

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750):
Vom Reiche Gottes
About the Kingdom of God

A great cantata with arias, choruses & chants
from 18 Bach Cantatas, compiled by Hans Grischkat,
performed according to the traditions of the time, by

Heike Heilmann ~ Soprano
Franz Vitzthum ~ Altus, Countertenor
Johannes Mayer ~ Tenor
Falko Hönisch ~ Bass
Maulbronner Kammerchor · Maulbronn Chamber Choir
Ensemble il capriccio (Baroque Orchestra)
Conductor: Jürgen Budday

A concert in the church of the German
UNESCO World Heritage Site Maulbronn Monastery
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in cooperation with Prof. Jürgen Budday.

Sound & Recording Engineer: Andreas Otto Grimminger
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This live recording is part of a cycle of oratorios, masses and other grand works, performed in the basilica of Maulbronn Abbey under the direction of Jürgen Budday. The series combines authentically performed oratorios and masses with the optimal acoustics and atmosphere of this unique monastic church. This ideal location demands the transparency of playing and the interpretive unveiling of the rhetoric intimations of the composition, which is especially aided by the historically informed performance. The music is exclusively performed on reconstructed historical instruments, which are tuned to the pitch customary in the composer's lifetimes (this performance is tuned in $a' = 415$ Hz).

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In the Year of J.S. Bach 1950 (200th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach) I first performed the cantata "Vom Reiche Gottes" in Stuttgart and Reutlingen, which is a feature-length compilation of cantatas emerging from the desire to keep unique, significant parts of the Bach cantatas having - out of several reasons - never been performed and were therefore nearly unknown, from neglect and to (re-)open them for the public.

At first, I stumbled upon these pieces more or less accidentally, but gradually I started to continue my search systematically. Over the years, I gathered about 50 single arias, choirs and chorals out of 25 different cantatas. I always tried to juxtapose these single movements to intact cantatas, but they never merged to a homogenous whole. Thereby, the thought of combining these separate parts to a larger oeuvre came up soon. In doing so, it was understood that in this new compilation the single parts had to be utilized note for note completely true to original without the slightest change, in original text lacking any reversification. A single exception of this principle was necessary in recitative no.15 "Wie nun? Der Allerhöchste spricht", where the first bar had to be changed due to tying it to the preceding part.

Foremost it had to be checked whether a textual coherence with clear development could be found, as I mustn't haphazardly string together individual musical pieces. Prof. Köberle (University of Tübingen) and Rev. Rudolf Daur (Stuttgart) have always been helpful with these textual questions, wherefore I want to thank them at this point once again.

I often was tempted to use single parts of well-known and frequently performed cantatas. But I abandoned this option due to the fact that I wanted to keep the complete works of Bach in its totality untouched under all circumstances. Therefore, I would exceedingly deplore if the work presented here would abet the random selection of particularly known parts out of cantatas otherwise complete.

After the first performance in the Markuskirche Stuttgart at the "Württembergisches Bachfest" Friday 21th of July 1950 wrote f. ex. the "Allgemeine Zeitung": *"It is no random string of fragments, but an entity of persuading closeness. The 23 choirs, chorals, recitatives, ariosi and arias had been so cautiously compiled in many years (and without touching the score) that an inner line is perceptible: the relation from man to god, from the reflective contemplation of the first part to the choirs of jubilation praising the glory of the Creator of all things."*

Albert Schweitzer as well commented on the cantata "Vom Reiche Gottes" very pleased. He wrote after his examination of the piano score that had been sent to him personally: *"Dear Mr. Grischkat! Your letter containing the piano score of the cantata "Vom Reiche Gottes" with a dear dedication lies in front of me. My poor injured hand doesn't allow me to write as I want to. But you shall receive compliment and gratitude by me. And the Great Cantata is beautifully compiled. A wonderful oeuvre. And that you added the figures in the score is nice. Cordially yours, Albert Schweitzer."*

A possibility for amplification shall be indicated here. After the introductive choir "Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen", the associated and in its textual worthy, lovely ancient aria "Unerforschlich ist die Weise, wie der Herr die Seinen führt" from cantata no.188 "Ich habe meine Zuversicht" could be added.*...

