




**RETROSPECT**  
ENSEMBLE

**Johann Sebastian Bach**  
Easter & Ascension  
Oratorios



# Johann Sebastian Bach

## Easter & Ascension Oratorios

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# RETROSPECT

ENSEMBLE

## Easter Oratorio, BWV. 249

- ① *Sinfonia* (3.52)
- ② *Adagio* (3.39)
- ③ *Chorus & Duetto* - Kommt, eilet und laufet (4.41)
- ④ *Recitativo* - O kalter Männer Sinn (0.52)
- ⑤ *Aria* - Seele, deine Spezereien (10.49)
- ⑥ *Recitativo* - Hier ist die Gruft (0.37)
- ⑦ *Aria* - Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer (7.15)
- ⑧ *Recitativo* - Indessen seufzen wir (0.50)
- ⑨ *Aria* - Saget, saget mir geschwinde (5.40)
- ⑩ *Recitativo* - Wir sind erfreuet (0.33)
- ⑪ *Chorus* - Preis und Dank (2.16)

## Ascension Oratorio, BWV. 11

- ⑫ *Chorus* - Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen (4.30)
- ⑬ *Evangelist* - Der Herr Jesus hub seine Hände auf (0.26)
- ⑭ *Recitativo* - Ach, Jesu, ist dein Abschied schon so nah? (1.07)
- ⑮ *Aria* - Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebstes Leben (8.12)
- ⑯ *Evangelist* - Und ward aufgehoben zusehends (0.27)
- ⑰ *Chorale* - Nun lieget alles unter dir (1.15)
- ⑱ *Evangelist* - Und da sie ihm nachsahen gen Himmel fahren (0.55)
- ⑲ *Recitativo* - Ach ja! So komme bald zurück (0.33)
- ⑳ *Evangelist* - Sie aber beteten ihn an (0.38)
- ㉑ *Aria* - Jesu, deine Gnadenblicke (6.56)
- ㉒ *Chorale* - Wenn soll es doch geschehen (4.01)

TOTAL TIME : 70.26

# Johann Sebastian Bach

## Easter & Ascension Oratorios

Seemingly employed to celebrate the central religious festivals in Leipzig's chief churches during 1734-5, Bach's three oratorios fulfil the same role within the Lutheran liturgy as a cantata. Numerous attempts have been made to explain their position within the Oratorio genre, but in actual fact they are each unique works of varying magnitude and structure, and do not conform to a set model or blueprint. The Christmas Oratorio is undoubtedly Bach's best-known Oratorio – it is more often recorded, performed and written about than either the Easter or Ascension Oratorio – and is a monumental work consisting of six individual cantatas, each celebrating different feast-days of the Christmas calendar. The Easter Oratorio was Bach's first foray into this genre; it is likely that the work was performed on Easter Sunday, 1735, and it comprises a two-movement instrumental *Sinfonia*, followed by alternating choruses, recitatives and arias. This Oratorio was most closely created in the image of the Italianate oratorios of the eighteenth century: it is without an evangelist figure, biblical passages, or chorales. Instead it utilises an entirely poetic text (often attributed to Picander) which is organised in rhyming verse, and is delivered by four characters, Mary Mother of James, Mary Magdalene, Peter and John. The Ascension Oratorio is one of the many works that Bach composed in honour of this part of the Easter cycle; probably performed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1735, it was incorrectly listed as a 'sacred cantata' in the (1852) *Bach-Gesellschaft* (most likely due to its brevity). In contrast with the Easter Oratorio, biblical passages (Luke 24: 50-2 Mark 16: 19 and Acts 1: 9-12) delivered by the tenor Evangelist create a narrative sequence, strongly connecting this work with the Lutheran *historia* tradition, an important predecessor of passions and oratorios. Original poetic verses are presented as choruses, accompanied recitative and arias, and two chorales take prominent positions as the central and final movements of the work. While these three works are disparate in style and structure, they nevertheless conform with Johann Gottfried Walther's broad definition of the Oratorio as '*the musical conception of a sacred history*': Bach's treatment of the genre has also been allied to postulations made by

Erdmann Neumeister during his lectures at Leipzig University in 1695, that the Oratorio is 'a literary genre mixing Biblical verses, aria texts and chorales'.

A common feature of all three oratorios is that they are parodies of earlier works, adapting music that Bach used previously in other contexts. The Easter Oratorio has a particularly complex genesis; in its first guise, the chorus and aria material appeared as a congratulatory cantata (*Entfliehet, verschwindet, entweichet, ihr Sorgen* BWV. 249a) celebrating the birthday of Duke Christian of Saxony-Weißenfels on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1725. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April of the same year, and with a new text and additional recitatives, the work was performed as an Easter Cantata. Subsequently, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1726, it was revived in honour of another birthday, this time that of Count Joachim Friedrich von Flemming (*Die Feier des Genius*, BWV. 249b). It was only upon a revision of the score, sometime in the early-mid 1730s, that the work was entitled 'Oratorium'. Christoph Wolff suggests that further minor changes to the Easter Oratorio were made in either 1749 or 1750; this was some of the last work carried out by Bach.

