

J. S. BACH

Cantatas

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80
Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147

Ingrid Kertesi • Judit Nemeth
Jozsef Mukk • István Gáti
Hungarian Radio Chorus
Failoni Chamber Orchestra, Budapest
Mátyás Antál



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, BWV 80

Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben, BWV 147

The career of Johann Sebastian Bach, the most illustrious of a prolific musical family, falls neatly into three unequal parts. Born in 1685 in Eisenach, from the age of ten Bach lived and studied music with his elder brother in Ohrdruf, after the death of both his parents. After a series of appointments as organist and briefly as a court musician, he became, in 1708, court organist and chamber musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar, the elder of the two brothers who jointly ruled the duchy. In 1714 he was promoted to the position of Konzertmeister to the Duke, but in 1717, after a brief period of imprisonment for his temerity in seeking to leave the Duke's service, he abandoned Weimar to become Court Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, a position he held until 1723. From then until his death in 1750 he lived in Leipzig, where he was Thomaskantor, with responsibility for the music of the five principal city churches, in 1729 assuming direction of the university collegium musicum, founded by Telemann in 1702.

At Weimar Bach had been principally employed as an organist, and his compositions of the period include a considerable amount written for the instrument on which he was recognised as a virtuoso performer. At Cöthen, where Pietist traditions dominated the court, he had no church duties, and was responsible rather for court music. The period brought the composition of a number of instrumental works. The final 27 years of Bach's life brought a variety of preoccupations, and while his official employment necessitated the provision of church music, he was able to provide music for the university collegium musicum and or write or re-arrange a number of important works for the keyboard.

The Reformation Cantata, Ein feste Burg, BWV 80, was adapted from an earlier cantata, Alles, was von Gott geboren, of which the music has been lost. This was written for performance at Weimar on the Third Sunday of Lent in

1715, with a text by Salomo Franck, secretary, librarian and poet at the court. The new cantata has been variously dated. Some have suggested as early a date as 31st October 1724 and there is a surviving autograph fragment from a year earlier, relatively soon after Bach's assumption of his new duties in Leipzig. Others have dated the complete surviving revision of the cantata to 1730, the date of celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession.

The cantata, scored for oboes, including oboe d'amore, oboe da caccia and cor anglais, strings and basso continuo, with soprano, alto, tenor and bass singers, opens with a polyphonic treatment of the first verse of Martin Luther's well known hymn, *Ein feste Burg*, using the four voices, with oboes, strings and continuo. The aria that follows combines the soprano statement of the second verse, in a version of the original chorale melody, with Franck's words sung by the bass. The aria is introduced by the upper strings in unison over the continuo, leading to an oboe aria, *Komm in meinem Herzenshaus*, with its economical basso continuo accompaniment. The instrumental ensemble of two oboe d'amore, cor anglais, appearance of a matching version of Luther's third stanza, sung by all the singers in unison. The following tenor recitative and duet for alto and tenor, with its oboe da caccia and solo violin accompaniment, *Wie selig sind doch dir*, use words by Franck. The final chorale is a magnificent statement of Bach's monumental harmonization of the original hymn.

The cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*, BWV 147, again represents an original work from Bach's period at the court of Weimar. With a text by Franck, it was first written for performance on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, 20th December, 1716. Again the original music has been lost and the surviving version was intended for use in Leipzig on the Feast of the Visitation, 2nd July, possibly in 1723. The work is scored for soprano, oboe da caccia, strings and basso continuo.

The opening polyphonic chorus, with its virtuoso clarino trumpet obbligato leads to an accompanied tenor recitative, followed by the alto aria *Schäme*

dich, with its oboe d'amore and continuo accompaniment. A bass recitative is succeeded by a soprano aria with a triplet solo violin obbligato, Bereite dir, Jesu. The first part of the work ends with a chorale, one of the best known of all Bach cantata movements, in which the trumpet accompanies the chorale melody. The second part starts with a tenor aria, Hilf, Jesu, hilf, leading to an alto recitative, with words based on the first chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke. This is followed by the bass aria, Ich will von Jesu Wunden singen, with accompanying trumpet and oboes doubling the violins. The familiar chorale returns in all its confident grandeur in conclusion.

Mátyás Antal

Mátyás Antal was born in 1945 into a family of musicians and completed his training at the Ferenc Liszt Academy in Budapest as a flautist and a conductor. In 1972, the year after his graduation, he joined the Hungarian State Orchestra as a flautist, but in the last ten years has been principally employed as a conductor, specialising initially in contemporary music. In 1984 he was appointed chorus-master of the Budapest Choir and two years later became associate conductor of the Hungarian State Orchestra. He appears frequently as a conductor in his native country as well as in East and West Germany, Austria and Greece, and has made a number of recordings for Hungaroton.

Failoni Chamber Orchestra

The Failoni Chamber Orchestra was founded in 1981 by members of the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra. Under the leadership of the violinist Belá Nágý, the orchestra has taken part in a number of important international festivals and in Hungary only yields first place to the longer established Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra. The orchestra takes its name from the distinguished Italian conductor Sergio Failoni, conductor of the Hungarian State Opera from 1928 until his death twenty years later.

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STEREO

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 Playing
Time :
53'48"

J. S. BACH
 Cantatas, BWV 80 and BWV 147

 Ingrid Kertesi, Soprano • Judit Nemeth, Alto
 Jozsef Mukk, Tenor • István Gáti, Bass
 Hungarian Radio Chorus
 Failoni Chamber Orchestra, Budapest
 Mátyás Antál

**Cantata "Ein feste Burg ist unser
Gott", BWV 80**

1	Chor	(4:50)
2	Aria	(3:37)
3	Recitativo	(1:52)
4	Aria	(3:46)
5	Choral	(3:36)
6	Recitativo	(1:13)
7	Duetto	(3:35)
8	Choral	(1:32)

**Cantata "Herz und Mund und
Tat und Leben", BWV 147**

9	Chor	(4:42)
10	Recitativo	(1:25)
11	Aria	(2:59)
12	Recitativo	(1:24)
13	Aria	(4:49)
14	Choral	(3:17)
15	Aria	(3:19)
16	Recitativo	(1:53)
17	Aria	(2:39)
18	Choral	(3:23)

Recorded at Festetich Castle in Budapest in January 1992.

 Producer: Tamás Benedek
 Engineer: Gábor Mocsáry
 Music Notes: Keith Anderson

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 the Baptist by Bruegel

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