

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

COMPLETE CANTATAS – L'INTÉGRALE DES CANTATES
DAS KANTATENWERK

VOLUME 14

Deborah York, Annette Markert, Lisa Larsson

soprano

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alto

Jörg Dürmüller, Christoph Prégardien, Paul Agnew

tenor

Klaus Mertens

bass

THE AMSTERDAM BAROQUE ORCHESTRA & CHOIR
TON KOOPMAN

COMPACT DISC 1

"Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt" BWV 68

"Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden" BWV 6

"Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten" BWV 74

"Erhalt uns Herr, bei deinem Wort" BWV 126

COMPACT DISC 2

"Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig" BWV 26

"Mit Fried und Freund ich fahr dahin" BWV 125

"Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält" BWV 178

Konzertsatz in D BWV 1045

COMPACT DISC 3

"Ihr werdet weinen und heulen" BWV 103

"Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats" BWV 42

"Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen" BWV 123

"Ihr werdet weinen und heulen" BWV 103 (Appendix)

"Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats" BWV 42 (Appendix)

Conclusion of the second yearly cycle (1724-25) of the Leipzig church cantatas by Christoph Wolff

Introduction

The cantatas in this fourteenth series fall into four unequal groups: BWV 26, 123, 125 and 178 form part of the second yearly cycle of Leipzig church cantatas, which was abruptly broken off in March 1725. The chorale cantatas - based on strophes of church Lieder or church Lieder paraphrased into recitatives and arias - lent the cycle its distinct character. We do not know any tangible reason for the abrupt break-off, but we may assume that it is connected to the death of the author of Bach's texts, Andreas Stübel, deputy headmaster of the Thomasschule, who is presumed to have died on 31 January 1725. For evidently the composer had at his disposal only texts up to the Marian Feast of the Annunciation, 25 March 1725 (BWV 1). While the texts for BWV 6 and 42 are the work of an unknown poet, in Cantatas BWV 74, 68 and 103 Bach set texts by the Leipzig poet Mariane von Ziegler, who evidently filled the gap left by the poet of the chorale cantatas. Finally, BWV 1045 is a sinfonia of a cantata dating from the mid-1740s, the other movements of which have not survived.

The Cantatas

The cantata "Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt", BWV 68, was first performed on Whit Monday, 21 May 1725. The text is the work of Mariane von Ziegler, who in the first movement uses the Lied strophe "Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt" by Salomo Liscow (1675), while the fifth movement draws on John 3:18. This bible text comes from the Gospel reading of the day (John 3:16-21), to which the Lied strophe also refers.

The instrumental forces of the cantata include three oboes, violoncello piccolo and the customary strings, and also cornett and three trombones - the latter being used to underpin the concluding chorale movement with sophisticated polyphony. This procedure leads us to infer that Bach had to take into consideration the severe demands made on his singers during the feast days. Also for the chorale chorus (movement 1) Bach uses the cornett in order to reinforce the melody-bearing soprano voice. The soprano and bass arias (movements 2 and 4) are lavish reworkings of two movements from the Weimar Jagdkantate, BWV 208, of 1713.

The cantata "Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden", BWV 6, dates from Easter Monday of 1725 and was first performed on 2 April. The author of the text is unknown. Its first movement draws on Luke 24:29, while movement 3 uses the Lied strophes "Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ" after Philipp Melanchthon (1579) and "In dieser letzt'n betrübten Zeit" by Nikolaus Selnecker (1572), and movement 6 uses the second strophe of Martin Luther's "Erhalt uns Herr bei deinem Wort" (1542). In this cantata the choir, whose four voices are also treated in a soloistic fashion, is accompanied by an instrumental ensemble that includes three oboes alongside the usual strings. The violoncello piccolo was not added until the second performance (probably in 1727), in movements 2 and 3. Movement 3 was later reworked by Bach as an organ chorale and published as one of his six "Schubler" Chorales (c. 1748). The extended and multipartite opening chorus forms an imposing prelude to the four solo movements, after which comes the concluding chorale.

The cantata "Wer mich liebet, der wird mein Wort halten", BWV 74, was written for Whit Sunday of 1725 and was performed on 20 May 1725. The text is by Mariane von Ziegler. In movement 1 the

Leipzig poet quotes John 14:23, in movement 4, John 14:28, both verses from the Gospel reading of Whit Sunday. Movement 8 uses as its text a Lied strophe by Paul Gerhardt, "Gott Vater, sende deinen Geist" (1653), sung on the old melody "Kommt her zu mir, spricht Gottes Sohn" (1539). For the first two movements Bach drew on music from the first and fourth movements of Cantata BWV 59 (1723-24), which has the same name. It is conceivable that the remaining movements are also derived from an earlier, unknown composition.

