

When Bach took over the St. Thomas Cantorate in the spring of 1723 as the leading musician of the foremost Cantorate in Protestant Germany, he achieved at long last the opportunity to realize his artistic aspirations: "the ultimate goal of a regulated church music," which he had described in 1708 to the Mühlhausen Town Council and which he had attempted to pursue, on a more restricted level, at the Weimar Court. Bach at once embarked on a program to provide a piece of concerted music - a Cantata - for every Sunday and Feast Day of the ecclesiastical year, except for the Lenten weeks preceding Christmas and Easter, when concerted music was suspended.

The Cantata supplied the principal music piece in the liturgy of the main service, and as such it highlighted and then interpreted a passage from the biblical text for the day. Thus all of Bach's Leipzig Cantata texts follow a standard pattern firmly grounded in the two-fold structure of a Lutheran sermon: *explicatio* and *applicatio*, biblical text and theological instruction, followed by practical and moral advice. The Cantata ordinarily opens with a Chorus using a Biblical dictum, normally a passage from the prescribed Gospel lesson that serves as a point of departure. Bach made a particular point of reflecting the mood of the text in his music. The Cantata usually concludes with a Chorale in the form of a hymn stanza.

Bach's own Bible was well used and frequently annotated in the margin. At the end of his Cantata scores he would write "*Fine. S.D.G*" (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Though formally employed by the City Council and responsible to his Choir and Congregation, the ultimate dedication of Bach's choral writing - indeed possibly all of his music - was "to the Glory of God Alone". We have used this as our title in these *Soli Deo Gloria* compilations from the two hundred or so known Cantatas. In the first two volumes (BACH 733 & 734) we offered a selection of some of Bach's finest opening Choruses conducted by Karl Richter. From Volume 3 through to Volume 10 we continue to explore this great treasure of Bach's little-heard music by working numerically through all of the Cantatas, excluding those already included in the first two Volumes of *Soli Deo Gloria* or those Cantatas which are exceptional throughout and presented in our *Bach Collection* in their entirety. The recordings given here were made over a number of years at the annual Greifswald Bach Festival by the East German Radio of the former D.D.R.

1: BWV 192 - (Written for the Leipzig City Council celebrating the Peace of Dresden which concluded the 2nd Silesian War, January 1746 - see: www.BaroqueMusic.org/Leipzig1745.html)

Chorus 1: Nun danket alle Gott mit Herzen, Mund und Händen, der grosse Dinge tut an uns und allen Enden, der uns von Mutterleib und Kindesbeinen an unzählig viel zugut und noch jetzund getan. Now thanks to God with our hearts, voice and labour, who for us worketh mighty things in every quarter, who from mother's womb and toddler's footsteps fills our lives with beneficence.

Chorus 2: Lob, Ehr und Preis sei Gott, dem Vater und dem, der beiden gleich im hohen Himmelsthronen, dem dreieinigen Gott, als der ursprünglich war und ist und bleiben wird jetzund und immerdar. Laud, Honour, Praise to God, to both the Father and the Son on the High Throne of Heaven, to God the Three-in-One, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.

2: BWV 193 - (Cantata for the re-election of the Leipzig Council, 1738) - Chorus 1: Ihr Tore zu Zion, ihr Wohnungen Jakobs, freuet euch! Gott ist unsers Herzens Freude, wir sind Völker seiner Weide, ewig ist sein Königreich. Ye gateways to Zion, ye dwellings of Jacob, rejoice! God is now our hearts' true pleasure, we are the people of His pasture, eternal is His Kingdom.

3: BWV 194 - (Written for the Dedication of the Hildebrand Organ of Störmthal, 2nd November 1723 - "A good two and a half hour's ride south of Leipzig")

Chorus: Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest, das der Herr zu seinem Ruhme im erbauten Heiligume uns vergnügt begehnen lässt. Höchsterwünschtes Freudenfest! O most lovely feast of joy, which the Lord for His great glory in consecrated sanctuaries lets us gladly celebrate. O most lovely feast of joy! **Chorale:** Sprich Ja zu meinen Taten, hilf selbst das Beste raten; den Anfang, Mittel und Ende, Ach, Herr, zum besten wende! Mit Segen mich beschütze, mein Herz sei deine Hütte, dein Wort sei meine Speise, bis ich gen Himmel reise! Say "yes" to my endeavours, and help me to receive the best counsel; from the beginning, middle and to the end, Ah Lord, dispense Thy favour! Thy blessing pour upon me, my heart be now Thy shelter, Thy word be my sustenance till I journey to Heaven!

