"As a piece from an opera" was the intention of the Protestant theologian and poet Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756) in his *Geistliche Cantaten* (sacred cantatas), which he first published in 1702. No wonder that several composers of sacred music jumped at the chance to use his texts to fulfil their duties. The varied structure of the poetry, some of which rhymes quite drastically, lends itself well to musical settings, in which recitatives, arias, choruses and chorales alternate quite easily. As such, devout congregations could be presented with theological subjects in a non-ascetic manner.

There were, of course, more austere cantatas with settings of psalms or other passages of the Holy Scriptures, either on their own or in connection with new poetic creations. This present production combines four examples from the quills of two contemporaries that successfully attempted various playing techniques, apparently in a relatively undogmatic phase.