



John Sebastian Bach

MAGNIFICAT

AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER CHOIR
MELBOURNE BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

directed by

Douglas Lawrence

12 November 2016 at 3.00pm
Church of the Resurrection, Honour Ave
Macedon

13 November 2016 at 3.00pm
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 210 Richardson St
Middle Park

1. SINFONIA FROM CANTATA BWV 29, *WIR DANKEN DIR, GOTT* ('WE THANK THEE, GOD') - Johann Sebastian Bach

Born in Eisenach, Germany, 31 March 1685; died in Leipzig, 28 July 1750.

There exists a specific group of eight Bach cantatas which originated in the need to make Leipzig's city councillors feel good about themselves at the start of their terms in office. This group is known to musicologists as the *Ratswechsel*; and since the council had it in its power to choose the individuals it wished to fill the city's musical jobs, Bach understandably wanted to demonstrate how fine his best work could be. He supplied BWV 29 for the conciliar installation ceremony of August 1731. Overworked, underpaid, and pressed for time as ever, he sometimes adapted earlier compositions when it came to *Ratswechsel* material. With the BWV 29's opening Sinfonia, for instance, he recycled and amplified the prelude from his third (F major) *Partita for Unaccompanied Violin* (BWV 1006), being understandably confident that the councillors would be too awed by the music's majesty to perceive its second-hand nature. Elizabeth Anderson, in today's performance, plays the prominent organ part.

2. CANTATA BWV 147, *HERZ UND MUND UND TAT UND LEBEN* ('HEART AND MOUTH AND DEED AND LIVING') - Johann Sebastian Bach

This celebrated masterpiece dates in its final form from 1723 (the very year in which Bach took up his post at Leipzig's Thomaskirche) and was intended for the Feast of the Visitation of Mary, which in the Lutheran calendar falls on 2 July. Some of its music comes from an Advent cantata which Bach had produced seven years earlier. BWV 147, principally because of its beloved concluding movement - usually known in English as 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring' - has enjoyed a solid recording tradition which dates back to the dawn of the LP era in the early 1950s. Maybe

Bach had a special fondness for the cantata as a whole, given that he revived it at least twice between 1730 and 1740, despite the expense involved with the unusually large instrumental forces. Altogether there are ten movements, several of which have elaborate solo lines for oboe d'amore and for trumpet. Bach drew upon several sources for the words. Whereas the first, third, fifth and seventh movements employ texts by his Weimar friend Salomo Franck (a name frequently to be found among Lutheran poets to whose output Bach found himself attracted), the sixth and tenth movements are to lines by Martin Jahn (who had lived in the seventeenth century and whom Bach set in BWV 154 as well). Nobody knows who wrote the verses for the remaining movements. The translation given below is by Z. Philip Ambrose.

1. Chorus

Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben

Muss von Christo Zeugnis geben
Ohne Furcht und Heuchelei,
Dass er Gott und Heiland sei.

2. Recitative (Tenor)

Gebenedeiter Mund!
Maria macht ihr Innerstes der
Seelen
Durch Dank und Rühmen kund;

Sie fänget bei sich an,
Des Heilands Wunder zu erzählen,
Was er an ihr als seiner Magd getan.

O menschliches Geschlecht,
Des Satans und der Sünden Knecht,
Du bist befreit
Durch Christi tröstendes Erscheinen

Von dieser Last und Dienstbarkeit!
Jedoch dein Mund
und dein verstockt Gemüte

1. Chorus

Heart and mouth and deed and
living
Must for Christ their witness offer
Without fear and falsity
That He God and Saviour is.

2. Recitative (Tenor)

O thou most blessed voice!
Now Mary makes her spirit's
deepest feelings
Through thanks and praising
known;
She undertakes alone
To tell the wonders of the Saviour,
All He in her, His virgin maid, hath
wrought.
O mortal race of men,
Of Satan and of sin the thrall,
Thou art set free
Through Christ's most comforting
appearance
From all this weight and slavery!
But yet thy voice
And thine own stubborn spirit

Verschweigt, verleugnet solche
Güte;
Doch wisse, dass dich nach der
Schrift
Ein allzuscharfes Urteil trifft!

3. Aria (Alto)

Schäme dich, o Seele, nicht,
Deinen Heiland zu bekennen,
Soll er dich die seine nennen

Vor des Vaters Angesicht!
Doch wer ihn auf dieser Erden
Zu verleugnen sich nicht scheut,
Soll von ihm verleugnet werden,
Wenn er kommt zur Herrlichkeit.

4. Recitative (Basso)

Verstockung kann Gewaltige
verblenden,
Bis sie des Höchsten Arm vom
Stuhle stößt;
Doch dieser Arm erhebt,
Obschon vor ihm der Erde Kreis
erbebt,
Hingegen die Elenden,
So er erlöst.
O hochbeglückte Christen,
Auf, machet euch bereit,
Itzt ist die angenehme Zeit,
Itzt ist der Tag des Heils: der
Heiland heißt
Euch Leib und Geist
Mit Glaubensgaben rüsten,
Auf, ruft zu ihm in brünstigem
Verlangen,
Um ihn im Glauben zu empfangen!

