen Gedichte* (1737). Picander's volume calls it: 'Hercules at the Crossroads, for the birthday of His High ness the Electoral Prince of Saxony, 5th September 1733. DRAMA PER MUSICA.'

The term 'dramma per musica' indicates the work's genre: it is a dramatic cantata. i.e. one that allocates specific roles to singers. The title and the name of the protagonist, Hercules, allude to the world of antiquity and its gods. The demigod Hercules (in Greek Heracles) was the illegitimate son of Jupiter (Zeus), father of the gods, and Alkmene, a vigorous and exceptionally handsome hero with the eternal radiance of youth – and theref ore a popular symbol and idol of baroque rulers. In Picander's libretto he represents the Electoral Prince, and in Bach's music he is sung by an alto (at the age of eleven, his voice had not yet broken). According to ancient mythology – Greek and many others besides – Mercury (Hermes), sung by a bass in Bach's cantata, is the messenger of the gods, a mediator between the world of the gods and the human world. In addition there are two allegorical figures, Lust (soprano) and Virtue (tenor), and larger groups representing the Divine Council (in the opening chorus) and the Choir of Muses (in the final movement).

The plot alludes to an episode from Hercules' youth. Banished to a remote place after an act of violence, he considers what the future course of his life will be. There, at a crossroads, he encounters two women. One of them, outwardly alluring, is Lust. She tries to win Hercules' friendship and promises him a comfortable life full of comfort and pleasure. The other is Virtue, who also tries to

befriend him, suggesting that he should follow the path of virtue in accordance with the will of the gods, that he should not shy away from hardship, work and toil, and become a master of all that is great and good. Hercules rejects Lust and chooses Virtue.

In Bach's birthday cantata the source material from antiquity is adapted to the needs of the occasion. This starts in the opening chorus: the gods carefully watch the development of the young 'son of the gods' and decide to oversee his way of virtue, to future greatness. Then the young Hercules appears (second movement) and asks himself and nature (the 'slender branches') about the path that he will follow. Like two possible answers, Lust and Virtue appear, court him, tempt and warn him. They are interrupted by a monologue from Hercules (fifth movement) in which he once more asks for advice from nature – which, like an oracle but nonetheless as an echo of his own inner voice, tells him to turn down Lust and follow Virtue. At the end of this inner conflict comes the harsh rejection of Lust (ninth movement) and a profession of steadfast faith between Hercules and Virtue (tenth and eleventh movements).

Mercury's recitative (twelfth movement) provides the turning point of this play with images and figures from antiquity, as well as the deciphering of the riddle – although all the listeners must surely have worked it out some time earlier. The gods' messenger – who, as befits his stature, is granted the luxury of orchestral accompaniment to his recitative – speaks to the Council of the Gods and simultaneously to the citizens of Saxony: Look! Our Hercules is none other than the Electoral Prince Friedrich Christian, and he is on the right path, a very promising one! And look! The Muses too are overjoyed to see it! In the final chorus the Muses present their congratulations to the future ruler, supported by a solo from Mercury. And the fact that it is specifically the Muses, the goddesses of the arts, who are here presenting their tribute, will have been clearly understood by the ruling family as an expression of what was expected of them.

As in *Tönet, ihr Pauken*, those who are familiar with the music of Johann Sebastian Bach will meet old acquaintances in the choruses and arias. A good year after composing them, Bach reused the introductory chorus and all five aria movements – with new texts – in his *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248. The introductory chorus appears in Part IV of the oratorio, with a text starting 'Fallt mit Danken, fallt mit Loben' ('Fall down with thanks, fall down with praise'). In addition the echo movement (fifth movement) returns there as a soprano aria with the text 'Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Name' ('Does my saviour, does your name infuse'), and the tenor aria 'Auf meinen Flügeln sollst du schweben' ('You shall soar up on my wings'; seventh movement) becomes 'Ich will nur dir zu Ehren leben' ('I want only to live to your glory'). Lust's slumber aria 'Schlafe, mein Liebster' ('Sleep, my dearest'; third movement), was included in Part II of the oratorio, with the same opening words and the exquisite accompaniment of an oboe quartet. The duet of Hercules and Virtue (eleventh movement) was used with minor modifications in Part III as the duet 'Herr, dein Mitleid' ('Lord, your mercy').

The only one of these movements to be subjected to a major revision was Hercules's aria 'Ich will dich nicht hören' ('I don't want to hear you'; ninth movement), which recurs as 'Bereite dich, Zion' ('Prepare yourself, Zion') in Part I of the oratorio. In this case Bach transformed an attitude of brusque rejection into a bridegroom's feeling of loving expec tation – a remarkable feat which has earned him much praise from Bach scholars. For the last movement of this birthday composition Bach turned to a homage cantata – now lost – from his Köthen period, which he had already adapted into the cantata *Erwünschtes Freudenlicht* (BWV 184) for the third day of Whitsun in 1724, expanding the original final duet into a four-part piece.

Klaus Hofmann 2015 (Vol. 5)

Tönet, ihr Pauken, erschallet, Trompeten, BWV 214
(Sound, ye drums, Ring out, ye trumpets!)

Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Geburtstag der Königin (8. Dezember 1733)
Text: Textdichter unbekannt
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe I auch Oboe d'amore, Oboe II, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Bellona), Alto (Pallas), Tenore (Irene), Basso (Fama), Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Continuo, Violoncello, Violone

1. Chorus. Tönet, ihr Pauken! Erschallet, Trompeten!…
2. Recitativo (Tenore). Heut ist der Tag…
3. Aria (Soprano). Blast die wohlgegriffnen Flöten…
4. Recitativo (Soprano). Mein knallendes Metall…
5. Aria (Alto). Fromme Musen! meine Glieder!…
6. Recitativo (Alto). Unsre Königin im Lande…
7. Aria (Basso). Kron und Preis gekrönter Damen…
8. Recitativo (Basso). So dringe in das weite Erdenrund…
9. Chorus. Blühet, ihr Linden in Sachsen, wie Zedern!…

The very title of this work betrays something of the splendour of the orchestral forces used in this magnificent festive work, written to mark the 34th birthday of the Prince-Elector's wife, Maria Josepha of Saxony, Queen of Poland, on 8th December 1733. The decision to celebrate the occasion with music may have been taken rather late: Bach's score is dated the day before the birthday, i.e. 7th December, allowing no more than 24 hours for copying the parts and rehearsals! For the performance a booklet of texts was printed and, in accordance with the practice of the time, an especially lavishly produced copy of this booklet would have been delivered to the Dresden court. As the booklet shows, the per formance itself was given in Leipzig by the Collegium musicum directed by Bach himself, probably – as was usual – in the Zimmermann coffee house. It was a society occasion of the first order, accompanied not by coffee, cake, beer and tobacco smoke but with splen dour, pomp and ceremony, certainly attended by the cream of Leipzig society. Even if the Queen herself was absent, a representative of the court would surely have been in attendance.

The identity of the librettist is not known. The cantata text – and Bach's setting – belong to the 'dramma per musica' genre, in other words a piece with roles for characters whose words portray action. The action is sustained by four mythological and allegorical figures, represented by solo singers of the four traditional vocal types. Bellona (soprano), the goddess of war, speaks for the armed forces of Saxony. Pallas (alto), or Pallas Athene, is the goddess of the arts and sciences; Irene (tenor) is the goddess of peace; and finally Fama (bass) is the goddess of fame. The latter two roles, although representing female characters, are sung by a tenor and a bass, probably because Bach wished to use a 'proper' quartet of soloists and attached greater importance to musical demands than to dramaturgical logic.

The plot itself is very modest. The first movement summons us to celebrate and to salute the Queen, after which the four characters all pay her a birthday tribute from their different perspectives. For all of them it is a joyous occasion, for the goddess of peace as well as for the goddess of war, for the goddess of the arts and sciences as well as for the goddess of fame. In the end Irene, Bellona, Pallas and Fama join forces to convey their good wishes. Irene, goddess of peace, calls out 'Blühet, ihr Linden in Sachsen, wie Zedern!' ('Bloom, ye lindens in Saxony, like cedars!') – in other words, blossom in long-lasting peace and prosperity, as enduring as the cedars for centuries and millennia.

Bellona summons up a magnificent military parade; Pallas makes the Muses sing with full voice. And Fama wishes – for herself and the others as well as the Queen – many more 'güldene Freuden' ('golden joys') in 'fröhlichen Stunden' ('happy hours') and 'freudigen Zeiten' ('joyful times').

Little needs to be said here about Bach's music. The majority of it – including the most important sections – is well-known from other contexts. Of the five main movements of this cantata – the two choruses (beginning and end) and three arias – four were supplied with new texts and transferred to Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* in 1734. The opening movement of the cantata, 'Tönet, ihr Pauken, erschallet, Trompeten' ('Sound, ye drums, Ring out, ye trumpets'), also begins the oratorio with the words 'Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage' ('Rejoice, exult! Praise those days'). As a result, one of the best-loved moments in the birthday cantata is lost: its first words call upon various instrument in turn, and this is also the order in which Bach introduces them at the beginning and then again when the voices enter: first the timpani, then the trumpets and then the 'klingenden Saiten' ('resonant strings') of the string orchestra – as if they were following the singers' exhortations.