The parody material comprising the Ascension Oratorio is more of a patchwork: the outer choruses and arias No. 4 and No. 10 all draw upon pre-existing material, primarily taken from the lost cantata, *Froher Tag, verlangte Stunden* (BWV. anh.18, 1732). Most famously, the alto aria No.4, 'Ach, bleibe doch', is based on 'Entfernet euch, ihr kalten Herzen' from the lost wedding cantata *Auf! süß-entzückende Gewalt* (1725, text by Johann Christoph Gottsched). The *Agnus Dei* from Bach's B minor Mass is also a parody of this same work, although numerous scholars have exhaustively demonstrated that this movement has been significantly re-composed, rather than being a direct parody of the original aria.

It is Georg Friedrich Handel who has become most famed for this type of self-borrowing, but parody is also common in the music of Bach, and questions have been raised concerning the artistic and practical motivations behind his use of this compositional technique. A possible explanation is the issue of time-management; in order to fulfil

the remit of his position as Kantor, even Bach may have had to take short cuts. Perhaps the quick turn-around between the birthday cantata BWV. 249a and the reworked Easter Cantata, which appeared just a few weeks later, would support this. J. C. Bach later alluded to such harsh realities in his own life, stating that *'my brother [C. P. E. Bach] lives to compose, I compose to live'*. Malcolm Boyd has also suggested that Bach may have hoped to *'give greater permanence to an occasional composition, and for this reason the ephemeral homage and birthday cantatas for the nobility were frequently fitted out with fresh texts'*. It is certainly clear that Bach sought to eke out the full range of compositional possibilities offered by both his own music and that of others; he devoted energies to arranging and transcribing the music of great composers (including, for example, Antonio Vivaldi) and was famous for his gift for extemporising on fugal themes, extracting the full range of potential offered by any given material. Bach's parody works can be viewed in this same light, as examples of his ingenuity and inventiveness; C. P. E. Bach reflected on this aspect of his father's music when he wrote that *'those who have a concept of what is possible in art and who desire original thought and its special, unusual elaboration will receive from it full satisfaction'*.

Embedded in the scholarship that surrounds Bach's parodies is the issue of whether works which began life with a secular subject can truly be adapted to express the central tenants of a sacred text. In 1946 Leo Schrade described *'a conflict between the sacred and the secular'* in Bach's music, and this has subsequently been a hotly contested aspect of his output. Bach has been lauded as 'The Fifth Evangelist'; and it has been strongly argued by the nineteenth-century scholar Philipp Spitta that his *'secular occasional compositions were not genuinely secular; as such they scarcely fulfilled their aim, and the composer only restored them to their native home when he applied them to church uses'*. As a counter to this, Jaroslav Pelikan postulates that Bach could be seen in another light: *'would it be more accurate to demythologize this legend and to see in him a secular modern man who did what he had to do, or more precisely what he was paid to do, including chorales and church cantatas, but for whom the music was the thing and the text was incidental?'*

In fact, the text is never incidental; how could it be, during a period when works with text were heralded as the most communicative form of music, and instrumentalists were expected to imitate the expressive power of the human voice? Throughout the recording of these works, aspects of rhetoric were called upon in order to shape their interpretation; the art of persuasive speech was one that was repeatedly compared with the composition and performance of music throughout the Baroque period, and a recurring aim was the desire to move the passions of listeners through 'Affektive' (or expressive) composition and delivery. C. P. E. Bach wrote that *'a stirring performance depends on an alert mind which is willing to follow reasonable precepts in order to reveal the content of compositions'*; and an organ pupil of Bach was reportedly instructed that a chorale should be played *'not just offhand but in accordance with the Affekt of the words'*. Nikolaus Harnoncourt has stated that *'in Bach's hands the rhetorical components are particularly clearly expressed'*; and although Bach himself left us little in the way of theoretical writings, enough can be garnered from those who surrounded him and who were taught by him to set parameters for the understanding of his music in rhetorical terms; in this way, we can fully appreciate the ease with which Bach's eloquent compositional language expresses secular and sacred music alike.

Upon comparing the texts of BWV. 249a and the Easter Oratorio, BWV. 249, the issue of any 'conflict' between the religious or profane subject matter becomes subsidiary to the Affekt of the text itself. The two texts regularly share very similar themes, which Bach sets persuasively; this is perhaps most clearly apparent in the central movement of the Easter Oratorio, the tenor aria 'Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer', accompanied by a delicate texture of ebbing recorders, muted violins, and throbbing bass line. Albert Schweitzer praises this movement as *'one of the most beautiful sacred lullabies that Bach ever wrote'*. Of course, in its original guise it was a secular lullaby, using a text that likewise draws upon images of sleep; in both settings of the text the word 'slumber' or 'sleep' comes to rest on a long pedal note. Marcus Fabius Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician who most exhaustively drew parallels between the arts of speech and music, writes that a thought can be *'expressed through the oration in such fashion that it is perceived as*

*though it were seen rather than heard*, by using the rhetorical figure hypotyposis; here, we are made to experience the stasis of slumber through Bach's setting of the word.

