

# “RELAX AND TRUST THE MUSICAL SAFETY-NET OF THE ENSEMBLE”

Marie Luise Werneburg reflects  
on performing cantata BWV 210

When the J. S. Bach Foundation asked me to perform the solo cantata BWV 210 “O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit” (O lovely day, O hoped-for time), I was filled with delight – what an honour!

At the time I’d never sung the work. So it wasn’t until a few months before the performance when I sat down with the score at the harpsichord and turned page after page that I gained an impression of just what I’d taken on: recitatives and arias that knew no end,

staves strewn with accidentals including no few double sharps, a libretto that eluded my first comprehension, passages dancing between C-sharp” and C-sharp’, unthinkably long phrases with no chance to breathe... The first recitative and aria start out harmlessly enough, but barely starts the B-section of “Spielet, ihr beseelten Lieder” (Play on, o ye lively anthems) than the music becomes fast and high and the recitatives demand rapid shifts in register and expression.

Nonetheless, I was determined to master the challenges and add this cantata to my repertoire! Note for note I worked my way through the intricate recitatives and gained an appreciation of the text and how I wished to interpret it. There is one story I have to share with you: Once at home when I was practising “Schweigt, ihr Flöten” (Hush, ye flutes), my young son took a recorder from a drawer and marched proudly around the room, tootling away to his heart’s content!

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Two weeks before the performance and recording session I'd learned the recitatives by memory. Then one week beforehand, conductor Rudolf Lutz sent me the suggested ornamentation from harpsichordist Thomas Leininger, and I went back to square one.

When, however, I met up in Rorschach with my dream-team colleagues from the J. S. Bach Foundation and we began rehearsing and making music together, I knew I could relax and trust the musical safety-net of the ensemble, which lifted my voice to new heights. It's not every day that I experience such a musical homecoming in my life as a soloist. I am grateful and very happy to have recorded this spectacular cantata with such a fantastic ensemble and a wonderful tonmeister like Stefan Ritzenthaler, who, with his exceptional

ear for Bach, guided us through the tight recording schedule. And now I can't wait to perform the work again!

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The concert performance of Bach cantata BWV 210 "O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit" (O lovely day, O hoped-for time) took place on 23 June 2023 at the Würth Haus Rorschach in Switzerland. The concert recording is available in full length on [www.bachipedia.org](http://www.bachipedia.org).

## MARIE LUISE WERNEBURG, SOPRANO

Marie Luise Werneburg grew up surrounded by art, music and literature in a parsonage in Dresden. She studied church and vocal music in Dresden and Bremen, specialising early in music of the 17th and 18th centuries, which highly suits her voice and musical expression. She focuses in particular on the works of Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach and relishes the interpretive challenges presented by their oeuvres.

The soprano is in international demand as a soloist and performs regularly with ensembles such as the J. S. Bach Foundation (Rudolf Lutz), the Collegium Vocale Gent (Philippe Herreweghe), the Nederlandse Bachvereniging (Shunsuke Sato) and the Bach Collegium Japan (Masaaki Suzuki). Her growing discography includes several lied projects, such as a 2021 recording of lieder by Johann Gottlieb Naumann with the fortepiano specialist Sebastian Knebel for cpo.

Marie Luise Werneburg lives with her husband and three children in Berlin where she teaches at the Hanns Eisler School of Music Berlin. She loves the designs of William Morris, the novels of Haruki Murakami and reads a diverse range of poetry and fairytales.

[www.marieluisewerneburg.de](http://www.marieluisewerneburg.de)