

WIGMORE HALL

Monday 7 February 2022 7.30pm

Julia Doyle soprano

Helen Charlston countertenor

London Handel Players

Adrian Butterfield director

Oliver Webber violin I

Dominika Fehér violin I

Naomi Burrell violin II

Nicola Cleary violin II

Rachel Byrt viola

Juan Manuel Quintana viola da gamba I

Charles Daniels tenor

Matthew Brook bass-baritone

Gavin Kibble cello, viola da gamba II

Katherine Sharman cello

Cecelia Bruggemeyer double bass

Silas Wollston harpsichord, organ

Jonas Nordberg lute

Rachel Brown flute I

Katy Bircher flute II

Maria Filippova flute III

Leo Duarte oboe, oboe d'amore I

Molly Marsh oboe, oboe d'amore II

Darren Moore trumpet I

Stephen Keavy trumpet II

Peter Mankarious trumpet III

Ben Hoffnung timpani, bells

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attr. Melchior Hoffmann (c.1679-1715)

Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde BWV53

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen Strahl BWV198 (1727)

Interval

Johann Sebastian Bach

Schleicht, spielende Wellen BWV206 (1736)

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Schlage doch comprises just one *da capo* aria for alto and strings in E major. For about 200 years it was thought to have been written by JS Bach and was given a catalogue number of BWV53. Since the 1950s, however, doubts have been expressed about its authorship. **Melchior Hoffmann**, who moved to Leipzig in 1702 and took over the directorship of Telemann's *Collegium musicum* in 1705 until his death in 1715, has been proposed as a possible author although Bach scholarship hasn't been able to come up with a definitive answer. The aria may have been part of an otherwise lost funeral cantata but this, too, is unknown.

The mood is gentle and unhurried and the text describes someone who is looking forward happily to the moment of death. A special feature of this work is that it includes two pitched (funeral) bells.

The Electress Christiane Eberhardine, wife of Augustus the Strong who was the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, was a much loved and respected lady in Saxony. Her husband decided to convert to Roman Catholicism in order to become King of Poland but he did not consult her in this decision and she refused to convert with him, remaining true to her Lutheran faith. On her death in September 1727 it was decided to arrange a special event in connection with Leipzig University in her memory. Johann Christoph Gottsched was invited to write the text and Bach to compose the music, and the latter directed the performance from the harpsichord in the University Church on 17 October.

Despite being held in a church this memorial event was not a funeral service, and the text is secular. Christiane is mourned as a model of a great Saxon woman, queen and keeper of the Lutheran faith. Bach's setting is a substantial one which includes several recitatives, arias and choruses. The orchestration is unusual and features 2 violas da gamba as well as lutes, flutes, oboes and strings.

The opening chorus is replete with tied notes and sighing figures which aptly engender a mood of yearning and melancholy, and similar devices are also used in the first two arias. In the second recitative Bach uses repeated notes in the flutes and pizzicato strings to conjure up a sound picture of tolling funeral bells, whilst the fugal chorus that concludes part one has a formality that beautifully portrays the respect in which the Electress was held.

In the tenor aria that opens part two (after the funeral oration) Bach incorporates a subtle allusion to Christiane's personal struggles through a reference to the first movement of cantata

BWV56, *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen* ('I want to bear the cross') written exactly a year earlier. The oboe part quotes the music sung by the bass at the words *Der führet mich nach meinen Plagen zu Gott, in das gelobte Land* ('[the cross] leads me, after all my tribulation, to God in the promised land'). The positive message contained in the text of the concluding chorus is reflected in Bach's use of gigue rhythms and his inclusion of unison passages for the four voices, and yet the B minor tonality and gentle colours of the flutes and oboes d'amore ensure that the underlying melancholy is never completely dispelled.

