



2010 Bach

THE COMPLETE CHORAL CANTATAS



CANTATAS VII 19 February 2006

BWV 3: Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid
BWV 14: Wår Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit
BWV 144: Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin

Elizabeth Scott, Soprano
Su-lin Leong, Mezzo-Soprano
Luke Redmond, Tenor
Timothy Collins, Bass-Baritone
Christopher Shepard, Conductor

Was Gott tut, das ist wohl getan



Whate'er my God ordains is right; His holy will abideth;
I will be still, whate'er He doth, and follow where He guideth.
He is my God; though dark the road, He ever will uphold me
And in His image mould me.



BWV 3: ACH GOTT, WIE MANCHES HERZELEID

1. Chorus

Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid
Begegnet mir zu dieser Zeit!
Der schmale Weg ist trübsalvoll,
Den ich zum Himmel wandern soll.

Ah God, how oft a heartfelt grief
Confronteth me within these days!
The narrow path is sorrow-filled
Which I to heaven travel must.

2. SATB Recitative and Chorale

Wie schwerlich läßt sich Fleisch und Blut
So nur nach Irdischem und Eitlem trachtet
Und weder Gott noch Himmel achtet,
Zwingen zu dem ewigen Gut!
Da du, o Jesu, nun mein alles bist,
Und doch mein Fleisch so widerspenstig ist.
Wo soll ich mich denn wenden hin?
Das Fleisch ist schwach, doch will der Geist;
So hilf du mir, der du mein Herze weißt.
Zu dir, o Jesu, steht mein Sinn.
Wer deinem Rat und deiner Hilfe traut,
Der hat wohl nie auf falschen Grund gebaut,
Da du der ganzen Welt zum Trost gekommen,
Und unser Fleisch an dich genommen,
So rettet uns dein Sterben
Vom endlichen Verderben.
Drum schmecke doch ein gläubiges Gemüte
Des Heilands Freundlichkeit und Güte.

How hard it is for flesh and blood
It but for earthly goods and vain things striveth
And neither God nor heaven heedeth,
To be forced to eternal good!
Since thou, O Jesus, now art all to me,
And yet my flesh so stubbornly resists.
Where shall I then my refuge take?
The flesh is weak, the spirit strong;
So help thou me, thou who my heart dost know.
To thee, O Jesus, I incline.
Who in thy help and in thy counsel trusts
Indeed hath ne'er on false foundation built;
Since thou to all the world art come to help us
And hast our flesh upon thee taken,
Thy dying shall redeem us
From everlasting ruin.
So savor now a spirit ever faithful
The Savior's graciousness and favor.

3. Bass Aria

Empfind ich Höllenangst und Pein,
Doch muß beständig in dem Herzen
Ein rechter Freudenhimmel sein.
Ich darf nur Jesu Namen nennen,
Der kann auch unermeßne Schmerzen
Als einen leichten Nebel trennen.

Though I feel fear of hell and pain,
Yet must steadfast within my bosom
A truly joyful heaven be.
I need but Jesus' name once utter,
Who can dispel unmeasured sorrows
As though a gentle mist dividing.

4. Tenor Recitative

Es mag mir Leib und Geist verschmachten,
Bist du, o Jesu, mein
Und ich bin dein,
Will ichs nicht achten.
Dein treuer Mund
Und dein unendlich Lieben,
Das unverändert stets geblieben,
Erhält mir noch den ersten Bund,
Der meine Brust mit Freudigkeit erfüllet
Und auch des Todes Furcht, des Grabes Schrecken stilleth.
Fällt Not und Mangel gleich von allen Seiten ein,
Mein Jesus wird mein Schatz und Reichthum sein.

Though both my flesh and soul may languish,
If thou art, Jesus, mine
And I am thine,
I will not heed it.
Thy truthful mouth
And all thy boundless loving,
Which never changed abides forever,
Preserve for me that ancient bond,
Which now my breast with exultation filleth
And even fear of death, the grave's own terror, stilleth.
Though dearth and famine soon from ev'ry side oppress,
My Jesus will my wealth and treasure be.

