

Bach AT THE SEM

2009-2010 Series

Concordia Seminary
The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus

December 13, 2009, 3:00 p.m.



Schedule of Concerts

Bach at the Sem 2009-2010

Music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Franz Joseph Haydn, and Georg Frideric Handel

200th Anniversary of Haydn's Death (1732-1809)

250th Anniversary of Handel's Death (1685-1759)

- Sunday, Oct. 25
3:00 p.m. Psalm 130: *De profundis*, From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee, is performed. This prayer, in plainsong and Anglican chant settings, is confession, meditation, and hope for us and our times. Also offered are composers Schein, Handel, and Bach's Cantata, BWV 38. Together with these significant works, Psalm 130 culminates in Luther's great hymn for congregation. The concert's finale consists of two Great Choruses by Handel from the *Messiah*.
- Sunday, Nov. 15
3:00 p.m. David Fienen, guest organist, performs Concerto for Organ and Orchestra in C Major by Franz Joseph Haydn. Bach, Solo Cantata BWV 51, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* for Solo Soprano and Trumpet with Stringed Orchestra, Kathryn Stieler, soprano; John Korak, trumpet. Handel, Psalm 112, *Laudate pueri Dominum*, Kathryn Stieler, soprano, with chorus and orchestra.
- Sunday, Dec. 13
3:00 p.m. The American Kantorei presents an Advent and Christmas Celebration. J. S. Bach, *Christmas Oratorio*: Parts I; II, Sinfonia; and VI, Final Chorale. G. F. Handel, Great Choruses from the *Messiah*. A tribute to radio station KFYO for its 85th year of broadcasting.
- Sunday, Jan. 31
3:00 p.m. Organ recital by Dennis Bergin. *Klavierübung* III. Chorales by Bach presented by The American Kantorei. J. S. Bach, Sonata for Flute and Harpsichord in E Major, Paula Kasica, flute; Mieko Hironaka Bergt, harpsichord.
- Sunday, March 21
3:00 p.m. The American Kantorei, with soloists Jeral Becker, Evangelist, and Jay Willoughby, Christ, present J. S. Bach's The Passion of Our Lord According to St. John. Aria soloists are principals of The American Kantorei. A celebration of the birthday of J. S. Bach.
- Sunday, May 2
3:00 p.m. The American Kantorei sings motets by Bach, Sing Unto the Lord a New Song and The Spirit Helps Us in Our Weakness. Dennis Bergin, organ.

The Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus
Concordia Seminary, 801 Seminary Place, St. Louis, MO 63105
www.csl.edu

We are grateful to Richard and Phyllis Duesenberg and to Robert and Lori Duesenberg for their generous gifts, which make the *Bach at the Sem* series possible. Concordia Seminary is privileged to make Johann Sebastian's music available to the St. Louis community and invites your generosity in support of this important series. If you have not received mailings from *Bach at the Sem* in the past and would like to be placed on the mailing list, please call 314-505-7362 or e-mail bach@csl.edu.

Bach at the Sem
December 13, 2009, 3:00 p.m.
Third Sunday in Advent

Celebrating the 85th Anniversary of KFUDO

The American Kantorei
Robert Bergt, Music Director and Conductor

In Nomine Jesu

Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248

Johann Sebastian Bach

Part I—For Christmas Day

1. Chorus: “*Jauchzet, frohlocket!*”
2. Recitative: “*Es begab sich aber zu der Zeit*”
3. Recitative: “*Nun wird mein liebster Bräutigam*”
4. Alto Aria: “*Bereite dich, Zion*”
5. Chorale: “*Wie soll ich dich empfangen*”
6. Recitative: “*Und sie gebar ihren ersten Sohn*”
7. Chorale and Recitative: “*Er ist auf Erden kommen arm*”
8. Bass Aria: “*Großer Herr und starker König*”
9. Chorale: “*Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein!*”

Tribute to KFUDO’s 85th

Rev. Dr. Paul Devantier

The offerings are received in support of the Bach at the Sem concert series.

Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248

J. S. Bach

Sinfonia from Part II

Great Choruses from *Messiah*

Georg Frideric Handel

“And the Glory of the Lord”
“Glory to God in the Highest”
“His Yoke Is Easy”
“Behold the Lamb of God”
“Hallelujah”

Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248

J. S. Bach

Final Chorale from Part VI—“*Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen*”

Soli Deo Gloria



On December 14, 1924, the infant voice of KFUO Radio found a home on the airwaves for the first time—a voice that grew, attracted more and more listeners, and became a significant part of broadcasting history. The very first programs broadcast by KFUO included classical music. Classical and sacred classical music now are an 85-year-old tradition. KFUO's sister station, KFUO-FM, began adding to the broadcast quality and beauty of this music in 1948 (among the very first stations on the FM dial and among the first to broadcast classical music.)

