

BACH Cantatas Nos. 65,¹ 49,² 114³ • Rudolf Lutz, cond; ²Nurial Rial (sop); ³David Erler (ct); ^{1,3}Georg Poplutz (ten); ³Matthias Friedrich, ¹, ²Sebastian Noack (bs); J. S. Bach-Stiftung Ch & O • LIVE 006 (64:41 )

No. 37 in a continuing series of the sacred music of J. S. Bach opens with *Se werden aus Saba alle kommen*, Bach's first cantata for Epiphany in Leipzig. Roger Wagner made the first recording for Allegro in 1950 (reissued on Lyrichord), followed by Günther Ramin, Fritz Werner, Helmut Kahlhöfer, and Marcel Couraud, all made by 1962. A festive celebration opening with horns, recorders, and oboes da caccia, its popularity is easy to understand and well deserved. The second movement is a chorale, surprisingly, based on the hymn "A child is born in Bethlehem." Bass Sebastian Noack is splendid in the following recitative and aria that extol such gifts as a faithful heart over the material gifts of the Wise Men. Tenor Georg Poplutz continues the same notions in an elegant recitative and aria. Surprisingly, Bach provided no text for the concluding chorale, Lutz's choice being *Hier ist mein Herz, Herr, nimm es hin*. The centerpiece of the program, *Ich geh und suche mit verlangen*, is, as usual, a small-scale work for soprano and bass, who sing the concluding chorale without added singers, but it is the longest of the three cantatas. Noack, taking the role of Jesus in the gospel selection, sings again with soprano Nuria Rial, who has an appealing voice. Three movements are duets, and each singer has a solo aria. Unusually, it has an obbligato organ part. Composed for the 20th Sunday after Trinity in the third cycle of Leipzig cantatas, it was first recorded in 1961 by Wilhelm Ehmann. Since then it has been found mostly in the complete sets. *Ach, lieben Christen, seid getrost* concludes the program. It was first performed three weeks before the previous selection, on the 17th Sunday after Trinity. The only recordings are in the complete sets, starting with Helmuth Rilling in 1974. Poplutz and countertenor David Erler each have an aria, while bass Wolf Matthias Friedrich has a recitative leading to the closing chorale. Erler has a pleasant voice. This cantata, one of many that are comparatively neglected, is a beautiful example of the chorale cantatas that Bach wrote that year, making an effective conclusion to the program. Warmly recommended for Lutz's way of programming. **J. F. Weber**

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