5. Soprano-Alto Duet

Wenn Sorgen auf mich dringen,
Will ich in Freudigkeit
Zu meinem Jesu singen.
Mein Kreuz hilft Jesus tragen,
Drum will ich gläubig sagen:
Es dient zum besten allezeit.

When sorrow round me presses,
I will with joyfulness
My song lift unto Jesus.
My cross doth Jesus carry,
So I'll devoutly say now:
It serves me best in ev'ry hour.

6. Chorale

Erhalt mein Herz im Glauben rein,
So leb und sterb ich dir allein.
Jesu, mein Trost, hör mein Begier,
O mein Heiland, wär ich bei dir.

If thou my heart in faith keep pure,
I'll live and die in thee alone.
Jesu, my strength, hear my desire,
O Savior mine, I'd be with thee.

BWV 14: WÄR GOTT NICHT MIT UNS DIESE ZEIT

1. Chorus

Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit,
So soll Israel sagen,
Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit,
Wir hätten müssen verzagen,
Die so ein armes Häuflein sind,
Veracht' von so viel Menschenkind,
Die an uns setzen alle.

Were God not with us all this time,
Then let Israel say it:
Were God not with us all this time,
We would have surely lost courage,
For such a tiny band we are,
Despised by so much of mankind,
They all oppose us ever.

2. Soprano Aria

Uns're Stärke heißt zu schwach,
Unserm Feind zu widerstehen.
Stünd uns nicht der Höchste bei,
Würd uns ihre Tyrannei
Bald bis an das Leben gehen.

Our own strength is called too weak,
That our foe we bid defiance.
Stood by us the Highest not,
Surely would their tyranny
Soon our very being threaten.

3. Tenor Recitative

Ja, hätt es Gott nur zugegeben,
Wir wären längst nicht mehr am Leben,
Sie rissen uns
aus Rachgier hin,
So zornig ist auf uns ihr Sinn.
Es hätt uns ihre Wut
Wie eine wilde Flut
Und als beschäumte Wasser überschwemmet,
Und niemand hätte die Gewalt gehemmet.

Yea, if then God had but allowed it,
We long no more were with the living,
Their vengeance would have ravished us,
Such wrath for us do they intend.
For they had in their rage
Like as a rampant flood
Within its foaming waters spilled upon us,
And no one could have all their might resisted

4. Bass Aria

Gott, bei deinem starken Schützen
Sind wir vor den Feinden frei.
Wenn sie sich als wilde Wellen
Uns aus Grimm entgegenstellen,
Stehn uns deine Hände bei.

God, through thine own strong protection
Are we from our foes set free.
When they come as raging waters
In their hate to rise against us,
With us yet thy hands will be.

5. Chorale

Gott Lob und Dank, der nicht zugab,
Daß ihr Schlund uns möcht fangen.
Wie ein Vogel des Stricks kömmt ab,
Ist unsre Seel entgangen:
Strick ist entzwei, und wir sind frei;
Des Herren Name steht uns bei,
Des Gottes Himmels und Erden.

God praise and thanks, who did not let
Their savage jaws devour us.
As a bird from its snare comes free,
So is our soul delivered:
The snare's in twain, and we are free; The Lord's own name
doth stand with us,
The God of earth and of heaven

BWV 144: NIMM, WAS DEIN IST, UND GEHE

HIN.1. Chorus

Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin.

Take what is thine and go away.

2. Alto Aria

Murre nicht,
Lieber Christ,
Wenn was nicht nach Wunsch geschicht;
Sondern sei mit dem zufrieden,
Was dir dein Gott hat beschieden,
Er weiß, was dir nützlich ist.

Murmur not,
Man of Christ,
When thy wish is not fulfilled;
Rather be with that contented
Which thee thy God hath apportioned;
He knows what will help thee.

3. Chorale

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan,
Es bleibt gerecht sein Wille;
Wie er fängt meine Sachen an,
Will ich ihm halten stille.
Er ist mein Gott,
Der in der Not
Mich wohl weiß zu erhalten;
Drum laß ich ihn nur walten.

What God doth, that is rightly done,
His will is just forever;
Whatever course he sets my life,
I will trust him with calmness.
He is my God,
Who in distress
Knows well how to support me;
So I yield him all power.