The lavish scoring, with three trumpets, drums and three oboes alongside the customary strings, and the soloistic manner in which the four choral voices are treated underline the cantata's festive character. This is further enhanced by the richly contrasted scoring of the recitatives and arias. Outstanding in this regard are movement 6, a bass recitative accompanied by three oboes, and the succeeding alto aria, in which the three oboes are joined by a solo violin and a full string orchestra.

The cantata "Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort", BWV 126, is intended for Sexagesima Sunday and was first performed on 4 February 1725, only two days after Cantata BWV 125. It is, before Cantatas BWV 127 and BWV 1, the third-to-last chorale cantata of the yearly cycle of 1724-25. Its text is based on the Lied of the same name by Martin Luther (1542). Its first and third strophes are taken over unchanged, while the remaining strophes are paraphrased. The concluding chorale departs from the usual scheme of the chorale cantata in being taken from another Lied, in fact one by Luther, "Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich" (1529), a German version of "Da pacem Domine". The cantata's scoring, apart from the usual chorus (in which the alto, tenor and bass voices are also treated soloistically) and the standard orchestra with strings and two oboes, calls for a trumpet. This makes a prominent entrance already in the first bars of the opening chorus, and its presence underlines the combative, dogmatic character of this late devotional song of Luther's. The Lied melody is again heard in movement 3, here inserted into a recitative. The cantata's two arias make no reference to the melody, but only to the paraphrased chorale text, which stimulates graphic musical expression from Bach: "Sende deine Macht von oben" ("Send your power from on high") in no. 2 (tenor and two oboes) and "Sturze zu Boden schwülstige Stolze" ("Hurl to earth bombastic pride") in no. 4 (bass with continuo).

The cantata "Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig", BWV 26, was written for the 24th Sunday after Trinity, and Bach performed it for the first time on 19 November 1724. The work is based on the Lied of the same name by Michael Franck (1652), with its own melody. Of Franck's 13 strophes the first and the last are taken over word for word in movements 1 and 6, the others being summarised in paraphrase form. The contents' reference to the Gospel for that Sunday, Matthew 9:18-26 (the raising of Jairus's daughter) is limited to a general allusion to the resurrection of the dead. The vocal forces (all four of the choral voices also used in a soloistic manner) are complemented by a substantial instrumental ensemble with transverse flute, three oboes, strings and continuo, with a horn added in the first and last movements to reinforce the chorale melody. The opening chorus, with its motives darting up and down the scale, express life's transience. The virtuosity of the orchestral texture continues in the vocally challenging Aria no. 2 and in the following recitative, which translates the word "Freude" (joy) into an extended hemisemiquaver melisma. The last aria too (no. 4), with its unusual oboe trio, alludes to the text ("An irdische Schätze das Herze zu han-gen" - "to dote on earthly treasures").

The cantata "Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin", BWV 125, was written for the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary in 1725, celebrated each year on 2 February. Its text is based on the Lied of the same name by Martin Luther (1524), a German verse paraphrase of the Song of Simeon from the Gospel reading for the feast, Luke 2:22-32 (Presentation of Jesus in the Temple). Strophes

1, 2 and 4 are preserved word-for-word, the rest paraphrased.

The scoring of the cantata consists of four-voice choir with three vocal soloists (alto, tenor and bass) and a string orchestra with transverse flute and oboe. The cantus firmus in the opening and closing movements is reinforced by the horn. The distinctive melody (in the Phrygian mode) of old Simeon's song is both intertwined and supported by a flowing orchestral texture in 12/8 time, in which the lower choral voices are also swept along. It can also be heard in movements 3 and 6. Of particular delicacy is the first aria (no. 2), in which the alto voice represents the blind Simeon, and where the phrase "gebrochenen Augen" ("ruined eyesight") is accompanied by a broken vocal line.

Flute and oboe d'amore underline the almost trembling declamation with dotted rhythms, soft appoggiaturas and irregular trills.

