

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 onwards we continue to explore this great treasure of some of Bach's greatest music, much of it little-heard, by working numerically through all of the Cantatas; we have omitted those already included in the first two Volumes of *Soli Deo Gloria* or Cantatas which are exceptional throughout and which we have therefore 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 101 - Chorus 1:** *Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott, die schwere Straf und grosse Not, die wir mit Sünden ohne Zahl verdient haben allzumal. Behüt für Krieg und teurer Zeit, für Seuchen, Feuer und grossem Leid.* Take from us, Lord, Thou faithful God, the punishment and great distress which we for sins beyond all count have merited through all our days. Protect us from times of war and lack, contagion, fire and grievous pain. **Chorale:** *Leit uns mit deiner rechten Hand und segne unsre Stadt und Land; gib uns allzeit dein heilig Wort, behüt fürs Teufels List und Mord; verleihe ein selges Stündlein, auf dass wir ewig bei dir sein.* Lead us with Thine own righteous hand and bless our City and our land, give us always Thy Holy Word, protect us from Satan's craft and death; and send us a blessed hour of peace, that we may forever be with Thee.

**2: BWV 102 - Chorus 1:** *Herr, deine Augen sehen nach dem Glauben! Du schlägest sie, aber sie fühlen's nicht; du plagest sie, aber sie bessern sich nicht. Sie haben ein härter Angesicht denn ein Fels und wollen sich nicht bekehren.* Lord, Thine own eyes watch over the true believers! Thou smitest them, but they feel not the blow; Thou vexest them, but they reform themselves not. Their countenance is harder than a rock and they would not be converted. **Chorale:** *Heut lebst du, heut bekehre dich, eh morgen kommt, kann's ändern sich; wer heut ist frisch, gesund und rot, ist morgen krank, ja wohl gar tot. So du nun stirbest ohne Buss, dein Leib und Seel dort brennen muss. Hilf, o Herr Jesu, hilf du mir, dass ich noch heute komm zu dir und busse tu den Augenblick, eh mich der schnelle Tod entrück, auf dass ich heut und jederzeit zu meiner Heimfahrt sei bereit.* Today thou who liveth, repent today, ere morning comes and the times can change; today he who is fresh, safe and sound can be tomorrow's sick or even dead. If thou now shalt die uncontrite, thy soul and body must burn. Help, O Lord Jesus, help me, that even this day I may come to Thee, and make contrition to Thee.

**3: BWV 107 - Chorus 1:** *Was willst du dich betrüben, o meine liebe Seel? Ergib dich, den zu lieben, der heisst Immanuel! Vertraue ihm allein, er wird gut alles machen und fördern deine Sache, wie dir's wird selig sein!* Why wouldst thou then be saddened, O thou my beloved soul? Devote thyself to love Him who is called Immanuel! Put trust in Him alone, He will set all in order and support thee and will make thee blessed! **Choral:** *Herr, gib, dass ich dein Ehre, ja all meine Leben lang, von Herzensgrund vermehre, dir sage Lob und Dank! O Vater, Sohn und Geist, der du aus lauter Gnaden abwendest Not und Schaden, sei immerdar gepreist!* Lord, grant that I may augment Thine honour, yea, all my living days, with hear unfeigned, and give Thee praise and thanks! O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Thou, who with purest mercy averts need and danger, for evermore be praised!

**4: BWV 109 - Chorus 1:** *Ich glaube, lieber Herr, hilf meinem Unglauben!* I have faith, O dear Lord, help my unbelieving! **Chorale:** *Wer hofft im Gott und dem vertraut, der wird nimmer zuschanden; denn wer auf diesen Felsen baut, ob ihm gleich geht zuhanden viel Unfalls hie, hab ich doch nie den Menschen sehen fallen, der sich verlässt auf Gottes Trost; er hilf sein' Gläubigen allen.* He who hopes in God and trusts in Him, shall never be confounded; for he who builds upon this rock, even though there may be great surrounding danger, I have not yet known that man to fall into ruin, who doth rely upon God's help; He helps all His faithful.

