

# WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 1 October 2024  
7.30pm

## London Handel Players

Adrian Butterfield director

Rachel Brown flute soloist

Oliver Webber violin

Rachel Byrt viola

Sarah McMahan cello

Carina Cosgrave double bass

Silas Wollston organ & harpsichord

Andreas Helm oboe, oboe d'amore 1

Joel Raymond oboe, oboe d'amore 2

Gavin Edwards horn

Hilary Cronin soprano

Clint van der Linde alto

Charles Daniels tenor

Edward Grint bass

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Was frag ich nach der Welt BWV94 (1724)

Ach, lieben Christen, seid getrost BWV114 (1724)

*Interval*

Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin (c.1690-1768)

Flute Concerto in E minor

*I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Vivace*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich sterben BWV8  
(1724)



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In 1723, **Johann Sebastian Bach** left his job at the court of Cöthen to take up a new appointment as Cantor in the city of Leipzig. Third choice he may have been (Telemann and Graupner had been preferred), but the choristers, musicians, church authorities and congregation were set to experience the most extraordinary outpouring of deeply sacred and spiritually inspiring music ever written.

Upon his arrival, in addition to all his other duties teaching at the school and training the choir, Bach embarked on a musical marathon: to compose and perform a new cantata every Sunday of the Lutheran church year (excluding Lent and Advent). According to his second son, CPE Bach, this monumental undertaking continued for five years, but many cantatas from later cycles are sadly lost. The surviving cantatas can be precisely dated by the Sunday in the church calendar on which they were first performed and they reflect on the bible readings prescribed for those particular days.

Most of Bach's cantatas are scored for soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, with strings, one or two oboes, bassoon and continuo and with the occasional addition of other colourful instruments such as trumpets, horns and flutes. Only a small percentage of Bach's cantatas include arias with obbligato flute and an intriguing cluster of these were written within a compact time period, virtually every Sunday between mid-August and mid-November 1724. Three of these works form the inspiration for tonight's programme.

On 6 August of that year, Cantata 94, *Was frag ich nach der Welt*, introduced a prominent obbligato flute part for the first time. Its message is one of shunning the transitory pleasures of our deluded world, taking Jesus as one's guiding light.

The works which frame our programme, written for the 16th and 17th Sundays after Trinity, are preoccupied with man's mortality. Cantata 8, *Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich sterben*, joyfully anticipates the rewards of heaven, whilst Cantata 114, *Ach, lieben Christen, seid getrost*, with the final day of judgement looming, presents a darker warning against worldly sin and yet offers a way to salvation through the Holy Spirit. It was first performed three hundred years ago today, on 1 October 1724.

The wind instruments for which Bach composed were the most up-to-date of their kind. Compared with their modern counterparts they have far fewer holes, all of which are much smaller, unequally sized and unequally spaced along the tube, resulting in many notes being obtained by forked fingerings, in which almost all of the tone holes are closed, producing a palette of very tender, mellow colours in more remote keys. Bach seems to have understood the innate qualities of every instrument he employed.

But with the flute, in particular, he exploited its fullest capabilities, pushing it up to and beyond any hitherto known boundaries of its technique. He did this first and foremost for poignant rhetorical and dramatic effect in order to characterise the music, be it in joyful exuberance or profound, heartfelt emotion.

Having scarcely used transverse flutes in his cantatas prior to this, Bach must suddenly have had the opportunity to engage a phenomenally good player for a few months, yet the identity of this source of inspiration is unknown. Although one of his older brothers, Johann Jakob, and his third son, Johann Gottfried Bernhard, were flautists, there is no evidence that Bach ever played the flute himself. His flautists in Cöthen were commendable players, but nothing which Bach is known to have composed prior to his appointment in Leipzig ever challenged the flute to this degree. It is assumed that an established player from Dresden would have been the most likely candidate to travel to Leipzig for the cantata performances. The young JJ Quantz had left Germany for Italy earlier that year, so it was probably one of the senior players, perhaps Johann Martin Blochwitz, or, most probably, the French flautist, **Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin** (c.1690-1768), who was, by all accounts a master of his instrument and especially noted for his ability to play at speed. Sadly, very few pieces composed by Buffardin survive, the best known being the short concerto in E minor included in this programme, with its extended passage-work, bursts of exceedingly fast notes, its forays into the upper register and its charmingly exotic slow movement.

