

Kuhnau – Sacred Music (1998)



Ihr Himmel Jubilirt Von Oben 13:19 1 *Symphony – Chorus & Soloists: Ihr Himmel Jubilirt*
3:22 2 *Contertenor Recitative: Es Ist Vollbracht* 0:43 3 *Countertenor & Bass Duet: Hilf Mir*
Es, Jesu, Auch Vollbringen 3:18 4 *Countertenor Recitative: Indessen Bleibt Die Seele* 0:35 5
Countertenor Aria: Jesu, Wenn Ich Dich Nur Habe 3:18 6 *Chorus & Soloists: Gieb, Jesu,*
Dass Dein Wille 2:03 *Weicht Ihr Sorgen Aus Dem*
Hertzen 13:50 7 *Sonata – Aria:*
Weicht Ihr Sorgen Aus Dem Hertzen 2:47 8 *Recitative: Ich Bleib In Gottgellass' Ner Ruh* 1:36
9 *Aria: Weicht Ihr Sorgen Aus Dem Hertzen* 0:56 10 *Recitative: Was Frag Ich Nach Der Welt*
1:00 11 *Aria: Ich Habe Gott, Was Fehlt Mir Noch?* 2:31 12 *Recitative: So Kan Ich Allen Tand*
1:22 13 *Aria: Komm Doch, Komm Doch Süsse Stunde* 3:38
Wie Schön Leuchtet Der Morgenstern 13:30
14 *Chorale: Wie Schön Leuchtet Der Morgenstern* 1:55 15 *Tenor Recitative: Allein, Heut*
Wird Der Grosse Klein 0:55 16 *Chorus: Uns Ist Ein Kind Geboren* 1:43 17 *Tenor Aria: O*
Wundersohn, Dein Überirdisch Wesen 2:26 18 *Tenor Recitative: Doch Leuchtet In Der*
Niedrigkeit 1:25 19 *Tenor Aria: Kommt, Ihr Völker, Kommt Mit Haufen* 1:46 20 *Tenor*
Accompagnato: Ich Huld' Ge Dir, Grossmächt' Ger Prinz 1:19 21 *Soprano Duet – Chorale:*
Zwingt Die Saiten In Cythara 2:01
Gott, Sei Mir Gnädig Nach Deiner Güte 12:11
22 *Chorus: Gott, Sei Mir Gnädig Nach Deiner Güte* 2:23 23 *Countertenor Aria: Wasche Mich*
Wohl Von Meiner Missetat 1:36 24 *Countertenor Recitative: Denn Ich Erkenne Meine Missetat*
0:23 25 *Soprano & Bass Solo – Chorus: An Dir Allein Hab' Ich Gesündigt* 2:06 26 *Tenor &*
Bass Arioso: Siehe, Ich Bin Aus Sündlichem Samen Gezeuget 1:43 27 *Chorus: Entsündige*
Mich Mit Isopen 1:04 28 *Soprano & Tenor Arioso – Chorus: Lass Mich Hören Freud Und*
Wonne 2:56
Tristis Est Anima Mea
29 *Tristis Est Anima Mea Usque Ad Mortem* 4:50
O Heilige Zeit 15:57
30 *Chorus & Soloists: O Heilige Zeit!* 3:20 31 *Bass Aria: Wüte Nur, Du Alte Schlange* 2:39
32 *Countertenor Arioso: Ach, Denk Ich Zwar, Mein Liebster Jesu* 2:57 33 *Soprano Aria:*
Eigne Dir Mein Herze Zu 2:04 34 *Tenor & Bass Duet – Chorus: Was Ist Der Mensch Als*
Staub Und Erde 1:54 35 *Countertenor Arioso: Haltet Mich Nicht Länger Auf* 1:31 36 *Bass*
Arioso – Chorus: Ich Bin Entzückt 1:32
Bass Vocals – Colin Campbell, Peter Harvey Bassoon – Alastair Mitchell Cello – Jane Coe
Countertenor Vocals – James Bowman, Robin Blaze French Horn – Andrew Clark, Roger