Since The American Kantorei and *Bach at the Sem* concerts have been heard on KFUO-FM and have delighted listeners on so many occasions, we thank KFUO-FM and generous sponsors for these broadcasts. More than that, we salute the many who have supported the priceless classical music heritage furthered so dramatically by KFUO-FM. And most of all, we celebrate the wonderful God-given gift of music that KFUO and KFUO-FM have shared with so many around the world for so many years. Happy 85th anniversary!

Paul Devantier
Senior Vice President,
Seminary Advancement

Program Notes

Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248,
Johann Sebastian Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach's great oratorio was first performed in the Christmas season of 1734 – 1735. It consists of six "Parts," each a complete cantata, to be distributed over the six festival days observed in the Leipzig churches: I—Christmas Day (25 December), II—Second Christmas Day (26 December), III—Third Christmas Day (27 December), IV—New Year's Day (Festival of the Circumcision), V—Sunday after New Year's Day (Second Sunday after Christmas), VI—Epiphany. Though sometimes offered today in single concerts, the six parts were never intended to be heard all at one time. The text is presumably by Picander, the pen name of Christian Friedrich Henrici, a Leipzig poet and frequent collaborator with J. S. Bach.

Bach himself labeled this work an "oratorio," but the elements of a cantata are all here: the massive opening chorus, arias for soloists, recitatives, and congregational hymns (chorales)—all related to the liturgical calendar—but with a difference. A cantata normally commented on the themes of the Sunday, thus becoming a musical "sermon,"

while the oratorio is usually based on a narrative story line. Part I, heard today, narrates the preparation for Christ's incarnation and the birth itself. The biblical events are reported in recitatives attended by devotional comment in the form of additional recitatives or arias. Congregational hymns are sung as a response to these events. All this is familiar to us from the St. Matthew and St. John passion settings. For example, the Evangelist (a tenor) proclaims biblical texts. That is a practice associated with passion music dating back into pre-Reformation times and developed by composers like Heinrich Schütz. Some commentators also compared the three-fold musical structure (recitative, aria, chorus) to the sequence for Bible reading (read, meditate, pray) recommended by older Lutheran theologians.

Drawing on all these elements, Bach scholar Alfred Dürr quotes Martin Dibelius in understanding the Part I cantata as a two-section narrative with an opening chorus. Numbers 2 – 5 make up the first section and follow an Advent theme of preparation; 6 – 9 center around the birth itself and the Christian response to the Infant Jesus.

<i>(Introduction)</i>	<i>chorus</i>	1. "Jauchzet, frohlocket"	
<i>Reading</i>	<i>biblical recitative</i>	2. "Es begab sich aber"	6. "Und sie gebar"
<i>Meditation</i>	<i>free recitative (+chorale)</i>	3. "Nun wird mein liebster Bräutigam"	7. "Er ist auf Erden" & "Wer kann die Liebe"
<i>Prayer</i>	<i>aria</i>	4. "Bereite dich, Zion"	8. "Großer Herr"
<i>Congregational response</i>	<i>chorale</i>	5. "Wie soll ich dich empfangen"	9. "Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein"

The joyous opening movement (“*Jauchzet, frohlocket*”) falls into a familiar three-section structure (ABA). The A section calls forth praise for what the Lord has done. Sadness is banished. The B section expresses similar thoughts in a contrasting mood before the first section repeats. In number 2 the Evangelist (tenor) introduces the biblical birth narrative, followed by a meditative recitative (“*Nun wird mein liebster Bräutigam*”) longing for the coming of the Lord. “*Bereite dich, Zion*” gives voice to the believer’s and the Church’s eager haste to meet the Bridegroom, drawing here on Advent themes related to the story of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. There is a yearning and expectation for a near-mystical marriage with the Savior who will come to save the world. The following chorale voices a congregational response, using a standard hymn for Advent, “*Wie soll ich dich empfangen*” (see *Lutheran Service Book*, 334, stanza 1).

The second group of movements (6 – 9), like the earlier group, is initiated by the Evangelist, this time reporting the infant’s birth. Then follows a hymn (“*Er ist auf Erden*”), richly decorated by the oboes. The hymn originated in medieval times as one of only three sequences the congregation was allowed to sing. Martin Luther added six more stanzas. His hymn was widely used in the Christmas liturgy and thus fittingly occurs in

Two other movements from the *Christmas Oratorio* grace this concert. The Sinfonia from Part II is the only purely instrumental movement in the entire work. In its feeling and use of instruments is a type of pastorale (or *siciliano*) traditionally linked with Christmas celebration. The rhythm, perhaps modeled on a slow dance, recalls a lullaby or rocking of the Holy Infant. The alternation between strings (with flutes) and the oboe ensemble follows an older Baroque practice of associating strings with the angelic or heavenly choir while woodwinds were linked to shepherds. In that Christmas tradition peasant pipers (*pifferari*) would go into the town squares

this cantata. Bach employs the sixth stanza (see *Lutheran Service Book*, 382, stanza 6). A recitative interrupts the hymn phrases and piously expresses the significance of the Incarnation.