Similarly, in the fifth movement of the two works, an aria for soprano and obbligato flute, images of circles are conveyed by Bach's setting of the text; in BWV. 249a the text describes 'welling' emotions, while in the Easter Oratorio, Mary Mother of James refers to 'laurel wreaths'. The rhapsodic and sinuous flute melody predominantly consists of eddying *circulatio* figures, whereby the theme rises and falls in a sine-wave pattern; throughout the Baroque era this rhetorical figure was a symbol of perfection, representing – in a literal sense – circular concepts. But most pertinently in the case of Mary's aria, this figure symbolises eternity, infinity, and ultimately, God.

Another feature that pervades the Easter Oratorio is the influence of dance models on many of the movements; it has previously been suggested that the first three movements of this work could originally have been composed as a concerto. Konrad Küster has further proposed that these movements are part of a multi-movement orchestral suite. In this context, No.5 could be interpreted as a minuet, No.7 as a bourrée, No.9 a gavotte, and the final chorus, No.11, a gigue. The appropriateness of using dance movements within a religious work has been questioned in the past; Spitta, for example, wrote that while the first aria of BWV. 176, in the style of a gavotte, is *'charming as a piece of music'*, it is nevertheless *'quite unsuited to its text'*. However, dance forms, like the various figures of rhetoric employed by Bach, actually enhance the Affekt throughout this work. Johann Mattheson's *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) gives a full account of the Affekt created by the metrical hierarchies of each dance-type: the fast-slow-fast structure of the opening three movements captures the contrast that can be achieved by employing different dance forms. Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne, in their study of Bach's use of dance music, describe the first and third movements of this work as Giges: Mattheson writes that the 'English gigue' is *'characterized by an ardent and fleeting zeal'* and that the 'Italian Gige' proceeds *'in a flowing and uninterrupted manner: perhaps like the smooth arrow-swift flow of a stream'*. Flanked by the exuberant



energy of No. 1 and No. 3, the second movement is a plaintive *Adagio* – a performance direction which for Mattheson indicates distress – for oboe accompanied by strings. Reminiscent of his Keyboard Partitas BWV. 825-30, also written in Leipzig, Bach adopts the dotted rhythms of a French sarabande to complement the free and ornamental solo melody. Patricia Ranum has unearthed an account of a dancer, who ‘became to express the emotions of his soul through the motions of his body’ during a sarabande: ‘Sometimes he would cast languid and passionate glances throughout a slow and languid rhythmic unit, and then, as though weary of being obliging, he would avert his eyes, and if he wished to hide his passion and, with a more precipitous motion, would snatch away the gift he had tendered’.

Mattheson, in a description of the passions that can be raised by music, captures the overall Affekt that Bach creates with these opening three movements of the Easter Oratorio:

*‘If I hear the first part of a good overture, then I feel a special elevation of soul...and if a serious [passage] follows, then everything is brought together to a normal restful conclusion. It seems to me that this is a pleasantly alternating movement which an orator could scarcely surpass. Whoever pays attention can see in the features of an attentive listener what he perceives in his heart... If I hear a solemn sinfonia in the church, then a prayerful trembling comes over me; if a powerful instrumental choir is also worked in, then great admiration is aroused in me by this ... then if everything is closed by a joyous hallelujah, my heart jumps in my body; even if I should know neither the meaning of the word nor should otherwise understand anything else, on account of the distance or for other reasons; indeed, even if words were not used, merely the effort of instruments and expressive sounds’.*

Bach’s Ascension Oratorio begins with a jubilatory D Major movement, scored for trumpets, timpani, flutes, oboes, strings and continuo: within the first two bars, Bach

presents rhetorical figures which summarise the subject matter and Affekts that are dealt with by this work. Notably, this reflects the instructions given to an orator, whereby the opening passage of a speech (the *Exordium*), should contain the purpose and meaning of the discourse, which is subsequently elaborated on throughout the rest of the work. An energetic rising *corta* rhythm (a three-note figure, where one note equals the length of the other two notes combined, and which is often used to express joy) is announced by the trumpets; rising themes (known as the rhetorical figure *anabasis*) such as this are associated with elevated passions, and Johann Gottfried Walther wrote in 1732 that they are used *‘for example on the words: He is risen; God has ascended; and similar texts’*. Immediately, however, this rising gesture which is so appropriate to the subject of Jesus’ ascension, is countered by a descending scale emphatically presented by the strings in unison: although the key is D Major – described by Bach’s pupil Johann Philipp Kirnberger as a ‘class 1’ major key, and therefore expressive of joy – descending figures (or *catabasis*) are associated with negative Affekts.

This duality represents the crux of the work: Christ is risen up, but throughout the Oratorio we are witness to characters who implore him to return to Earth. The juxtaposition of literal rising and descending is also mirrored by the internal struggle of the characters: while the glory of the ascension is played out in some movements (notably No.6, 10 and 11), the loss, pain and suffering induced by Jesus’ departure is also explored (No.3 and 4). The expression of opposing Affekts in this way is the rhetorical figure *antithesis*.

These simple musical-rhetorical figures resonate throughout the rest of the work; in the Evangelist’s first recitative (No.2), the text *‘the Lord Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples’* is punctuated by a rising scale, and the sorrow accompanying *‘while He blessed them, He was parted from them’* is represented by a descending scale. Even more vividly, the *‘two men in white apparel’* who appear in No.7 sing the words *‘which is taken up from you into Heaven’* with an *anabasis* figure, while the prediction that Jesus shall come to Earth again is represented by a *catabasis* figure. The final movement

– a glorious concerted chorale which recalls the scoring of the opening movement – impatiently implores, *‘But when shall it come to pass... O day, when will you dawn, That we may greet the Saviour... Come, then, and appear!’* all the while accompanied by tumbling and emphatically repeated descending scales.