Whoever the flautist was, Bach seized on his virtuosic ability to fly around the instrument with consummate agility, demanding fluent rapid tonguing alongside long phrases full of soulful delicacy, and he extended all these qualities into the highest register of the flute. Earlier French repertoire lies largely on the staff. Quantz and Telemann extended the range to E<sup>'''</sup>, but Bach's elevation of the range of the flute and his special delight in writing high F sharps and G<sup>'''</sup>s for exultant effect was a radical new departure. The extraordinarily high placement of the flute writing throughout the aria 'Doch weichet, ihr tollen, vergeblichen Sorgen!' in Cantata BWV8 up to G<sup>'''</sup> and A<sup>'''</sup> presents an enormous challenge. It is as if Bach wanted to exploit these high notes to the full once he had discovered a player who could produce them. However, it is quite possible that the first flautist to whom this part was presented, very likely at short notice, faced insurmountable difficulties: the flute part in the original score is crossed out! Many years later Bach transposed the whole cantata down a tone, rendering this aria in G major instead of A major.

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## Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

### Was frag ich nach der Welt BWV94 (1724)

Balthasar Kindermann,  
Anonymous

#### Coro

Was frag ich nach der Welt  
Und allen ihren Schätzen  
Wenn ich mich nur an dir,  
Mein Jesu, kann ergötzen!  
Dich hab ich einzig mir  
Zur Wollust fůrgestellt,  
Du, du bist meine Ruh:  
Was frag ich nach der Welt!

#### Aria

Die Welt ist wie ein Rauch  
und Schatten  
Der bald verschwindet und vergeht,  
Weil sie nur kurze Zeit besteht.  
Wenn aber alles fällt und bricht,  
Bleibt Jesus meine Zuversicht,  
An dem sich meine Seele hält.  
Darum: was frag ich nach der Welt!

#### Recitativo e Choral

### Die Welt sucht Ehr und Ruhm Bei hoherhabnen Leuten.

Ein Stolzer baut die prächtigsten Paläste,  
Er sucht das höchste Ehrenamt,  
Er kleidet sich aufs beste  
In Purpur, Gold, in Silber,  
Seid und Samt.  
Sein Name soll für allen  
In jedem Teil der Welt erschallen.  
Sein Hochmuts-Turm  
Soll durch die Luft bis an die  
Wolken dringen,  
Er trachtet nur nach hohen  
Dingen  
Und denkt nicht einmal  
dran,

### Why enquire after the world

#### Chorus

Why enquire after the world  
and all its treasures,  
when I can only rejoice in thee,  
my Jesus!  
Thee alone have I envisioned as my joy,  
thou, thou art my repose:  
why enquire after the world!

#### Aria

The world resembles smoke and shadow,  
soon to vanish and perish,  
because they last but a short while.  
But when everything shall fall and break,  
I shall have trust in Jesus,  
to whom my soul will cling.  
Therefore: why enquire after the world!

#### Recitative and Chorale

### The world seeks glory and fame among the high and mighty.

The proud man builds the most splendid palaces,  
he seeks the highest office,  
he dresses most finely  
in purple, gold, in silver,  
silk and velvet.  
His name must resound above all else  
in every region of the world.  
His tower of arrogance  
must soar through the air  
up to the clouds,  
he only strives for lofty things  
and does not even reflect

### Wie bald doch diese gleiten.

Oft bläset eine schale Luft  
Den stolzen Leib auf einmal  
in die Gruft,  
Und da verschwindet alle Pracht,  
Wormit der arme Erdenwurm

Hier in der Welt so grossen  
Staat gemacht.