Bach wrote five secular cantatas for members of the Saxon Elector's family during the 1730s. In February 1733 Augustus the Strong died and his son, Friedrich August II, succeeded him. Bach sent a copy of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* of what was to become the B minor Mass in July of that year to Dresden as his application for a position with the Royal and Electoral *Hofkapelle*. Nothing seemed to come of this, initially, so he produced and performed these celebratory works as a way of reminding the family of his abilities. He originally wrote BWV206 in 1734 as a birthday tribute to the Elector, but this was postponed until 1736 because of a surprise visit to Leipzig by the royal family (for which he wrote BWV215 at great speed). Happily for Bach his persistence was rewarded and the performance of this work on 7 October 1736 was followed by his appointment as Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Court Composer on 19 November.

Like a number of his other secular cantatas Bach described this work as a 'Dramma per Musica', but there isn't a plot as such and the text is set very much as a dialogue between four characters. These personages are, in fact, rivers with important local connections: the Vistula, Elbe, Danube and Pleisse. The Pleisse runs through Leipzig and into the Elbe which flows through Dresden. The Vistula is Poland's longest river whilst the Danube, Europe's second-longest river, connects four capital cities and numerous territories of what was then the Holy Roman Empire.

The opening chorus is followed by a recitative and aria from each of the rivers in turn before they join together in a final chorus full of praise for August. Although the text is not especially significant Bach produces music of wonderful variety and joy, and concludes this celebratory work with another chorus based on the gigue, but this time in D major and with trumpets and drums.

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attr. Melchior Hoffmann (c.1679-1715)

Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde **Strike then, long-awaited hour**
BWV53

Anonymous attr. Melchior Franck

Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde, **Strike then, long-awaited hour,**
Brich doch an, du schöner Tag. **break then, fairest day.**

Kommt, ihr Engel, auf mir zu; **Come to me, ye angels;**
Öffnet mir die Himmels Auen, **open Heaven's pastures to me,**
Meinem Jesum bald zu schauen **so that I may soon see Jesus**
In vergnügter Seelen-Ruh'. **in the happy peace of my soul.**
Ich begeh'r von Herzens **From the depths of my heart I**
Grunde **desire**
Nur den letzten Seigerschlag. **the last hour alone.**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen Strahl **Let, Princess, just one more glance**
BWV198

(1727)

Johann Christoph Gottsched

Part I **Part I**
Coro **Chorus**
Lass, Fürstin, lass noch einen **Let, Princess, just one more**
Strahl **glance**
Aus Salems Sterngewölben **shoot forth from Salem's**
schiessen. **firmament.**
Und sieh, mit wieviel **And see, with what a deluge of**
Tränengüssen **tears**
Umringen wir dein Ehrenmal. **we surround your monument.**

Recitativo **Recitative**
Dein Sachsen, dein bestürztes **Your Saxony, your dismayed**
Meissen **Meissen**
Erstarrt bei deiner Königsgruft; **grow numb beside your royal tomb;**
Das Auge trânt, die Zunge ruft: **my eyes weep, my tongue cries:**
Mein Schmerz kann **my pain cannot be**
unbeschreiblich heissen! **described!**
Hier klagt August und Prinz und **Here August and Prince and**
Land, **country mourn,**
Der Adel ächzt, der Bürger **the nobles groan, the commons**
trauert, **grieve,**
Wie hat dich nicht das Volk **how the people have lamented**
bedauert, **you,**
Sobald es deinen Fall **as soon as they heard of your**
empfand! **death!**

Aria **Aria**
Verstummt, verstummt, ihr **Fall silent, fall silent, you lovely**
holden Saiten! **strings!**

Kein Ton vermag der Länder **No sound can adequately**
Not **convey**
Bei ihrer teuren Mutter **the woe of nations at the**
Tod **death - O painful word! -**
O Schmerzenswort! recht **of their cherished**
anzudeuten. **mother.**

Recitativo **Recitative**
Der Glocken bebendes Getön **The tolling of the booming bells,**
Soll unsrer trüben Seelen **through their vibrating**
Schrecken **bronze,**
Durch ihr geschwungnes Erze **shall cause our sad souls to feel**
wecken **terror,**
Und uns durch Mark und Adern **and pierce us to the very**
gehn. **core.**
O, kömnte [,könnte' on b-c] nur **Ah, if only this anxious pealing,**
dies bange Klingen, **which shrills daily in our ears,**
Davon das Ohr uns täglich gellt, **could cause all of Europe**
Der ganzen Europäerwelt **to witness our**
Ein Zeugnis unsres Jammers **grief!**
bringen!