Hans Grischkat

*Jürgen Budday choosed to make use of this possibility in the performance at hand.

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A great cantata with arias, choruses & chants
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I. Teil

1. Sinfonia

für obligate Orgel mit Streichorchester und dreistimmigem Oboenchor (BWV 146,1)

2. Coro:

Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal (BWV 146,2)

Chor mit Streichorchester & obligater Orgel

Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen.

3. Arie:

Unerforschlich ist die Weise (BWV 188,4)

Alt Solo mit Solovioline & B.c.

Unerforschlich ist die Weise, wie der Herr die Seinen führt. Selber unser Kreuz und Pein muss zu unserm Besten sein und zu seines Namens Preise.

4. Arioso:

In der Welt habt ihr Angst (BWV 87,5)

Bass Solo mit Generalbass

In der Welt habt ihr Angst, aber seid getrost, ich habe die Welt überwunden.

5. Choral:

So sei nun, Seele, deine (BWV 97,9)

Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen & Generalbass

So sei nun, Seele, deine und traue dem alleine, der dich erschaffen hat; es gehe, wie es gehe; mein Vater in der Höhe weiß allen Sachen Rat.

6. Chor & Choral:

Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe (BWV 25,1)

Chor mit Streichorchester, Flöten, Oboen, Trompete, drei Posaunen & Generalbass

Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe für deinem Dräuen, und ist kein Friede in meinen Gebeinen vor meiner Sünde.

Dazu bläst ein vierstimmiger Bläserchor den Choral:

Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder straf nicht in deinem Zorn, dein'n ersten Grimm doch linder, sonst ist's mit mir verlor'n. Ach Herr, wollst mir vergeben mein Sünd und gnädig sein, dass ich mag ewig leben, entflieh'n der Höllenpein.

7. Rezitativ:

Ach, führe mich, o Gott (BWV 96,4)

Sopran Solo mit Generalbass

Ach, führe mich, o Gott, zum rechten Wege, mich, der ich unerleuchtet bin, der ich nach meines Fleisches Sinn so oft zu irren pflege; jedoch gehst du nur mir zur Seiten, willst du mich nur mit deinen Augen leiten, so gehet eine Bahn gewiss zum Himmel an.

Part I

1. Sinfonia

for organ obbligato with string orchestra and three part oboe choir (BWV 146,1)

2. Chorus:

We must pass through great sadness (BWV 146,2)

Choir with String Orchestra & Organ obbligato

We must pass through great sadness that we God's kingdom may enter.

3. Aria:

Not to fathom is the manner (BWV 188,4)

Alto Solo with Solo Violin & Basso Continuo

Not to fathom is the manner in which God his people leads. Even our own cross and pain must to our advantage be and to bring his name great honor.

4. Arioso:

In the world ye have fear (BWV 87,5)

Bass Solo with Basso Continuo

In the world ye have fear; but ye should be glad, I have now the world overpowered.

5. Chorale:

To thee be true, O spirit (BWV 97,9)

Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes and Basso Continuo

To thee be true, O spirit, and trust in him alone now who hath created thee; tet happen what may happen, thy Father who's in heaven in all things counsels well.

6. Choir & Chorale:

There is nought of soundness within my body (BWV 25,1)

Choir with String Orchestra, Flute, Oboe, Trumpet, three Trombones and Basso Continuo

There is nought of soundness within my body, for thou art angry, nor any quiet within these my bones now, for I am sinful.

With it a four-part brass choir plays the chant:

Ah Lord, poor sinner that I am, do not punish me in your rage, but soften your stern wrath otherwise I am lost. Ah Lord, may it be your will to forgive my sin and be merciful so that I may live for ever and flee from the pains of hell.

7. Recitative:

Ah, lead thou me, O God (BWV 96,4)

Soprano Solo with Basso Continuo

Ah, lead thou me, o God, to righteous pathways, me, for I am in darkness now and, seeking what my flesh desires, so oft in error wander; but yet, if thou but walk beside me, if thou wouldst only with thine eyes now guide me, then surely will my course secure to heaven lead.