4. Tenor Recitative

Wo die Genügsamkeit regiert
Und überall das Ruder führt,
Da ist der Mensch vergnügt
Mit dem, wie es Gott fügt.
Dagegen, wo die Ungenügsamkeit das Urteil spricht,
Da stellt sich Gram und Kummer ein,
Das Herz will nicht
Zufrieden sein,
Und man gedenket nicht daran:
Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan.

Wherever moderation rules
And ev'rywhere the helm doth tend,
There is mankind content
With that which God ordains.
However, where immoderation doth its judgment speak,
There shall both grief and woe ensue,
The heart shall not
Be satisfied,
And unremembered shall be this:
What God doth, that is rightly done.

5. Soprano Aria

Genügsamkeit
Ist ein Schatz in diesem Leben,
Welcher kann Vergnügung geben
In der größten Traurigkeit,
Genügsamkeit.
Denn es lässet sich in allen
Gottes Fügung wohl gefallen
Genügsamkeit.

Contentedness,
In this life it is a treasure
Which is able to bring pleasure
In the greatest time of grief,
Contentedness.
For it findeth in whatever
God ordaineth satisfaction,
Contentedness.

6. Chorale

Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit,
Sein Will, der ist der beste,
Zu helfen den'n er ist bereit,
Die an ihn glauben feste.
Er hilft aus Not, der fromme Gott,
Und züchtiget mit Maßen.
Wer Gott vertraut, fest auf ihn baut,
Den will er nicht verlassen.

What my God will, let be alway,
His will, it is the best will.
To help all those he is prepared
Who in him faith keep steadfast.
He frees from want, this faithful God,
And punisheth with measure.
Who God doth trust, firm on him builds,
Him shall he not abandon.

PROGRAMME NOTES

BWV 3: Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid

Although the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday after Epiphany relates the story of the wedding at Cana, the anonymous librettist for this cantata chose instead to focus on the chorale *Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid*, based on the Latin hymn *Jesu dulcis memoria*. This cantata was first heard on 14 January 1725. Its theme is that however difficult life is, God comforts us in times of need.

In the opening chorus, an elegaic chorale-prelude for oboes d'amore, strings and choir, Bach sets the chorale melody in the bass part rather than the more typical soprano. There are several theological ideas presented in the complex counterpoint of the other parts. The two oboes d'amore share a deceptively beautiful theme in canon. Though the theme is achingly beautiful, it contains within it a descending chromatic line that represents the grief and tribulation spoken of in the chorale text. The interweaving of these lines, which are echoed later in the upper three voice parts, also amplifies this idea of affliction and tribulation. The strings' main motif in the ritornello is a two-bar sighing pattern, beneath which the continuo plays a quaver walking theme that Bach often uses to symbolise the believer's pilgrimage through life. These three different musical ideas recur throughout the movement, only being freed from their moorings in the final soprano line, when a melisma to a high A takes the believer to heaven.

The middle movements of this cantata are based on the chorale, though only the second movement actually quotes the chorale directly, in a 4-part setting of verse two of the chorale text in alternation with recitatives expanding upon the idea that it is difficult for sinful man to attain goodness and heaven's blessings.

In the following bass aria, we return again to the idea that even in the midst of Hell's fear and torment, God's blessing is available to us. In a rather ascetic setting for continuo and bass soloist, affliction is depicted in the chromaticism and anguished leaps in the repeated opening motif. This two-bar motif is constantly present, either in the cello or in the singer's part, representing the inescapability of life's tribulations. But the rugged figure is quelled when the believer calls upon God, at which point the music becomes more melismatic, melodic and diatonic.

If the first recitative-aria pair dealt with the pain of life, then the following tenor recitative and soprano-alto duet focusses more on the believer's response to God. The tribulation figures are still present, but they recede into the background in favour of the joy and calm that come with turning to God in times of trouble.

This is beautifully depicted in the duet. The main theme has a distant echo of the cantata's opening theme, with a rising fourth and some chromaticism, as well as the canonic interplay that was initially presented by the oboes d'amore. But this music is more joyful, and even becomes playful at the appearance of the word *Freudigkeit*, "joyfulness." We find more chromaticism in the B section, where the text speaks of

"sharp". But the duet is in *da capo* form, so it is joyfulness that wins the day, not tribulation.

