

**J.S. Bach – Advent Cantatas BWV 36, 61 & 62 (2000)**



1. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Ov - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner 2. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Recitative - Anthony Rolfe Johnson 3. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Aria - Anthony Rolfe Johnson 4. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Recitative - Olaf Bar 5. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Aria - Nancy Argenta/Timothy Mason 6. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland I, BWV61: Chorale - Besetzung [Flac](#) 7. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part One: Chor - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner 8. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part One: Chorale-Duet - Nancy Argenta/Petra Lang/ Anthony Robson/Richard Earle/Alastair Mitchell 9. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part One: Aria - Anthony Rolfe Johnson/Anthony Robson 10. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part One: Chorale - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner 11. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part Two: Aria - Olaf Bar 12. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part Two: Chorale - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner [Flac](#) 13. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part Two: Aria - Nancy Argenta/ Alison Bury 14. Schwingt Freudig Euch Empor, BWV 36: Part Two: Chorale - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner 15. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Chorus - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner 16. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Aria - Anthony Rolfe Johnson 17. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Recitative - Olaf Bar 18. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Aria - Olaf Bar 19. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Recitative - Nancy Argenta/Petra Lang 20. Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland II, BWV 62: Chorale - Monteverdi Chor/John Eliot Gardiner  
Performer: Nancy Argenta – soprano Petra Lang - mezzo-soprano Richard Campbell – tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson - tenor Olaf Bar – bass-baritone English Baroque Soloists, Olaf Bar John Eliot Gardiner - conductor

"Alas, by the time this piece appears the Advent season of the church year will be over; yet, of course, these three cantatas, like each and every one of the remainder are, in musical terms "per ogni tempo" as Bach himself might have put it. John Eliot Gardiner continues his series for Archiv with works which Bach performed on the First Sunday in Advent—two of them linked, to a greater or lesser extent, to Luther's great hymn Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, itself a metrical version of the fourth-century Veni redemptor gentium, the third a parody by and large of

birthday music which Bach performed several times during the mid to late 1720s.

Gardiner has shown us on many other occasions that he can respond passionately to the music and in this new release he seems to have allowed himself a greater degree of expressive freedom than in the previous two issues. The result is not only a more colourful and relaxed performance but also a more satisfying one. The earliest work here, No. 61, is a masterpiece of Bach's Weimar years, dramatically conceived—the opening number is the first of several in which the composer set the chorus within the framework of a French overture—and containing in its bass arioso one of the great moments of declamatory writing outside the Passions. None of the drama is lost on Gardiner who performs the work lovingly and with an affectingly restrained exuberance.

Were it not for the masterly nature of No. 61, its namesake of ten years later (Leipzig, 1724) would undoubtedly enjoy a higher profile. As it is the piece is too often underrated, suffering from inappropriate comparison with the other. Inappropriate because, apart from name and seasonal dedication, the structural basis of the two are different, the latter adhering more strictly to Luther's hymn. Gardiner gives a fervent and vivacious performance of the symmetrically constructed opening chorus where the hymn melody is sustained by the sopranos. The reverse side of the expressive coin, so to speak, is represented by an accompanied recitative of affecting tenderness for soprano and alto where text and music give us a foretaste of the great Christmas music that was to follow ten years later.

The remaining piece, No. 36, is both the latest and the most extended of the three cantatas. It is also, perhaps, the least even in performance. The strongest features here are the solos since the choir does not always sound completely convincing in the opening chorus with its leaping intervals illustrative of the text, nor the tenors in the later chorale "Der du bist dem Vater gleich". Outstanding among them is the lyrical 12/8 soprano aria with violin obbligato, "Auch mit gedampften, schwachen Stimmen" ("Even with hushed, weak voices God's majesty is revered"). Here the ravishing partnership of Nancy Argenta and the leader of the band, Alison Bury, is all that one could wish for. Gardiner sets what at first struck me as a dangerously slow tempo for this do capo number but it comes over convincingly. The robust bass aria, "Willkommen, werter Schatz!" ("Welcome precious treasure") sung by Olaf B5r, comes off well too, as does much else here.

[T]his is a captivating disc with an outstandingly successful performance of No. 61 and with individual contributions in the remaining cantatas which I shall not want to be without...recorded sound is pleasingly spacious. Strongly recommended." --- N.A., Gramophone [2/1993]

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