8. Arie:**Bald zur Rechten, bald zur Linken (BWV 96,5)***Bass Solo mit Streichorchester, zweistimmigem Oboenchor & Generalbass*

Bald zur Rechten, bald zur Linken lenkt sich mein verirrter Schritt. Gehe doch, mein Heiland, mit. Lass mich in Gefahr nicht sinken, lass mich ja dein weises Führen bis zur Himmelspforte spüren.

9. Choral:**Ich lieg im Streit und widerstreb (BWV 177,5)***Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen, Posaunen & Generalbass*

Ich lieg im Streit und widerstreb, hilf, o Herr Christ, dem Schwachen! An deiner Gnad allein ich kleb, du kannst mich stärker maßen. Kommt nun Anfechtung, Herr, so wehr, dass sie mich nicht umstoßen. Du kannst machen, dass mir's nicht bringt Gefahr; ich weiß, du wirst's nicht lassen.

10. Chor:**Wer sich selbst erhöht, der soll erniedrigt werden (BWV 47,1)***Chor mit Streichorchester, zweistimmigem Oboenchor & Generalbass*

Wer sich selbst erhöht, der soll erniedrigt werden, und wer sich selbst erniedrigt, der soll erhöht werden.

11. Rezitativ:**Es ist nichts Verdammliches (BWV 74,6)***Bass Solo mit drei Oboen & Generalbass*

Es ist nichts Verdammliches an denen die in Christo Jesu sind.

12. Arie:**Greifet zu, fasst das Heil (BWV 174,4)***Bass Solo mit einstimmigem Geigen- und Bratschenchor & Generalbass*

Greifet zu! Fasst das Heil, ihr Glaubenshände. Jesus gibt sein Himmelreich und verlangt nur das das von Euch: Gläubt getreu bis an das Ende.

13. Chor:**Du sollst Gott, deinen Herren, lieben von ganzem Herzen (BWV 77,1)***Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen, Trompete & Generalbass*

Du sollst Gott, deinen Herren, lieben von ganzem Herzen, von ganzer Seele, von allen Kräften und von ganzem Gemüte und deinen Nächsten als dich selbst.

Dazu bläst die Trompete den Choral:

Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot, die uns gab unser Herre Gott durch Moses, seinen Diener treu, hoch auf dem Berg Sinai. Kyrieleis.

8. Aria:**To the right side, to the left side (BWV 96,5)***Bass Solo with String Orchestra, two-part Oboe Choir & Basso Continuo*

To the right side, to the left side, wend their way my wayward steps. Walk with me, my Savior, still, let me not in peril falter, make me, yea, of thy wise guidance until heaven's portals conscious.

9. Chorale:**I lie midst strife and now resist (BWV 177,5)***Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes, Trombones & Basso Continuo*

I lie midst strife and now resist, help, O Lord Christ, my weakness! Unto thy grace alone I cling, for thou canst make me stronger. Come now temptation, Lord, defend, let it not overthrow me. Thou canst check it lest it bring me to harm; I know thou shalt not let it.

10. Chorus:**Who himself exalteth, he shall be made to be humble (BWV 47,1)***Choir with String Orchestra, two-part Oboe Choir & Basso Continuo*

Who himself exalteth, he shall be made to be humble, and who doth make himself humble, he shall be made exalted.

11. Recitative:**There is nought destructible (BWV 74,6)***Bass Solo with three Oboes & Basso Continuo*

There is nought destructible in any who in Christ, Lord Jesus, live.

12. Aria:**Take it now, clasp your hope (BWV 174,4)***Bass Solo with one-part Violin and Viola Choir & Basso Continuo*

Take it now, clasp your hope, ye hands which trust him! Jesus gives his paradise and requires but this of you: keep your faith until the finish!

13. Chorus:**Thou shalt thy God and master cherish with all thy bosom (BWV 77,1)***Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes, Trumpets & Basso Continuo*

Thou shalt thy God and master cherish with all thy bosom, with all thy spirit, with all thy power and with all thine affection, as well thy neighbor as thyself.

