

MASTERING EQUIPMENT

*Merging Technologies
Hapi Digital Converter
Antelope Audio Isochrone 10M*

Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software

Weiss POW-r Dithering Software

*Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics*

*Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services
Dehavilland Tube Tape Pre-amp
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer*

Merging Pyramix Audio Software

*Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant
and Power Plant 300*

*Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,
Speltz Anti-Cables*

*Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves*

*Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's*

Facts about this Recording

Transferred from a Vanguard 4-track tape

Date of Recording: March 1957

Producer: Seymour Solomon Engineer: Marc Aubort

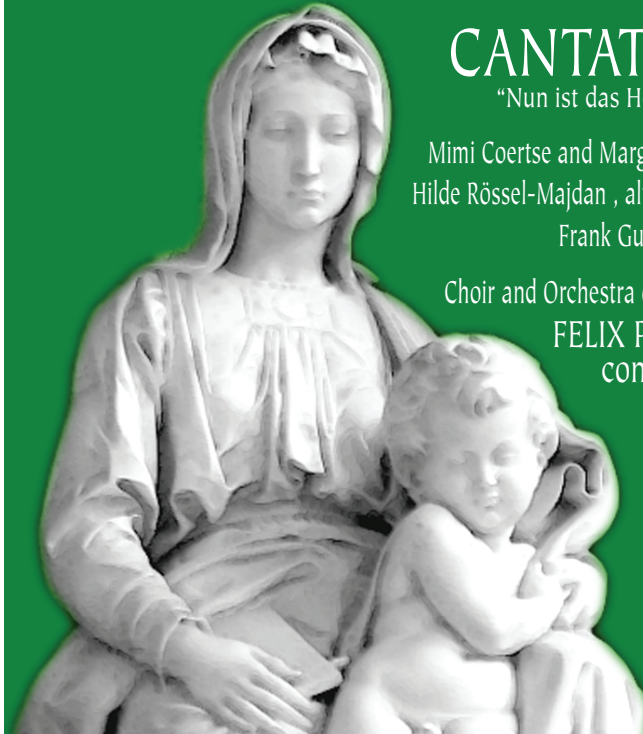
J.S. Bach MAGNIFICAT IN D

CANTATA No. 50

“Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft”

Mimi Coertse and Margarete Sjöstedt, sopranos
Hilde Rössel-Majdan, alto • Anton Dermota, tenor
Frank Guthrie, bass

Choir and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera
FELIX PROHASKA
conductor



The Magnificat text comes from the Gospel According to Luke. It is Mary's response to her cousin Elizabeth, after Elizabeth greets Mary as the mother of God. The Magnificat is the most popular and best-known of all the Gospel canticles, which are Biblical songs from somewhere other than the book of Psalms. The Magnificat, from the earliest days, has been a part of Catholic Vespers services. During Bach's time, Vespers were a common occurrence on Sunday afternoons in Leipzig. Normally, this would have been sung in German, except on Christmas Day, when it was sung in Latin. This Magnificat, in fact, appears to have been written for Christmas 1723 in Leipzig. Originally, the work was in E-flat major, though in about the year 1730 it appears Bach revised it. Among the revision was the transposition to the brighter key of D major. Other changes generally effected the instrumentation of the piece. The latter version is the one generally performed and better known, perhaps because of its more festive tone. It uses the largest orchestra available to Bach at the time, including trumpets, drums, flutes, oboes, bassoons, strings, and organ. The choir, too, is large, using five-part chorus (with divided sopranos) rather than four.

Gloria Patri, Gloria Filio, Gloria et Spiritui Sancto! Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The entire Magnificat takes about 25 minutes to perform. Although there is not enough time or space here to discuss the entire piece, I would like to focus your attention on a few favorite spots.

First, the opening is among the brightest and most festive of all of Bach's works. For thirty measures, the full orchestra plays alone. The three trumpets sound out primarily in arpeggiated triads, which add a sense of majesty. The oboes perform busy runs, complicating – perhaps glorifying? – the texture. Flutes later join this passage work in a higher register (originally, Bach used recorder, which would not have cut through the texture as well as the flutes). A walking bass line keeps the piece moving forward. Finally, pairs of voices enter (first, the two soprano parts, then alto and tenor) or a melismatic "Magnificat",

leading to homophonic, dotted-rhythm statements of the same word by the full choir; again, this creates a regal, majestic feel, and gives the sense of "glorification." Even as the movement progresses to include other text, this brilliant, regal mood never vanishes.

Another favorite moment of mine comes with the fourth movement. But first we must backtrack. You'll notice in the English text above that the words "all generations" are bracketed. This is because Bach skips these words in movement three, where they normally appear. Instead, Bach uses these two words alone as the basis for the entire fourth movement, giving them more attention than they would have received buried in the midst of the third movement. But that's not really what is so interesting here; it's what Bach does musically here that catches my ear. Each of the five vocal parts sings "omnes, omnes generations," over and over again, through for more than 23 measures, the five parts are completely independent of each other; for the final 3 ½ measures of the movement, then, the five come together to sing in rhythmic unison. The effect is this: initially, many generations – all distinct from each, from different eras and regions – call Mary blessed; the result is that throughout time, all generations shall call her blessed.

Another delightful movement comes in number 9, marked as an aria for alto. In reality, it is a complicated four-part texture, with solo alto voice, two solo flutes, and of course the continuo part. This is a good example of a movement in which Bach uses obbligato instruments continuously throughout the texture, rather than having them alternate with the solo voice (as Handel might have done). The pleasant parallel third which dominates the two flute parts are symbolic of the Holy Trinity (as, I suppose, are the three solo parts together). The active parts which fill in the sound between the beats in the continuo (especially where the continuo only plays on the beats) are like the hungry being filled with good things. The sweet sound of the parallels reflects the "good things" God gave to the hungry. The fact that Bach devotes more notes to the words "et divites dimisit inanes" (and the rich he send empty away) represents God's act – giving to the hungry, noticing the rich but giving them nothing in return. Ultimately, the solo voice drops out seven measures from the end, and the flutes continue until the penultimate measure, but finish somewhat unresolved; the representation of that which the rich receive here.

J.S. Bach

MAGNIFICAT IN D

CANTATA No. 50

“Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft”

Choir and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera

FELIX PROHASKA
conductor

1. Magnificat Anima Mea
2. Et exultavit
3. Quia respexit
4. Omnes generationes
5. Quia fecit
6. Et misericordia
7. Fecit potentiam
8. Deposuit
9. Esurientes
10. Suscepit Israel
11. Sicut locutus est
12. Gloria
13. Cantata No. 50 Nun ist das Hell

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks. Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com