No. 3, a bass recitative accompanied by flutes, and No. 4, the alto aria which is famously a parody of *‘Entfernet euch, ihr kalten Herzen’*, present the most unambiguous expression of suffering in this work. Descending sobbing figures pervade the bass recitative, illustrating rolling tears and the sorrow induced by Jesus’ departure. In both the recitative and subsequent aria, the difficult sounding interval leaps in the melody line (known in rhetorical terminology as *saltus duriusculus*) are described by Kirnberger as representing *‘sad, intense, tender, melancholy, imploring and caressing’* Affekts. Joachim Burmeister, the first German author to produce a full compendium of musical-rhetorical figures, wrote that *‘pathopoeia [the use of chromaticism in music] occurs when the text is expressed through semitones in such fashion that no one appears to remain unmoved by the created affection’*. The portrayal of pain and suffering is the main feature that is shared by both the *‘Entfernet euch, ihr kalten Herzen’* and *Agnus Dei* versions of this movement, and although compositionally there are structural and thematic differences between this aria and the *Agnus Dei*, they are both dominated by a combination of angular and crawling melodic lines. A striking addition to the Ascension Oration is the descending corta rhythm in the second bar (accompanying the word *‘doch’* in the vocal entry): here, the rising trumpet figure that was presented at the start of the work is inverted. This transforms its Affekt, and rather than portraying joy, it represents the agitation of this text.

In stark contrast, the soprano aria *‘Jesu, deine Gnadenblicke’*, depicts the Heavenly exultance of Jesus’ Ascension. Malcolm Boyd has postulated that *‘Christ’s departure from Earth is suggested by the absence of a continuo part, but the power of his loving spirit remains and is reflected in the hovering accompaniment for upper instruments’*. This ethereal aria opens with a mirror rhythm (crotchet-quaver-quaver-crotchet, which

is created by Bach's use of slurs) similar to that at the start of 'Mein teurer Heiland' of the St John Passion: this feature is related to the *chiasmic* figures which symbolise the cross, and are prevalent in Bach's music. A three-part (trinity) texture pervades much of the movement; during instrumental interludes, the flutes, oboe and strings engage in an interlocking trio. Furthermore, the movement is written in triple time – as is, relatively unusually, the chorale which is at the centre of this Oratorio – and a predominant feature of the melody is the repeated three-note rising figure (*anabasis*) which is associated with the text '*I can continually see*'. The contrary motion which is so often featured between the melody lines perhaps summarises and resolves the conflict between the rising and falling figures which persist throughout the work.

Regardless of profane origin of much of the music that constitutes these two works, Bach sets the text of his oratorios with all the skill of a great orator. He must surely have been aware of the plaudits offered to the power of music by Luther himself: '*I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone... even that transcends the greatest eloquence of the most eloquent, because of the infinite variety of its forms and benefits. We can mention only one point (which experience confirms), namely, that next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise*'. Perhaps most significant, though, are Bach's own notes in the margin of his Abraham Calov Bible, whereupon reading 2 Chronicles 5:11-15, '*How the Glory of the Lord appeared After Beautiful Music*', he added '*NB. Where there is devotional music, God with his Grace is always present*'.

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## Easter Oratorio Translations, BWV. 249

**Kommet, eilet und laufet (1725)**

**Osteroratorium**

Maria Jacobi (s), Maria Magdalena (a),  
Peter (t), John (b)

① **Sinfonia**

② **Adagio**

③ **Chorus & Duetto** (t,b)

Kommt, eilet und laufet,  
ihr flüchtigen Füße,  
Erreicht die Höhle, die Jesum bedeckt!  
Lachen und Scherzen  
Begleitet die Herzen  
Denn unser Heil ist auferweckt.

④ **Recitativo** (a,s,t,b)

*Alt:*

O kalter Männer Sinn!  
Wo ist die Liebe hin,  
Die ihr dem Heiland schuldig seid?

*Sopran:*

Ein schwaches Weib muß euch beschämen!

*Tenor:*

Ach, ein betrübtes Grämen

*Baß:*

Und banges Herzeleid

*Tenor, Baß:*

Hat mit gesalznen Tränen  
Und wehmutsvollem Sehnen  
Ihm eine Salbung zudedacht,

**Come, hasten and run**

**Easter Oratorio**

Mary, Mother of James (s), Mary Magdalen (a),  
Peter (t), John (b)

① **Sinfonia**

② **Adagio**

③ **Chorus & Duet**

Come, hasten and run,  
you who are fleet of foot,  
Make for the cavern, where Jesus lies hidden!  
Laughter and banter,  
Attend now our hearts,  
For our Saviour has been raised up.

④ **Recitative**

*Alto:*

O men so cold of heart!  
Where has that love gone,  
Which you owe the Saviour?

*Soprano:*

A weak woman must put you to shame!