With it the trumpet plays the chant:

These are the holy ten commandments that our Lord God gave us, through Moses, His faithful servant, high upon Mount Sinai. Lord, have mercy.

14. Choral:**Von Gott kommt mir ein Freudenschein (BWV 172,6)***Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen & Generalbass*

Von Gott kommt mir ein Freudenschein, wenn du mit deinen Äugelein mich freundlich tust anblicken. O Herr Jesu, mein trautes Gut, dein Wort, dein Geist, dein Leib und Blut mich innerlich erquickten. Nimm mich freundlich in dein Arme, dass ich warme werd von Gnaden; auf dein Wort komm ich geladen.

15. Choral-Chor:**Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele (BWV 180,1)***Chor mit Streichorchester, zweistimmigem Flöten-, zweistimmigem Oboenchor & Generalbass*

Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele, lass die dunkle Sündenhöhle, komm ans helle Licht gegangen, fange herrlich an zu prangen; denn der Herr voll Heil und Gnaden lässt dich itzt zu Gaste laden. Der den Himmel kann verwalten, will selbst Herberg in dir halten.

16. Rezitativ & Arioso:**Wie nun? Der Allerhöchste spricht (BWV 59,2)***Sopran Solo mit Streichorchester & Generalbass*

Wie nun? Der Allerhöchste spricht, er will in unsern Seelen die Wohnung sich erwählen. Ach was tut Gottes Liebe nicht? Ach, dass doch, wie er wollte, ihn auch ein jeder lieben sollte!

17. Choral:**Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott (BWV 59,3)***Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen & Generalbass*

Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott! Erfüll mit deiner Gnaden Gut deiner Gläubigen Herz, Mut und Sinn. Dein brünstig Lieb entzünd in ihn'n. O Herr, durch deinen Lichtes Glanz zu dem Glauben versammelt hast das Volk ais aller Welt Zungen; das sei dir, Herr, zu Lob gesungen. Halleluja!

18. Arie:**Ich will dich all mein Leben lang (BWV 117,7)***Alt Solo mit Streichorchester, Flöte & Generalbass*

Ich will dich all mein Leben lang, o Gott, von nun an ehren; man soll, o Gott, den Lobgesang an allen Orten hören. Mein ganzes Herz ermuntre sich, mein Geist und Leib erfreue sich, gebt unserm Gott die Ehre!

19. Chor:**Wir kommen, deine Heiligkeit, o Gott, zu preisen (BWV 195,5)***Chor und vier Solisten (SATB) mit Streichorchester, zweistimmigem Flöten- und Oboenchor, drei hohen Trompeten, Pauken & Generalbass*

Wir kommen, deine Heiligkeit, unendlich großer Gott, zu preisen. Der Anfang rührt von deinen Händen, durch Allmacht kannst du es vollenden und deinen Segen kräftig weisen.

20. Rezitativ & Arioso:**Der Herr ist noch und nimmer nicht (BWV 117,5)***Alt Solo mit Streichorchester & Generalbass*

Der Herr ist noch und nimmer nicht von seinem Volk geschieden, er bleibt ihre Zuversicht, ihr Segen, Heil und Frieden; mit Mutterhänden leitet er die Seinen stetig hin und her. Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre!

14. Chorale:**From God to me comes joyful light (BWV 172,6)***Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes & Basso Continuo*

From God to me comes joyful light, when thou with thine own precious eye with kindness dost regard me. O Lord Jesus, my trusted good, thy word, thy soul, thy flesh and blood me inwardly enliven. Take me kindly in thine arms now, make me warm now with thy favor: to thy word I come invited.

15. Chorale-Chorus:**Deck thyself, O soul beloved (BWV 180,1)***Choir with String Orchestra, two-part Flute- & Oboe-Choir & Basso Continuo*

Deck thyself, O soul beloved, leave sin's dark and murky hollows, come, the brilliant light approaching, now begin to shine with glory; for the Lord with health and blessing hath thee as his guest invited. He, of heaven now the master, seeks his lodging here within thee.

