

# Good report on western classical music album review

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Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the most renowned classical musicians whose works are popular even today. He is considered as one of the most important composers of the Baroque period. His nine symphonies have particularly been cited as some of the most brilliant western classical musical pieces of all time. Apart from symphonies, Bach is also recognized for his other compositions such as Cantatas, which are religious pieces of musical composition. Today, some of his works have been performed by various musicians, compiled and then sold in album format to millions of classical music lovers around the world. One such album is the one being reviewed here and it is titled " BACH, J. S.: Cantatas for Solo Soprano, BWV 51, 52, 84, 199" compiled and performed by four parties, Siri Karoline Thornhill, Helmut Muller-Bruhl, The Cologne Bach Vocal Ensemble and the Cologne Chamber Orchestra. This album features the performance of four of Johann Sebastian Bach's most famous cantatas, Falsce Welt (Cantata no. 52), Ich bin vergnüngt mit meinem Glücke, (Cantata no. 84), Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut (Cantata no. 1990) and finally Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen (Cantata no. 51).

Although this album involves the performance of western classical music, it has a significant modern feel and hugely conforms to modern technical and artistic principles. This feature mainly emanates from the fact that it is a studio recording contrary to how it would be performed in the classical period. The resonance depicted by the album can consequently be attributed to the recording technology utilized.

However, one distinct feature of this album is that all the pieces are significantly congruent and represent the trademark religious themes of

Johann Sebastian Bach.

All the musical pieces in the album are cantatas and hence, they depict similar characteristics and the album has a distinctive rhythm and flow from its commencement up to the point when the last cantata is performed.

The main performers in this album do full justice to Bach's original vision in his composition. Siri Karoline Thornhill, the Norwegian soprano, has a very attractive tone as well as superbly natural phrasing style that help to bring out the message of the composition as the initial composer intended.

Thornhill characteristically applies some light vibratos to the notes of the cantatas that are longer. In addition, she inclines her voice to a more modern orientation than a Baroque one, therefore, giving the performance a relatively conspicuous modern touch. In addition, this makes the performance more attractive and competent. The Cologne Bach Vocal Ensemble also does a superb job in their serviceable renditions of the arias and the chorales. The tuning, balance and articulation of these elements is nothing short of brilliant.

As mentioned earlier, there is a very conspicuous congruence between the four cantatas and not even one of them feels out of place. The entire album, therefore, seems much harmonized in terms of all elements of performance; they are in one way or another similar.

The first performance of the album features *Falsche Welt*, which is Cantata number 52. In the beginning, a period performance lighting accompanies the phrasing, but this is then followed by a round tone from the modern instruments that significantly distinguish the piece from a sample performance by a Baroque era purist. The soloist, Thornhill, gives some very

heartfelt recitatives during this performance, some of it resembling the passion often witnessed in the performance of operas.

The second performance in the album features *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*, (Cantata no. 84). This performance opens with a flowing oboe obligato aria played at a relatively brisk pace. The slow reading of the part emphasizes the cantata's timbre warmth that supersedes the contrapuntal intrigue. The central aria's ensemble exposition is also very voluptuous. In addition, the balance created by the contrapuntal lines and the soloist voice when it makes its entry is brilliant. This, in fact, demonstrates the advantages brought about by taking Bach's performance out of its initial venue (the Church, seeing that all Cantatas are sacred) and bringing it to a modern recording studio.

The third Cantata played is the *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut* (Cantata no. 1990). This can be considered to be the most somber performance of the whole set. Its performance hugely benefits from Thornhill's baroque restraint and operatic expression. Long and impassioned phrases accompanied by occasional discrete ornamentation together with a slight vibrato touch all make up a very attractive and indeed convincing take on the vocal lines that would have originally been intended by Bach, an aspect that would without a doubt please Baroque purists.

The final performance in this album features Cantata no. 51 titled *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. This is one of Bach's most famous cantatas whose fame is often attributed to the popular interplay of the trumpet obligato and the voice in the piece. In this particular performance, the balance engineer's skills are made evident in this performance especially when it comes to the

distinguishing of the trumpet lines, which at the same time act as subordinates to the soloist's voice. Once again, the power of the Thornhill is shown in her projection of energy, in the note phrasing leading to maintenance of momentum throughout the performance. The two arias are also accompanied by extremely attractive singing.

In conclusion, the album " BACH, J. S.: Cantatas for Solo Soprano, BWV 51, 52, 84, 199" is a brilliant western classical music album that brings Johann Sebastian Bach's most famous Cantata to a modern audience and does it superbly. Every classical music lover should make a point of buying the album.

## **Works Cited**

" BACH, J. S. Cantatas for Solo Soprano, BWV 51, 52, 84, 199 JH Libraries." N. p., 2012. Web. 24 Apr. 2014.

" BACH, J. S.: Cantatas for Solo Soprano, BWV 51, 52, 84, 199 (Thornhill, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Muller-Bruhl) - 8. 570453." Classical Music - Streaming Classical Music. N. p., 2010. Web. 24 Apr. 2014.