*Tenor:*

Ah, our sad grieving

*Bass:*

And anxious sorrow

*Tenor, Bass:*

Intended to anoint Him here  
With salty tears  
And melancholy yearning,

*Sopran, Alt:*

Die ihr, wie wir, umsonst gemacht.

⑤ **Aria** (s)

Seele, deine Spezereien  
Sollen nicht mehr Myrrhen sein.

Denn allein  
Mit dem Lorbeerkranze prangen,  
Stillt dein ängstliches Verlangen.

⑥ **Recitativo** (t,b,a)

*Tenor:*

Hier ist die Gruft

*Baß:*

Und hier der Stein,  
Der solche zugedeckt.  
Wo aber wird mein Heiland sein?

*Alt:*

Er ist vom Tode auferweckt!  
Wir trafen einen Engel an,  
Der hat uns solches kundgetan.

*Tenor:*

Hier seh ich mit Vergnügen  
Das Schweißstuch abgewickelt liegen.

⑦ **Aria** (t)

Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer,  
Nur ein Schlummer,  
Jesu, durch dein Schweißstuch sein.  
Ja, das wird mich dort erfrischen  
Und die Zähren meiner Pein  
Von den Wangen tröstlich wischen.

*Soprano, Alto:*

But it was for you, like us, in vain.

⑤ **Aria**

O soul, your spices  
Should consist no more of myrrh.

For only  
With resplendent laurel wreaths  
Will you still your anxious longing.

⑥ **Recitativo**

*Tenor:*

Here is the tomb

*Bass:*

And here the stone  
Which covered it.  
But where might my Saviour be?

*Alto:*

He has risen from the dead!  
We met with an angel,  
Who made this known to us.

*Tenor:*

I see now with joy  
The sweat-cloth lying here unwound.

⑦ **Aria**

My final agony shall be gentle,  
Just a slumber,  
O Jesus, due to Thy sweat-cloth.  
Yea, it will refresh me there  
And wipe the tears of my pain  
Consolingly from my cheeks.

⑧ **Recitativo** (s,a)

Indessen seufzen wir  
Mit brennender Begier:  
Ach, könnt es doch nur bald geschehen,  
Den Heiland selbst zu sehen!

⑨ **Aria** (a)

Saget, saget mir geschwinde,  
Saget, wo ich Jesum finde,  
Welchen meine Seele liebt!  
Komm doch, komm, umfasse mich;  
Denn mein Herz ist ohne dich  
Ganz verwaist und betrübt.

⑩ **Recitativo** (b)

Wir sind erfreuet,  
Daß unser Jesus wieder lebt,  
Und unser Herz,  
So erst in Traurigkeit zerflossen  
und geschwebt,  
Vergißt den Schmerz  
Und sinnt auf Freudenlieder;  
Denn unser Heiland lebet wieder.

⑪ **Coro** (s,a,t,b)

Preis und Dank  
Bleibe, Herr, dein Lobgesang.  
Höll und Teufel sind bezwungen,  
Ihre Pforten sind zerstört.  
Jauchzet, ihr erlösten Zungen,  
Daß man es im Himmel hört.  
Eröffnet, ihr Himmel, die prächtigen Bogen,  
Der Löwe von Juda kommt siegend gezogen!

⑧ **Recitative**

Meanwhile we sigh  
With burning desire:  
Ah, if only we could soon  
See the Saviour Himself!

⑨ **Aria**

Tell me, tell me quickly,  
Tell me where I might find Jesus,  
Whom I love with my soul!  
Come now, come, embrace me;  
For my heart without Thee  
Is quite orphaned and distressed.

⑩ **Recitative**

We rejoice  
That our Jesus lives again,  
And that our heart,  
Which once drifted in such sadness,  
Now forgets the pain,  
And turns to joyful anthems;  
For our Saviour lives again.

⑪ **Chorus**

May laud and thanks  
Remain, O Lord, Thy song of praise.  
Hell and the devil are vanquished,  
Their gates are destroyed.  
Rejoice, ye ransomed voices,  
That ye be heard in heaven.  
Spread open, ye heavens, your glorious arches,  
The Lion of Judah shall enter in triumph!

# Ascension Oratorio Translations, BWV. 11

## Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen (1735) Himmelsfahrtsoratorium Kantate zu Himmelfahrt

### ⑫ Coro (s,a,t,b)

Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen,  
Preiset ihn in seinen Ehren,  
Rühmet ihn in seiner Pracht;  
Sucht sein Lob recht zu vergleichen,  
Wenn ihr mit gesamten Chören  
Ihm ein Lied zu Ehren macht!

### ⑬ Evangelist (t)

*Der Herr Jesus hub seine Hände auf und  
segnete seine Jünger, und es geschah,  
da er sie segnete, schied er von ihnen.*

### ⑭ Recitativo (b)

Ach, Jesu, ist dein Abschied schon so nah?  
Ach, ist denn schon die Stunde da,  
Da wir dich von uns lassen sollen?  
Ach, siehe, wie die heißen Tränen  
Von unsern blassen Wangen rollen,  
Wie wir uns nach dir sehnen,  
Wie uns fast aller Trost gebracht.  
Ach, weiche doch noch nicht!