The marvel of the Incarnation is that God comes to earth in human form to save us. The A and B sections of the following aria (“*Großer Herr*”) offer contrast between the splendors that the Savior forsakes and the hard bed where he must now sleep. Bach here expresses the paradox of Christmas, that the mighty God is found in a weak, small child who will go on to the cross and tomb. Even as the quieter music meditates on the little child, the trumpet and flute jubilantly remind us just who this infant really is.

To conclude, Bach again uses a favorite Christmas hymn, this time Martin Luther’s “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” (see *Lutheran Service Book*, 358). The thirteenth stanza, “*Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein,*” brings everything together in a prayer at the crib, while the festive trumpets and timpani celebrate the heavenly Prince who sleeps there. Many Christians, including this writer, prayed this hymn text every night at bedtime. Sung at the end of the cantata, it brings us as worshipers into the presence of the little Child. In turn we invite him into our own hearts.

and play their instruments in imitation of the biblical shepherds.

This concert concludes with the final chorale of Part VI. Here Bach strikes to the heart of Christian faith by reminding us of Good Friday. The melody of “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” perfectly fits the message. The wonder of Christmas cannot be separated from the Infant’s messianic mission to defeat Satan, death, and hell on the cross. The final victory is the empty tomb. Our joy at the baby’s birth devolves into mere sentiment without this final reminder of why our Lord came to earth.

Bach's oratorio reminds us of the conundrum facing Christians each Christmas. We struggle annually to merge the "materialism" of the secular celebration with worship. In a similar vein, strong voices have argued that the *Christmas Oratorio* cannot be genuinely "sacred" music because so much of it is borrowed from earlier works written for secular purposes, namely the birthdays of the Saxon Prince and the Queen of Poland in 1733 just a few months before the Christmas cantatas were unveiled. The voices and themes of the birthday music were borrowed from pagan mythology. In Part I of the *Christmas Oratorio*, then, numbers 1, 4, and 8 contain music from the earlier royal concerts now carefully rearranged with the Christmas texts inserted. In the first movement, for example, the unusual opening drumbeat, followed by woodwinds and then trumpets, reflects the sequence whereby those instruments were named in the earlier secular cantata. The alto aria (No. 4) at one point contains a running, writhing bass line that was originally associated with the writhing of snakes sent to destroy the infant Hercules in his crib.

Does this mean the music (like some aspects of our Christmas celebrations) is not really sacred but irretrievably "secular"? The German musicologist Friedrich Blume cited the *Christmas*

Oratorio as hard evidence that Bach was quite simply a secular musician who happened to write some music for the church. There was no real religious motivation or meaning to it, he argued. More balanced views have been expressed by a number of Bach biographers (Christoph Wolff, Peter Williams). They note that Bach's technique of revising earlier music was a well-established compositional practice known as "parody." A composer could perceive additional possibilities and uses for a pre-existing work and then create a "parody" by rewriting some parts, providing new texts, and making any necessary adjustments.

Bach did that with this music. Because only a few months separated the *Christmas Oratorio* from the original "secular" performances, it has even been speculated that Bach may have had the massive *Christmas Oratorio* project in mind as he wrote for the Saxon court. In any event, he envisioned a new function for the royal birthday music, remade as the praise of God within the liturgy. So it is with our Christmas. We "parody" the world around us—as Bach parodied music—by remembering that the world and all good things are gifts from God and redirecting those gifts (also Christmas celebrations) back to God in worship.

Great Choruses from *Messiah*, Georg Frideric Handel

"And the Glory of the Lord"
"Glory to God in the Highest"
"His Yoke Is Easy"
"Behold the Lamb of God"
"Hallelujah"

Handel's *Messiah* has become standard fare in our culture, even in our understanding of religious music. Its popularity remains undiminished 267 years after the rave responses to its first sold-out performance on 13 April 1742. It was a

blockbuster event due to Handel's enormous reputation. Women were instructed to abandon the stylish hoops in their dresses and gentlemen to forswear the manliness of swords to save space in the concert hall. It should be noted that the published instructions provided good motivation, since saving space would allow more ticket purchases and thus add to the proceeds that were designated for three major charities. More than 100 unfortunates were released from debtors' prison due to this prestigious event.

The satisfactions were musical as well as charitable. The Dublin newspaper reviewer claimed that

Handel's "Sacred Grand Oratorio" offered "sheer Delight" to the audience, and judged it to be "the most finished [i.e., polished or sophisticated] piece of Musick." He rhapsodized further, noting that "The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport the ravished Heart and Ear." History has pretty much confirmed these early responses to one of the most successful works of all time.