5. Aria (Soprano)

Bereite dir, Jesu, noch itzo die Bahn,
Mein Heiland, erwähle

Grow still, denying all such
kindness;
Remember that the Scripture says
An awesome judgement shall thee
strike!

3. Aria (Alto)

Be ashamed, O spirit, not,
This thy Saviour to acknowledge,
Should He as His own ever name
thee
Before his Father's countenance.
For he who Him on earth now
To deny is not afraid
Is by Him to be denied
When He comes in majesty.

4. Recitative (Bass)

The mighty can by stubbornness be
blinded
Till them the Highest's arm thrust
from their throne;
But this arm doth exalt,
Although before it the earthly ball
doth quake,
In turn the meek and humble,
Whom He shall save.
O highly favoured Christians,
Rise, get yourselves prepared,
Now is the time of joy at hand,
Now is the day of grace: the Saviour
bids
You arm both soul and body with
faith's blessings;
Rise, call to Him with fervour and
with yearning,
That ye in faith may now receive
Him.

5. Aria (Soprano)

Make ready, O Jesus, to Thee now
the way;
My Saviour, elect now

Die gläubende Seele
Und siehe mit Augen der Gnade
mich an!

6. Chorale

O wie feste halt ich ihn,
Dass er mir mein Herze labe,
Wenn ich krank und traurig bin.
Jesum hab ich, der mich liebet
Und sich mir zu eigen gibet;
Ach, drum lass ich Jesum nicht,
Wenn mir gleich mein Herze bricht.

7. Aria (Tenor)

Hilf, Jesu, hilf, dass ich auch dich
bekenne
In Wohl und Weh, in Freud und Leid,
Dass ich dich meinen Heiland nenne
Im Glauben und Gelassenheit,
Dass stets mein Herz von deiner
Liebe brenne.

8. Recitative (Alto)

Der höchsten Allmacht Wunderhand

Wirkt im Verborgenen der Erden.

Johannes muss mit Geist erfüllet
werden,
Ihn zieht der Liebe Band
Bereits in seiner Mutter Leibe,
Dass er den Heiland kennt,
Ob er ihn gleich noch nicht
Mit seinem Munde nennt,
Er wird bewegt, er hüpfet und
springet,
Indem Elisabeth das Wunderwerk
ausspricht,
Indem Mariae Mund der Lippen
Opfer bringet.
Wenn ihr, o Gläubige, des Fleisches
Schwachheit merkt

My soul ever faithful
And look with eyes full of grace now
on me!

6. Chorale

Oh, how firmly I hold Him,
Blessed am I that I have Jesus,
When I'm ill and filled with grief.
I have Jesus, Who doth love me
And Himself to me entrusteth;
Ah, I'll hence leave Jesus not,
Even though my heart should
break.

7. Aria (Tenor)

Help, Jesus, help, both that I may
confess Thee
In health and woe, joy and grief,
And that I may my Saviour call Thee
In steadfast faith and confidence,
That e'er Thy love within my heart
be burning.

8. Recitative (Alto)

The wondrous hand of might
sublime

Doth work in earth's unseen
recesses;

Since John now must be made full
of the Spirit,

The bond of love tugs him
Already in his mother's body;

That he the Saviour know,
Although he not at once

Him with his mouth address,
He is stirred up, he leaps and
springeth,

So that Elizabeth the marvel doth
proclaim,

So that Maria's mouth the gift of lips
doth offer.

If ye, O ye of faith, the flesh's
weakness see,

Wenn euer Herz in Liebe brennet,

Und doch der Mund den Heiland
nicht bekennet,
Gott ist es, der euch kräftig stärkt,

Er will in euch des Geistes Kraft
erregen,
Ja Dank und Preis auf eure Zunge
legen.

9. Aria (Bass)

Ich will von Jesu Wundern singen
Und ihm der Lippen Opfer bringen,
Er wird nach seiner Liebe Bund
Das schwache Fleisch, den
irdischen Mund
Durch heiliges Feuer kräftig zwingen.

10. Chorale

Jesus bleibt meine Freude,
Meines Herzens Trost und Saft,
Jesus wehret allem Leide,
Er ist meines Lebens Kraft,
Meiner Augen Lust und Sonne,
Meiner Seele Schatz und Wonne;
Darum lass ich Jesum nicht
Aus dem Herzen und Gesicht.

And if your heart with love is
burning,
But still your mouth thy Saviour not
acknowledge,
God is it who gives you great
strength;
He shall in you the Spirit's power
awaken,
Yes, thanks and praise upon your
tongue shall lay then.

9. Aria (Bass)

Of Jesus' wonders I'll be singing
And bring to Him my lips' glad
offering;
He will by bond of his own love
My feeble flesh, my mundane voice
Through holy fire overpower.

10. Chorale

Jesus shall remain my gladness,
Essence of my heart, its hope;
Jesus from all grief protecteth,
He is of my life its strength,
Of mine eyes the sun and pleasure,
Of my soul the joy and treasure;
Therefore I will Jesus not
From my heart and sight allow.