The cantata "Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns halt", BWV 178, for the 8th Sunday after Trinity, was first performed on 18 July 1724. Its text is based on the Lied of the same name by Justus Jonas (1525), with its own melody. The first and the last two strophes are taken over unchanged in the opening and final movements, while the inner strophe, using quotations of single lines in paraphrased form are used for the recitatives and arias. The contents of the Lied refer to the Gospel for that Sunday, Matthew 7:15-23 (warning about false prophets). The cantata is scored for four-voice choir (alto, tenor and bass with a solo function), accompanied by an instrumental ensemble of 2 oboes, strings and continuo. The Reformation cantus firmus is heard in the opening chorus and in the concluding chorale in a clearly recognisable and unembellished form, and in movements 2, 4 and 5 is used various ways (in one voice in movements 2 and 4, in five voices in movement 5), but used in an extremely pointed manner - here and there with graphic musical illustration of single passages of text (for example on key words like "wenn unsre Feinde toben" - "if our enemies rage" in movement 1).

The Sinfonia in D, BWV 1045, survives as a single instrumental work. It was intended as the introductory movement of a cantata, as the simple wording of the original title indicates: "/. /. Concerto a 4 voci. 3 Trombe, Tamburi, 2 Hautbo: Violino Cone: 2 Violini, Viola e Cont." After the phrase "Jesu juva" (Jesus, help), usual in Bach's scores, the indication "Concerto a 4 voci" points to a piece of church music for four voices ("Concerto" is the term used by Bach for a cantata). The sinfonia is not allocated to any particular liturgical occasion. The autograph score has survived in fragmentary form and belongs, to judge from Bach's handwriting, to the period 1743-46. Thus it is one of the latest surviving cantata sources.

Not only are the final bars of the sinfonia missing (they have been supplied for this recording), the remaining movements of the cantata are also missing, which were detached from the surviving score in about 1800 at the latest and whose whereabouts are unknown. The indicated scoring, solo violin, three trumpets with drums, two oboes, strings and continuo, is unusual lavish and indicates that the work could have been written for a particular occasion - perhaps for one of the church high feasts or for the services for the change of council held in August every year.

The cantata "Ihr werdet weinen und heulen", BWV 103, was written for "Jubilate" Sunday (3rd Sunday after Easter) 1725 and first performed on 22 April that year. The text, by the poet Mariane von Ziegler, which was clearly modified through Bach's interventions, adheres to the text of the Gospel for that Sunday, the central verse of which (John 16:20) forms the basis of the first movement. The concluding chorale is based on the ninth strophe of the Lied "Barmherziger Vater, hochster Gott" by Paul Gerhardt (1653), which was sung to the melody of "Was mein Gott will, das g'scheh allzeit" (1572). The cantata's scoring with four-voice choir (alto and tenor being used soloistically) includes as instruments trumpet, flauto piccolo, two oboi d'amore and strings. The

formal layout corresponds to what was normal in Leipzig, in which a large-scale, highly expressive opening chorus (with extended instrumental introduction and several choral sections based on fugue-like imitation) and a final chorale frame the solo movements. Among these the two arias stand out: movement 3, a chromatic trio for alto, recorder and continuo and movement 5, written in concertato style for tenor with trumpet and strings.

Appendix: alternative versions for movements 1 and 3, which belong to a subsequent performance of 1731. The parts Bach added later confirm that the recorder (flauto piccolo) is replaced by a transverse flute.

The cantata "Am Abend aber desselbigen Sabbats", BWV 42, dates from the 1st Sunday after Easter, 8 April 1725. The text, by an unknown author, recurs in a print prepared for a subsequent performance of the cantata in 1731. The text of movement 2 uses as its source John 20:19, that of movement 4 the chorale strophe "Verzage nicht, o Hauflein klein" by Johannes Fabricius (c. 1635), while that of movement 7 uses Martin Luther's "Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich" (1524). The introductory sinfonia probably stems from an instrumental work that has not survived, from Bach's period in Kothen. In this cantata the choir appears only in the concluding chorale. The three extended arias all stand out for their different scoring: the alto aria (movement 3) with the entire complement of instruments, the duet for soprano and tenor (movement 4) with its flexible continuo, in which the cello and bassoon weave around the bass voice, and the bass aria (movement 6) with its violin accompaniment (with divided first violins).

Appendix: in a later alternative version of the cantata the continuo in movement 4 is performed with a double-bass.