Aria **Aria**
Wie starb die Heldin so vergnügt! **How content our heroine died!**
Wie mutig hat ihr Geist **How valiantly her spirit**
gerungen, **struggled,**
Da sie des Todes Arm bezwungen, **when death's arm subdued her,**
Noch eh er ihre Brust besiegt. **before vanquishing her breast.**

Recitativo **Recitative**
Ihr Leben liess die Kunst zu **Her life embodied the art of**
sterben **dying**
In unverrückter Übung sehn; **for all to see close at hand.**
Unmöglich konnt es denn geschehn, **It simply was not possible**
Sich vor dem Tode zu **for her to pale when faced with**
entfärben. **death.**
Ach selig! wessen grosser Geist **Ah, blessed be that noble soul**
Sich über die Natur erhebet, **which raises itself above nature,**
Vor Gruft und Särgen nicht **and does not quake before crypt**
erbebet, **or coffin,**
Wenn ihn sein Schöpfer **when its maker summons it to**
scheiden heisst. **part.**

Coro **Chorus**
An die [dir probably? It is on b-c], **In you, O model of great women,**
du Fürbild grosser Frauen, **in you, illustrious queen,**
An dir, erhabne Königin, **in you, O keeper of the faith,**
An dir, du Glaubenspflegerin, **was this nobleness to be**
War dieser Grossmut Bild zu **witnessed.**
schauen.

Part II **Part II**
Aria **Aria**
Der Ewigkeit saphirnes Haus **The sapphire house of eternity,**
Zieht, Fürstin, deine heitern **O Princess, draws back from**
Blicke **our humble state**
Von unsrer Niedrigkeit zurücke **your cheerful glances**

Und tilgt der Erden Dreckbild
aus.
Ein starker Glanz von hundert
Sonnen,
Der unsern Tag zur Mitternacht
Und unsre Sonne finster macht,
Hat dein verklärtes Haupt
umspinnen.

Recitativo, Arioso e Recitativo
Was Wunder ist's? Du bist es
wert,
Du Fürbild aller Königinnen!
Du musstest allen Schmuck
gewinnen,
Der deine Scheitel itzt
verklärt.
Nun trägst du vor des Lammes
Throne
Anstatt des Purpurs Eitelkeit
Ein perlenreines Unschuldskleid
Und spottest der verlassnen
Krone.

Soweit der volle Weichselstrand,
Der Niester und die Warthe
fliesset,
Soweit sich Elb' und Muld'
ergiesset,
Erhebt dich beides, Stadt und
Land.

Dein Torgau geht im
Trauerkleide,
Dein Pretzsch wird kraftlos,
starr und matt;
Denn da es dich verloren hat,
Verliert es seiner Augen Weide.

Coro
Doch, Königin! Du stirbst nicht,
Man weiss, was man an dir
besessen;
Die Nachwelt wird dich nicht
vergessen,
Bis dieser Weltbau einst zerbricht.
Ihr Dichter, schreibt! Wir
wollen's lesen:
Sie ist der Tugend Eigentum,
Der Untertanen Lust und
Ruhm,
Der Königinnen Preis gewesen.

and obliterates earth's base
form.
A brilliant glow of a hundred
suns,
which turns our day into midnight
and darkens our sun,
has surrounded your
transfigured head.

Recitative, Arioso and Recitative
It is no surprise! You are
worthy of it,
you paragon of all queens!
You were meant to be
adorned
with what now transfigures
your head.
Now you wear before the lamb's
throne,
instead of purple's vanity,
a pearl-white robe of innocence
and scorn the abandoned
throne.

