



RECORDINGS

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CHRISTOPH GRAUPNER (1683–1760), JOHANN DAVID HEINICHEN (1683–1729), GEORG PHILIPP
TELEMANN (1681–1767)

ICH HEBE MEINE AUGEN AUF: TELEMANN, HEINICHEN & GRAUPNER IN LEIPZIG

Veronika Winter (soprano) / Alex Potter (countertenor) / Hans Jörg Mammel (tenor) / Markus Flaig (bass) / L'arpa
festante / Rien Voskullen (director)

Carus 83.337, 2015: one disc, 78 minutes

Although today the name of Johann Sebastian Bach towers over the musical history of Leipzig, we must not forget that many other noteworthy musicians of his era spent time in the city as pupils of the Thomasschule and/or as students at the university, among them composers such as Johann David Heinichen, Johann Friedrich Fasch, Johann Georg Pisendel, Georg Philipp Telemann and Christoph Graupner. This recording presents a snapshot of the kind of music written in Leipzig at the beginning of the eighteenth century, before the arrival of J. S. Bach. It features two pieces by Telemann, whose name will undoubtedly be familiar to most listeners, and one each by Graupner and Heinichen, both composers whose music is only now starting to become widely known. Two of these works, the Telemann cantata 'Ich hebe meine Augen auf' and Heinichen's cantata 'Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener', receive world-premiere recordings. Fittingly, they are the first and last works on the disc, and are of distinctly different types that display the evolution of the cantata genre during this period.

The opening work, 'Ich hebe meine Augen auf' (I lift up mine eyes), *rwv7:17*, is one of Telemann's earliest cantatas, composed around 1703. Rooted firmly in the seventeenth-century sacred concerto style, it is in six movements and consists of four short duets for soprano and bass, with the two voices also given one solo aria each. Even in a work of such comparative brevity, Telemann's emotionally expressive style is fully on display: for example, in the marvellous word-painting heard throughout the piece, such as the series of ascending arpeggiated figures on 'I lift up mine eyes' and long melismatic phrases on the word 'gleiten' (slide, or stumble). Both Veronika Winter and Markus Flaig give excellent renditions of their respective solo arias – Winter's effortless top notes are especially praiseworthy for their beautiful rounded tone – but it is their perfectly balanced ensemble singing in the duet movements, particularly in the beguiling final 'Amen', that makes this performance such a joy to listen to.

The subtitle of the recording is something of a misnomer, for although all three of the featured composers lived and studied in Leipzig at some point in their lives, not all the music included was actually written there. Although Christoph Graupner was educated at the Thomasschule and the University of Leipzig, his cantata for solo soprano 'Vernügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust' (Contented rest, beloved delight of the soul) was probably written around 1711, early during his tenure as Kapellmeister at the Darmstadt court, where he wrote over a thousand church cantatas. There is nonetheless a direct literary connection between this work and the city of Leipzig: the text, by Georg Christian Lehms, probably originated there, and was then supplied (along with other Leipzig cantata texts) to Graupner at a later time. Bach, of course, set this text himself in 1726 as a cantata for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, *BWV170*.

Graupner's cantata is scored for an intimate ensemble of two flutes, two muted violins, two 'violettas' and continuo. (Incidentally, the liner notes rather unclearly state that 'Graupner's solo cantata and *BWV 170* have a very unusual instrumentation in common'; presumably, this refers to the fact that the instrumentation of the Bach, like that of the Graupner, is unusual, and not that the two works share the same instrumentation.) The title page of the autograph score specifies transverse flutes, but here they are replaced by alto recorders in the first and last movements. Although the liner notes offer no explanation for this decision, and it seems rather odd having the transverse flute in the third movement only, the recorders are nonetheless effective. The use of the two wind instruments imbues the work with a quiet pastoral air that calls to mind their similar



usage in Bach's cantata 'Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit', BWV106; they sit above the strings and carry the instrumental melodies throughout the expansive first movement, and in the more sorrowful central aria 'Wie jammern mich doch'. These movements are interspersed with two brief operatic-style recitatives, before the cantata concludes with the sprightlier 'Mir ekelt mehr zu leben'. Once again, Veronika Winter shines here, her light and delicate tone perfectly suited to the lyrical charm of this music. A somewhat grating (surely unintentional) vocal slide at the very beginning of 'Wie jammern mich doch' is the only blemish on what is an otherwise faultless performance of this lovely work.

Telemann's instrumental Overture in E flat major, TWV55:Es4, might at first seem to sit somewhat uneasily on a recording otherwise devoted exclusively to sacred vocal music, but it nonetheless makes for a refreshing interlude between the Graupner and Heinichen pieces. The work, scored for strings and continuo with two oboes playing *colla parte*, is a suite in the Lullian French-overture form and consists of twelve movements, including two each of the Menuett, Bourrée and Passetied. Its origins are unclear: it may have been composed for the Collegium musicum in Leipzig, but it may also have been written in Sorau or Eisenach, both cities where Telemann subsequently held posts as Kapellmeister. In the liner notes to the recording, Michael Maul suggests that the title of the second movement, the stately 'Entrée', may indicate that the overture originally belonged to one of the operas Telemann claimed to have written for Leipzig. Intriguingly, a keyboard transcription of this work, TWV Anh. 32:1, is found in the Andreas Bach Book, compiled by Johann Sebastian Bach's older brother Johann Christoph; there it sits alongside other German ballet suites by Böhm, Pestel and Johann Sebastian himself. This Telemann suite is therefore of particular interest because it was clearly a work that J. S. Bach was familiar with, and one that may indeed have acted as a model for his own orchestral suites.