16. Recitative & Arioso:**What then? The Lord Almighty saith (BWV 59,2)***Soprano Solo with String Orchestra & Basso Continuo*

What then? The Lord Almighty saith: he will within our spirits elect to make his dwelling. Ah, what doth God's dear love not do? Ah, would that, as he wanted, now each and ev'ry man should love him.

17. Chorale:**Come Holy Spirit, God the Lord (BWV 59,3)***Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes & Basso Continuo*

Come Holy Spirit, God the Lord, and fill with thy most precious grace thy believers in heart, will and mind. Thine ardent love ignite in them. O Lord, through thine own brilliant light to faith thou hast assembled now the folk of ev'ry tongue and clime; may this, O Lord, be sung to praise thee. Alleluia.

18. Arie:**I will thee all my life's extent (BWV 117,7)***Alto Solo with String Orchestra, Flute & Basso Continuo*

I will thee all my life's extent, o God, from henceforth honor; one shall, O God, the song of praise in ev'ry region hearken. My heart be fully stirred with life, my soul and body let rejoice. Give to our God all honor!

19. Chorus:**We come here, thy great holiness, o God of endless might, to honor (BWV 195,5)***Choir and four Soloists (SATB) with String Orchestra, two-part Flute- and Oboe-Choir, three high Trumpets, Timpani & Basso Continuo*

We come here, thy great holiness, o God of endless might, to honor. What thine own hands are here beginning thy mighty pow'r can bring fulfillment and to thy blessing clearly witness.

20. Recitative & Arioso:**The Lord is not and never was (BWV 117,5)***Alto Solo with String Orchestra & Basso Continuo*

The Lord is not and never was from his own people severed; He bideth e'er their confidence, their blessing, peace, and rescue; with mother's hands he leadeth sure His people ever here and there. Give to our God all honor!

21. Choral:**So kommet vor sein Angesicht (BWV 117,9)**

Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen & Generalbass

So kommet vor sein Angesicht mit jauchzenvollem Springen;
bezahlet die gelobte Pflicht und lasst uns fröhlich singen;
Gott hat es alles wohlbedacht und alles, alles wohlgemacht.
Gebt unserm Gott die Ehre.

22. Arie:**Öffne meinen schlechten Liedern (BWV 25,5)**

Sopran Solo mit Streichorchester, Oboen, dreistimmigem Flötenchor & Generalbass

Öffne meinen schlechten Liedern, Jesu, dein Genadenohr!
Wenn ich dort im höhern Chor werde mit den Engeln singen,
soll mein Danklied besser klingen.

23. Chor:**Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes (BWV 76,1)**

Chor und vier Solisten (SATB) mit Streichorchester, zweistimmigem Oboenchor, Trompete & Generalbass

Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes, und die Feste verkündigt seiner Hände Werk. Es ist keine Sprache noch Rede, da man nicht ihre Stimme höre.

24. Schluss-Choral:**Lobe den Herren (BWV 137,5)**

Chor mit Streichorchester, Oboen, drei Trompeten, Pauken & Generalbass

Lobe den Herren, was in mir ist, lobe den Namen! Alles, was Odem hat, lobe mit Abrahams Samen! Er ist dein Licht, Seele vergiss es ja nicht: Lobende, schließe mit Amen!

21. Chorale:**So come before his countenance (BWV 117,9)**

Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes & Basso Continuo

So come before his countenance with glad, triumphant dancing;
discharge ye now your solemn oath and let us sing with gladness;
God hath all things so well designed and all things, all things rightly done, give to our God all honor!

22. Aria:**Open to my songs so meager (BWV 25,5)**

Soprano Solo with String Orchestra, Oboes, three-part Flute Choir & Basso Continuo

Open to my songs so meager, Jesus, thy most gracious ear!
When I there in choirs above shall be with the angels singing,
shall my thankful song sound better.

23. Chorus:**The heavens are telling the glory of God (BWV 76,1)**

Choir and four Soloists (SATB) with String Orchestra, two-part Oboe Choir, Trumpet & Basso Continuo

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament publisheth all his handiwork. There is neither language nor speaking, for one cannot perceive their voices.