As far as the brimming Vistula,
the Dniester and Warth are
flowing,
as far as the Elbe and Mulde
stream,
both town and countryside extol
you.

Your Torgau now walks in
mourning,
your Pretzsch grows weary,
motionless and weak;
because since it has lost you,
it loses all its striking beauty.

Chorus
No, O queen! You do not die,
we know what you were to
us;
posterity shall not forget
you,
till this universe shall fall.
Ye poets, write! For we would
read:
she was the property of virtue,
the delight and fame of her
subjects,
the crown and glory of all queens.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Schleicht, spielende Wellen BWV206 (1736)

Anonymous

Coro
Schleicht, spielende Wellen, und
murmelt gelinde!
Nein, rauschet geschwinde,
Dass Ufer und Klippe zum
öffern erklingt!
Die Freude, die unsere Fluten
erreget,
Die jegliche Welle zum
Rauschen beweget,
Durchreisset die Dämme,
Worein sie Verwundrung und
Schüchternheit zwingt.

Recitativo
Weichsel
O glückliche Veränderung!
Mein Fluss, der neulich dem
Cocytus gliche,
Weil er von toten Leichern
Und ganz zerstückten Körpern
langsam schliche,
Wird nun nicht dem Alpheus
weichen,
Der das gesegnete Arkadien
benetzte.
Des Rostes mürber Zahn
Frisst die verworfnen Waffen
an,
Die stets der Zwietracht tolle Wut
[Die jüngst des Himmels harter
Schluss]
Auf meiner Völker Nacken
wetzte.
Wer bringt mir aber dieses
Glücke?
August,
Der Untertanen Lust,
Der Schutzgott seiner Lande,
Vor dessen Zepter ich mich
bücke,
Und dessen Huld für mich
alleine wacht,
Bringt dieses Werk zum Stande.
Drum singt ein jeder, der mein
Wasser trinkt:

Glide, O sparkling waves

Chorus
Glide, O sparkling waves, and
murmur softly!
No, rush swiftly by,
that bank and cliff repeatedly
resound!
The joy that stirs our
waters
and moves each wave to rush
along,
bursts the banks
of awe and
inhibition.

Recitative
Vistula
O happy transformation!
My river, which but now was
like the Cocytus,
flowing slowly amid corpses
and mutilated
bodies,
will now not be eclipsed by the
Alpheus
that once watered blessèd
Arcadia.
The decaying tooth of rust
corrodes the discarded
weapons,
which discord's rabid rage
ever whetted on my people's
neck.
But who brings me this good
fortune?
August
the delight of his subjects,
his country's tutelary God,
before whose sceptre I bend my
knee
and whose favour watches over
me alone,
it is he who brings all this to pass.
Therefore all who drink my
water sing:

Aria
Weichsel
Schleuss des Janustempels
Türen,
Unsre Herzen öffnen wir.
Nächst den dir getanen
Schwüren
Treibt allein, Herr, deine Güte
Unser reuiges Gemüte
Zum Gehorsam gegen dir.

Aria
Vistula
Close the gates of Janus's
temple,
we open up our hearts!
Apart from the vows we swore
to you,
it is only your goodness, my Lord,
that makes our contrite hearts
obey you.

Recitativo ed Arioso
Elbe
So recht! beglückter
Weichselstrom!
Dein Schluss ist lobenswert,
Wenn deine Treue nur mit
meinen Wünschen stimmt,
An meine Liebe denkt
Und nicht etwann mir gar den
König nimmt.
Geborgt ist nicht geschenkt:
Du hast den gütigsten August
von mir begehrt,
Dess holde Mienen
Das Bild des grossen Vaters
weisen,
Den hab ich dir geliehn,
Verehren und bewundern sollt
du ihn,
Nicht gar aus meine Schoss und
Armen reissen.
Dies schwöre ich,
O Herr! bei deines Vaters
Asche,
Bei deinen Siegs- und
Ehrenbühnen.
Eh sollen meine Wasser sich
Noch mit dem reichen Ganges
mischen
Und ihren Ursprung nicht mehr
wissen,
Eh soll der Malabar
An meinen Ufern fischen,
Eh ich will ganz und gar
Dich, teuerster Augustus, missen.