In her aria (third movement) Bellona, goddess of war, calls upon the 'wohlgegriffnen Flöten' ('expertly held flutes') – rather than the trumpets, thereby indicating that peace and security reign. Her aria does have a military tone, although this is not to the fore: from time to time, in both the solo part and the accompaniment, there are allusions to a military signal that will not have been lost upon Bach's contemporaries – and this may be the reason why this is the only one of the arias that was not transferred to the *Christmas Oratorio*. Pallas's aria, 'Fromme Musen, meine Glieder' ('Devout Muses! My sisters!', fifth movement), here for alto accompanied by oboe d'amore, appears as a tenor aria with *concertante* flute in the *Christmas Oratorio*, with the text 'Frohe Hirten, eilt, ach eilet' ('Happy shepherds, hurry, oh hurry'). The seventh movement, the aria 'Kron und Preis gekrönter Damen' ('Crown and prize of crowned ladies') addressed directly to the Queen, was transformed into one addressed to the Saviour, 'Großer Herr und starker König' ('Mighty Lord and great king'). The movement that concludes the birthday cantata – in which, as in an opera finale, the actors appear individually on stage and say their last words – was reused as the introductory chorus of Part III of the *Christmas Oratorio*, albeit without the character dramaturgy but instead as a hymn-like appeal to God: 'Herrscher des Himmels, erhöre das Lallen, lass dir die matten Gesänge gefallen, wenn dich dein Zion mit Psalmen erhöht!' ('Lord of the heavens, hark to the babble, may our feeble song please you, when your Zion lifts you up with psalms!').

Klaus Hofmann 2015 (Vol. 5)

Vol. 6 (Trauerode)

Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen Strahl, BWV 198

(Let, Princess, let one more beam)

Kantate zum akademischen Trauerfestakt für die Kurfürstin Christiane Eberhardine (Uraufführung: 17. 10. 1727)
Text: Johann Christoph Gottsched 1727
Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe/ Oboe d'amore I, II, Violino I, II, Viola, Viola da gamba I ,II, Liuto I, II, Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Continuo

1. [Chorus]. Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen Strahl…
2. Recitativo (Soprano). Dein Sachsen, dein bestürztes Meißen…
3. Aria (Soprano). Verstummt, verstummt, ihr holden Saiten!…
4. Recitativo (Alto). Der Glocken bebendes Getön…
5. Aria (Alto). Wie starb die Heldin so vergnügt!…

6. Recitativo (Tenore). Ihr Leben ließ die Kunst zu sterben…
7. Chorus. An dir, du Fürbild großer Frauen…
8. [Aria] (Tenore). Der Ewigkeit saphirnes Haus…
9. Recitativo (Basso). Was Wunder ists? Du bist es wert…
10. Chorus ultimus. Doch, Königin! du stirbest nicht…

Bach's so-called 'Mourning Ode' was composed for a public occasion that attracted attention not just in Leipzig but all over Saxony. On 5th September 1727 Christiane Eberhardine, wife of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland Augustus the Strong, passed away. She had enjoyed the adoration of the overwhelmingly Protestant population of Saxony to an unusual degree because she had shown herself to be steadfast, remaining Evangelical even after her husband had converted to Catholicism in 1697 in order to make himself eligible for the Polish throne. In Leipzig people felt obliged to commemorate her passing with an imposing funeral celebration. Unexpectedly, however, the initiative for this did not come from the city authorities but from a student and aristocrat, Hans Carl von Kirchbach, who – despite all kinds of bureaucratic obstacle – arranged a memorial event in the Paulinerkirche (at that time the university church) on 17th October 1727, at which he himself gave the oration for the deceased First Lady, between the two parts of the music. Kirchbach had commissioned the prominent man of letters and university teacher Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66) to write the text, and Bach to compose the music. In fact the entire occasion was not a church event but rather a political ceremony in which the city council, university, nobility and bourgeoisie all took part.

Gottsched's poems are secular, containing neither Bible quotations nor hymns, and to some extent ecumenical. In elevated, solemn language – not afraid of exaggeration – the text devotes itself first to the sorrow of the populace regarding the Electress's death (movements 1–4). Then, with an intentionally diplomatic choice of words, it pays tribute to her as a role model in death, as she had been in life, as 'nurturer of the faith' (movements 5–7). The final part takes a look at the Electress's posthumous reputation (movements 8–10).

Like Gottsched's poems, so too Bach's music adopts the elevated style of eulogies and funeral orations. The voices are joined by an exquisite combination of instruments, characterized by the gently sonorous flutes, *oboi d'amore*, gambas and lutes. The three big choral movements (Nos 1, 7 and 10) are stylized as a concerto grosso, fugue and dance (gigue) respectively. In between we find an alternation of recitatives and solo arias, each with its own unique instrumentation. In the baroque manner, the text is portrayed vividly and fervently in the music. The words of mourning and lamentation in the first three movements are constantly heard in conjunction with sigh ing motifs; in the third movement the 'falling silent' of the 'exquisite strings' is expressed by means of pauses in the string parts; and in the eighth movement Bach illustrates 'eternity' with a note that is stretched out for more than two bars on the first syllable of the word. Such subtleties will not have gone unnoticed by most listeners. In particular, however, they must have been impressed by the alto recitative 'The bells' quaking sound', in which Bach imitates the sound of bells by having the instrumental groups enter in turn, starting high up with the flutes and moving down to the lowest register, the continuo. One can well imagine that people in Leipzig talked about this display piece long after the event.

Three and a half years later, on Good Friday 1731, Leipzig audiences could once again hear the outer choruses and the three solo arias, now with different texts, as parts of the (now lost) *St Mark Passion*, BWV 247. In addition, in the spring of 1729 Bach had already made 'parody' versions of the outer choruses in the funeral music (also now lost) for his former employer Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen, BWV 244a.

Klaus Hofmann 2015 (Vol. 6)

Georg Melchior Hoffmann (?): Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, BWV 53
(Strike, then, longed-for hour)

Georg Melchior Hoffmann (?)
Campanella, Violino I, II, Viola, Continuo

Aria (Alto). Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde (BWV 53)

Until the second half of the twentieth century this alto aria, which probably derives from a piece of funeral music, was believed to be a work by Bach. Then, however, it became apparent that it only held this position because of a mistake that happened in the 1760s in the Leipzig publishing firm of Breitkopf. The actual composer is probably Melchior Hoffmann (c.1679–1715), who from 1705 until 1715 was music director of the Neue Kirche in Leipzig and whom posterity can thank for at least one very successful vocal work, the solo cantata *Meine Seele rühmt und preist* (which was also temporarily numbered among Bach's works, as BWV 189). The musical charm of this funeral aria is by no means diminished by the correction of the composer's name. With sonorous baroque vividness, the piece acquires its special charm from the use – in reference to the text – of two bells (probably an organ register).

Klaus Hofmann 2015 (Vol. 6)

Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden, BWV 1083
after Giovanni Battista Pergolesi

(Erase, Highest, my sins)

nach dem 'Stabat mater' von Giovanni Battista Pergolesi
Text: Textdichter unbekannt; Psalm 51
Violino I, II, Violino ripieno I, II, Viola, Soprano, Alto, Continuo

Versus 1 (Soprano, Alto). Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden…
Versus 2 (Soprano). Ist mein Herz in Missetaten…
Versus 3 (Soprano, Alto). Missetaten, die mich drücken…
Versus 4 (Alto). Dich erzürnt mein Tun und Lassen…
Versus 5 (Soprano, Alto). Wer wird seine Schuld verneinen…
Versus 6 (Soprano, Alto). Siehe! ich bin in Sünd empfangen…
Versus 7 (Soprano). Sieh, du willst die Wahrheit haben…
Versus 8 (Alto). Wasche mich doch rein von Sünden…
Versus 9 (Soprano, Alto). Lass mich Freud und Wonne spüren…
Versus 10 (Soprano, Alto). Schaue nicht auf meine Sünden…
Versus 11 (Alto). Öffne Lippen, Mund und Seele…
Versus 12 (Soprano, Alto). Denn du willst kein Opfer haben…
Versus 13 (Soprano, Alto). Lass dein Zion blühend dauern…
Versus 14 (Soprano, Alto). Amen

Bach's duet cantata *Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden* from the period around 1746–47 represents a special case within Bach's cantata output in more than one respect – with regard to his so-called 'parody' technique and also stylistically. The long series of solo and duet arias can only to a certain extent be regarded as a cantata in the usual sense of the term. Nor is it an original composition by Bach: it is an arrangement of an original (and very important, in terms of musical history) work by the Neapolitan composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710–36) – his *Stabat mater*. In this respect it testifies to Bach's contact with the new stylistic world in which his youngest son, Johann Christian (1735–82), would enjoy success as a composer of operas.

