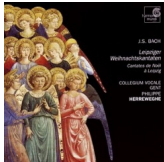


Bach – Leipziger Weihnachtsskantaten & Magnificat (2001 - 2002)



CD 1

1. Cantata No. 91, 'Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ,' BWV 91 (BC A9): Choral
2. BWV 91 (BC A9): Recitativo: Der Glanz der höchsten Herrlichkeit
3. BWV 91 (BC A9): Aria: Gott, dem der Erden Kreis zu klein
4. BWV 91 (BC A9): Recitativo: O Christenheit!
5. BWV 91 (BC A9): Aria: Die Armut, so Gott auf sich nimmt
6. BWV 91 (BC A9): Choral: Das hat er alles uns getan
7. Cantata No. 121, 'Christum wir sollen loben schon,' BWV 121 (BC A13): Choral
8. BWV 121 (BC A13): Aria: O du von Gott erhöhte Kreatur
9. BWV 121 (BC A13): Recitativo: Der Gnade unermeßlichs Wesen
10. BWV 121 (BC A13): Aria: Johannis freudenvolles Springen
11. BWV 121 (BC A13): Recitativo: Doch wie erblickt es dich in deiner Krippen
12. BWV 121 (BC A13): Choral: Lob, Ehr und Dank sei dir gesagt
13. Cantata No. 133, 'Ich freue mich in dir,' BWV 133 (BC A16): Choral
14. BWV 133 (BC A16): Aria: Getrost! es faßt ein heileiger Leib
15. BWV 133 (BC A16): Recitativo: Ein Adam mag sich voller Schrecken
16. BWV 133 (BC A16): Aria: Wie lieblich klingt es in den Ohren
17. BWV 133 (BC A16): Recitativo: Wohlan! Des Todes Furcht und Schmerz
18. BWV 133 (BC A16): Choral: Wohlan, so will ich

CD 2

1. Cantata No. 63, 'Christen, ätzt diesen Tag,' BWV 63 (BC A8): Choral
2. BWV 63 (BC A8): Recitativo: O selger Tag! O ungermeines Heute
3. BWV 63 (BC A8): Aria: Gott, du hast es wohl gefüget
4. BWV 63 (BC A8): Recitativo: So kehret sich nun heut
5. BWV 63 (BC A8): Aria: Ruft und fleht den Himmel an
6. BWV 63 (BC A8): Recitativo: Verdoppelt euch demnach
7. BWV 63 (BC A8): Choral: Höchster, schau in Gnaden an
8. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Magnificat anima mea
9. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Et exultavit spiritus meus
10. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Vom Himmel
11. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Quia respexit humilitatem
12. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Omnes generationes
13. Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Quia fecit mihi magna

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14. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Freut euch und jubiliert*
15. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Et misericordia*
16. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Fecit potentiam*
17. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Gloria in excelsis Deo*
18. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Deposuit potentes*
19. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Esurientes implevit bonis*
20. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Virga Jesse floruit*
21. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Suscepit Israel*
22. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Sicut locutus est*
23. *Magnificat, BWV 243a (BC E14): Gloria Patri*

Dorothee Blotzky-Mields: soprano

Carolyn Sampson: soprano

Ingeborg Danz: alto

Mark Padmore: tenor

Peter Kooy: bass

Sebastian Noack: bass

Collegium Vocale Gent

Philippe Herreweghe – conductor

The reason to buy this set is for the Magnificat, the original but rarely recorded E-flat version from 1723, which certainly gets its most exciting and likely most enduring performance on disc, an agreeable combination of first-rate soloists, matchless choral singing, and unassailable playing from Philippe Herreweghe's period-instrument band. Listeners familiar with the more commonly performed D major Magnificat--which Bach revised from the earlier work some 10 years later--will notice some significant differences, especially the presence of four "Christmas interpolations", which are additional hymn-based movements that were part of Leipzig Christmas custom.

The first of these, Von Himmel hoch, is a strictly a cappella motet, while the last, Virga Jesse floruit, is one of Bach's more lovely vocal duets (soprano and bass with continuo), whose rendition here by Carolyn Sampson and Sebastian Noack is deserving of more than a couple of repeats. As for the rest of the Magnificat, you're treated to bracing but not rushed tempos, infectiously energetic and technically solid contributions from the chorus, and an intelligently paced flow from movement to movement that once again shows Herreweghe's complete command of this repertoire. The cantata BWV 63 "Christen, ätzt diesen Tag", recorded at the same 2002 sessions as the Magnificat, also receives an outstanding performance, recorded in an appropriately bright, richly resonant, cleanly detailed acoustic.

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The set's first disc, which includes the cantatas BWV 91, 121, and 133, is placed in a warmer, more confined environment that overall provides pleasant listening but also permits less clarity and detail and takes a bit of the edge off the performance's excitement and energy, and the soprano soloist, while very good, will appeal primarily to those who appreciate their Bach arias in a straight-toned, Emma Kirkby-like manner (not that there's anything wrong with that!). Regardless, the three cantatas on Disc 1 carry Herreweghe's authoritative stamp, from the perfectly managed choral flourishes to the finer detail of arias such as BWV 91's "Die Armut, so Gott auf sich nimmt", with its incessant skipping string figures balanced against the soprano and alto's earnest vocal exhortations. No matter how you cut it, this is a treasurable collection, and no Bach fan should be without this Magnificat--it's that good. [11/8/2003] ---David Vernier, ClassicsToday.com

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