5: BWV 110 - Chorus 1: *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens und unsre Zunge voll Rühmens. Denn her Herr hat Grosses and uns getan. Make our mouth full with laughter and make our tongue full with praises. For the Lord hath achieved great things for us. Chorale: Alleluja! Alleluja! Gelobt sei Gott, singen wir all aus unsers Herzens Grunde. Denn Gott hat heut gemacht solch Freud, die wir vergessen solln zu keiner Stunde. Alleluia! Alleluia! All praise be to God, we all sing forth from the bottom of our heart. For God today hath wrought that joy, which we shall not at any moment forget.*

6: BWV 112 - Chorus 1: *Der Herr ist mein getreuer Hirt, halt mich in seiner Hute, darin mir gar nichts mangeln wird irgend an einem Gute; er weidet mich ohn Unterlass, darauf wäscht das wohlschmeckend Gras seines heilsamen Wortes. The Lord is now my true shepherd, He holds me in His shelter, wherein shall I want of nothing possessing any value; He gives me endless pasture, whereupon grows the sweet-tasting grass of His Word's healing Gospel. Chorale: Gutes und die Barmherzigkeit folgen mir nach im Leben, und ich werd bleiben allezeit im Hause des Herren eben, auf Erd in christlicher Gemein und nach dem Tod da werd ich sein bei Christo, meinem Herren. His goodness and His mercy shall attend me throughout my lifetime, and I will evermore abide within the Lord's own dwelling, on Earth and in Christian company, and after death there will I be with Christ, my Lord and Master.*

7: BWV 113 - Chorus 1: *Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut, du Brunnquell aller Gnaden, sieh doch, wie ich in meinem Mut mit Schmerzen bin beladen und in mir hab der Pfeile viel, die im Gewissen ohne Ziel mich armen Sünder drücken. Lord Jesus Christ, Thou highest good, Thou wellspring of mercy, O see how I within my heart am sore laden with sorrows and I bear the pangs of many darts, which endlessly oppress the conscience of this wretched sinner.*

*BWV 113 - Chorale 1: Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last, nimm sie aus meinem Herzen, dieweil du sie gebüsst hast am Holz mit Todesschmerzen, auf dass ich nicht für grossem Weh in meinen Sünden untergeh, noch ewiglich verzage. Have mercy upon me in such grief, lift this weight from my heart, since Thou has paid for it in full upon the cross in death's sorrow; that I may not with grievous woe amidst my sins go to ruin, nor evermore lose courage.*

8: BWV 114 - Chorus 1: *Ach, lieben Christen, seid getrost, wie tut ihr so verzagen! Weil uns der Herr heimsuchen tut, lasst uns von Herzen sagen; die Straf wir wohl verdienet han, solchs muss bekennen jedermann, niemand darf sich ausschliessen. Ah, fellow Christians, be consoled, why are ye so despondent! Since now the Lord doth punish us, let us sincerely say it: chastisement have we well deserved, this we must all confess, and let no one be excepted.*

9: BWV 115 - Chorus 1: *Mache dich, mein Geist, bereit, wache, fleh und bete, dass dich nicht die böse Zeit unverhofft betrete; denn es ist Satans List über viele Frommen zur Versuchung kommen. Get thyself, my soul, prepared, watching, begging, praying, lest thou let the unforeseen evil day overtake thee. For in truth, Satan's guile often comes to the righteous with temptation.*

10: BWV 116 - Chorus 1: *Du Friedefürst, Herr Jesu Christ, wahr' Mensch und wahrer Gott, ein starker Nothelfer du bist in Leben und im Tod. Drum wir allein in Namen dein zu deinem Vater schreien. Thou Prince of Peace, Lord Jesus Christ, true man and a true God, Thou art a strong helper when we are in need, in life as well as death. So we alone are crying to Thy Father in Thy dear name.*

11: BWV 117 - Chorus 1: *Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut, dem Vater aller Güte, dem Gott, der alle Wunder tut, dem Gott, der mein Gemüte mit seinem reichen Trost erfüllt, dem Gott, der allen Jammer stillt. Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre! Give laud and praise to the Highest Good, the Father of all kindness, the God who works every wonder, the God who fills my spirit with His deep consolation, the God who stills all sorrow. Give to our God all honour! Chorale: Ich rief dem Herrn in meiner Not: ach Gott, vernimm mein Schreien! Da helf mein Helfer mir vom Tod und liess mir Trost gedeihen. Drum dank, ach Gott, drum dank ich dir; ach danket, danket Gott mit mir! Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre! I called to God in my distress: Ah Lord, pay heed to my crying! Then my Saviour saved me from death and let my comfort flourish. My thanks, O God, my thanks to Thee; Ah thank ye, thank ye God with me! Give to our God all honour!*