The playing of L'arpa festante here is delightful throughout, and the character and spirit of each dance is well captured, although a slightly crisper articulation from the upper parts in some of the faster movements (such as the Overture and Bourrée I) would have created even more exciting contrasts and precision. The carefree Gigue is performed with a deliciously casual *Schwung* (one only wishes it was longer), and the penultimate movement, a moving little Aria, features sensitive phrasing from the violins and beautiful continuo playing by theorbist Johannes Vogt. At times I felt slightly too aware of the prominence of the continuo in the audio balance, and wanted to hear a little more of the upper parts in the foreground, but this is a very minor quibble.

The final piece on this recording, and the longest of the three vocal works, is Johann David Heinichen's Purification cantata 'Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener' (Lord, now lettest thou thy servant), the text of which is essentially a Lutheran version of the Nunc dimittis. In complete contrast to the opening Telemann, it is written in the more modern madrigal cantata style (although still without recitatives). An introductory instrumental Sonata, in which we hear the chorale tune 'Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele' played in the oboes above a bustling string accompaniment, is followed by the first of three choral movements that frame the work (here performed using one voice per part, to great effect). The two following movements, freely texted arias for bass and tenor respectively, are written in true operatic style, exemplifying Heinichen's conviction that the principles of theatrical music should be transferred to sacred music to 'delight the ears' and 'move the spirits' of listeners (as Maul notes in his liner notes, page 8, quoting from Heinichen's 1711 *Gründliche Anweisung*).

Certainly, the performances here do more than justice to Heinichen's vision, particularly Hans Jörg Mammel's thoughtful performance of 'Nun fährt dein Knecht', partnered by Christoph Hesse's searching violin obbligato. This is followed by another chorus, similar in style to the first, and a short but dramatic bass aria filled with vivid word-painting. One of my favourite moments in the whole cantata comes in the middle of the penultimate movement, 'Weg, o Welt', which starts off as a jaunty imitative duet for soprano and alto but then slowly grinds to a halt. The soprano subsequently enters alone, quietly, singing the 'Freu dich sehr' chorale tune, which is later juxtaposed against the text of the duet, now sung by the alto, tenor and bass voices. Just as the movement appears to have finished serenely, all four voices take flight again in counterpoint for a brief concluding passage on the words 'nun, so fahr ich himmelauf' (I journey up to



heaven), again featuring some clever word-painting. Having been reminded of the chorale tune once more, we move into the last movement and a setting of the plain four-part chorale proper, the stanzas interspersed with instrumental ritornelli. This work is fully deserving of more performances and recordings, and any fan of Bach's cantatas will find much to enjoy here. All four singers are on top form, ably supported once again by the fine playing of L'arpa festante.

The aforementioned accompanying booklet contains concise liner notes by Michael Maul that present informative background about each work, although it would have been nice if the English translation of these had been given in complete, rather than abridged, form. The booklet also includes full German texts for each of the cantatas, with free English translations, though some of the latter may surprise those used to the more familiar English versions of these texts: the title 'Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust', for example, is translated as 'O blessed rest, O welcome, soul's delight!'

This is a fascinating recording, filled with surprises and delights for those interested in the development of Lutheran sacred music in the early eighteenth century. All the music presented is of very high quality, and the performances from both singers and instrumentalists are first class; the fact that two of the works are world-premiere recordings only strengthens the recommendation. One can only hope that the present recording encourages further exploration and performance of this music, particularly the little-known vocal works of Heinichen and Graupner. These pieces surely just represent the tip of the iceberg, and I look forward to future recordings of more treasures from this wonderful repertoire.

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THOMAS TUDWAY (c1650–1726)
MUSIC FOR WIMPOLE HALL
Eboracum Baroque / Chris Parsons (director)
National Trust, 2015; one disc, 73 minutes

Thomas Tudway (c1656–1726) was a contemporary of John Blow and Pelham Humfrey during his time as a child of the English Chapel Royal. Although his later career was respectable (he was organist at four Cambridge institutions, gaining his doctorate and becoming professor of music there in 1705), it was blighted by an incident in 1706 that resulted in his public humiliation and temporary suspension from all his posts, apparently for an unguarded joke thought to have been insulting to Queen Anne. His failure to gain a Chapel Royal position despite repeated attempts may have been partly linked to this incident, although the quality of the competing candidates was probably the major factor. Whatever the reason, he was forced to concentrate his efforts upon obtaining private patronage, resulting in the work for which he is now best known: the six-volume manuscript 'Collection of the Most Celebrated Services and Anthems Used in the Church of England' (GB-Lbl Harl. MSS 7337–42) assembled for Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford, between 1714 and 1720. An important feature of this work is its series of prefaces, which include extensive and valuable commentary upon recent political, religious and musical history and the state of English church music at the time, at least as perceived by Tudway. Although Tudway is not now primarily known as a composer, he composed a large amount of church music that both typified his opinions on that genre and reflected his interest in historical church music. This recording by Chris Parsons and Eboracum Baroque offers a rare opportunity to hear some of these works, most of which had not been recorded and are only rarely performed.

Tudway's setting of the Te Deum, composed together with the Jubilate (also included) for the consecration of Harley's chapel at Wimpole Hall in 1721, is the most substantial of the five of his works presented here.