4: BWV 195 - (Wedding Cantata) - Chorus 1: Dem Gerechten muss das Licht immer wieder aufgehen und Freude den frommen Herzen. Ihr Gerechten, freuet euch des Herrn und danket ihm und preiset seine Heiligkeit. For the righteous must the light ever be arising, and bring gladness for upright spirits. O ye righteous, be glad in the Lord, and give thanks and praise to Him for His Holiness. **Chorus 2:** Wir kommen, deine heiligkeit, unendlich grosser Gott, zu preisen. Der Anfang rührt von deinen Händen, durch allmacht kamst du es vollenden und deinen Segen kräftig weisen. We come here, Thy Great Holiness, O God of endless might, to honour Thee. With what Thine own hands are here beginning, Thy mighty power can bring fulfillment and clearly provide a witness to Thy blessing. **Chorale:** Nun danket all und bringet Ehr, ihr Menschen in der Welt, dem, dessen Lob der Engel Heer in Himmel stets vermeldet. Now thank ye all and bring your praise, ye mortals in the world, to Him whose praise the Host of Angels gives forth forever in Heaven.

5: BWV 196 - (Wedding Cantata for the marriage of Parish Priest Johann Lorenz Stauber and Regina Wedemann, Aunt of Maria Barbara Bach, 5th June, 1708).

Sinfonia - Chorus 1: Der Herr denket an uns und segnet uns. Er segnet das Hause Israel, er segnet das Haus Aaron. The Lord careth for us and blesseth us. He blesseth the house Israel, He blesseth the house Aaron. **Chorus 2:** Ihr seid die Gesegneten des Herrn, der Himmel und Erde gemacht hat. Amen. Ye are the anointed ones of God, whom Heaven and Earth hath created. Amen.

6: BWV 197 - (Wedding Cantata 1737) - Chorus 1: Gott ist unsre Zuversicht, wir vertrauen seinen Händen. Wie er unsre Wege führt, wie er unsrer Herz regiert, da ist Segen allerenden. God is our true confidence, we rely upon His

hands now. When He doth our pathways lead, when He doth our hearts command, there is never-ending blessing. *Chorale 2:* So wandelt froh auf Gottes Wegen, und was ihr tut, das tut getreu! Verdienet eures Gottes Segen, denn der ist alle Morgen neu: Denn welcher seine Zuversicht auf Gott setzt, den verlässt er nicht. So journey gladly on God's true pathways, and what ye do, do that in faith! Now earn ye well your God's great blessing, for it is every morning new: for he who places his confidence in God, him will He not forsake.

7: BWV 198 – ("TRAUER ODE" for the Funeral of Queen Christiane Eberhardine of Saxony/Poland - performed at a special Memorial Service in the University Paulinerkirche, Leipzig, on the 17th of October, 1727)

Opening Chorus: Laß, Fürstin, laß noch einen Strahl Aus Salems Sterngewölben schießen. Und sieh, mit wieviel Tränengüssen umringen wir dein Ehrenmal! Give one backward glance, O Princess, from Salem's starry Heaven, and see the wealth of tears we shed at thy Memorial.

Chorus 2: An dir, du Fürbild großer Frauen, An dir, erhabne Königin, An dir, du Glaubenspflegerin, war dieser Großmut Bild zu schauen. In thee, thou model of great women, in thee, illustrious Royal Queen, in thee, thou keeper of the faith, the form of kindness was to be witnessed.

Closing Chorus: Doch, Königin! du stirbst nicht, Man weiß, was man an dir besessen; Die Nachwelt wird dich nicht vergessen, bis dieser Weltbau einst zerbricht. Ihr Dichter, schreibt! wir wollens lesen: Sie ist der Tugend Eigentum, Der Untertanen Lust und Ruhm, Der Königinnen Preis gewesen. No, Royal Queen! Thou shalt not die; We see in thee our great possession; Posterity shall not forget thee, till all this universe shall fall. Ye poets, write! For we would read it: She hath been virtue's property, her loyal subjects' joy and fame, of Royal Queens the crown and glory. (For full historical details, see: www.BaroqueMusic.org/198trauerode.html)

8: BWV 118 - (Motet for the Funeral of the Governor of Leipzig, Joachim Friedrich von Flemming, 19 October 1740)

Chorus: O Jesu Christ, mein's Lebens Licht, mein Hort, mein Trost, mein' Zuversicht, auf Erden bin ich nur ein Gast, und drück mich sehr der Sünden Last. Auf deinen Abschied Herr ich trau, darauf mein letzte Heimfahrt bau. Tu mir die Himmels Tür weit auf wenn ich beschliess mein Lebenslauf! Lord Jesus Christ, my life, my light, my refuge, my comfort, my confidence; on Earth am I only a guest? My sins oppress me sorely. Lord, I have faith in Thy farewell, and build thereon my own last journey. Open wide the gates of Heaven when my life on Earth comes to its end!

Soli Deo Gloria - Vols. 1 & 2 - Ansbach Bach Festival Choir & Orchestra - Karl Richter - BACH 733-4

Soli Deo Gloria - Vols. 3-10 - Greifswalde Bach Tage Choir & Berlin Bach Orchestra - BACH 748-755