

## BACH 737 - J.S. BACH: CANTATAS 35, 53 & 42

Both Cantata 35 and 42 feature the Alto soloist - in this recording it is Maureen Forrester, who was destined to become something of a legend. The absence of any choral movements might indicate composition between 1730 and 1732 when the remodeling of the Thomasschule caused the temporary dispersing of the choir. The extensive use of the organ in Cantata 35 also points to this period, during which the Positive Organ in the Thomaskirche was made separately playable. The purpose of the Cantata in the context of the Leipzig service was to instruct the congregation in the Word of God, the Commandments, and godly conduct in general - as well as providing a measure of reassurance in a difficult world. Both Cantatas are based strictly on the biblical text for the day.

### CANTATA 35: Geist und Seele wird verwirret.

**1. CONCERTO. 2. Alto Aria:** Geist und Seele wird verwirret, Wenn sie dich, mein Gott, betracht. Denn die Wunder, so sie kennet Und das Volk mit Jauchzen nennet, Hat sie taub und stumm gemacht. *Soul with spirit is bewildered When it beholds thee, my God. For the wonder which it beholds And the folk with triumph telling Have made it deaf and dumb.*

**3. Alto Recitative:** Ich wundre mich; Denn alles, was man sieht, Muss uns Verwundrung geben. Betracht ich dich, Du teurer Gottessohn, So flieh Vernunft und auch Verstand davon. Du machst es eben, Dass sonst ein Wunderwerk vor dir was Schlechtes ist. Du bist Dem Namen, Tun und Amte nach erst wunderreich, Dir ist kein Wunderding auf dieser Erde gleich. Den Tauben gibst du das Gehör, Den Stummen ihre Sprache wieder, Ja, was noch mehr, Du öffnest auf ein Wort die blinden Augenlider. Dies, dies sind Wunderwerke, Und ihre Stärke Ist auch der Engel Chor nicht mächtig auszusprechen. *I am amazed; For everything we see Must give us cause to marvel. When I look upon Thee, Thou precious Son of God, So flee from me My reason and my sense. Thou has thus made it That even a miracle seems wretched next to Thee. Thou art in name and deed and office truly wonderful, There is no thing of wonder on the earth like Thee. To the deaf Thou givest hearing To the dumb their speech once more, Yea, more than this, Thou canst open with one word the eyes of the blind. These, these are works of wonder, And to their power even the angel choir lack strength to give expression.*

**4. Alto Aria:** Gott hat alles wohlgemacht. Seine Liebe, seine Treu Wird uns alle Tage neu. Wenn uns Angst und Kummer drücket, Hat er reichen Trost geschicket, Weil er täglich für uns wacht. Gott hat alles wohlgemacht. *God hath all so well achieved. His devotion, his good faith We see every day renewed. When both fear and toil oppress us, He hath ample comfort sent us, For he watches over us each day. God hath all so well achieved.*

### 5. SINFONIA – Part 2

**6. Alto Recitative:** Ach, starker Gott, lass mich Doch dieses stets bedenken, So kann ich dich Vergnügt in meine Seele senken. Lass mir dein süßes Hephata Das ganz verstockte Herz erweichen; Ach! lege nur den Gnadenfinger in die Ohren, Sonst bin ich gleich verloren. Rühr auch das Zungenband Mit deiner starken Hand, Damit ich diese Wunderzeichen In heilger Andacht preise Und mich als Erb und Kind erweise. *Ah, mighty God, let me Then always reflect on this, So that I can Implant it, contented, within my soul. Let thy sweet call "Be Opened" now soften my obstinate heart; Ah! only lay thy gracious finger upon my ears, Or I will soon be lost. Touch, too, my tongue's restraint With Thine own mighty hand, That I may all these signs of wonder In sacred worship praise now, Revealing myself Thine heir and child.*

**7. Alto Aria:** Ich wünsche nur bei Gott zu leben, Ach! wäre doch die Zeit schon da, Ein fröhliches Halleluja Mit allen Engeln anzuheben. Mein liebster Jesu, löse doch Das jammerreiche Schmerzensjoch Und lass mich bald in deinen Händen Mein in martervolles Leben enden. *I seek only to live with God, Ah, would that time were already come, To raise a glad hallelujah With all the angels in rejoicing. My dearest Jesus, do release This sorrow-laden yoke of pain And let me soon within Thy hands end my life so full of torment.*

