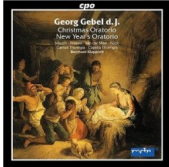


Georg Gebel - Christmass Oratorio, New Years Oratorio (Klapprott) [2003]



Jauchzet ihr Himmel, for chorus & orchestra (Christmas Oratorio) 1 Coro. Jauchzet, ihr Himmel! Erfreue dich Erde! 2 Coro. Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe 1:22 3 Recitativo. Das ganze Heer der frohen Engelscharen 1:27 4 Aria. Nichts, als reine Himmelsfreude 3:48

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5 Choral. Fröhlich soll mein Herze springen 0:33 6 Accompagnato. Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend 2:14 7 Recitativo & Accompagnato. Geweihte Segensnacht 1:17 8 Aria. Geist der Andacht, sanfte Flamme 6:02 9 Choral. Ermuntre dich, mein schwacher Geist 0:48 10 Coro. Das Volk, so im Finstern wandelt 0:46 11 Recitativo & Accompagnato. Wie tröstlich 1:19 12 Aria. Nur im Lichte lebt das Leben 2:55 13 Choral. Werde Licht, du Stadt der Heiden 0:41 14 Coro. Daran ist erschienen die Liebe Gottes gegen uns 0:56 15 Recitativo. Mein Herz, betrachte doch die Triebe 1:42 16 Aria Duetto. Komm, Süßeste Hoffnung der ewigen Freude 3:40 17 Choral. Herr Gott Vater, mein starker Held! 1:04 18 Coro. Heil und Stärke, Preis und Ehre 2:45

Erzählet ihr Himmel, for chorus & orchestra (New Year's Oratorio)

19 Coro. Erzählet, ihr Himmel, die göttlichen Werke! 2:38 20 Accompagnato & Recitativo. Tag und Nacht ist dein 2:09 21 Aria. Fliehe nur, gemessne Zeit! 3:55 22 Choral. Ach, wie nichtig! ach, wie flüchtig 0:31 23 Coro. Danket dem Herrn, denn er ist freundlich 2:39 24 Recitativo. O, welches Meer der treuen Vätergüte 1:28 25 Aria Duetto. Herzensdank ist ein Magnet 2:24

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26 Choral. Nun danket alle Gott mit Herzen, Mund und Händen 0:53 27 Coro. Wünschet Jerusalem Glück! 1:34 28 Recitativo. Ein Wunsch muss ein Gebet 1:42 29 Aria. Gebet kann Gottes Majestät 4:55 30 Choral. Nun Vater, unser Gott! 0:51 31 Accompagnato & Recitativo. Ist jemand in Christo 1:54 32 Aria. Neue Stadt, ach komm, du Schöne! 3:28 33 Coro. Herr des Himmels und der Zeit 0:55 34 Choral. Hierauf so sprechen wir in Jesu Christi Namen 0:48

Monika Mauch - Soprano Kai Wessel – Alto Nico van der Meel – Tenor Peter Kooij - Bass
Cantus Thuringia, Capella Thuringia Bernhard Klapprott - Director

The son of a composer of the same name, Gebel was a musical prodigy with an opera and

various other works to his credit by the time he was 16. In 1729 he was appointed organist of St. Maria Magdalena in Breslau, a position retained following his appointment as Kapellmeister at the court of Oels. There followed 12 years at Warsaw and later at Dresden in the service of Count Brühl, first minister of the Saxon court. Gebel's final post was at the court of Rudolstadt, which he joined in 1746, subsequently becoming Kapellmeister in 1750, the post he held at the time of his premature death three years later. Throughout his career, Gebel was a remarkably prolific composer, although the overwhelming majority of a huge output that includes at least a dozen operas and four complete cantata cycles is today lost. The two oratorios recorded here were composed for the cultured Rudolstadt court of Prince Johann Friedrich, both dating from 1748, the same year as the Passion recorded by Ludger Rémy on the set referred to above. They are lavishly scored, the Christmas work including parts for trumpets and timpani in addition to oboes, flute, bassoon, and strings, while that for New Year is scored for pairs of trumpets, horns, and oboes in addition to strings. The vocal forces are SATB, with the nature of the writing and external evidence clearly pointing to solo singers in the choruses (Rudolstadt employed eight singers in 1748, some of whom doubled as instrumentalists), although they are here sung by a well-disciplined and balanced body of 14 singers.

The designation of the oratorios as "devotions" for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve provides a strong clue as to their character, neither being concerned with relating the details of the Christmas story, but rather concerning themselves with the implications of its events for Christians. Both are framed by appropriately festive choruses, the jubilant one for the Christmas work starting with unmistakable echoes of Bach's "Christmas" Oratorio, while that for New Year is driven by the dynamic scalar figuration supporting the dotted-rhythm vocal line. The chorus that closes the Christmas oratorio is another powerfully exultant piece, here thrillingly dispatched with great verve and commitment. Sandwiched between is the expected alternation of recitative, aria, and chorales, set to biblical or free poetic texts. Many of the recitatives are striking, Gebel, like Stölzel, often dividing them between more than one soloist and employing a flexible alternation of secco, accompagnato, and arioso. Unlike in the St. John Passion, all the arias are in da capo form, although most are still brief. An exception is the impressive tenor aria from the Christmas oratorio, "Geist der Andacht," which, in its long sustained lines and vivid word painting, is not alone in displaying Italian influences that Gebel possibly picked up during his Dresden sojourn. Here, as elsewhere, Nico van der Meel's lack of fluency suggests he is not wholly comfortable with the fairly demanding writing.

Overall, these performances convey the spirit of the music and its message in thoroughly convincing, idiomatic fashion, with Bernhard Klapprott inspiring both orchestra and chorus to playing and singing of great conviction. It's good, too, to hear chorales taken at a sensible pace. Cpo's sound is a little edgy, but well detailed and spacious, while the comprehensive notes are in the best house tradition. Anyone inspired to investigate Gebel by the reviews of the St. John Passion (we like to think such people exist!) should need little encouragement to make for this disc, featuring as it does two works that perhaps make an even more convincing case for the composer. ---Brian Robins, Fanfare

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