The final straightforward chorale, with the melody initially heard in the bass voices in the first movement now in the soprano, resolves the battle entirely. In this short chorale, the believer asks God for purity of heart, vowing to live and die to Him alone.



BWV 14: Wär Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit

The length of time between Ash Wednesday and Easter—forty days—is constant in the liturgical calendar. However, since the date of Easter changes every year, it is the number of Sundays in the Epiphany season that changes to accommodate the placement of Easter. Since Easter was early (1 April) in 1725, there was no Epiphany 4 cantata needed for the 1724-25 cycle of cantatas. Consequently, it wasn't until 1735 that Bach composed BWV 14.

This fact is important because it makes this cantata one of the latest extant church cantatas that have survived from Bach's pen. Though only five movements long, it is a particularly dense cantata, and the first movement in particular is unique in Bach's output for its complexity, both musically and theologically.

The appointed Gospel reading, Matthew 8:23-26, tells the story of Jesus calming the seas when the disciples become frightened in a storm. The theme that God guides our life, and that we are lost without him, resounds throughout the entire cantata. In the first movement, Bach uses Martin Luther's 1524 hymn, an adaptation of Psalm 124. The chromaticism of the Luther's melody lends itself to the theme of affliction and pursuit by our enemies, and Bach constructs a very long movement to develop those ideas further. Rather than using the Baroque *stile concertante*, Bach uses the *stile antico* style redolent of Renaissance polyphony. We often see this when Bach is referring to Old Testament themes—in this case, God's special stewardship of Israel. Using polyphony, Bach sets each line of the chorale in pairs, with one voice singing the chorale melody as Luther wrote it, and the other singing the inversion of the tune—the notes going down where they originally would have gone up, for example. Then the other pair of voices enter in canon, doing the same thing. In this way, Bach is developing the conditional "If God were not with us at this time": the literal statement of the tune is what *has* happened, while its inversion is what *would have* happened. Halfway through each section, the oboes enter above the vocal polyphony, playing the chorale melody in long notes. This five-part polyphonic setting is the mature Bach at his best; the complexity of this writing is as impressive as what can be found in the *B Minor Mass* or *Art of the Fugue*, and reflects Bach's growing interest in arcane musical forms. But through it all, he also communicates intensely emotional ideas of pursuit, destruction and deliverance.

The soprano aria that follows is as sunnily Baroque as the first movement is darkly Renaissance. In this movement, the enemies still rage—in this case, in scalar semi-quaver patterns in the

and weakness, represented by the light soprano voice, and the triumphant music confirms that the enemies are held at bay. This cantata made its debut only weeks after the *Christmas Oratorio* was composed; the use of horn or trumpet in this aria is reminiscent of the trumpet in *Grosser König*, in which the trumpet satirised the pomposity of the power of man compared to the humility of the infant Jesus.

The next recitative-aria pair amplifies further the ways in which God saves his people from destruction. In the tenor recitative, the cello depicts the enemies' rage "like a wild torrent." Its companion bass aria, set in a gavotte-like rhythm, continues this image of "wild waves," seen in sem-quaver melismas. The two oboes dance around one another, again representing the raging of the enemies, while the stentorian bass sings in longer tones of God's protection. This movement, more than the others, is a musical depiction of Christ—always presented as a bass in Bach's vocal works—calming the waters for his disciples.

The closing chorale, a song of praise and thanksgiving for God's saving grace, is a four-part setting of the Lutheran hymn presented in polyphonic form in the first movement.



BWV 144: Nimm, was dein ist, und gehe hin

This cantata dates from the first of Bach's three annual cycles of cantatas, tied to the three-year cycle of readings prescribed by the lectionary. Composed for the Third Sunday before Lent, 6 February 1724, it takes as its textual basis the Gospel for the day. In this Gospel, Matthew 20: 1-16, a landlord hires a group of workers to labour in his vineyard. He hires some early in the morning, others a few hours later, another group a bit later, and then one more at the "eleventh hour". When they are paid at the end of the day, all of the workers are paid the same amount. When the full-day workers complain that the part-time workers were paid the same amount, the landlord replies, "Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?" The anonymous librettist develops from this passage the theme that the Christian should be content with what God has given him or her—that God's will is the best thing that can happen.