Montgomery Oboe – Katharina Spreckelsen Organ – Gary Cooper Soprano Vocals – Deborah York, Lisa Beckley, Marianne Hellgren, Susan Hamilton Tenor Vocals – Charles Daniels, James Gilchrist Theorbo – David Miller Timpani – Charles Fullbrook Trumpet – Crispian Steele-Perkins, James Ghigi, Phillip Bainbridge Viola – Katherine McGillivray, Rona Tavior Violin – Anne Schumann, Simon Jones Violone – Mark Levy Choir, Orchestra – The King's Consort Conductor, Score Editor [Editions By] – Robert King

Johann Kuhnau was one of life's polymaths—as well as being a composer he trained as a lawyer, spoke several languages, helped found Leipzig's opera house, theorized about music and even found time to write a novel sending up the shortcomings of the contemporary music scene. Musically he's the link between Schütz and Bach, but he was alive to many different stylistic traits as this selection of sacred music demonstrates. From the brilliantly brassy opening of *Ihr Himmel jubilirt* to the restrained intensity of *Tristis est anima mea*, it's music invigorated at every turn by The King's Consort. ---hyperion-records.co.uk

As the distinguished German-baroque scholar John Butt points out in his clear and informative note, Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722) is often assigned to the dusty footnotes of Bach biographies. Read on and we are reminded that he was Cantor at St Thomas's, Leipzig until his death, crossing paths with Bach and inspiring the younger man to borrow the title *Clavier-Ubung* for the prime repository for Bach's published keyboard works. Out of Bach's shadow, Kuhnau stands tall as a polymath of a sort that had almost ceased to exist in the pragmatic social climate of the seventeenth-century musician: lawyer, novelist, philosopher, theorist, linguist and musician. In purely stylistic terms, Butt's note gives us a chance to place Kuhnau's art in that subtle and evolving tradition of Lutheran church music, as perhaps the only important figure of his generation who, if not actually encountering Schutz first-hand (and Kuhnau still may have done as a young boy in Dresden), was at least partly shaped by the world of old orthodox Lutheranism – and yet was still composing cantatas in Leipzig when Bach was a well-established Kapellmeister. With all this in mind, and having ruminated on the notes, do we not find this selection of six 'cantatas' sounds more akin to Schutz's figural imagery, J. C. Bach's and Weckmann's intense emotionalism or Buxtehude's own immaculate refinement? Inevitably we wonder, do we hear embryonic Bach?

This splendid and varied cross-section of his choral music has definite affinities with these figures but leaves us in no doubt that Kuhnau is far more than merely a confident practitioner

who followed the plot of changing fashion. Through a keen sense of assimilation comes a singular, mainly sober, yet highly accomplished church composer. Gott, sei mir gnadig is a fine, evocative work full of rhetorical detail and inference, whilst in Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern the declamation straddles the concentrated world of the Bach motet, Komm, Jesu, komm, yet punctuated by the secular ostentation and chuckling horns of another world – this is hardly the man who publicly denounced modern opera in the first decade of the eighteenth century (though that may have had more to do with a political spat with Telemann than his own creative inclinations).

Robert King and his consort of singers and players highlight the multi-layered references in Kuhnau's cantatas, from the graceful Bach-aria lilt of Weicht ihr Sorgen, with the sympathetic colouring, if questionable diction, of Deborah York offset by an affectionate and responsive band of strings and unison oboes, to the decidedly pietist world of the accompagnato recitative in Wie schon leuchtet. The way the solo voices emerge from a 'community' of integrated musicians is an attractive characteristic of these performances. Above all, such an approach helps to emphasize Kuhnau's richly imbued, though direct projection of strong melodic ideas and contrapuntal fluency (with an almost Handelian gait – and then we read that Kuhnau encountered Handel as a student). The beguiling and antiquated Tristis est anima mea is worth its weight in gold. Only rarely do the solo sopranos forget to listen to each other here, and elsewhere. Vocally colourful (all the soloists are on fine form, but especially Robin Blaze and Peter Harvey) and instrumentally outstanding, this is an important recording of a woefully neglected figure whose music has real stature. ---Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, gramophone.co.uk

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