### ⑮ Aria (a)

Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebstes Leben,  
Ach, fliehe nicht so bald von mir!  
Dein Abschied und dein frühes Scheiden

## Praise God in His kingdoms Ascension Cantata Ascension Day

### ⑫ Chorus

Praise God in His kingdoms,  
Praise Him in His honour,  
Laud Him in His splendour;  
Seek to tell His praise correctly,  
When with assembled choirs  
You sing to His honour!

### ⑬ Evangelist

*The Lord Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed  
His disciples, and it came to pass, while He  
blessed them, He was parted from them.*

### ⑭ Recitative

Ah, Jesus, is Thy parting now so near?  
Ah, is the hour already come,  
When we must let Thee leave us?  
Ah, see how the burning tears  
Are rolling down our pale cheeks,  
How we are yearning for Thee,  
How we lack almost all comfort.  
Ah, do not yet go from us!

### ⑮ Aria

Ah stay, my dearest life,  
Ah, do not flee so soon from me!  
Thy parting and Thy early leaving



Bringt mir das allergrößte Leiden,  
Ach ja, so bleibe doch noch hier;  
Sonst werd ich ganz von Schmerz  
umgeben.

⑩ **Evangelist (t)**

*Und ward aufgehoben zusehends und fuhr  
auf gen Himmel, eine Wolke nahm ihn weg  
vor ihren Augen, und er sitzt zur rechten  
Hand Gottes.*

⑪ **Choral (s,a,t,b)**

Nun lieget alles unter dir,  
Düch selbst nur ausgenommen;  
Düe Engel müssen für und für  
Dür aufzuwarten kommen.  
Düe Fürsten stehn auch auf der Bahn  
Und sind dir willig untertan;  
Luft, Wasser, Feuer, Erden  
Muß dir zu Dienste werden.

⑫ **Evangelist (t, b)**

*Und da sie ihm nachsahen gen Himmel  
fahren, siehe, da stunden bei ihnen zwei  
Männer in weißen Kleidern, welche auch  
sagten:*

*Beide:*

*Ihr Männer von Galiläa, was stehet ihr und  
seheth gen Himmel? Dieser Jesus, welcher  
von euch ist aufgenommen gen Himmel,  
wird kommen, wie ihr ihn gesehen habt gen  
Himmel fahren.*

Cause me untold suffering.  
Ah yes, so stay yet here awhile;  
Else pain will quite encompass me.

⑬ **Evangelist**

*And while they beheld, He was taken up;  
and a cloud received Him out of their sight,  
and He sits on the right hand of God.*

⑭ **Chorale**

All now dwell beneath Thee,  
Thyself the sole exception;  
The angels must for evermore  
Come to wait upon Thee.  
Princes too stand by the path  
And are Thy willing servants;  
Air, water, fire and earth  
Must now do Thy bidding.

⑮ **Evangelist**

*And while they looked steadfastly toward  
heaven as He went up, behold, two men  
stood by them in white apparel, which also  
said:*

*both:*

*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing  
up into heaven? This same Jesus, which  
is taken up from you into heaven, shall so  
come in like manner as ye have seen Him go  
into heaven.*

19 **Recitativo** (a)

Ach ja! so komme bald zurück:  
Tilg einst mein trauriges Gebärden,  
Sonst wird mir jeder Augenblick  
Verhaßt und Jahren ähnlich werden.

20 **Evangelist** (t)

*Sie aber beteten ihn an, wandten um gen  
Jerusalem von dem Berge, der da heißt der  
Ölberg, welcher ist nahe bei Jerusalem und  
liegt einen Sabbater-Weg davon, und sie  
kehrten wieder gen Jerusalem mit großer  
Freude.*

21 **Aria** (s)

Jesu, deine Gnadenblicke  
Kann ich doch beständig sehn.  
Deine Liebe bleibt zurücke,  
Daß ich mich hier in der Zeit  
An der künftgen Herrlichkeit  
Schon voraus im Geist erquickte,  
Wenn wir einst dort vor dir stehn.

22 **Coro** (Choral) (s,a,t,b)

Wenn soll es doch geschehen,  
Wenn kömmt die liebe Zeit,  
Daß ich ihn werde sehen  
In seiner Herrlichkeit?  
Du Tag, wenn wirst du sein,  
Daß wir den Heiland grüßen,  
Daß wir den Heiland küssen?  
Komm, stelle dich doch ein!

19 **Recitative**

Ah yes! so come back soon again:  
Efface at last my sad demeanour,  
Otherwise each moment will be for me  
Despised and seem to last for years.

20 **Evangelist**

*And they worshipped Him and returned unto  
Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet,  
which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's  
journey, and they returned to Jerusalem with  
great joy.*

21 **Aria**

Jesus, I can continually see  
Thy looks of mercy.  
Thy love remains behind,  
So that I here on earth  
Might already refresh my soul  
With the glory that is to come,  
When we one day shall stand before Thee.

22 **Chorus** (Chorale)

But when shall it come to pass,  
When shall the dear day dawn  
That I behold Him  
In all His glory?  
O day, when will you dawn,  
That we may greet the Saviour,  
That we may kiss the Saviour?  
Come, then, and appear!