We do not know what caused Bach to turn to Pergolesi's composition. It is likely to have been the result of an external impulse rather than his own initiative – perhaps quite simply a commission. This seems all the more probable because there is no discernible liturgical purpose for Bach's arrangement.

Obviously Pergolesi's original version, setting a medieval sequence about Mary, mother of Jesus, standing mournfully at the cross of her son, could not be performed in a Protestant church at that time. The idea of providing the work with a new text must have seemed appealing. The chosen source was Psalm 51, a penitential prayer of King David, which in its emotional stance and its inner development is a good match for the text of the sequence and for Pergolesi's musical setting. With great skill an unknown poet managed to paraphrase the psalm using the metrical scheme of the medieval sequence so that the text fits smoothly with Pergolesi's music.

Bach's task was primarily to underpin the new text. This was far more than just a technical exercise, however, and Bach approached it entirely in the spirit of a creative artist. The musical declamation had to be adapted to fit the German words; emphasis had to be modified; but at times Bach also seems to have taken exception to stylistic idiosyncrasies. Thus he introduced variety to those repeats that he regarded as unduly mechanical, often making changes to the melodic line or writing a contrapuntal continuation of imitations that are only hinted at. Overall, in Bach's hands Pergolesi's work – a decade after its composition – undergoes not so much a modernization as rather a restoration in the sense of being integrated into the stylistic world of Bach and his generation.

Let us consider: in 1746–47 Bach was a man who knew what was going on around him, stylistically – his sons, among others, informed him of that. He was certainly not wholly closed to new developments, as this very arrangement of Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* demonstrates. But Bach, it would appear, had his principles, and in his Pergolesi arrangement they clearly come into conflict with the aesthetic ideas of a new era.

Klaus Hofmann 2015 (Vol. 6)

Vol. 7

Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet (Peasant Cantata), BWV 212

(We have a new governor)

Cantate burlesque

Anläßlich der Huldigung für Carl Heinrich von Dieskau in Klein-Zschocher (Uraufführung: 30.08.1742)
Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander)
Corno, Flauto traverso, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano, Basso, Continuo, Cembalo

1. [Ouverture]
2. Aria. Duetto (Soprano, Basso). Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet…
3. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Nu, Mieke, gib dein Guschel immer her…
4. Aria (Soprano). Ach, es schmeckt doch gar zu gut…
5. Recitativo (Basso). Der Herr ist gut: Allein der Schösser…
6. Aria (Basso). Ach, Herr Schösser, geht nicht gar zu schlimm…
7. Recitativo (Soprano). Es bleibt dabei…
8. Aria (Soprano). Unser trefflicher…
9. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Er hilft uns allen, alt und jung…
10. Aria (Soprano). Das ist galant…
11. Recitativo (Basso). Und unsre gnädge Frau…

12. Aria (Basso). Fünfzig Taler bares Geld…
13. Recitativo (Soprano). Im Ernst ein Wort!…
14. Aria (Soprano). Klein-Zschocher müsse…
15. Recitativo (Basso). Das ist zu klug vor dich…
16. Aria (Basso). Es nehme zehntausend Dukaten…
17. Recitativo (Soprano). Das klingt zu liederlich…
18. Aria (Soprano). Gib, Schöne…
19. Recitativo (Basso). Du hast wohl recht…
20. Aria (Basso). Dein Wachstum sei feste und lache vor Lust!…
21. Recitativo (Soprano, Basso). Und damit sei es auch genung…
22. Aria (Soprano). Und dass ihr's alle wisst…
23. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano). Mein Schatz, erraten!…
24. Chor (Soprano, Basso). Wir gehn nun, wo der Dudelsack…

Among Bach's secular cantatas, two works have long enjoyed particular popularity: the so-called 'Coffee Cantata' *Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht* (BWV 211) and the 'Peasant Cantata' *Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet* (*We have a new governor*). In both works Bach displays his 'folk' side. The Coffee Cantata presented a humorous version of an argument within a bourgeois family of the period. In the Peasant Cantata, however, Bach transports his listeners into a farming environment.

The action is set at the manor of Klein-Zschocher, south-west of Leipzig. Here, on 30th August 1742, the cantata was performed in connection with the accession to the estate of the nobleman Carl Heinrich von Dieskau (1706–82). Dieskau had inherited the estate in the spring of 1742, and on 30th August that year Klein-Zschocher celebrated the customary hereditary homage. This was also the 36th birthday of the new lord of the manor. There were therefore twice as many reasons to celebrate.

The libretto is by Bach's regular Leipzig collaborator, Christian Friedrich Henrici (1700–64), who as an author went by the name of Picander although in fact he was a tax officer and local tax collector by profession. Dieskau was 'Kreis hauptmann' (regional governor) and, as head of the tax authority, Henrici's boss. The cantata may, therefore, have been written at Henrici/Picander's instigation.

Picander's libretto is based on exchanges between a peasant couple. The plot is simple: it all starts with a scene from the homage festivities, at which the peasant girl Mieke and a young farmer, enlivened by the free beer, flirt with each other. Picander skilfully uses the Upper Saxon dialect as a means of depicting the milieu. This also means that the slightly coarse aspect of the couple's exchanges is toned down, and the lewd references to the guests and the 'Kammerherr' (Chamberlain) himself into which Mieke and her admirer soon descend are perceived as merry and ironical. For example the local priest is mentioned, reportedly scowling at the joyful goings-on (second movement). Even Dieskau himself is not spared: 'Er weiß so gut als wir und auch wohl besser, wie schön ein bisschen Dahlen schmeckt' ('He knows as well as we do, indeed better, how fine a little smooching tastes' – movement 3) – an allusion that possibly did not please Dieskau's 'noble Lady'. She herself is later praised: she is 'nicht ein prinkel stolz' ('not the slightest bit proud'), 'recht fromm, recht wirtlich und genau' ('very pious, hospitable and proper') and so thrifty that she can turn a 'Fledermaus' (a small coin) into four thalers (movement 11). Later the hope is expressed that the 'Schöne' ('fair lady') may have 'viel Söhne' ('many sons'; movement 18) – a wish that is not entirely free of irony, as the Dieskaus had hitherto had only daughters, five in all.

In addition there are all sorts of references to regional politics and tax collection. It was to Dieskau's credit that in the most recent 'Werbung' ('recruitment') Klein-Zschocher had escaped lightly (movement 9), and that the neighbouring villages of Knauthain and Cospuden, which also belonged to the estate, were spared the 'caducken Schocken' ('extra land-dues', i.e. the property tax

for fallow land; movement 10). In movement 5 a 'Schösser' (a tax collector and official), who is evidently a guest at the festivities, gets what is coming to him on account of the imposition of a 'neu Schock' ('new tax': two and a half thalers) 'wenn man den Finger kaum ins kalte Wasser steckt' ('before we've hardly got our fingers wet', i.e. by fishing without authorization). Later a certain 'Herr Ludwig' and an accountant are mentioned, who on this occasion – clearly contrary to their usual practice – are forced to visit the tavern together with the peasants (movement 23).

There is no parsimony with positive words about their lords and masters. Mieke sets about singing 'der Obrigkeit zu Ehren ein neues Liedchen' ('in honour of our rulers, a new song'; movement 13) and performs a charming aria expressing good wishes for Klein-Zschocher (movement 14). But her friend remarks disparagingly that it is just a song 'nach der Städter Weise' ('like they sing in town'); 'wir Bauern singen nicht so leise' ('We peasants don't sing so gently'; movement 15), and immediately strikes up a boisterous song in his own coarse style, in which he wishes the Chamberlain ten thousand ducats and a good glass of wine every day (movement 16). Now it is Mieke's turn to criticize him when she also launches ironically into a peasant-style song (move ment 18). The farmer then decides 'auch was Städtisches zu singen' ('to sing something in the town style too'): a song full of good wishes for growth and prosperity (movement 20). This little stylistic dispute – 'urban' versus 'peasant' music – brings the action to an end: every one goes to the tavern, where the bagpipes are already droning, and gives three cheers for Dieskau and his family (movement 24).

In Bach's music we can plainly hear his enjoyment of how the scene is described in the libretto. With a small basic complement of two violins (mostly playing in unison), one viola and continuo, Bach may have had typical village music in mind; in passing these instruments are joined by a flute (movement 14) and hunting horn (movements 16 and 18). The folk style already characterizes the instrumental introduction, a 'patchwork overture' in which we hear a sequence of quite disparate sections, in the manner of a potpourri. From time to time Bach quotes folk songs: in movement 3, as the peasant couple is flirting, there is an instrumental reference to 'Mit mir und dir ins Federbett, mit mir und dir ins Stroh' ('With thee and me in the featherbed, with thee and me in the hay') or in the 'ducat aria' (movement 16), which alludes to the popular tune 'Was helfen mir tausend Dukaten, wenn sie versoffen sind' ('What good are a thousand ducats to me if they are all drunk away'). Bach also strikes a folk note in the two duets at the beginning and end of his 'Cantate burlesque' and, like the overture, the arias also contain the rhythms of dances that were popular at the time such as the polonaise (movement 4), sarabande (movement 8, quoting the famous 'Follia' melody), mazurka (movement 12) and minuet (movement 14). Bach quotes himself in the 'urban' bass aria 'Dein Wachs tum sei feste' ('May your growth be strong'; movement 20): it is a parody of Pan's aria 'Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge, so wackelt das Herz' ('In dancing and leaping my heart shakes' from the cantata *Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde* (*Swift, you swirling winds*, BWV 201). Probably the similarly 'urban' soprano aria 'Klein-Zschocher müsse so zart und süße' ('Klein-Zschocher should be as tender and sweet'; movement 14) is also derived from an earlier work.