Acht! solcher eitler Tand  
Wird weit von mir aus meiner  
Brust verbannt.

### Dies aber, was mein Herz

Vor anderm růhmlich hält,  
Was Christen wahren Ruhm  
und rechte Ehre gíbet,

Und was mein Geist,  
Der sich der Eitelkeit entreisst,

Anstatt der Pracht und  
Hoffart liebet,

### Ist Jesus nur allein,

Und dieser solls auch ewig  
sein.

Gesetzt, dass mich die Welt  
Darum vor tůrlich hält:

### Was frag ich nach der Welt!

#### Aria

Betörte Welt, betörte  
Welt!

Auch dein Reichtum, Gut und  
Geld

Ist Betrug und falscher  
Schein.

Du magst den eitlen  
Mammon zählen,

Ich will davor mir Jesum  
wählen;

Jesu, Jesu soll allein  
Meiner Seele Reichtum sein.

Betörte Welt, betörte  
Welt!

### how quickly these can slip away.

A faint breeze will often  
suddenly blow  
the proud body into the  
grave,

and all pomp will then  
vanish,  
of which this wretched  
earthly creature

has made such a display  
here below.

Ah! all such vain trifles  
shall be banished far from  
my breast.

### But that which, above all else,

exalts my heart.  
and gives Christians true  
glory and honour,

and which my soul,  
breaking free from  
vanity,

loves instead of  
splendour and pride,

### is Jesus Christ alone,

and it shall be ever  
so.

Even though the world  
deem me to be a fool:

### why enquire after the world!

#### Aria

Deluded world, deluded  
world!

Even your riches,  
possessions and  
money

are deceptions and  
illusion.

Though you count up  
your mere riches,

I shall choose  
my Jesus;

Jesu, Jesu shall alone  
be the riches of my soul.

Deluded world, deluded  
world!

*Song continues overleaf. Please turn the page as quietly as possible.*

*Recitativo e Choral*

**Die Welt bekümmert sich.**

Was muss doch wohl der  
Kummer sein?  
O Torheit! dieses macht ihr  
Pein:

**Im Fall sie wird  
verachtet.**

Welt, schäme dich!  
Gott hat dich ja so sehr  
geliebet,  
Dass er sein  
eingebornes Kind  
Vor deine Sünd  
Zur grössten Schmach um  
dein Ehre gibet,  
Und du willst nicht um Jesu  
willen leiden?  
Die Traurigkeit der Welt ist  
niemals grösser,

**Als wenn man ihr mit List  
Nach ihren Ehren trachtet.**

Es ist ja besser,  
**Ich trage Christi Schmach,  
Solang es ihm  
gefällt.**

Es ist ja nur ein Leiden dieser  
Zeit,  
Ich weiss gewiss, dass mich  
die Ewigkeit  
Dafür mit Preis und Ehren  
krönet;  
Ob mich die Welt  
Verspottet und verhöhnet,  
Ob sie mich gleich  
verächtlich hält,

**Wenn mich mein Jesus ehrt:**

**Was frag ich nach der  
Welt!**

*Aria*

Die Welt kann ihre  
Lust und Freud,  
Das Blendwerk schnöder  
Eitelkeit,  
Nicht hoch genug erhöhen.  
Sie wühlt, nur gelben Kot  
zu finden,  
Gleich einem Maulwurf in  
den Gründen  
Und lässt dafür den Himmel  
stehen.

*Aria*

Es halt es mit der blinden  
Welt,  
Wer nichts auf seine Seele  
hält,  
Mir ekelt vor der Erden.  
Ich will nur meinen Jesum  
lieben

*Recitative and Chorale*

**The world is aggrieved.**

What is the cause of  
its grief?  
O folly! It is  
this:  
**that one day it shall be  
despised.**  
Be ashamed, O world!  
God has loved you so  
dearly,  
that he has subjected his  
only-begotten son,  
for your sins,  
to the greatest disgrace,  
for your honour's sake,  
and you will not suffer for  
Jesus's sake?

