

TELEMANN Complete Cantatas Vol 1

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To CPO's already generous Telemann catalogue we can now add this first volume in what will be the first complete recording of the composer's *Französischer Jahrgang* (French Cycle) of 1714/15, comprising 72 substantial sacred cantatas for soloists, choir and instrumentalists. The 10 cantatas included here – five for the Trinity Sundays of 1715, five for Lent in the same year – are performed with gusto and a fierce attention to clarity, style and affective intent by a mixture of emerging and experienced vocal soloists – who also form the Gutenberg Soloists choir – and the Neumeyer Consort directed by Felix Koch.

These performers are protagonists in The Telemann Project, spearheaded by the Collegium Musicum of Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, and Frankfurt's Forum Alte Musik. Another chief player is music publisher Canberra Baroque. Until recently, only 21 of these cantatas had been available in score; but with Canberra Baroque's involvement, the remaining 51 cantatas are now available in modern performing editions.

Karl Böhmer, whose detailed commentaries for each of the 10 cantatas are another delight of this release, speculates as to the cycle's epithet. His conclusion is 'banal'. It's apparently a reference to each cantata's tendency to remain in the same key, like the French suite movements whose forms are a conspicuous presence throughout. Nevertheless, if these 10 cantatas (which

Author: William Yeoman



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Jesu, Meine Freude

Ich werfe mich zu deinen Füßen

Valet will ich dir geben

Der Herr verstößet nicht ewiglich

Ach, sollte doch die ganze Welt

Christus hat einmal für die Sünde gelitten

Muß nicht der Mensch immer in Streit sein

Herr, wie lange wilt du mein so gar vergessen

typically include the expected arias, recitatives, duets and choruses) are anything to go by, the cycle teems with variety and invention, even by Telemann's standards. As Böhmer writes: 'It stands out in his oeuvre in several respects – in completeness, in variety of scoring and in wealth of forms.'

Telemann's variety of scoring is evidenced by two delicious examples. In *Jesu meine Freude*, soprano Elisabeth Scholl in 'Ach wie lang, ach lange' luxuriates in her melancholy above a quartet of sighing recorders. Almost an echo, in the Parisian *opéra* fied Lenten cantata *Gott schweige doch nicht* Hans Christoph Begemann's superb bass moves in dignified fashion against the wavelike motions of three sonorous bassoons.

It seems invidious to pick out just these two soloists when their vocal and instrumental colleagues, under Koch's judiciously elastic command, so convincingly animate Telemann's variegated, even at times daringly voluptuous painterly responses to Neumeister's texts – even to the point where polish is sacrificed to passion. But *ars longa*, word-count *brevis*. You'll just have to hear it for yourself.

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Gott, schweige doch nicht also

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