In addition we know that the festivities in Klein-Zschocher ended with a firework display. And apparently there was more music, too: according to the musicologist Hugo Riemann (1849–1919), a now lost trio sonata by Johann Gottlieb Graun (1702/03–71) bore the date '30th August 1742' in Bach's handwriting.

Klaus Hofmann 2016 (Vol. 7)

Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209
(He does not know what sorrow is)

Uraufführung: unbekannt
Text: Textdichter unbekannt
Flauto traverso, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano, Continuo

1. Sinfonia
2. Recitativo (Soprano). Non sa che sia dolore…
3. Aria (Soprano). Parti pur e con dolore…
4. Recitativo (Soprano). Tuo saver al tempo e l'età constrasta…
5. Aria (Soprano). Ricetti gramezza e pavento…

The texts of Bach's secular cantatas, like those of his sacred cantatas, are usually in German. The two surviving Italian cantatas associated with his name – *Non sa che sia dolore* and *Amore traditore* – are striking exceptions, and have long been regarded with scepticism by Bach biographers and researchers. As both of the cantatas have only survived as copies, we do not have documentary verification of Bach's authorship. Moreover, stylistic considerations should be taken into account. The two pieces, however, are very different cases, and researchers have thus approached them with varying levels of interest.

The problem of *Non sa che sia dolore* has been occupying Bach researchers for a good hundred years, although they have so far failed to provide definitive clarification concerning its authenticity and the circumstances of its composition. A particular incentive for examining this work is provided by the text –which is by no means an unproblematic one. Although its meaning is partly obscured by poetic images and allusions, it nevertheless allows the outline of the work's motivation and purpose to emerge: the cantata is a farewell to a young scholar who is in the process of taking leave of his existing life and friends, and who can count on finding important patrons when he reaches the end of his journey, in Ansbach in Franconia.

Who might this young scholar have been? One of the more recent hypotheses has suggested Lorenz Christoph Mizler (1709–78), founder of the 'Sozietät der musikalischen Wissenschaften' ('Corresponding Society of the Musical Sciences') that is often associated with his name – and of which Bach became a member in 1747. Mizler came from near Ansbach, and had studied in Leipzig where he became a pupil of Bach's. When he took his Master's degree in 1734, he dedicated his dissertation (published the same year) to four prominent musical figures, one of whom was Bach. After that he left Leipzig, and his departure might have provided the impulse for the cantata. Many details of the text and also the prominent role played by the transverse flute in the cantata would be suitable for Mizler, who was himself an enthusiastic flautist.

And who could have written the cantata's text? Several linguistic details reveal that the author was not Italian but German, and that writing the text caused him some problems. For assistance he helped himself liberally to Italian literature: he turned in the introductory verses to the classical poet Giovanni Battista Guarini (1538–1612) and in the rest of the work to the opera librettist Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782). He evidently had a thorough literary education. Here, too, the evidence seems to point in one direction: to Johann Matthias Gesner (1691–1761), then headmaster of the Thomasschule in Leipzig who, when he had been headmaster of the grammar school in Ansbach in 1729–30, had already become aware of Mizler, and had become his mentor and patron.

Admittedly, all of these are no more than hypotheses, speculative attempts to assign the cantata a place in Bach's life and personal environment, on the basis of its text. But the music, too, is difficult to categorize. In terms of format, a solo soprano cantata with an opening *concertante* movement for flute and two *da capo* arias introduced by recitatives is by no means unusual. It is also unproblematic to believe that Bach was the composer of the sinfonia and recitatives. What is surprising, however, is the

relative modernity of the arias, which prove to be strongly influences by the stylistic world of Italian opera and cantata writing. But perhaps the music's *Italianità* can be understood as a wholly intentional correlation with the Italian text.

Despite all the efforts of Bach scholars, *Non sa che sia dolore* has remained an enigma. Perhaps one day a fortunate source discovery will shed further light on the matter. Until then, however, the music can captivate its audiences and, with its beauty tinged with mystery, lead them into the world of fantasies.

Klaus Hofmann 2016 (Vol. 7)

Amore traditore, BWV 203
(Treacherous love)

Uraufführung: unbekannt
Text: Textdichter unbekannt
Basso solo, Cembalo obbligato

1. [Aria] (Basso). Amore traditore…
2. Recitativo (Basso). Voglio provar…
3. Aria (Basso). Chi in amore ha nemica la sorte…

This short solo cantata for bass and harpsichord, comprising just three movements, has survived in a composite manuscript from the eighteenth century, which was still available when the Bach-Gesellschaft's complete edition was prepared in 1862 but has subsequently disappeared. In that manuscript the cantata was definitively labelled as a work 'di Giov. Seb. Bach'. Nonetheless, doubts as to its authenticity are legitimate. These have nothing to do with the quality of the music. It is a very typical Italian chamber cantata, and its text is equally typical: the monologue of a disappointed lover, who takes Amor, the god of love, to task, accuses him of betrayal and deception, and defiantly refuses to be a suffering slave to unrequited love.

The form of the cantata follows an established pattern: two *da capo* arias are linked by a recitative. The first aria has as its basis a basso continuo ritornello, which frames and subdivides the movement. Above its ostinato motifs the vocal line roams freely, sometimes alluding to them by means of imitation.

A special feature of the second aria is that the harpsichord is used not as a continuo instrument with a chordal accompaniment (as it had been previously) but in a virtuoso, *concertante* role. Here the musical activity takes place on two almost totally separate levels. The singer presents something akin to a vocal minuet, at a moderate tempo and with a relatively simple metrical scheme, without extended coloraturas, progressing to a large extent in two- and four-bar groups typical of dance music. In sharp contrast, however, the harpsichord plays an extremely lively part with toccata-like figurations and, at times, full chords. This is the work of a very idiosyncratic composer.

If the cantata had not already been linked to the name of Bach, nobody would have thought of ascribing it to him. Stylistically it does not really fit anywhere in his output. One might at best imagine that his link to the piece was as an arranger rather than a com poser. Perhaps the cantata was originally for another, higher vocal range, and was arranged for bass voice at a later stage, possibly by Bach. Or perhaps the *concertante* harpsichord part was added by an arranger in place of a normal, chordal continuo part – again Bach might have done so. This cantata, too, presents us with many riddles.

Klaus Hofmann 2016 (Vol. 7)

Vol. 8 (Celebratory cantatas)

Schleicht, spielende Wellen, und murmelt gelinde, BWV 206

(Glide, Playful Waves)

Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Geburts- und Namenstage Augusts III. (Uraufführung: 7.10.1736)
Textdichter unbekannt
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverse I, II, III, Oboe I, II, auch Oboe d'amore I, II, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Pleiße), Alto (Donau),Tenore (Elbe), Basso (Weichsel), Continuo

1. Chorus. Schleicht, spielende Wellen, und murmelt gelinde!…
2. Recitativo (Basso). O glückliche Veränderung!…
3. Aria (Basso). Schleuß des Janustempels Türen…
4. Recitativo e Arioso (Tenore). So recht! beglückter Weichselstrom!…
5. Aria (Tenore). Jede Woge meiner Wellen…
6. Recitativo (Alto). Ich nehm zugleich an deiner Freude teil…
7. Aria (Alto). Reis von Habsburgs hohem Stamme…
8. Recitativo (Soprano). Verzeiht, bemooste Häupter starker Ströme…
9. Aria (Soprano). Hört doch! der sanften Flöten Chor…
10. Recitativo (Basso, Tenore, Alto, Soprano). Ich muss, ich will gehorsam sein…
11. Chorus. Die himmlische Vorsicht der ewigen Güte…

The 'dramma per musica' *Schleicht, spielende Wellen* is dedicated to Augustus III (1696–1763), Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. The history of the work is linked in a special way to a surprise visit the royal family made to Leipzig in 1734. When the royal visit on 2nd October 1724 was announced, Bach was working on the cantata *Schleicht, spielende Wellen*, intended as a festive piece to mark the birthday of Augustus III on 7th October. But nobody had considered the possibility that the sovereign might be present in person. On account of his visit, a celebratory event was arranged for the 5th October, focusing instead on the anniversary of his election as King of Poland. Bach had no option but to put the birthday cantata aside and devote himself to the new project, the cantata *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen*, with all possible haste. *Schleicht, spielende Wellen* eventually saw the light of day two years later, on 7th October 1736, with a festive performance at the Café Zimmermann in Leipzig.

