

Ton Koopman **Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra**

Dorothee Miels, soprano

LONDON
SPITALFIELDS MUSIC
Spitalfields Church
8 JUNE 2012

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J.S. BACH
Suite No. 1 in C major, BWV 1066
Cantata "Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen" BWV 51

Cantata "Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut" BWV 199
Cantata "Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten" BWV 202

Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra/ Koopman – review. Christ Church Spitalfields, London

George Hall

A late programme change meant that soprano Dorothee Miels, soloist with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra under Ton Koopman in this opening concert of Spitalfields Music Summer festival, had to take on extra duties. Already down to sing two cantatas in this all-Bach event, she added a third, replacing the previously announced Third Brandenburg Concerto.

The new item was Cantata No 199, Mein Herz Schwimmt in Blut (My Heart Swims in Blood), which describes a sinner finding salvation through repentance. Miels's light and even soprano proved nicely scaled to the piece's vocal demands; her delicacy of expression never tipping over into emotional wallowing. She was sensitively supported by the period-instrument players, especially in the complex oboe obbligato vividly undertaken by Antoine Torunczyk.

She was also expertly partnered by baroque trumpeter David Hendry in the much livelier Cantata No 51, Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen (Praise God in All Lands), whose extravert spirit of universal rejoicing makes equally virtuosic demands on soprano and instrumentalist. Hendry's formidable skill and security kept faith with Bach's notes via an alternately mellow and brilliant coloristic range.

Finally, Miels turned to the secular wedding cantata No 202, Weichet nur, Betrübte Schatten (Depart, Dismal Shadows), in whose bouncy bucolic dance rhythms Torunczyk once again radiated a benign charm. By this point, the German soprano had assumed responsibility for three-quarters of the programme in a remarkable feat of concentration and consistency.

The opening item, the First Orchestral Suite, remained unchanged. Now in his late 60s, Koopman continues to present a gently unassuming figure at the keyboard, directing proceedings with a light control. The results never felt mechanical, and could encompass the odd moment of untidiness without losing an overall sense of shape and direction.