Recitative and Arioso
Elbe
How right you are, happy
Vistula!
Your conclusion is laudable,
if your allegiance accords with
my wishes
and remembers my love
and does not by chance rob me
of the King.
To lend is not to give:
you desired of me the most
gracious Augustus,
whose fair features
are the image of his great
father;
I lent him to you,
you should honour and admire
him,
not tear him from my
embrace!
This I swear to you,
my Lord, by the ashes of your
father
by your victory
plinths.
I'd sooner see my waters
mingle with those of the
bountiful Ganges
and no longer know their
source,
I'd sooner see the Malabar
fish upon my banks,
than lose you forever,
dearest August.

Aria
Elbe
Jede Woge meiner Wellen
Ruft das goldne Wort August!
Seht, Tritonen, muntre Söhne,
Wie von nie gesprüter Lust
Meines Reiches Fluten schwellen,
Wenn in dem Zurückprallen
Dieses Namens süsse Töne
Hundertfältig widerschallen.

Aria
Elbe
Every billow of my waves
cries the golden word: August!
See, you Tritons, carefree sons,
how, in never-known delight,
my kingdom's waters swell
when, echoing this name,
sweet sounds reverberate
a hundredfold.

Recitativo
Donau
Ich nehm zugleich an deiner
Freude teil,
Betagter Vater vieler Flüsse!
Denn wisse,
Dass ich ein grosses Recht auch
mit an deinem Helden habe,
Zwar blick ich nicht dein Heil,
So dir dein Salomo gebiert,
Mit scheelen Augen an,
Weil Karlens Hand,
Des Himmels seltn Gabe,
Bei uns den Reichsstab führt.
Wem aber ist wohl unbekannt,
Wie noch die Wurzel jener Lust,
Die deinem gütigsten Trajan
Von dem Genuss der holden
Josephine
Allein
bewusst,
An meinen Ufern grüne?

Aria
Donau
Reis von Habsburgs hohem
Stamme,
Deiner Tugend helle Flamme
Kennt, bewundert, rühmt mein
Strand.
Du stammst von den
Lorbeerzweigen,
Drum muss deiner Ehe Band
Auch den fruchtbarn Lorbeern
gleichen.

Recitativo
Pleisse
Verzeiht,
Bemooste Häupter starker Ströme,
Wenn eine Nymphe euren Streit
Und euer Reden störet.
Der Streit ist ganz gerecht;
Die Sache gross und kostbar,
die ihn nähret.
Mir ist ja wohl Lust
Annoch bewusst,
Und meiner Nymphen frohes
Scherzen,
So wir bei unsers Siegeshelden
Ankunft spürten,
Der da verdient,
Dass alle Untertanen uhre Herzen,
Denn Hekatomben sind zu schlecht,
Ihm her zu einem Opfer führten.
Doch hört, was sich mein Mund
erkühnt,

Recitative
Danube
I likewise share in your
joy,
aged father of many rivers!
For know:
I too have a great claim on your
hero.
In no way do I look askance
on all the benefits
bestowed on you by your Solomon,
since Charles's hand,
the heavens' precious gift,
holds the rod of power here.
But who is not aware
that the source of such delight,
of which your gracious Trajan
only became
aware
from his enjoyment of the fair
Josephine,
flourishes on my banks?

Aria
Danube
Scion of Habsburg's noble
race,
the bright flame of your virtue
is known, admired, extolled on
my shores.
You are descended from the
laurel's branches,
and so the bond of your marriage
must be likened to the fruitful
laurel.