**RETROSPECT**  
ENSEMBLE

## **RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE**

Launched on 1 May 2009, Retrospect Ensemble gave its inaugural UK performance at the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, opening the festival with a critically acclaimed performance of Handel's late masterpiece, Jephtha. Shortly afterwards they made their Edinburgh Festival Debut with soprano Carolyn Sampson.

Founded by Matthew Halls, Retrospect Ensemble is embarking on a new journey both for its musicians and audiences – exploring the repertoire of four centuries and embracing the practices, styles and aesthetics of former ages with renewed vigour and a fresh approach. The choice of the name Retrospect Ensemble ensures that the group need not restrict itself to one particular historical period nor to a rigid configuration; concerts range from small chamber ensemble to full orchestra and choir.

The ensemble records for the innovative Linn Records and this is their second disc for the label recently named Label of the Year by Gramophone, following their critically acclaimed debut recording of Purcell Trio Sonatas (CKD 332):

*'The playing is immaculate — expressive and alert to all the nuance and variety of this superb music. An absolute winner for the Purcell year...'*

**Hugh Canning, The Times, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009**

*'Delightfully expressive and sensitively ornamented playing and a rewarding recording as well. One of the best new contributions to Purcell's discography I've heard so far in this 350th anniversary year...'*

**Andrew McGregor, BBC Radio 3 CD Review, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

The ensemble's current diary includes appearances at two of London's foremost festivals, the Spitalfields Festival and Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music. The ensemble has an annual Wigmore Hall series; concerts across Europe and the Far East; has established an exciting partnership with the Korean National Opera, following an initial collaboration for performances of Gluck Orfeo ed Euridice in Spring 2010; and has a flourishing Young Artist Programme.



RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE

## RETROSPECT ENSEMBLE

Artistic Director

**Matthew Halls**

General Manager

**Susie York Skinner**

Head of Development

**Karen Morris**

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**Matthew Halls** *conductor*

**Carolyn Sampson** *soprano*

**Iestyn Davies** *countertenor*

**James Gilchrist** *tenor*

**Peter Harvey** *bass*

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*violin 1*

Lucy Russell

Sarah Sexton

Daniel Edgar

Tuomo Suni

Jorge Jimenez

*violin 2*

Claire Duff

Andrea Morris

Rebecca Miles

Nia Lewis

*viola*

Jane Rogers

Louise Hogan

*cello*

Andrew Skidmore

Emily Robinson

*double bass*

Timothy Amherst

*organ*

Mark Williams

*recorder*

Rebecca Miles

Katy Bircher

*flute*

Rachel Brown

Katy Bircher

*oboe*

Alexandra Bellamy

Hannah McLaughlin

*bassoon*

Zoë Shevlin

*trumpet*

Neil Brough

Crispian Steele-Perkins

John Hutchins

*timpani*

Charles Fullbrook

*soprano*

Ildikó Allen

Julie Cooper

Alison Hill

Charlotte Mobbs

Rebecca Outram

Helen Parker

*alto*

Ian Aitkenhead

Stephen Carter

David Martin

Richard Wyn-Roberts

*tenor*

Nicholas Keay

Tom Phillips

Roy Rashbrook

Angus Smith

*bass*

Ben Davies

Charles Pott

Richard Savage

William Townend

**MATTHEW HALLS** *conductor*



Photo © Eric Richmond

**MATTHEW HALLS** *conductor*

Matthew Halls has established himself as one of today's leading young conductors. A former Artistic Director of The King's Consort, he has conducted in prominent venues including the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; the Cité de la Musique, Paris; and the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels. Beyond the early repertoire in which he has initially established his reputation, Halls is known for his passion for the Germanic repertoire, particularly Beethoven, Brahms, Schumann and Schubert. As a conductor of choral music he has conducted an eclectic cross section of the repertoire, juxtaposing composers as diverse as Byrd and Britten, Gesualdo and Schoenberg.

Now firmly established as a conductor of international repute, Halls' guest conducting includes significant debuts with orchestras such as Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Hessischer Rundfunk Sinfonie Orchester, Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte Carlo, Bach Collegium Stuttgart, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic, Het Residentie Orkest, Houston Symphony and National Symphony Orchestra, Washington DC.

Having initially established his reputation as a keyboard player, Halls has worked extensively with many of Europe's foremost early music groups and in opera houses including The Netherlands Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper and Komische Oper Berlin. Building on this long established pedigree, Halls has made recent debuts with opera companies such as Handelfestspiele Halle, Salzburg Landestheater, Central City Opera Colorado and Korean National Opera.

An Oxford graduate, Halls subsequently taught at the University for five years. Passionately committed to education and working with young musicians, the development of Retrospect Ensemble's Young Artist Programme has been a priority for him. He is also a tutor for the European Union Baroque Orchestra and regularly teaches on summer schools and courses such as the Jerusalem Early Music Workshop and the Dartington International Summer School.

#### **CAROLYN SAMPSON** *soprano*

Carolyn Sampson has established a reputation as one of the most exciting sopranos to emerge in recent years. A consummate performer of opera she has appeared at English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opéra de Paris, Opéra de Lille, Opéra de Montpellier and Opéra National du Rhin.