24. Final Chorus:**Praise the Almighty (BWV 137,5)**

Choir with String Orchestra, Oboes, three Trumpets, Timpani & Basso Continuo

Praise the Almighty, all that's in me, give his name honor. All things that breath possess, praise him with Abraham's children! He is thy light, spirit, yea, this forget not; praising him, close thou with amen!

The Performers

Heike Heilmann ~ Soprano

The German soprano, born in Wangen/Allgäu (Germany), has obtained many of the First and Second Prizes at the federal competition "Jugend musiziert." After graduation, she studied singing at the Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg/Breisgau, among other, with Professor Markus Goritzki. She then began graduate studies with focus on Lied / Oratorio with Professor Heidrun Kordes at the Hochschule für Darstellende Kunst und Musik in Frankfurt/Main. She was also a member of the opera class. In addition to her solo career Heike Heilmann is also a member in professional ensembles, such as the Balthasar-Neumann-Chor under the direction of Thomas Hengelbrock.

Franz Vitzthum ~ Altus, Countertenor

Born in upper Bavaria, he began singing with the Regensburg Cathedral Choir (Regensburger Domspatzen). At the Cologne University of Music, he studied singing with Kai Wessel, receiving his degree in 2007. While there, he already won numerous prizes and earned scholarships. The critics praise Franz Vitzthum's counter-tenor voice for its precision in intonation and flexibility. It effortlessly reaches up into the mezzo range, and delights with an extraordinary beauty. He has been invited to give recitals at the Rheingau Musik Festival, at the Handel Festivals in Halle, Karlsruhe and Göttingen, at La Folle Journée de Nantes, and at the Bach Festival of Philadelphia. He has worked with the conductors Nicolas McGegan, Andrew Parrot, Hermann Max, Peter Neumann, and Christoph Poppen, among others. He has also taken part in various operas and oratorio productions, for example, in Scherz, Satire, Ironie und tiefere Bedeutung (Glanert), Jephtha and Solomon (Handel), Orfeo (Gluck), Orlando generoso (Steffani), and most recently in Spartaco (Porsile) at Winter in Schwetzingen. Chamber music is also one of Franz Vitzthum's passions. He regularly gives concerts with the lutenist Julian Behr and the Ensemble Capricornus from Basel, as well as with his own vocal ensemble Stimmwerck, which he founded. This many-faceted activity is reflected in his continually expanding discography. Following his debut solo-CD "Ich will in Frieden fahren" with the viol consort Les Escapades, Franz Vitzthum released a further solo-CD of Baroque sacred vocal music for Christophorus, early in 2012.