The sadness of the world  
is never greater  
**than when one with guile  
strives for its honours.**

Is it indeed better  
**I suffer Christ's disgrace,  
for as long as it pleases  
him.**

For it is but an ephemeral  
suffering,  
I know full well that  
eternity  
will crown me with  
honour and praise;  
though the world  
mock me and deride me,  
though it  
scorn me,  
**if my Jesus honours  
me:  
why enquire after the  
world!**

*Aria*

The world cannot exalt its  
delight and joy,  
that illusion of shameless  
vanity,  
high enough.  
It burrows, only to find  
yellow mud,  
like a mole in  
the ground,  
and, for its sake, forfeits  
heaven.

*Aria*

He sides with a blind  
world  
who does not care for his  
own soul,  
this earth revolts me.  
My Jesus alone shall I  
love

Und mich in Buss und  
Glauben üben,  
So kann ich reich und selig  
werden.

*Choral*

Was frag ich nach der  
Welt!  
Im Hui muss sie  
verschwinden,  
Ihr Ansehn kann durchaus  
Den blassen Tod nicht  
binden.  
Die Güter müssen fort,  
Und alle Lust verfällt;  
Bleibt Jesus nur  
bei mir:  
Was frag ich nach der  
Welt!

Was frag ich nach der  
Welt!  
Mein Jesus ist mein Leben,  
Mein Schatz, mein Eigentum,  
Dem ich mich ganz ergeben,  
Mein ganzes  
Himmelreich,  
Und was mir sonst gefällt.  
Drum sag ich noch einmal:  
Was frag ich nach der  
Welt!

**Ach, lieben Christen,  
seid getrost BWV114**

(1724)  
*Johannes Gigas,  
Anonymous*

*Coro*

Ach, lieben Christen, seid  
getrost,  
Wie tut ihr so verzagen!  
Weil uns der Herr  
heimsuchen tut,  
Lasst uns von Herzen sagen:  
Die Straf wir wohl  
verdienen han,  
Solchs muss bekennen  
jedermann,  
Niemand darf sich  
ausschliessen.

*Aria*

Wo wird in diesem  
Jammertale  
Vor meinen Geist die  
Zuflucht sein?  
Allein zu Jesu  
Vaterhänden

and practise faith and  
penance,  
that I become rich and  
blessèd.

*Chorale*

Why enquire after the  
world!  
In a trice it must  
vanish,  
its authority cannot at all  
put pallid death in  
chains.  
Possessions must perish  
and all pleasure fade;  
as long as Jesus bides by  
me:  
why enquire after the  
world!

Why enquire after the  
world!  
My Jesus is my life,  
my treasure, my property,  
to whom I am devoted,  
my whole heavenly realm,  
and all else I hold dear.  
Thus I say one more time:  
why enquire after the  
world!

**Ah, dear Christians,  
be comforted**

*Chorus*

Ah, dear Christians, be  
comforted,  
how despondent you are!  
Since the Lord doth  
punish us,  
let us say with sincerity:  
we have deserved the  
punishment,  
this must everyone  
confess,  
and no one be  
excepted.

*Aria*

Where within this vale of  
sorrow  
will my spirit find  
refuge?  
To Jesus's paternal hands  
alone

Will ich mich in der  
Schwachheit wenden;  
Sonst weiss ich weder aus  
noch ein.

shall I turn in my  
weakness;  
I have no other place to  
turn.