**CAROLYN SAMPSON** *soprano*

Photo © Annelies van der Vegt

Embracing a wide repertoire from the baroque to the contemporary Carolyn Sampson has appeared with some of the great orchestras and conductors in the world. These have included The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Bach Collegium Japan, The English Concert, Hallé Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, WDR Symphonieorchester Köln, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra e Coro dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and St Paul Chamber Orchestra and such conductors as Riccardo Chailly, Sir Mark Elder, Philippe Herreweghe, Gustav Leonhardt, Andris Nelsons, Trevor Pinnock and Maasaki Suzuki.

Carolyn Sampson is a regular guest at the BBC Proms and gives frequent recitals at Wigmore Hall. Her many recordings appear on the Hyperion, Harmonia Mundi, Virgin Classics, BIS, DG Archiv and Linn Records labels.

### **IESTYN DAVIES** *countertenor*

Iestyn Davies studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, where he was a choral scholar at St John's College, before pursuing his vocal studies at the Royal Academy of Music.



Photo © Iestyn Davies & Marco Borggreve, 2010



Since making his debut as Ottone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for Zürich Opera with Harnoncourt, operatic roles have included Armindo (Handel's *Partenope*) for English National Opera; *Ottone* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Purcell's *King Arthur* for New York City Opera and English National Opera; Hamor (Handel's *Jephtha*) and L'Humana Fragilità and Pisandro (Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) for Welsh National Opera; Voice of Apollo (Britten's *Death in Venice*) for English National Opera; Azul (Nadair's *Madrugada*) for the Schleswig-Holstein Festival; Corrado (Vivaldi's *Griselda*) in Paris, Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Houston Grand Opera and his Covent Garden debut as the Spirit in *Dido and Aeneas*. He has worked with directors including Warner, Mitchell, Alden and Flimm and will soon be making his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

He made his debut at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, in a concert performance of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the Orchestra Filarmonica della Scala under Dudamel. Appearances at Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Concertgebouw, Snape Maltings and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées have included performances of Britten's *Canticles*, Bach's *Mass in B minor* and Handel's *Messiah* and *Flavio*. He has sung with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Matheus and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and he regularly works with conductors including Layton, Gardiner, Harnoncourt, Nagano, Alessandrini, Spinosi, Koopman, Hogwood and Bruggen.

### **JAMES GILCHRIST** *tenor*

James Gilchrist began his working life as a doctor, turning to a full-time career in music in 1996. As a recitalist, James has appeared with Malcolm Martineau, with Stephen Varcoe and Della Jones at St John's, Smith Square, and with John Constable performing Britten *Canticles*, Quilter *To Julia* and Tippett *The Heart's Assurance*. In his partnership with the pianist Anna Tilbrook, he has performed Schumann *Liederkreis* (Op. 24), Finzi *Till Earth Outwears* and Poulenc *Metamorphoses*. Operatic performances include Quint in Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Scaramuccio in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, and many more.



Photo © John Hasky

Amongst his many recordings are title roles in Albert Herring and Vaughan William's *A Poisoned Kiss*, Bach *St Matthew Passion* and Bach *St John Passion*. In 2009 James released *The Songs on Muriel Herbert* (CKD 335) which joins his other acclaimed recordings on Linn Records, *Oh Fair To See* (CKD 253) and the Classic FM Gramophone Award Finalist *On Wenlock Edge* (CKD 296). In 2010, James released the first modern recording of Leighton's *Earth, Sweet Earth* and Britten's *Winter Words* on his album titled *Leighton Earth, Sweet Earth* (CKD 329).

Other engagements include Haydn *The Seasons* and *Creation* with the Monteverdi Choir on tour in Europe and the US, *Messiah* with the St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Bach *Cantatas* with NDR Hannover, *St Matthew Passion* in Koln and Amsterdam, *B minor Mass* for the Bach Choir and Mozart *Requiem* for the Academy of Ancient Music and with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales.

### **PETER HARVEY** *baritone*

Peter Harvey studied music at Magdalen College, Oxford, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Having initially set out to read French and German, his commitment to language has always been at the heart of his singing. Although he sings a wide

repertoire, he has become especially associated with music from the High Baroque, and the works of J.S. Bach in particular.

With the English Baroque Soloists and the Monteverdi Choir, directed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, he was a key participant in the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage. A long-standing soloist with Paul McCreech's Gabrieli Consort, The King's Consort, The Sixteen and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has seen Peter perform in prestigious venues internationally.

He is returning increasingly to the Song repertoire, in 2010, Peter made his Linn Records debut with his recording of Franz Schubert's *Winterreise* (CKD 371) and has performed this song-cycle at festivals in Cambridge and Lugo, Spain. He has given recitals in festivals in Britain, Canada and France whilst other recitals include early Lieder with Laurence Cummings, Mozart in Barcelona and a programme of Lute Songs and Lieder in London's Purcell Room with Matthew Wadsworth (lute and 19th century guitar) and Gary Cooper.

Peter is founder and director of the Magdalena Consort, which focuses on the vocal music of J.S. Bach.



Photo © Eric Richmond



## Linn Records Label of the Year

"Linn is the very model of a modern record company, ensuring that the highest standards are maintained from the studio right through the company's very impressive digital store."

**JAMES JOLLY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, GRAMOPHONE**



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