The first movement is a motet fugue on the text "Take what is yours and go away." It is the words *gehe hin*—"go away"—that generate the most energy for the movement, with the rhythmic repetition of the words acting as episodic material.

The beautiful alto aria that follows establishes the theme of contentment with God's will. The idea of "murmuring"—grumbling that we don't get what we want—is depicted by the pulsing quavers in the lower strings. In the B section, expressing the idea that contentment with one's lot brings peace, the murmuring strings are silenced. The movement is crafted as a minuet, the use of a worldly dance form perhaps suggesting that the believer will not find peace in

the world, but only in turning from worldly things to God's kingdom.

The texts of the two chorales in this cantata are strikingly similar: God's will is best; and He will help those who trust him. The first chorale is the first verse of a 1675 hymn by Samuel Rodigast, and the closing chorale is the opening verse of a 1547 chorale penned by Duke Albrecht of Prussia.

The tenor recitative contrasts the contentment of the man who accepts God's will with the lack of peace (symbolised by the introduction of a diminished chord) for those who try to have their own way. The soprano aria extols the virtues of contentment, which can "give pleasure amid the greatest sorrow". This is a particularly peaceful aria for soprano, oboe d'amore and continuo. The opening motive, outlining a B minor arpeggio with a turn, is used throughout to depict contentment—*Genügsamkeit*.



CANTATAS VII: PERFORMING FORCES

In keeping with the goal of this project to explore a wide range of performing options, we are using a smaller choir in this afternoon's concert. The **Sydneian Bach Chamber Choir**, only a dozen in number, comes closest to the number of singers that Bach would have used, but our young adult singers, many of whom are professional singers, sing at a much higher calibre than Bach's pupils probably would have sung. But the clarity of texture from the smaller number of singers approximates the original, and it must be remembered that Bach worked with professional singers throughout his career—as well as augmenting his Thomaskirche choir with tenors and basses from the University of Leipzig. As for using women's voices, it is important not to confuse the rules of the Lutheran church with Bach's own preferences. His first wife, Maria Barbara, was a fine singer, and his second wife, Anna Magdalena, was such an accomplished singer that she was one of the highest paid musicians at the court of Cöthen.

The textures of the instrumental parts of these cantatas seem particularly well suited to playing by solo instrumentalists, albeit playing on modern instruments in this case. Although there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Bach used 2-3 players on each of the violin and viola parts, there is also a tradition, advocated by such performers as Joshua Rifkin and Andrew Parrott, supporting one player per part.

C.P. Shepard

PERFORMERS

Elizabeth Scott, Soprano

Elizabeth Scott graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1995 having earned the prestigious "Student of the Year" award. As the holder of scholarships from the Hungarian Ministry of Education, she then completed post-graduate studies in choral conducting, vocal performance and aural training in Hungary and Germany. During her time abroad, Elizabeth performed extensively throughout Europe in oratorio and music theatre. She also toured as soprano soloist with the German based chamber orchestra, Allgau Sinfonietta, to Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, France and Africa.

Elizabeth returned to Australia in 2004, and is currently working as a freelance conductor, singer, accompanist and music educator working with the Sydney Conservatorium, the Arts Unit, the Australian Girls Choir and the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.

Su-lin Leong, Mezzo-Soprano

Su-lin has had a long association with music at Grammar as a "Grammar sister". She was involved with not one, but two productions of Britten's *Noye's Fludde* at St Ives Prep - first in 1990, when Su-lin and her mum played the four-hands piano part with the orchestra, and again in 1997, when she sang the role of Mrs Noah. Su-lin was awarded her L.Mus.A. in 2000 under the tutelage of Janet Rutledge, and continues to study singing with Grace Edwards-Barnetson. When not at choir practice, Su-lin can be found in the labs at CSIRO Food Science Australia, where she is a Food Mycologist, i.e. a fungus scientist. She is just 4-5 months off completing her PhD studies on mouldy grapes and wine, a project, which, at times, feels like it almost rivals the Bach cantata project in magnitude!