*Recitativo*

O Sünder, trage mit  
Geduld,  
Was du durch deine  
Schuld  
Dir selber  
zugezogen!  
Das Unrecht säufst du ja  
Wie Wasser in dich ein,  
Und diese  
Sündenwassersucht  
Ist zum Verderben da  
Und wird dir tödlich sein.  
Der Hochmut ass vordem  
von der verbotnen Frucht,  
Gott gleich zu  
werden;  
Wie oft erhebst du dich  
mit schwülstigen  
Gebärden,  
Dass du erniedrigt werden  
musst.  
Wohlan, bereite deine  
Brust,  
Dass sie den Tod und Grab  
nicht scheut,  
So kämst du durch ein  
selig Sterben  
Aus diesem sündlichen  
Verderben  
Zur Unschuld und zur  
Herrlichkeit.

*Recitative*

O sinner, endure with  
patience  
what you through your  
own fault  
have brought upon  
yourself!  
You drink injustice  
like water,  
and this thirsting  
after sin  
will lead to ruin  
and your death.  
Pride ate long ago from  
the forbidden fruit,  
in order to become God's  
equal;  
how often do you exalt  
yourself with pompous  
gesture  
and must in turn be  
humbled?  
Go now, prepare your  
heart  
that it shun neither death  
nor the grave,  
and you shall by a  
blessèd death  
pass through this sinful  
corruption  
into innocence and  
majesty.

*Choral*

Kein Frucht das  
Weizenkörnlein bringt,  
Es fall denn in die Erden;  
So muss auch unser irdscher  
Leib  
Zu Staub und Aschen  
werden,  
Eh er kömmt zu der  
Herrlichkeit,  
Die du, Herr Christ, uns hast  
bereit'  
Durch deinen Gang zum  
Vater.

*Chorale*

The grain of wheat will  
bear no fruit  
unless it fall into earth;  
so must our earthly  
body  
turn to dust and  
ashes,  
before it attain that  
majesty  
which thou, Lord Jesus,  
hast made for us  
through thy path to the  
Father.

*Aria*

Du machst, o Tod, mir nun  
nicht ferner bange,  
Wenn ich durch dich die  
Freiheit nur erlange,  
Es muss ja so einmal  
gestorben sein.  
Mit Simeon will ich in  
Friede fahren,

*Aria*

No longer, Death, shall  
you make me afraid,  
if only I through thee gain  
my freedom,  
death must one day be  
endured like that.  
I shall journey with  
Simeon in peace,

Mein Heiland will mich in der  
Gruft bewahren  
Und ruft mich einst zu sich  
verklärt und rein.

my Saviour shall preserve  
me in the grave  
and call me at the last,  
transfigured and pure.

*Recitativo*

Indes bedenke deine  
Seele  
Und stelle sie dem  
Heiland dar;  
Gib deinen Leib und deine  
Glieder  
Gott, der sie dir gegeben,  
wieder.  
Er sorgt und  
wacht,  
Und so wird seiner  
Liebe Macht  
Im Tod und Leben  
offenbar.

*Recitative*

Meanwhile be mindful of  
your soul,  
and place it in your  
Saviour's care;  
give your body and your  
limbs  
back to God, who gave  
them to you.  
He cares and keeps  
watch,  
and thus shall the might  
of his love  
be made manifest in  
death and life.

*Choral*

Wir wachen oder  
schlafen ein,  
So sind wir doch des  
Herren;  
Auf Christum wir getauft  
sein,  
Der kann dem Satan wehren.  
Durch Adam auf uns kömmt  
der Tod,  
Christus hilft uns aus aller  
Not.  
Drum loben wir den  
Herren.

*Chorale*

Whether we wake or fall  
asleep,  
we are the children of  
God;  
we are baptised in  
Christ,  
who can ward off Satan.  
Death comes to us  
through Adam,  
Christ frees us from all  
extremities.  
For this we praise the  
Lord.

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**Interval**

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## Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin (c.1690-1768)

### Flute Concerto in E minor

#### I. Allegro

#### II. Andante

#### III. Vivace

## Johann Sebastian Bach

### Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich sterben

**BWV8** (1724)

Caspar Neumann,  
Anonymous

#### Coro

Liebster Gott, wenn werd ich  
sterben?