Falko Hönisch ~ Bass

The German baritone studied voice at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart under the guidance of Julia Hamari and Art Song interpretation under Konrad Richter. While a student, he debuted at the Wilhelma Theater in Stuttgart in the title role of Mozart's Don Giovanni. Prior to this, Mr. Hönisch studied in Karlsruhe and Lübeck, taking voice lessons from Roland Hermann and Franz-Josef Einhaus, in addition to conducting lessons and piano with Kaya Han. He has received further instruction in several master classes by such renowned singers and pianists as Gundula Janowitz, Brigitte Fassbaender, Catarina Ligendza, Edith Wiens, Francisco Araiza, Helmut Deutsch, Julius Drake, Malcom Martineau, Tom Krause, Rudolf Piernay, Wolfgang Schöne, Charles Spencer, Bernd Weikl and many other renowned artists. The 2011-2012 marked two significant debuts for Mr. Hönisch: in November, he performed in the world premier of Auerbach's Gogol at the Theater an der Wien, and made his debut at Amsterdam's prestigious Concertgebouw. During the 2010-2011 season baritone Falko Hönisch performed Bach's St. John's Passion in a staged production signed by Dale Duesing at the Reisopera in The Netherlands. In July 2010 he sang Hans Castorp, the leading role in the World Première of Gregory Vajdas' opera Der Zauberberg under the auspices of the Young Artists Music Festival in Davos, Switzerland. Falko Hönisch was member of the soloists ensemble at various theaters in Germany, where he sang many of the leading roles of his repertoire, including Count Almaviva in Mozart's Le Nozze di Figaro, Papageno and Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte, Gabriel von Eisenstein in Strauss' Die Fledermaus, Graf Eberbach in Lortzing's Der Wildschütz and Wolfram von Eschenbach in Wagner's Tannhäuser. The latter role marked his Italian debut at the Giuseppe Verdi Theater in Trieste during the 2009-2010 season. He has sung under the baton of numerous conductors including Frieder Bernius, Gregor Bühl, John Fiore, Siegfried Köhler, Cornelius Meister, Roberto Paternostro and Helmuth Rilling and with such orchestras as the Radio Orchestra of Munich, the Aalborg Symphoniorkester, the Symphony Orchestras of Düsseldorf and Bochum, the State Orchestra of Kassel, the Staatskapelle of Baden, the "Het Bravants" Orchestra in The Netherlands, the Limburg Symphony Orchestra, the Cologne Sinfonietta and the Bach Collegium Stuttgart. His repertoire includes the Bach's Passions, Haydn's Die Schöpfung (The Creation), and Brahms' German Requiem amongst many other titles. Mr. Hönisch has received numerous awards: he was a prize winner of the 2010 Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition for Wagnerian voices; 2nd prize winner at the 2010 Mendelssohn Competition in Frankfurt; received the Audience Prize at the 6th International Wagnerian voices Competition in Karlsruhe; the 3rd prize and several special prizes at the 58th International ARD Competition in Munich (including the Audience Prize, the Prize for the Best Interpretation of the Mandatory Contemporary Composition and the Charlotte Hamel-Foundation Prize); in February 2009 he won the 1st prize at the Richard Strauss Competition in Munich, receiving the Richard Strauss Gold Medal during the Richard Strauss Festival in June 2009; at the 45th International Vocal Competition in 's-Hertogenbosch in 2008, he was awarded the Lied Prize; that same year he won a prize at the Robert Schumann Competition; he was also a prize winner at the 2007 Anneliese Rothenberger Competition. Mr. Hönisch has been the recipient of a grant from the Richard Wagner Association.

Maulbronn Chamber Choir

The Maulbronn Chamber Choir (German: Maulbronner Kammerchor) was founded in 1983 and counts today as one of the renowned chamber choirs in Europe. Awards like the first places at the Baden-Württemberg Choir Competitions in 1989 and 1997, the second place at the German Choir Competition in 1990, the first prize at the German Choir Competition in 1998, the second place at the International Chamber Choir Competition in Marktoberdorf 2009 and the first place at the Malta Choir Competition show the extraordinary musical calibre of this ensemble. The Chamber Choir has managed to make quite a name for itself on the international scene, too. It was received enthusiastically by audiences and reviewers alike during its debut tour through the USA in 1983, with concerts in New York, Indianapolis and elsewhere. Its concert tours in many European countries, in Israel and Argentina as well as in South Africa and Namibia have also met with a similar response. Since 1997 the choir performs oratorios by George Frideric Handel each year. All these performances were documented on disc; because of that the Maulbronn Chamber Choir holds a leading position as a interpreter of this genre internationally.

Il Capriccio ~ Baroque Orchestra

Founded in 1999, it evolved into a personally, stylistically and musically very individual ensemble. Its members, meeting up from all over middle Europe for mutual working sessions are outstanding musicians of international ensembles and professional orchestras or teachers at a conservatory. All musicians of Il Capriccio have intensively occupied themselves since their studies with historically informed performance. The usage of original instruments only constitutes the sounding foundation for an extremely meaningful and vivid way of musical interacting on stage. Il Capriccio gives concerts in variable instrumentation from the size of a baroque orchestra to the classical string quartet consisting of the principals of the ensemble. The solo part for violin plays the art director Friedemann Wezel. Additionally, Il Capriccio cooperates with important artists such as Sergio Azzolini (bassoon) or Markus Brönnimann (flute). A further and exceptional obligation considering the educational support of young artists was accepted by the 2004 founding of the "Il Capriccio Strings Academy".