Luke Redmond, Tenor

Luke graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1997, where studied voice with Stephen Yalouris and Michael Halliwell. Since graduating he has studied with Anthea Moller and Steven Ostrow, with whom he currently studies.

Luke enjoys performing in a wide range of musical genres and contexts. Since 2000 he has appeared with the award-winning vocal quartet, The Voice Squad, whose repertoire spans the musical gamut from the Renaissance through to Madonna. The Voice Squad were prize-winners at the 2002 Cabaret Convention and their debut CD 'Ocean Street' was launched in 2004.

Luke has also collaborated with the jazz pianist John Saunders culminating in the launch of an album of classic American popular songs from the middle of the 20th century, 'The Days of Wine and Roses'. The album was launched in 2004 and has since sold out. Later this year Luke will also collaborate with prominent Sydney jazz pianist and composer Kevin Hunt as part of a fundraising project for the Northcott Society. Luke made his debut as a Bach soloist in the Sydneian Bach Choir's performance of the *Christmas Oratorio*, for which he sang the role of the Evangelist.

Timothy Collins, Bass-Baritone

Tim Collins studied voice at the Queensland Conservatorium under the tutelage of Professor Jan Delpratt, where he was the recipient of 12 scholarships and prizes. After singing as a member of the Young Artists' Programme with Opera Queensland, he moved to Sydney. He has been a finalist in many national aria and singing competitions and has made several national broadcasts for the ABC, singing lieder recitals, Chamber music, Oratorio and Australian contemporary music. He has also performed as a solo recitalist in Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand and across Australia.

Formerly Head of Vocal Studies at McDonald Performing Arts College, Tim is currently a private singing teacher at Sydney Grammar School, The Ascham School, St. Andrews Cathedral School and SCEGGS, Darlinghurst. He has recently become an AMEB Singing Examiner.

As a young singing voice specialist, Tim has published a number of papers and articles in Australian music education, choral and vocal journals, newsletters and publications. He will present his research at the biennial National conference of The Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing in Melbourne in October. As a teacher of Raja Yoga Meditation, he has developed meditation programmes combining, values education, meditation techniques and vocal education and exercise.



Christopher Shepard, Conductor

Foundation conductor of the Sydneian Bach Choir, Christopher Shepard is Director of Music at Sydney Grammar School, and holds degrees in Music Education (piano) and Choral Conducting from the Hartt School of Music and Yale University. He has studied conducting with Marguerite Brooks, James Jordan and Helmuth Rilling, and Baroque performance practice with Jaap Schroeder, Paul Brainard and Roslyn Tureck.

Before moving to Sydney in 1996, Chris was Head of Fine and Performing Arts at the Taft School (USA). He has served as Music Director of several community choirs and has conducted many choirs and orchestras in the greater New York metropolitan area. He has served as music director of the Georgian Singers and as chorusmaster for the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, in addition to conducting the Senior Choir at Ascham School. He has conducted the SBS Youth Orchestra on several occasions, including the Brahms *German Requiem* and a televised broadcast of Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. With the Sydneian Bach Choir, he has conducted several Bach works, including the *St John Passion*, *B Minor Mass* and *Christmas Oratorio*. In February 2005, he began BACH 2010, a six-year project to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas with the Bach Sydneian Choir and Orchestra.

Chris is Music Director of the Hotchkiss Summer Chamber Program, an intensive chamber music program for advanced young players and singers from around the world, held each July in America's Berkshire Mountains. As Director of the program, he conducts the chamber orchestra and teaches alongside several guest musicians, including the Tokyo String Quartet, Ying Quartet and the Philadelphia Singers.



Sydneian Bach Choir

In February 2005, the Sydneian Bach Choir embarked on BACH 2010, a musical journey to perform all of Bach's choral cantatas, in a series of 50 concerts through December 2010. The choir was formed in 2000 as part of the Sydneian Festival Choir, in order to raise money for local charities through fundraising concerts. Although their repertoire is wide and varied, the fifty voice Bach Choir uses the choral music of J.S. Bach as its touchstone. In residence at Sydney Grammar School, the choir performs the closing work of the School's biennial Bach Festival, including Bach's *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and *B Minor Mass*. They have also performed the music of Schütz, Tavener, Mendelssohn, Whitacre and many others, and gave