Meine Zeit läuft immer hin,  
Und des alten Adams Erben,  
Unter denen ich auch bin,  
Haben dies zum  
Vaterteil,

Dass sie eine kleine Weil  
Arm und elend sein  
auf Erden

Und denn selber Erde  
werden.

#### Aria

Was willst du dich, mein  
Geist, entsetzen,

Wenn meine letzte Stunde  
schlägt?

Mein Leib neigt täglich sich  
zur Erden,

Und da muss seine Ruhstatt  
werden,

Wohin man so viel  
tausend trägt.

#### Recitativo

Zwar fühlt mein schwaches  
Herz

Furcht, Sorge, Schmerz:

Wo wird mein Leib die Ruhe  
finden?

Wer wird die Seele  
doch

Vom aufgelegten  
Sündenjoch

Befreien und entbinden?

Das Meine wird  
zerstreut,

### Dearest God, when shall I die

#### Chorus

Dearest God, when shall I  
die?

My days run ever on,  
and old Adam's heirs,  
of whom I am also one,  
have this as their  
inheritance,

that they for a little while  
are poor and wretched on  
earth,

and then become earth  
themselves.

#### Aria

Why, my spirit, would you  
be fearful,

when my final hour  
strikes?

Daily my body bows  
nearer the earth,

and there its place of rest  
must be,

whither so many  
thousands are borne.

#### Recitative

In truth, my faint heart  
feels

fear, sorrow, pain:

where shall my body find  
rest?

Who shall free and  
release

my soul from the yoke of  
sin

that weighs upon it?

What is mine will be  
dispersed,

Und wohin werden meine  
Lieben

In ihrer Traurigkeit

Zertrennt

vertrieben?

and whither will my loved  
ones

in their sadness

be scattered and

banished?

#### Aria

Doch weichet, ihr tollen,  
vergeblichen Sorgen!

Mich rufet mein Jesus: wer  
sollte nicht gehn?

Nichts, was mir gefällt,

Besitzet die Welt.

Erscheine mir, seliger,  
fröhlicher Morgen,

Verkläret und herrlich vor  
Jesu zu stehn.

#### Aria

But vanish, you foolish,  
vain worries!

My Jesus calls me: who  
would then not go?

Naught that I desire

is of this world.

Appear to me, blessed,  
happy morning,

transfigured and glorious  
before Jesus I'll stand.

#### Recitativo

Behalte nur, o Welt,  
das Meine!

Du nimmst ja selbst mein  
Fleisch und mein Gebeine,

So nimm auch meine Armut  
hin;

Genug, dass mir aus  
Gottes Überfluss

Das höchste Gut noch  
werden muss,

Genug, dass ich  
dort reich und  
selig bin.

Was aber ist von mir  
zu erben,

Als meines Gottes  
Vatertreu?

Die wird ja alle  
Morgen neu

Und kann nicht sterben.

#### Recitative

You may keep, O world,  
what is mine!

Since you take my flesh  
and bones,

take my poverty  
as well;

it is enough, that from  
God's abundant store

the greatest blessing  
shall be mine,

it is enough, that I shall be  
rich and blessed there.

But what is to be  
inherited from me

except my faith in God  
the Father?

For it is renewed each  
morning

and cannot die.

#### Choral

Herrscher über Tod und  
Leben,

Mach einmal mein Ende  
gut,

Lehre mich den Geist  
aufgeben

Mit recht wohlgefasstem  
Mut.

Hilf, dass ich ein ehrlich  
Grab

Neben frommen Christen  
hab

Und auch endlich in der  
Erde

Nimmermehr zuschanden  
werde!

#### Chorale

Ruler over death and  
life,

let at the last my end be  
good,

teach me to give up the  
ghost

with courage firm and  
sure.

Help me earn an honest  
grave

next to godly Christian  
folk,

and finally covered by  
earth

never more be  
confounded!