Jürgen Budday ~ Conductor & Music Director

Prof. Jürgen Budday (born 1948) is conductor, director of church music, music teacher and artistic director of the concert series at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Maulbronn Abbey. He started teaching at the Evangelical Seminar in Maulbronn from 1979 till 2012. This also involved his taking over as artistic director of the Maulbronn Monastery Concerts and the cantor choir in 1979. He studied church music and musicology at the Academy of Music in Stuttgart from 1967 to 1974. In 1992, he was named Director of Studies, in 1995 came the appointment as Director of Church Music and in 1998 he was honored with the "Bundesverdienstkreuz" (German Cross of Merit) as well as the Bruno-Frey Prize from the State Academy in Ochsenhausen for his work in music education. In 1983 Jürgen Budday founded the Maulbronn Chamber Choir (Maulbronner Kammerchor) with whom he won numerous national and international awards. At the Prague International Choir Festival, for example, Jürgen Budday received an award as best director. Since 2002, he has also held the chair of the Choral Committee of the German Music Council and became director and jury chairman of the "German Choir Competition" (Deutscher Chorwettbewerb). In 2008, he received the silver Johannes-Brenz-Medal, the highest honoring of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg. Jürgen Budday was honoured in 2011 with the honorary title "Professor". In May 2013 Prof. Jürgen Budday was awarded by the Association of German Concert Choirs with the "George-Frideric-Handel-Ring" - one of the highest honors for choir conductors in Germany. Thus Jürgen Budday followed Helmuth Rilling, who was honored with the ring from 2009 till 2013.

Jürgen Budday has started a cycle of Handel oratorios that is planned to span several years, which involves working with soloists like Emma Kirkby, Miriam Allan, Michael Chance, Nancy Argenta, Mark Le Brocq, Charles Humphries, Stephen Varcoe (to name but a few). The live recordings of these performances, that have received the highest praise from reviewers, has won him international recognition. Till these days 11 oratorios by G.F. Handel are documented on discs.

"No conductor and no choir have so consistently recorded so many Handel oratorios as Jürgen Budday and his Maulbronn Chamber Choir." (Dr. Karl Georg Berg, Handel Memoranda Halle 2008).

Choir & Orchestra Members

Maulbronn Chamber Choir

Soprano:

Katrin Andraschko, Kathrin Brumm, Claudia Fischer, Judith Raith, Nicole Schuffert, Irene Vorreiter, Heike Wetzel, Katharina Bihlmaier, Dorothea Gölz-Most, Susanne Laenger, Monika Martin, Veronika Miehllich, Birgit Petkau, Sabine Stöffler

Alto:

Rebekka Eberhardt, Beata Fechau, Roswitha Fydrich-Steiner, Wiltrud Gonzalez, Marianne Kodweiß, Salome Martin, Susanne Müller, Margret Sanwald, Angelika Stoessel, Erika Budday, Christiane Gölz, Heilswint Hausmann, Marianne Krämer, Bettina van der Ham

Tenor:

Hartmut Meier, Sebastian Fuierer, Tobias Bastian, Konrad Mohl, Bernd Reichenecker, Ulrich Kiefner, Felix Schultz, Johannes Mayer

Bass:

Leonid Grau, Jo Dohse, Karl Bihlmaier, Frieder Weckermann, Sebastian Eberhardt, Hansjörg Lechler, Bernhard Fräulin, Daniel Fritsch

Ensemble il capriccio

Violin I: Friedemann Wezel, Marieke Bouche, Adam Lord, Johannes Platz

Violin II: Dietlind Mayer, Konstanze Winkelmann, Katka Stursova-Ozaki, Semadar Schidlowsky

Viola: David Dieterle, Jeannette Doree, Benjamin Herre

Cello: Juris Teichmanis, Celine Papion

Double Bass: Christian Bergmann-Flüel

Recorder/Flauto traverso: Heike Nicodemus, Martin Heidecker

Oboe: Gustav Friedrichssohn, Julia Bauer, Hanna Geisel

Bassoon: Barbara Meditz

Trumpet: Patrick Henrichs, Peter Hasel, Klaus Pfeiffer

Timpani: Ineke Busch

Zinc/Trombone: Rodrigo Calveyra, Max Eisenhut, Johanna Pschorr, Patrick Flassig

Chamber Organ: Evelyn Laib