Bach's unknown librettist organized the text as a roleplay of four rivers: all of them have a claim on the ruler about which they must come to an agreement. The Vistula (bass) stands for Poland, the Elbe (tenor) for Saxony, the Danube (alto) for Austria and the Pleiße (soprano) for Leipzig. First of all the four rivers are called upon to demonstrate their festive joy by means of rushing waves and strong currents. After that, each river has a *secco* recitative followed by an aria. In these pairs of movements the Vistula, Elbe and Danube in turn have the opportunity to make their claims and express their admiration for the royal house. Only the Pleiße puts its claim forward silently. It acts as a mediator, and its words – ultimately taken up by all four rivers – explain that the Danube should honour the royal couple but also leave them to the other three rivers; meanwhile the Vistula and Elbe should accept that the King will share his time between Poland and Saxony. The results of the encounter are portrayed in a recitative from the four main characters, who reach a peaceful accord and, with collective greetings, commend the King to divine providence.

With evident purpose and great skill the librettist has delighted in making abundant use of river metaphors, and Bach too avails himself extensively of these. No doubt to the surprise of all the

listeners of the time, the splendidly orchestrated opening movement begins *piano*, then breaking out all the more effectively into *forte* with timpani and trumpets. The same procedure is then repeated when the choir enters: quietly, with a rocking motion, we hear the gliding waves, murmuring softly in the lower register, *pianissimo*, and then they rush swiftly and powerfully, supported by the entire orchestra with fast runs in the violins, flutes and oboes.

The Vistula's recitative (second movement) brings our attention back to the turmoil of war in Poland following the royal election of 1733, thereupon praising the King's abilities as a peacemaker all the more emphatically. Like the recitative with its mythological allusions, the aria 'Close the doors of Janus's temple' (third movement) is evidently intended for academically trained listeners. In ancient Rome the doors of the Temple of Janus remained open whenever the Empire was at war, and were closed only when the war had been won and peace reigned on all the borders. The message of the aria is thus: now peace reigns throughout the land.

As the text suggests, musical images of billows and waves predominate in the lively solo violin part in the aria of the Elbe. In the middle section the voice joins in with demanding coloraturas; the mention of 'hundredfold echoes' of the 'sweet sounds' of the King's name gives rise to a wide variety of echo effects between the voice and solo violin.

The Danube declares a somewhat indirect claim on Augustus, as his wife was an Austrian princess from the Habsburg family (sixth movement). The aria, accompanied by two oboes in a sonorous and contrapuntally dense setting, is a song of praise to the King's wife.

The Pleiße now speaks up as an arbitrator (eight movement) – and, in her aria (ninth movement), demonstrates the harmony that unity produces: 'Listen! The choir of gentle flutes cheers the heart, delights the ear.' Following the text, Bach asks for a 'choir' of three flutes, which present the 'agreeable harmony' of the 'unbroken union' mentioned in the middle part of the aria. Such a musically delicate flute aria would never have been heard before in Leipzig. In the end unity and joy reign, and the choir and orchestra conclude the rivers' confrontation in the dance-like metre of a gigue.

Bach's cantata must have been very well liked in Leipzig: in 1740 he performed it again, with small adjustments to the text, to mark the sovereign's name day on 3rd August – this time in the open air, in the garden of the Café Zimmermann.

Klaus Hofmann 2016 (Vol. 8)

Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen, BWV 215
(Praise your Fortune, Blessed Saxony)

Dramma per musica

Glückwunschkantate zum Jahrestage der Königswahl Augusts III. (Uraufführung: 5.10.1734)
Text: Johann Christoph Clauder 1734
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverse I, II, Oboe I, II (auch Oboe d'amore I, II), Violino I, II, Viola (auch Violetta), Soprano I, Alto I, Tenore I, Basso I, Soprano II, Alto II, Tenore II, Basso II, Continuo, Fagotto

1. Chorus. Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen…
2. Recitativo (Tenore). Wie können wir, großmächtigster August…
3. Aria (Tenore). Freilich trotzt Augustus' Name…
4. Recitativo (Basso). Was hat dich sonst, Sarmatien, bewogen…
5. Aria (Basso). Rase nur, verwegner Schwarm…
6. Recitativo (Soprano). Ja, ja! Gott ist uns noch mit seiner Hülfe nah…

7. Aria (Soprano). Durch die von Eifer entflammeten Waffen…
8. Recitativo (Soprano, Tenore, Basso). Lass doch, o teurer Landesvater, zu…
9. Chorus. Stifter der Reiche, Beherrscher der Kronen…

More than any other secular work by Bach, the cantata *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen* reflects a piece of history. At the same time the circumstances of its composition provide insight into Bach's sometimes turbulent everyday professional life as *Thomaskantor* and director of music in Leipzig.

The work is a cantata that pays tribute to the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, Augustus III. It owes its existence to the surprise visit made by the royal family to Leipzig in 1734 in order to attend the annual fair held around Michaelmas. The King, Queen and Princes arrived on 2nd October and, as the visit had been announced just three days previously, organizing the essential congratulatory celebrations placed the city elders in a very difficult situation. The city's students were inspired – or perhaps compelled – to commission a homage cantata with all possible haste: the text from the well-known man of letters Magister Johann Christoph Clauder (1701–79), and the music from Bach. And even if the librettist worked very quickly, Bach cannot have had more than three days to produce the music. The festive occasion took place three days after the King's arrival, on 5th October. That day was also the anniversary of a significant political event: the previous year, in Warsaw, the Elector of Saxony had been elected King of Poland.

The cantata's text frequently refers to this event, and also – especially – to the political confusion that resulted from the monarch's election. The text does not, however, mention that the election did not proceed in a totally orthodox manner: Augustus did not put his name forward until after the Poles had already decided in favour of Prince Stanisław Leszczyński, and then he was elected King by a minority, under pressure from the Habsburgs and with support from Russia. Leszczyński, however, insisted on his right to the throne; military complications ensued. Leszczyński and his troops entrenched themselves in Danzig (Gdańsk) and managed to resist a siege for some six months until, in the spring of 1734, he was forced to yield to superior forces and surrendered.

Magister Clauder takes a somewhat different view of some of these happenings. In the fourth movement – the bass recitative – he claims that 'Sarmatia' (Poland) chose Augustus 'above all others', especially because of 'the magnificence of his virtue', which enraptured all his subjects. Anything else stems from envy and jealousy! In the sixth movement, the soprano recitative, allusion is made to an unnamed 'city that opposed him for so long' and yet which, as the text goes on to boast, 'feel[s] his mercy more than his anger'. The city in question is Danzig. In the last recitative, the eighth movement, the text takes a swipe at France: 'At a time', sings the bass, 'when we are surrounded on all sides by lightning and noise, yea, when the might of the French (which has so often been quashed)… even threatens our fatherland with sword and fire' – and so on. France was on the opposing side: Leszczyński was the father-in-law of Louis XV. Later on, in fact, Poland was very satisfied with its King Augustus – and, overall, historians have by no means reached a negative verdict on 'the Saxon Piast' – as he is called in the fourth movement.

Bach's music hardly requires any explanation. The splendid double chorus with full orchestra at the beginning; the rich use of wind instruments, also in recitatives; the virtuoso solo writing; the martial trumpet signal when the bass sings about warlike lightning and noise: Bach knew what worked! And no doubt the Leipzig audience hummed the beautiful, hymn-like, rather effusive ending of the cantata long after the event.

Our admiration is aroused not only by the beauty of the music itself but also by Bach's rate of work. In the shortest imaginable time he produced more than forty pages of score; with great alacrity

the parts had to be written out and the work had to be rehearsed. Admittedly Bach had made the process of composition easier in his time-honoured fashion: for the opening double chorus he reused the beginning of a cantata from 1732, written for the name day of Augustus the Strong (*Es lebe der König, der Vater im Lande*, BWV Anh. 11 – of which only the text has survived). A decade and a half later, Bach revised this movement again; in that form, as the *Osanna in excelsis* of the Mass in B minor, it acquired a longevity and relevance that went far beyond its own time.

In the arias for tenor (third movement) and bass (fifth movement), too, Bach evidently drew on existing works – although these cannot be identified with certainty. The only parts to have been composed completely from scratch were the recitatives, the soprano aria (seventh movement) and the final chorus. The soprano aria is a display piece with subtle, chamber-music-like sonority. Two transverse flutes in unison interact with the soprano (supported by oboe d'amore) above a bass line that is an octave higher than usual, played by violins and violas without any continuo accompaniment. Such a sound image, so to speak stripped of all earthly burden, is used by Bach primarily for depicting purity and innocence. Here it characterizes the King's nobility: 'But to repay evil with charity is the prerogative… of Augustus'. Bach enthusiasts will recognize the music: it appears in modified form in Part 5 of the *Christmas Oratorio* as a bass aria with the text 'Erleucht auch meine finstre Sinnen' (BWV 248/47).