The cantata "Liebster Immanuel, Herzog der Frommen", BWV 123, written for the feast of Epiphany, was first performed on 6 January 1725. It is based on the Lied of the same name by Ahasverus Fritsch (1679). Its first and sixth strophes are taken over unchanged, while the middle strophes are paraphrased to form two pairs of recitative and aria. The text recalls the Christmas season that is drawing to a close, but contains no closer reference to the Gospel for that Sunday, Matthew 2:1-12 (The Wise Men from the East). In keeping with the festive character of the cantata, the scoring is lavish. Alongside the usual four-voice choir, whose three lower voices are also treated soloistically, the string orchestra is complemented by a double pair of woodwind (two each of flutes and oboi d'amore). Already in the opening movement the woodwind play a prominent role, not only setting the pastoral mood of the 9/8 movement but also leading in turns with the chorale melody. The tenor aria, no. 3, makes a dramatic impression, being a quartet movement with two oboi d'amore, in which the motivic material and alternating tempos refer directly to the words: the phrase "die harte Kreuzesreise" ("the hard way of the Cross") is underlined by bizarre chromatic melodic figures, the raging "Ungewitter" (storm) by exuberant passage-work. In the concluding chorale Bach takes an unconventional course, repeating the Abgesang of the last strophe piano in accordance with the words "legt ins Grab hinein" ("lies in the tomb").

The Soloists

The English soprano **Deborah York** graduated from Manchester University with a First Class Honors Degree in music and went on to study at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, with Laura Sarti. She now studies with Janice Chapman.

Deborah York performs and broadcasts regularly with many of Europe's leading groups and orchestras. Her concert performances have included a recital with The King's Consort at the Tonhalle, Zurich; a recital at Wigmore Hall with Michael Chance and Julius Drake, a recital of songs by Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Poulenc with Julius Drake at the 1998 Saintes Festival, *Un Viaggio a Roma* with Concerto Italiano and Rinaldo Alessandrini, Bach's Magnificat (BWV 243), Weihnachts-Oratorium (BWV 248) and St. John Passion (BWV 245) with Collegium Vocale Gent and Philippe Herreweghe, Bach's St Markus Passion (BWV 247) with Ton Koopman, Messiah with Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert; Purcell's Fairy Queen with Markus Creed and Freiburger Barockorchester, and Vivaldi's Laudate Pueri with La Stagione, Frankfurt.

Deborah York's operatic roles have included Anne Truelove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* in the celebrated Cox/Hockney Glyndebourne production for New Israeli Opera; Mirror in Harrison Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* for Glyndebourne and Glyndebourne Touring Opera; Emilia in Händel's *Flavio* for Opera Theatre Company, Dublin and Covent Garden Festival; Servilia in *La Clemenza di Tito* for Glyndebourne Touring Opera; Barbarina (*Figaro*) and Giannetta (*L'Elisir d'Amore*) at Covent Garden, Ismene in Telemann's *Orfeus* and Iris in Händel's *Semele*, both with René Jacobs at the Berlin Staatsoper, and Euridice in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich. (source: <http://www.bach-cantatas.com>)

Annette Markert was born in the Rhone Valley in Germany and studied music at the Hochschule für Musik in Leipzig. Her first operatic engagement was at Halle, Germany (1983-1990), where she was twice awarded the prestigious Handel Prize for her outstanding operatic performances, including the title roles in *Rinaldo* and *Floridante*. She was then engaged at Leipzig (1991-1996), where she won wide critical acclaim for such roles as Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and Olga in *Eugene Onegin*.

Annette Markert's concert and operatic engagements have included collaborations with such distinguished conductors as Kurt Masur, Philippe Herreweghe, Nicolas McGegan, Kurt Sanderling, Ton Koopman and Reinhard Goebel. She has enjoyed particular success in the Baroque repertoire, highlighted by celebrated performances of Bach's St John Passion with the Vienna Philharmonic under Philippe Herreweghe and the St Matthew Passion with the New York Philharmonic and Kurt Masur.

Other notable appearances have included a series of Israel Philharmonic performances of Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony under Kurt Masur, Frank Martin's *Golgotha* conducted by Herbert Bock at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* with the Antwerp Royal Philharmonic, and sell-out performances in Carnegie Hall of Haydn's 'Harmony' Mass with Roger Norrington.

The 1999-2000 season brought Annette Markert together with conductor Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra for performances and recordings of Bach's cantatas.