### CANTATA 53: Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde.

Shortly before his death, Bach made the journey north to Potsdam at the invitation of King Frederick the Great, an occasion which gave rise to the "Musical Offering". The King's sister, Princess Amalia was, like the King himself, an enthusiastic amateur and competent musician, as well as being a devotee of Bach's music. Born in 1723 she would have been twenty-four during Bach's visit, and she would most certainly have taken the opportunity to meet with Bach and attend his several recitals. In 1758 Johann Philipp Kirnberger, one of Bach's most devoted pupils, became her Court Musician, a position he maintained until the Princess's death. The Princess held frequent musical soirées in her own palace, and amassed a large and valuable collection of music featuring works by many contemporary composers, the most numerous, however, being those of J.S. Bach. Her collection is now in the Berlin State Library and it is in this collection that we find the manuscript for Cantata 53. The work is not really a Cantata at all, but a Mourning Aria, as indeed it is called on the manuscript's title page. The unusual employment of two bells in the score has given it the nickname *CampANELLA Cantata*. Though questions come and go as to the authenticity of various Bach compositions, the idea of looking forward to the blessed release of death can be found in several of Bach's Cantatas, as for example in Cantatas 106 (on our disc **BACH 736**) and Cantata 161.

**Alto Aria:** Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, Brich doch an, du schöner Tag! Kommt, ihr Engel, auf mich zu. Öffnet mir die Himmelsauen, Meinen Jesum bald zu schauen In vergnügter Seelenruh. Ich begeh von Herzens Grunde Nur den letzten Seigerschlag. *Strike then, O longed-for hour, Break forth O glorious day! Come, ye angels, unto me. Open to me Heavens' pastures; That I may soon see my Jesus In contented soul's repose. I desire with heart and spirit Only the final victorious stroke!*

### CANTATA 42: Am Abend desselbigen Sabbats.

The purpose of the Cantata in the Lutheran service was to reinforce the Gospel of the day, in this case John 20:19-31. *“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to*

*them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print*

*of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*

The work opens with a lengthy Sinfonia, and is otherwise a Solo Cantata throughout, indicating composition around 1730-31 when the Thomas School building was being remodeled and the choir temporarily dispersed.

## 1. SINFONIA

**2. Tenor Recitative:** Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats, Da die Jünger versammelt Und die Türen verschlossen waren Aus Furcht für den Jüden, Kam Jesus und trat mitten ein. *In the evening of that same Sabbath, when the disciples were assembled, and the doors had been barred for fear of the Jews, then Jesus came and walked among them.*

**3. Alto Aria:** Wo zwei und drei versammelt sind In Jesu teurem Namen, Da stellt sich Jesus mitten ein Und spricht darzu das Amen. Denn was aus Lieb und Not geschicht, Das bricht des Höchsten Ordnung nicht. *Where two and three are gathered together In Jesus' precious name, There stands Jesus in their midst And speaks o'er them his Amen. For that which love and need have caused Doth not the Highest's order break*

**4. Aria (Soprano/Tenor Duet):** Verzage nicht, o Häuflein klein, Obgleich die Feinde willens sein, Dich gänzlich zu verstören, Und suchen deinen Untergang, Davon dir wird Recht Angst und Bang: Es wird nicht lange währen. *Do not despair, O little flock, E'en though the foe may well intend Thee fully to destroy And seek a way to bring thee down, Wherefore thou shalt know fear and dread: Yet it shall not long be lasting.*

**5. Bass Recitative:** Man kann hiervon ein schön Exempel sehen An dem, was zu Jerusalem geschehen; Denn da die Jünger sich versammelt hatten Im finstern Schatten, Aus Furcht für denen Jüden, So trat mein Heiland mitten ein, Zum Zeugnis, dass er seiner Kirche Schutz will sein. Drum lasst die Feinde wüten! *One can from this a fine example summon, From that which came to pass in Jerusalem; When the disciples had assembled In gloomy shadows Because they feared the Jews, There came my Savior in their midst To witness that he would be a shield for his church. So let the fiends rage on!*

**6. Bass Aria:** Jesus ist ein Schild der Seinen, Wenn sie die Verfolgung tritt. Ihnen muß die Sonne scheinen Mit der güldnen Überschrift: Jesus ist ein Schild der Seinen, Wenn sie die Verfolgung trifft. *Jesus is a shield for his own people When persecution strikes them For their sake the sun must shine With its golden superscript: Jesus is a shield for his own people When persecution strikes them.*

**7. Chorale:** Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich, Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten; Es ist doch ja kein anderer nicht, Der für uns könnte streiten, Denn du, unsr Gott, alleine. Gib unsern Fürsten und all'r Obrigkeit Fried und gut Regiment, Dass wir unter ihnen Ein geruhig und stilles Leben führen mögen In aller Gottseligkeit und Ehrbarkeit. **Amen.** *Grant us peace, of Thy mercy, Lord God, in our own season; For there is indeed no other Who could fight for us Than Thou, our God, thou only. Give to our princes and all in authority Peace and good governance, So that we beneath them May lead a peaceful and quiet life In all godliness and honor. Amen.*