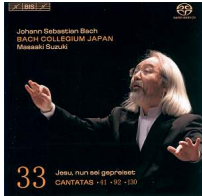


Bach – Cantatas Vol.33 (Suzuki)



01 – 06. *Jesu, nun sei gepreiset, BWV 41 (1725) [27:40]* 07 – 15. *Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn, BWV 92 (1725) [30:12]* 16 – 21. *Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir, BWV 130 (1725) [15:08]*
Yukari Nonoshita (soprano), Robin Blaze (counter-tenor), Jan Kobow (tenor), Dominik Wörner (bass) Bach Collegium Japan Masaaki Suzuki – conductor rec. April 2005, Kobe Shuin Women's University Chapel, Japan

'Music's greatest treasure trove' is an apt description of the Bach cantatas, since again and again the music-lover will discover riches of the highest quality and depth. So it proves here in this latest collection from the distinguished combination of Masaaki Suzuki and Bach Collegium Japan. Together they have achieved remarkable things in their Bach odyssey, and this latest collection must rank among their most successful to date.

They perform three cantatas from 1725 in Leipzig. *Jesu, nun sei gepreiset* (Jesus now be praised), BWV 41, began the same year as the cantata performed on 1 January for the Feast of the Circumcision. Bach employed his favoured method of using an existing chorale melody - this time by Johannes Herman - as the basis for a complex chorus as the opening movement. This is also a substantial structure, and Suzuki articulates its complex textures with remarkable clarity, aided by the excellent BIS recording, SACD sound at its best. There is also a more complex relationship of tempi than Bach generally employs, and this is itself a challenge to the performers, though here the balancing of faster and slower identities is handled with masterly transitions and control. Suzuki's concern for articulation in his phrasing reaps the strongest of dividends, and the balancing of the three trumpets is particularly effective.

The solo numbers that follow are no less fine, as are the various instrumental obligati. The solo voices, save for the counter-tenor Robin Blaze, join with the twelve voices of the chorus, and to

splendid effect. While Gustav Leonhardt's celebrated performance of this cantata (Sony Classical SK68265) remains a poetic and sensitive interpretation, Suzuki manages to articulate the music's nature more keenly still, and with better recorded sound, as we might expect some forty years on.

Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn (I have into God's heart and soul), BWV 92, was first performed at the end of January 1725. It has a less grand manner than BWV 41, but no less subtlety in its treatment of the opening chorus with interpolated chorale melody. The orchestra features a pair of oboes d'amore with strings and continuo, a particular and highly effective sound, which is again well captured by atmospheric recording. Altogether less dramatic in character, the music makes an effective foil to the other two featured pieces, the treatments of the chorale melody if anything more imaginative still. The rhythmic felicities of the opening chorus are beautifully shaped, although the tenor and bass arias might have been more strongly characterized in their phrasing and delivery. No such caveats with Yukari Nonoshita's soprano solo, however, replete with beautifully played obbligato oboe d'amore above pizzicato strings at a perfectly judged tempo.

With Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir, BWV 130, the splendours of trumpet sound return, not only at the beginning and ending of the sequence of movements, but also in the magnificent bass aria 'Der alte Drache brennt vor Neid', with Dominik Wörner at the peak of his form. More delicate is the tenor aria 'Laß, o Fürst der Cherubinen', equally well sung by Jan Kobow yet quite different in approach. The trumpets are particularly well recorded and always add that extra dimension Bach surely intended they should. ---Terry Barfoot, musicweb-international.com

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