Swedish soprano **Lisa Larsson** has won acclaim around the globe for her Erato recordings with Ton Koopman of Bach's Christmas Oratorio, Magnificat, Easter Oratorio and several volumes in the complete cantata series. So it comes as something of a surprise to learn that she originally started out

as a concert flautist and only later concentrated her attention on singing. Following intensive training in Switzerland, she was immediately hired in 1993 by the Opernhaus Zurich Opera Studio for two years. During her time there she gained much valuable experience singing under a number of internationally acclaimed conductors, including Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Christoph von Dohnanyi.

She left the Zurich opera company in 1995, and her career has blossomed at an exceptional rate. Following appearances at La Scala Milan, Lausanne Opera and the Komische Oper Berlin, she spent a year with the Basel Opera Company, where she enjoyed particular success in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Cluck's Orpheus*. Since then she has performed at many of Europe's leading operatic venues and festivals, including the Royal Danish Opera, Lyon Opera, Glyndebourne, the Salzburg Easter Festival and BBC Promenade Concerts. Always very much in demand as a concert soloist, Larsson has appeared with such renowned conductors as Claudio Abbado, Franz Welser-Most, Christopher Hogwood and Nicholas McGegan.

After leaving school, **Bogna Bartosz** first studied singing at the Academy of Music in Gdansk. After graduating with distinction, she continued her studies at the Berlin Academy of Arts under Professor Ingrid Figur, and took part in master classes with Aribert Reimann, Adele Stolte and Anna Reynolds.

At the 9th International J.S. Bach Competition in Leipzig in 1992, she won first prize, as well as the special prize awarded by the MDR broadcasting organization in Leipzig. Since then Bogna Bartosz has sung with well-known orchestras and leading conductors, in all the major concert halls in Germany, as well as in Europe, the USA and Israel, and at numerous major festivals.

The Swiss lyric tenor **Jörg Dürmüller** studied voice at the Winterthur Conservatory with Ruth Binder (1977-1982), and with a scholarship of the Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund at the Academy of Music and Theatre in Hamburg with Naan Pöld, Hans Kagel and Hertha Werner (1982-1987). He attended master classes given by Edith Mathis, Christa Ludwig and Hermann Prey.

His first opera-engagement led him in 1987 to the Bielefeld City Theatre, where he was a member of the ensemble for five years. From 1995 to 1997 he was engaged as the first tenor at the Brunswick State Theatre under Kammersängerin Brigitte Fassbaender. He appeared also at the State Opera of Hamburg, and at the Theatre in Revier Gelsenkirchen. In 1996 he appeared as a guest at the Comic Opera Berlin in the role of Fernando in *Così fan tutte* produced by Harry Kupfer, and at the National Theatre of Braunschweig as Andres in *Wozzeck* by Alban Berg. In 2002 and 2003 he is invited to sing the role of Bajazete in *Händel's Tamerlano* also at the Opera Comique Berlin directed by David Alden.

From 1997-1998 to 1999-2000 Jörg Dürmüller has been a permanent member of the ensemble of the Vienna Volksoper, where he very successfully appeared in the roles of Tamino in *The Magic Flute* (Mozart), Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (Mozart), Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Mozart), Count Zedlau in *Wiener Blut* (J. Strauß), Alfred in *Die Fledermaus* (J. Strauss), Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* (Rossini) and Fenton in *Nicolai's Lustigen Weibern von Windsor and Falstaff* (Verdi), and Châteauneuf in *Zar und Zimmermann* by Lortzing. In addition to his numerous concert engagements he is now working there as a guest tenor. In 2001 he gave guest performances at the Opera National du Rhin Strasbourg in the part of the Steuermann in the Wagner-Opera *Der fliegende Holländer* directed by Philippe Arlaud. Furthermore he appeared as a guest tenor at the

opera houses of Hamburg, Montpellier, Leipzig, Cologne, Sevilla and at the Teatro Real in Madrid where he made his debut in 1998-1999 as Walter von der Vogelweide in *Tannhäuser* (Wagner) directed by Werner Herzog. In June 1999 he toured in Japan as Alfred in a *Fledermaus* production by the Vienna Volksoper. In February 2002 he sang the title-role of the Weber-opera *Abu Hassan* in Eindhoven conducted by Jan Willem de Vriend. In May 2002 he will sing the title-role of the opera *Abu Hassan* (C.M. v. Weber) under Bruno Weil in a WDR CD-production.