Bach's 'dramma per Musica' was presented as an evening entertainment in the open air, in front of the King's lodgings in the Apelsches Haus (nowadays Königshaus) on the south side of the market square in Leipzig. The Leipzig municipal chronicles tell of a festive procession of musicians, accompanied by 600 students, each bearing a wax torch. The music was a total success; the chronicle reports that 'His Royal Majesty, alongside his Royal Spouse and Royal Princes… did not leave the window before the music was ended, but listened to it graciously, and His Majesty liked it extremely much'.

Klaus Hofmann 2016 (Vol. 8)

Vol. 9 (The Contest between Phoebus and Pan)

Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde, BWV 201

(Hurry, Ye Whirling Winds)

Dramma per musica. Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan

Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander) 1732
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe I, auch Oboe d'amore, Oboe II, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Momus), Alto (Mercurius), Tenore I (Tmolus), Tenore II (Midas), Basso I (Phoebus), Basso II (Pan), Continuo

1. Chorus. Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde…
2. Recitativo (Basso I, Basso II, Soprano). Und du bist doch so unverschämt und frei…
3. Aria (Soprano). Patron, das macht der Wind…
4. Recitativo (Alto, Basso I, Basso II). Was braucht ihr euch zu zanken…
5. Aria (Basso I). Mit Verlangen drück ich deine zarten Wangen…
6. Recitativo (Soprano, Basso II). Pan, rücke deine Kehle nun…
7. Aria (Basso II). Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge, so wackelt das Herz…
8. Recitativo (Alto, Tenore I). Nunmehro Richter her…
9. Aria (Tenore I). Phoebus, deine Melodei…
10. Recitativo (Basso II, Tenore II). Komm, Midas, sage du nun an…
11. Aria (Tenore II). Pan ist Meister, lasst ihn gehen!…

12. Recitativo (Soprano, Alto, Tenore I, Basso I, Tenore II, Basso II). Wie, Midas, bist du toll?…
13. Aria (Alto). Aufgeblasne Hitze…
14. Recitativo (Soprano). Du guter Midas, geh nun hin…
15. Chorus. Labt das Herz, ihr holden Saiten…

The Contest between Phoebus and Pan

Whereas the majority of Bach's secular cantatas were written for specific political, academic or private festive occasions, which are emphasized by their texts, in the case of the 'dramma per musica' *Geschwinde, ihr wirbelnden Winde* no particular catalyst is discernible. It may well be that Bach composed the piece on his own initiative, without an external incentive, especially because the message he conveys in the work can be understood as championing his own cause – a defence of his artistry and his musical attitudes against the trends of the time, against philistinism, superficiality of artistic judgement and an unquestioning preference for easy fare.

The score and parts date from 1729. The introductory chorus urges the 'whirling winds' to withdraw to the 'cave' so that the music may remain undisturbed, suggesting that the music was performed in late summer or early autumn. According to the *Aeneid* by Virgil (70–19 BC) Aeolus, god of the winds, kept the powerful autumn storms captive in a cave, releasing them only when the time was right. Evidently the people of Leipzig were hoping for good weather for an outdoor performance.

The work is remarkable for its opulent scoring, with no fewer than six vocal soloists, plus trumpets and timpani, flutes, oboes, strings and continuo. Bach had recently taken over leadership of the Leipzig Collegium musicum, founded by Telemann, and could evidently indulge himself.

The libretto was by Bach's regular and skilful collaborator, Picander (i.e. Christian Friedrich Henrici [1700–64)]. It alludes loosely to a famous episode from the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (43 BC – 17 AD), describing a musical competition between two Greek gods. Pan, the god of shepherds and flocks and companion of the nymphs, with his own invention, the panpipes, challenges Phoebus (Apollo), the cithara-playing god of the arts, to a contest. They are accompanied by their seconds, the Lydian mountain god Tmolus and the Phrygian king Midas. Phoebus and Pan compete and, as might have been expected, Phoebus emerges victorious. Midas, however, had voted for Pan; and he is now punished by Phoebus, who gives him donkey ears.

Picander's libretto turns the instrumental competition into a singing contest. Two additional characters join in as well: Momus, the god of mockery, and Mercury, the versatile messenger of the gods, who as the patron of merchants was a familiar mythological figure in the trade fair city of Leipzig. To some extent it is these two characters who drive the action forwards.

Bach divided up the vocal pitches into pairs. Momus and Mercury are allocated to the upper voices, soprano and alto; the 'seconds' Tmolus and Midas sing first and second tenor, and the protagonists Phoebus and Pan sing first and second bass. In the outer movements all six singers join in unison with the choir. In between there is a regular sequence of recitatives and arias, with one aria for each of the characters.

In the magnificent opening chorus, Bach lets the winds 'whirl' in rapid triplet figures. The middle section of this *da capo* movement, however, is full of charming echo effects between the choir and the instruments. The plot *per se* begins in the first recitative with an argument between Phoebus and Pan, in which the latter boasts about his artistry. By doing so, however, he earns the scorn of Momus, both here and in the following aria (third movement), who calls out to the show-off: 'Patron, das macht der Wind' ('My friend, this is just hot air'). In the following recitative (fourth movement) Mercury suggests a contest and asks the protagonists to choose their seconds.

Phoebus begins the competition with a beautiful aria (fifth movement). The text is full of the tender longing with which Phoebus mourns for his friend Hyacinth, killed by Zephyrus out of jealousy. Bach put all of his artistry into this movement. The exquisite sonority of flute, oboe d'amore and muted strings is combined with an expression of wistful longing. It ticks all the boxes: expressive leaps of a sixth and seventh in the opening theme, sighing grace notes, caressing triplet and trill figures. This movement is a display of artistic emotion *par excellence*.

Now Pan makes his appearance. His aria 'Zu Tanze, zu Sprunge, so wackelt das Herz' ('Dancing and leaping sets the heart in motion'; seventh movement) is a rustic *passepied*, and forms a striking contrast to Phoebus's aria: it is earthy and powerful. Bach makes the most of the 'motion' in musical terms, making it thoroughly comical. In the middle section of the aria, where – with a side long glance at Phoebus – the text mentions 'laboured' music, Bach introduces 'laboured' chromatic writing. Bach maybe somewhat biased, but he is not unfair: this movement is by no means lacking in artistry, and it comes as no surprise that Bach reused it some years later, with a new text ('Dein Wachstum sei feste'/'May your growth be strong'), in his *Peasant Cantata*, BWV 212.

Mercury and Tmolus are in agreement (eighth movement): Phoebus has won, Pan has lost. Tmolus strikes up a song of praise (ninth movement) for Phoebus and the charm of his music. Bach set this movement most charmingly as a trio with obbligato oboe d'amore. In the middle section, to the words 'aber wer die Kunst versteht' ('but whosoever understands the art'), he pointedly writes a canon between the voice and wind instrument.

Now it is Midas's turn to speak (tenth movement). He praises Pan, and the melodiousness and memorability of his song – with, unlike that of Phoebus, was not 'gar zu bunt' ('all too colourful') but rather 'leicht und ungezwungen' ('approachable and unforced'). Midas, too, strikes up a song of praise (eleventh movement). This time, however, Bach has tinged the song with irony: when Midas refers to the evidence of his 'beiden Ohren' ('two ears' – with a long note on the syllable 'oh'), Bach has the strings bray quietly like a donkey. In the following recitative (twelfth movement) Midas receives the punishment he deserves: donkey ears. And there is more mockery to follow: in Mercury's aria (thirteenth movement) there is a mention of a 'Schellenmütze' ('dunce's cap') that the Philistine Midas has earned.

The final chorus praises the 'Kunst und Anmut' ('art and charm') of true music, and defends it against pedantry and derision. This is all part of the message Bach intended to convey. This is even clearer in the preceding recitative (fourteenth movement), when Momus tells Midas: 'Du hast noch mehr der gleichen Brüder…' ('You have brothers of the same ilk. Ignorance and stupidity now wish to be wisdom's neighbours, judgements are passed on the spur of the moment, and those who so do all belong in your society.') This does not apply only to Midas, but also to critics of Bach and of his art. And the ending sounds as if Bach were trying to encourage himself: 'Ergreife, Phoebus, deine Leier wieder…' ('Phoebus, now take up once more your lyre, nothing is more pleasurable than your songs.')

We do not know who or what prompted Bach in 1729 to wish to convey such a message. Later, though, he had ample cause to do so – in 1749 for example, when Johann Gottlieb Biedermann, headmaster of the grammar school in Freiberg, asserted that music was the ruin of youth. This caused outrage among musicians and strong invective, and Bach could not let it pass. For a revival of the cantata that year he smuggled the headmaster's nickname, Birolius, and that of one of his supporters, into the final lines, which were changed to 'Verdopple, Phoebus, nun Musik und Lieder, tobt gleich Birolius und ein Hortens darwider!' ('Redouble now, Phoebus, your music and songs, though Birolius and Hortensius rage against them!')

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Auf, schmetternde Töne der muntern Trompeten, BWV 207a
(Up, Strident Sounds of Cheerful Trumpets)

Dramma per musica.