Recitative
Pleisse
Allow,
hoary heads of mighty rivers,
a nymph to disrupt your dispute
and your discourse.
Your dispute is quite justified,
its cause both great and
weighty.
Hitherto I have known
only pleasure
and the merriment of my
nymphs,
which we felt when our
victorious hero arrived,
who deserves
that all his subjects offer him
their hearts,
since animal sacrifice is too coarse.
But listen to what my lips
venture

Eich vorzusagen:	to say to you:
Du, dessen Flut der Inn und Lech vermehren,	you, whose waters are swollen by the Inn and the Lech,
Du sollt mit uns dies Königspaar verehren,	may honour this royal pair with us,
Doch uns dasselbe gänzlich überlassen.	yet leave them to us alone.
Ihr beiden andern sollt euch brüderlich vertragen	The two of you should come to brotherly terms,
Und, müsst ihr diese doppelte Regierungssone	and if, in turn, you have to forgo
Auf eine Zeit, doch	these two royal suns for a
wechselsweis, entbehren,	time,
Euch in Geduld und Hoffnung fassen.	should wait in patience and with hope.

<i>Aria</i>	<i>Aria</i>
<i>Pleisse</i>	<i>Pleisse</i>
Hört doch! der sanften Flöten Chor	But listen to the choir of gentle flutes
Erfreut die Brust, ergötzt das Ohr.	that gladdens the heart, delights the ear.
Der unzertrennten Eintracht Stärke	The power of undivided concord
Macht diese nette Harmonie	causes this sweet harmony
Und tut noch grössre	and performs yet greater
Wunderwerke;	wonders;
Dies merkt und stimmt doch	take note of this, and strike up
auch wie sie.	like them.

<i>Recitativo</i>	<i>Recitative</i>
<i>Wechsel</i>	<i>Vistula</i>
Ich muss, ich will gehorsam sein.	I must, I shall obey.

<i>Elbe</i>	<i>Elbe</i>
Mir geht die Trennung bitter ein,	Such separation grieves me,
Doch meines Königs Wink	but a sign from my King is my
gebietet meinen Willen.	command.

<i>Donau</i>	<i>Danube</i>
Und ich bin fertig, euren	And I am ready to fulfil your
Wunsch,	wish
Soviel mir möglich, zu erfüllen.	as best I can.

<i>Pleisse</i>	<i>Pleisse</i>
So krönt die Eintracht euren	Thus concord crowns your
Schluss. Doch schaut,	resolve. But see,
Wie kommt's, dass man an	how is it that along your banks
eueren Gestaden	today
So viel Altäre heute baut?	so many altars are being built?
Was soll das Tanzen der Najaden?	Why are the naiads dancing?
Ach! irr ich nicht,	Ah, unless I am mistaken,
So sieht man heut das längst	we see today the longed-for
gewünschte Licht	light
In frohem Glanze glühen,	shine out joyfully,
Das unsre Lust,	which gave to the world and us,
Den gütigsten August,	our great delight,
Der Welt und uns geliehen.	our most gracious August.

Ei! nun wohlan!	And so! Without further ado!
Da uns Gelegenheit und Zeit	Since time and opportunity
Die Hände beut,	are offered us,
So stimmt mit mir noch einmal an:	sing with me once more:

<i>Coro</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
Die himmlische Vorsicht der	May divine providence, in its
ewigen Güte	everlasting goodness,
Beschirme dein Leben,	protect your life, most noble
durchlauchter August!	August!
So viel sich nur Tropfen in	And may you ever
heutigen Stunden	enjoy
In unsern bemoosten Kanälen	as much pleasure and
befunden,	delight,
Umfange beständig dein hohes	as our venerable
Gemüte	waterways
Vergnügen und Lust!	had water in them today!

Translations of Bach by Richard Stokes from J S Bach: The Complete Cantatas, published by Long Barn Books (Ebrington, Gloucestershire, 1999)