But still of greater importance is his career in concert and oratorio singing. Within this area he appeared in the centres of music life of Switzerland and Germany in a versatile repertoire and made guest appearances in Paris and Brussels, in Pesaro and at the Festival Weeks for Ancient Music in Mannheim. In 1989 he undertook a very successful tour to Russia, with appearances in Moscow, Leningrad and Vilnius (Wilna). He also made a successful tour to Spain. As a concert singer Jörg Dürmüller has gained a particularly good reputation especially in singing Bach's *Evangelist's* parts. This led him to most of the major concert-halls at home and abroad. He became estimated also as a Lieder singer.

Christoph Prégardien began singing at an early age with the church choir from his home town of Limburg, Germany. Following studies with Caria Castellani in Milan and Hartmut Höll at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule, he quickly established himself as one of the foremost singers working in the 'authentic' field. The list of celebrated conductors he now regularly works with reads like a virtual 'who's who' period-instrument movement, including John Eliot Gardiner, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Philippe Herreweghe, Rene Jacobs, Ton Koopman and Gustav Leonhardt. He has proved equally successful in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century concert repertoires. An acclaimed interpreter of the works of Benjamin Britten (most notably the *Serenade*, *Nocturne* and *War Requiem*), appearances with such renowned orchestras as the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic, the Royal Concertgebouw and Boston Symphony have also included music by Stravinsky and Rihm. His many operatic roles embrace not only Monteverdi, Mozart and Rossini, but also Verdi, most notably as Fenton in *Falstaff*.

However, the genre with which Christoph Prégardien is perhaps most popularly associated is solo song, particularly the German Romantic Lied. His collaborations with the fortepianist Andreas Staier, in particular, have proved nothing short of revelatory. His numerous recordings, notably of works by Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn, have won prestigious awards around the globe.

Paul Agnew was born in Glasgow and a former Choral Scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford, and is now one of the most versatile tenors of his generation. A long-time member of Anthony Rooley's Consort of Musicke, since turning soloist he has been in great demand with some of the most distinguished period instrument ensembles in the world. He made his debut at the Palais Garnier, Paris, performing the title role in a highly successful production of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* with William Christie and Les Arts Florissants, which subsequently travelled to Nice, Caen, Montpellier and New York. Another major role with William Christie was Jason in Charpentier's *Médée*, which toured France, Portugal and the United States.

Other orchestras Paul Agnew has worked with include the English Baroque Soloists (Purcell's *King Arthur* with John Eliot Gardiner), the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (Bach cantatas) and most particularly the English Concert with whom he has performed *The Fairy Queen*, *Dioclesian*, *Timon of Athens* and *King Arthur*. More recently he has worked with La Chapelle Royale and

Philippe Herreweghe (Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*), the Academy of Ancient Music (Handel's *Joshua*), Tafelmusik (Purcell's *Dioclesian*), the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra (Bach's *B minor Mass*), the Hanover Band (Schubert's *Lazurus*) and Les Arts Florissants in Monteverdi's *Vespers*, which he also recorded for Erato.

Paul Agnew's other recordings for Erato include Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass, several volumes in the complete Bach cantata series, Charpentier's *Les Plaisirs de Versailles* and an album of Mondonville motets.

Klaus Mertens, the German bass-baritone, has been following studies with Else Bischof-Bornes, Jakob Stämpfli and Peter Massmann and has established an enviable reputation within a remarkably short space of time, and is now very much in demand. His concert career to date has focussed largely upon the Baroque era, working alongside such renowned specialists in the period-instrument field as Ton Koopman, Frans Bruggen, Nicholas McGegan, Rene Jacobs, Philippe Herreweghe and Sigiswald Kuijken. He has already recorded many of the central works of the period, including Monteverdi's *Vespers*, Bach's *B minor Mass* and a disc of Charpentier motets for Erato. In addition, he has played a central role in the same company's complete Bach cantata edition under the direction of Ton Koopman.

Mertens has been equally successful in later repertoire. His concert appearances in such stylistically disparate works as Hindemith's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* have been universally praised, as have his many *Lieder* recitals. He has appeared at many of the world's most important music festivals, including the Prague Spring, Salzburg, Lucerne and London 'Proms', and has made numerous guest appearances with such internationally acclaimed orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, Leipzig Gewandhaus and Dresden Philharmonic. His TV appearances include the *St John Passion* with the Royal Concertgebouw, and a recital of Schubert songs orchestrated by Reger for NDR Hanover.

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