Glückwunschkantate zum Namenstage Augusts III (Uraufführung: 03.08.1735)
Text: Textdichter unbekannt
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe d'amore I, II, Taille, Violino I ,II, Viola, Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Continuo

1. Chorus. Auf, schmetternde Töne der muntern Trompeten…
2. Recitativo (Tenore). Die stille Pleiße spielt…
3. Aria (Tenore). Augustus' Namenstages Schimmer…
4. Recitativo (Soprano, Basso). Augustus' Wohl ist der treuen Sachsen Wohlergehn…
5. Aria: Duetto (Basso, Soprano). Mich kann die süße Ruhe laben…
5a. Ritornello
6. Recitativo (Alto). Augustus schützt die frohen Felder…
7. Aria (Alto). Preiset, späte Folgezeiten…
8. Recitativo (Tenore, Basso, Soprano, Alto). Ihr Fröhlichen, herbei!…
9. Chorus. August lebe, lebe, König!…
10. Anhang: Marche

Bach's parody technique has various facets. The use of existing material offered him an opportunity for a renewed involvement with the work, and the chance to improve and refine it. A further strong incentive for Bach was the possibility of salvaging for posterity the artistic substance of secular occasional pieces, written for a single performance, by providing them with a new religious text and transforming them into religious compositions that could be reused every year in the context of church services. For Bach it was very appealing to take a work designed for a single use and bring it back to life in this way. And, not least, the parody technique offered practical advantages: the composer's task could to some extent be confined to a few procedures such as substituting a new text, plus of course slight compositional changes and additions; and often the parts for the original version could be used again without extensive alterations.

The cantata *Auf, schmetternde Töne der muntern Trompeten* is an example of the kind of parody in which Bach was clearly primarily concerned with practical considerations. In this form the cantata was prepared for the name day of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland Augus tus III on 3rd August 1735. Bach based it on a cantata from 1726, *Vereinigte Zwietracht der wechselnden Saiten* (*United Division of Changing Strings*), BWV 207 [BIS-2001], written to congratulate the Leipzig academic Dr Gottlieb Kortte on taking up his law professorship. Most of the work in converting it into its new version for the royal name day fell to the – unknown – librettist. It was his task to imitate the metre and rhyme structure of the 1726 cantata text in a replacement, parallel text about the sovereign. Only in the wording of the three *secco* recitatives (second, fourth and sixth movements) did Bach allow the poet free rein to write something independent of the earlier version; movements of this kind are hard to parody effectively, and could in any case quickly be composed anew. The rest of the cantata – the opening and closing choruses, the arias and the single recitative with orchestral accompaniment (eighth movement) – received a new text. At times Bach's librettist remained close to the original not just formally but also in terms of content, as is shown by a comparison of the opening lines. In both cases the cantata begins by calling upon the participating instruments to delight the listener with their music. The final chorus of the 1726 version started with 'Kortte lebe, Kortte blühe!' ('Long live Kortte, may Kortte flourish!'); in the new version the wording is rather similar: 'August lebe, lebe, König!' ('Long live Augustus, may the King live!).

In the inner movements the poet has gone to a lot of trouble to capture in verse the virtues and achievements of the sovereign and the alleged enthusiasm of his subjects – with the exaggeration that was typical of the period. Although the reference to the instruments at the beginning of the cantata takes the existing music into account, there are otherwise – as one might expect – hardly any illustrative allusions. An exception to this is the newly composed tenor recitative 'Die stille Pleiße spielt mit ihren kleinen Wellen' ('The calm river Pleiße plays with its little waves'; second movement), in which Bach imitates the wave motion of the river in the continuo. On the other hand, some musical images in the original piece have lost their textural context, but this seems not to have bothered Bach very much. This applies for example to the energetic dotted motif, repeating a single note, that the strings interject in the otherwise charming alto aria with flute 'Preiset, späte Folgezeiten' ('Praise, later generations'; seventh movement). It has nothing to do with the new text, but plenty to do with the original one: 'Ätzet dieses Angedenken in den härtsten Marmor ein!' ('Etch this remembrance into the hardest marble!') – and the string motif depicts how the stone mason is already working on the marble with his hammer and chisel. Clearly Bach just trusted in the power of his music.

We should not neglect to mention that Bach had already had recourse to existing and established music in the congratulatory score of 1726, which thus returns for a second time in the name day cantata. The opening chorus is a free arrangement of the third movement from the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*, BWV 1046, with the addition of the choir and with trumpets and timpani instead of horns. The ritornello that appears after the fifth movement also originates in the same concerto, where it was the third trio of the concluding minuet. Bach later added one more instrumental piece to the score – a march that does not appear in the original performance parts. Even if it is not part of the cantata, this march was probably performed in the context of the festivities surrounding the sovereign's name day.

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Vol. 10 (Cantatas of contentment)

Angenehmes Wiederau, BWV 30a

(Pleasant Wiederau)

Zur Huldigung Johann Christian von Hennickes als Erbherr auf Wiederau (Uraufführung: 27.09.1737)
Text: Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander)
Tromba I, II, III, Timpani, Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe I, II, Oboe d'amore, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano (Zeit), Alto (Glück), Tenore (Elster), Basso (Schicksal), Continuo

1. Chorus. Angenehmes Wiederau…
2. Recitativo (Basso, Soprano, Alto, Tenore). So ziehen wir…
3. Aria (Basso).Willkommen im Heil, willkommen in Freuden…
4. Recitativo (Alto). Da heute dir, gepriesner Hennicke…
5. Aria (Alto). Was die Seele kann ergötzen…
6. Recitativo (Basso). Und wie ich jederzeit bedacht…
7. Aria (Basso). Ich will dich halten…
8. Recitativo (Soprano). Und obwohl sonst der Unbestand…
9. Aria (Soprano). Eilt, ihr Stunden, wie ihr wollt…
10. Recitativo (Tenore). So recht! ihr seid mir werte Gäste…
11. Aria (Tenore). So, wie ich die Tropfen zolle…

12. Recitativo (Soprano, Alto, Tenore, Basso). Drum, angenehmes Wiederau…
13. Chorus. Angenehmes Wiederau…

The cantata with which Bach erected a musical memorial to the manorial estate of Wiederau, southwest of Leipzig, is a sister work of the 'Peasant Cantata' – the *cantate burlesque* 'Mer hahn en neue Oberkeet' ('We have a new governor', BWV 212). Both pieces were written for festive occasions at Saxon noble estates, and owe their existence to a custom known as 'Erbhuldigung', the solemn oath of faith taken by subjects upon the arrival of a new lord of the manor. In Wiederau this took place on 28th September 1737. the new 'hereditary lord, liege and judge' at Wiederau was Johann Christian von Hennicke (1681–1752), ennobled in 1728. He was of humble origins but had made a career in the service of the Dresden court and, as a favourite of the Electoral Saxon prime minister Heinrich Graf Brühl, rose to become a Dresden privy councillor and minister in 1737. On the title page of the printed text of the cantata (which, incidentally, does not mention Bach), three well-wishers offer the new lord of the manor their humble devotion. All three were civil servants with responsibility for Wie derau, among them Bach's regular Leipzig poet, Christian Friedrich Henrici (also known as Picander; 1700–64). Professionally he was a tax official, and this manorial estate was part of his administrative district. Evidently it was the three well-wishers who commissioned and paid for the work – and no doubt they were hoping to get something in return.

Picander contributed the text for the cantata. It takes the form of a *dramma per musica*, a dramatic cantata with four characters. In this case they are 'die Zeit' (Time; soprano), 'das Glück' (Good Fortune; alto), 'der Elster' (the river bordering the palace park in Wiederau; tenor) and 'das Schicksal' (Fate; bass). The text shows the librettist's experience: the whole piece is framed by two tutti strophes in praise of Wiederau. In between, however, the four protagonists take turns to have their say, each with a recitative and aria. In the first pair of movements, Fate – flanked by his three companions – tells of the wellbeing of Wiederau (movements 2–3). Then the characters speak directly to Hennicke – Good Fortune, Fate and Time surpassing each other in flattering felicitations and assurances (movements 4–9). The Elster's words lead us in another direction: the river invites Hennicke's peasant subjects to build on the 'Au und Ufer' ('meadow and river banks'), and to contribute to Wiederau's affluence through their efforts (movements 10–11). In the final recitative (twelfth movement) the four characters, led by Time, offer – first alternately, then together – their good wishes for all of Wiederau and especially for Hennicke and his family, and the final chorus confirms all of this with its optimistic fore cast of unending prosperity, growth and welfare.

The celebrations in Wiederau were not just some country gathering in a peasant milieu. Representatives of the Dresden court will have been in attendance, likewise members of the nobility and of the Leipzig civil service, and the audience would surely have included educated musical connoisseurs. And Bach showed what he could do. The scoring is appropriate for such an occasion: trumpets and timpani, two flutes, two oboes, strings and continuo join forces with the singers in a highly colourful piece of music. Each of the arias has its own combination of instruments: the full strings (third movement) are joined by the flute (fifth movement), then by the concertante oboe and solo violin (seventh movement). In the ninth movement the violins play in unison, and the eleventh, finally, offers us flute and oboe together with the strings.