3. LIEBER HERR GOTT, WECKE UNS AUF ('DEAREST LORD, WAKEN US NOW') - Johann Christoph Bach

Born in Armstadt, Germany, 6 December 1642; died in Eisenach, Germany, 31 March 1703.

Anyone who could get some of his own music misattributed for centuries to Johann Sebastian Bach possessed, by definition, a remarkable talent; and so it proved with Johann Sebastian's great-uncle, Johann Christoph. 'The profound composer,' Johann Sebastian called him, when preparing a family tree. For years he worked as organist at Eisenach: not very profitably, it would

appear, given that he died under a mountain of debt. This piece, dating from 1672 and using a text based on Matthew 25:1-13, involves two choirs of four parts each. Written for the most part in a conservative style (plenty of block harmony) which suggests the antiphonal productions of Giovanni Gabrieli and Heinrich Schütz rather than anything by Johann Christoph's own contemporaries, it suddenly switches to rather severe counterpoint at the words 'durch den selbigen'.

Lieber Herr Gott, wecke uns auf
dass wir bereit sein,
wenn dein Sohn kömmt,
Ihn mit Freuden zu empfangen
und dir
mit reinem Herzen zu dienen,
durch den selbigen
deinen lieben Sohn,
Jesum Christum unsern Herren.
Amen.

Dear Lord God, waken us now
that we may be ready,
when your Son comes,
to greet Him with joy,
and to serve You
with pure heart,
through the same
dear Son of Yours,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

4. MAGNIFICAT, BWV 243 - Johann Sebastian Bach

In any list of Bach's half-dozen most popularly beloved sacred works, the *Magnificat* would warrant a place. This makes it all the more surprising to discover how long it took Bach to arrive at the piece's final form. In effect, he wrote the whole thing twice. Shortly after his 1723 arrival at the Thomaskirche, he set the relevant Latin text (Luke 1:46-55) in the key of E flat major. That version is now known as BWV 243a, and lacks the lively trumpet parts familiar to us from BWV 243 (E flat was not among the very few keys which trumpeters in Bach's time, restricted as their key-less and valve-less instruments were to notes of the harmonic series, could manage). For the Feast of the Visitation in 1733, Bach released a new version of his 1723 offering, having been tinkering at the revision intermittently since 1728. Now the music inhabited the key of D major (so that trumpeters could be incorporated) and the four specifically Christmas-related hymns to be found in the

1723 version were left out. Why a Latin-language *Magnificat* rather than a German-language one (of the sort that Schütz and Telemann, to name only a few leading Teutonic musicians, had already composed)? Because Leipzig distinguished itself, during Bach's time, by the unusually large amount of Latin music in its Lutheran liturgies. Possibly commercial considerations also played a role. Bach did not succeed at getting the *Magnificat* published, but in view of his persistent money worries, it seems probable that he tried; and for the wider European market, a Latin-language setting would be likelier to pique publishers' interest than a setting in the vernacular. Perhaps the two finest sections in BWV 243 are the woodwind-dominated *Esurientes* (the word 'delicious' seems odd in a sacred context, but it is *le mot juste* to describe Bach's scoring here) and the melancholy grandeur of *Suscepit Israel* (where, in the slow-moving oboe line, Bach sets against the vocal lines' trellis-work the haunting theme known in Gregorian chant as the *tonus peregrinus* - 'wandering tone' - which Lutherans had associated with the *Magnificat* since the late sixteenth century). The translation given below is by Pamela Dellal, who owns the copyright to it.

1. Chorus

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

1. Chorus

My soul magnifies the Lord.

2. Aria (Soprano I)

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.

2. Aria (Soprano I)

And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

3. Aria (Soprano II)

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae.

Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent

3. Aria (Soprano II)

For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

Behold, from henceforth, I will be called blessed

4. Chorus

omnes generationes.

4. Chorus

by all generations.

5. Aria (Bass)

Quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen

5. Aria (Bass)

For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His

eius.

6. Duet (Alto, Tenor)

Et misericordia a progenie in
progenies, timentibus eum.

7. Chorus

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo,
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

8. Aria (Tenor)

Deposuit potentes de sede
et exaltavit humiles.

9. Aria (Alto)

Esurientes implevit bonis,
et divites dimisit inanes.

10. Trio (Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto)

Suscepit Israel puerum suum
recordatus misericordie suae.

11. Chorus

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

12. Chorus

Gloria Patri et Filio
et Spiritui Sancto,
sicut erat in principio
et nunc et in saecula saeculorum,
Amen.

name.

6. Duet (Alto, Tenor)

His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.

7. Chorus

He has shown strength with His
arm,
He has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts..

8. Aria (Tenor)

He has brought down the powerful
from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.

9. Aria (Alto)

He has filled the hungry with good
things,
and sent the rich away empty.

10. Trio (Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto)

He has helped His servant Israel
in remembrance of His mercy.

11. Chorus

According to the promise He made
to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants
forever.

12. Chorus

Glorify to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and for ever and ever,
Amen.