Furthermore, this is surprisingly modern music. The spirit of a new age, the period of Bach's sons and pupils and of the Italian-influenced stylistic world of Dresden court music around Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783), permeates the entire cantata. This applies to the dance-like opening and closing choruses with their fashionable syncopations as much as to the arias. These are all based on dance patterns, here combined with new stylistic elements, especially the syncopations and triplets that had become so popular in the 1730s, 'Lombardic slides', and parallel sixths and thirds. The bass aria

'Willkommen im Heil' ('Welcome in health'; third movement) is a veritable *passepied* (albeit one with plentiful 'health' and 'joy' coloraturas), whilst the alto aria 'Was die Seele kann ergötzen' ('That which can delight the soul', fifth movement) is a gavotte, strikingly reshaped with syncopations and triplets. The second bass aria, 'Ich will dich halten' ('I shall uphold you', seventh movement), has the character of a march and surprises the listener with a theme dominated by fashionable slide figures. Time's soprano aria 'Eilt, ihr Stunden' ('Hasten, ye hours', ninth movement) goads us to hurry with its gigue rhythm and, at the same time, urges us to protect 'Hennicks Ruhm und Glücke' ('Hennicke's fame and fortune') from the transience of everything temporal. Finally the Elster's tenor aria, 'So wie ich die Tropfen zolle' ('As I pay tribute with these drops', eleventh movement), is a polonaise that brings to mind Polish folklore – which had become increasingly popular in central Germany since the union of the Saxon Elector's family with Polish Crown in 1697. Bach must have been especially fond of this movement: it was used as early as c. 1730, with different texts, in cantatas paying tribute to Duke Christian of Sachsen-Weißen fels and the Leipzig governor Joachim Friedrich Graf von Flemming, and returned once more in 1741 in the wedding cantata 'O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit' ('O lovely day, o hoped-for time', BWV 210).

Soon after its composition, Bach reused large parts of his 'manorial music' for the church cantata 'Freue dich, erlöste Schar' ('Rejoice, redeemed host', BWV 30). That piece was probably first performed at the St John's Day (midsummer) church service in Leipzig, on 24th June 1738. In the sacred version Bach used the music of the outer choral movements (though without trumpets and timpani) and the first four of the five arias virtually unchanged, just giving them different words. The new text, written to fit the existing music exactly, was probably by Picander, like the original. Musical connoisseurs among the Leipzig church goers may have been surprised at the unusually fashionable and at times noticeably secular tone of Bach's music for St John's Day. Might they have suspected how long a content-related journey Bach's cantata had travelled? The Wiederau cantata moves entirely in the here and now, reflecting the worldliness of the lord of the manor and paying tribute to the optimism that focuses on the favour of Time, Good Fortune and Fate, and wastes no time thinking of a higher, divine order. By contrast, the St John's Day cantata is filled with the 'redeemed host' of believers' joyful anticipation of eternal splendour in 'Zion's meadows'.

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Ich bin in mir vergnügt, BWV 204

(I am content in myself)

Von der Vergnügsamkeit
Text: 1–6: Christian Friedrich Hunold (1713); 7, 8: unbekannter Dichter
Flauto traverso, Oboe I, II, Violino I, II, Viola, Soprano, Continuo

1. Recitativo. Ich bin in mir vergnügt…
2. Aria. Ruhig und in sich zufrieden…
3. [Recitativo]. Ihr Seelen, die ihr außer euch…
4. Aria. Die Schätzbarkeit der weiten Erden…
5. Recitativo. Schwer ist es zwar, viel Eitles zu besitzen…
6. [Aria]. Meine Seele sei vergnügt…
7. Recitativo e Arioso. Ein edler Mensch ist Perlenmuscheln gleich…
8. Aria. Himmlische Vergnügsamkeit…

This cantata for solo soprano, composed in 1726 or 1727, does not automatically fit into the series of occasional pieces that Bach wrote for political, academic or family events. Whereas in the case of most of these cantatas the reason for their composition is apparent from the musical sources or printed

texts, and can usually also be determined from the wording of the text, the present cantata offers us no such clues. The text does not refer to any external event; nor is it directed at any specific person. It concerns rather a general theme, philosophical in the broadest sense of the term. This is what was termed at the time a 'moral' cantata.

Its theme is identified by Bach in the title written in the score: 'Cantata Von der Vergnügsamkeit' (Cantata of Contentment). What the old-fashioned word 'contentment' actually signified is from today's perspective not entirely clear. The meaning of the German word has changed since the eighteenth century. Whereas today it tends to bring to mind happy leisure activity, in Bach's time it signified a humility, a relaxed satisfaction with what life had to offer. This attitude is a very popular theme in the literature and philosophy of the early Enlightenment, and in the 'moral magazines' that were widely read among the bourgeoisie – creating a new image of individual virtue, concerned with earthly happiness that is based on a modest lifestyle and prudent acceptance of the prevailing circumstances.

The cantata's text pays tribute to the new ideal. But it is an oddly disparate patchwork. At its heart lies the libretto for a 'Cantata von der Zu frie denheit' ('Contentment Cantata') by the respected poet and literary theorist Christian Friedrich Hunold, alias Menantes (1680–1721), from a collection printed in Halle an der Saale in 1713. This comprises movements 2–6 and the first two lines of the seventh movement (which in Hunold's original libretto appears as a motto above the actual text itself). The cantata's opening recitative, on the other hand, is based on a separate six-strophe poem by Hunold, entitled 'Der vergnügte Mensch' (The Contented Man). The seventh movement (apart from the first two lines) and the eighth are by an unknown and evidently not very proficient poet – perhaps the person responsible for assembling the text.

Bach cannot have been especially happy with this text as a whole. It is not just that the theme of 'contentment' is worn thin by the length of the text; in addition, the strophic poetry that dominates the additions to Hunold's original libretto proved hard to combine with the modern recitative and aria forms. The Alexandrine verse pattern popular in the baroque era, with its characteristic caesura in the middle of the line, gives the opening recitative a certain short-windedness and monotony of phrasing. A similar small-scale quality emerges from the fourfooted verse in the last recitative (seventh movement). But Bach makes the best of this movement, and livens things up by treating the second half of the text as an arioso.

Hunold's actual 'Contentment Cantata' (movements 2–6) is the work of an experienced opera and cantata librettist – a man who was by no means unknown to Bach, who had set several of Hunold's cantata librettos during his time in Köthen. (Of these, the texts for 'Der Himmel dacht auf Anhalts Ruhm und Glück' ['Since heaven cared for Anhalt's fame and bliss', BWV 66a] and 'Die Zeit, die Tag und Jahre macht' ['Time, which day and year doth make', BWV 134a] have survived.) From the composer's point of view, Hunold's original libretto leaves nothing to be desired. The two recitatives (third and fifth movements) with their freer, nonschematic verse structure permit a varied musical setting. Moreover Bach set the first of them with string accompaniment, and has illustrated the passage where the text speaks of how all worldly goods 'wie Staub zerfliegen' ('blow away like dust') with a striking musical image: the tempo changes suddenly to *Presto*, and the vocal line and instruments depict the dust flying with a brief outburst of vigorously animated melodic gestures.

The three aria texts by Hunold (movements 2, 4 and 6) are all in the modern *da capo* form. Bach has transformed them into beautiful music, and has given each aria its own instrumental profile: the first with a pair of oboes, the second with an agile solo violin part, and the third with a solo flute with wideranging coloraturas that compete with the solo voice.

At the end of the cantata there is a hymn to ‘himmlische Vergnügsamkeit’ (‘heavenly contentment’), performed by all the participants together. Here the flute sometimes resumes its function as solo partner of the soprano, who in turn is given new opportunities to demonstrate her artistry at its finest.

The lack of any reference to the circumstances of its origin or to a dedicatee, together with the text that inclines towards passivity and intimacy, has occasionally led to all kinds of conjecture that the cantata might have been intended by Bach for personal use, within his own family and with Anna Magdalena Bach as soloist. This, however, belongs in the realm of sentimental speculation. For one thing, the ‘composer-unfriendly’ way the text is put to gether surely does not reflect Bach’s own wishes. Probably someone else wanted him to set the text to music. In any case, we have the unknown patron to thank for a secular solo cantata by Bach of great beauty and maturity.

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The two cantatas on this disc conclude a project that the Bach Collegium Japan started in 2004, in which Bach’s secular cantatas formed the basis of numerous concerts and recordings. After the completion of the ensemble’s recordings of the church cantatas in 2013, all of Bach’s secular cantatas are now also available on disc from the BCJ directed by Masaaki Suzuki. They offer a welcome complement to our image of Bach the church musician, and reveal a composer who approached secular music with the same artistic integrity and demand for quality that we find in his sacred music. We can still regret that only a little more than twenty works out of what was originally a far larger number of secular cantatas have survived in performable condition. But – as we have discovered from our examination of them in the past few years – these works are well worth performing, listening to and getting to know.

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