Messiah also marked a turning point in Handel's life. After making a fortune composing and staging operas in the Italian style for London audiences, his world crashed. Opera attendance declined, resulting in big debts for Handel. His health took a bad turn in 1737, though he mostly recovered. He was consequently forging a new phase in his career when invited to Dublin for a series of concerts in 1741 and 1742. Traveling from London through the west of England, he crossed over to Dublin in November. Beginning in December he offered a series of six subscription concerts that cemented his already high standing with the music-loving public. Handel and his sponsors had also agreed on a new work (*Messiah*) to be presented later in the spring of 1742. Handel had set about composing already in August while still in London. Incredibly he finished the major work in roughly three weeks (22 August until 14 September), a demonstration of his extraordinary musical facility and creative power.

The text for the new oratorio had been submitted to Handel by a wealthy gentleman, Charles Jennens, one of Handel's principal collaborators. The two apparently maintained a respectful relationship, though Jennens is infamously remembered for a 1745 letter in which he claimed that he was responsible for *Messiah*'s text and that Handel had done well with it, "tho' not near so good as he might & ought to have done." Jennens also took credit for forcing Handel to correct some of his "grossest faults" in the music and complained that Handel had "retained the

Overture obstinately." There is nothing to support Jennens' role in the composition of this masterpiece, and—to be fair—it is not clear whether or not Jennens ever sent the letter.

The structure of this oratorio is somewhat unusual in that Jennens had selected a series of biblical passages that together displayed the vast drama of God's redemptive work. There is no narrative as was expected in oratorios based on biblical stories such as Esther, Saul, Samson, or Jephtha. In fact, this is the only one of Handel's oratorios that dealt with New Testament themes. Jennens' text is divided into three Parts: I—Prophetic Announcements and the Birth of the Savior; II—Suffering, Death, and Resurrection; III—The Final Resurrection and Praise of the Lamb.

Musically Handel's oratorios relied on the standard grouping of recitative, aria, and chorus so common also in Italian opera. The choruses represented crowds or provided comment as the story progressed. In *Messiah* the choruses are more frequent and significant than had been the case in Handel's operas. Those we hear today contemplate the central points in the work of Christ. The musical forms of these movements show how much Handel had learned from various traditions, including German fugal motet writing, Italian operatic drama, and the English cathedral anthem. Handel uses them all in diverse, creative ways as he responds to the character of the words before him.

"And the Glory of the Lord" (based on Isaiah 40:5), resembles an English verse anthem by opening with a single voice part followed by the full chorus. The first theme ("And the glory . . .") is paired with a second ("shall be revealed") in a "duet" structure that alternates the upper and lower voices before the full choir comes together. Another pair of ideas accompanies "and all flesh shall see it together" and "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" to form a second section. Thereafter Handel combines all these elements before rhetorically cadencing on the most impor-

tant point: “the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

“Glory to God in the Highest” (the angels’ song from Luke 2:14) moves beyond prophecy to celebration of the Incarnation. Here the orchestra is divided, the winds supporting the voices while the violins recall the rushing flight of the angels. Two contrasting motives—one high, the other low—correspond to “God in the highest” and “peace on earth” below. Then a third idea, fugal in texture, completes the thought with “good will towards men.” All three ideas are repeated before the strings fade softly, recalling what the music must have sounded like as the angel choir drifted away into the heavens after singing to the shepherds.

The third chorus responds to a prior aria (“And He Shall Feed His Flock”)—not heard in this performance—which combines the prophecy of Isaiah (the caring shepherd image) and its fulfillment in Matthew 11:28 (“Come to me . . . I will give you rest.”). Then follows the chorus based on Matthew 11:30. Jesus’ words (“My yoke is easy . . .”), however, are changed slightly (“His yoke is easy . . .”). In this way the chorus becomes a comment on the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. After the triumphal D major of “Glory to God” the change of key, the more uniform fugal writing, and the quieter tone of this chorus focus on the love of God in the redemptive drama. This music leads naturally to the fourth chorus (from John 1:29), “Behold the Lamb of God,” which is in a closely related key and even more contemplative in expression. Responding to the Lamb who takes away our sins, Handel writes music along the lines of older polyphonic motets with the instruments supporting the voices. Among the choruses heard today, this is most purely choral in style.

The “Hallelujah” anthem is the conclusion to Part II of *Messiah*, a celebration of the completed redemption. Here Handel displays his mastery of concerto form, with massive acclamations in powerful rhythms set against a series of quite var-

ied styles that announce the kingdom and the worship of the One who will reign forever. The opening “Hallelujah” is a dramatic “head motive,” a signature of Handel’s dramatic style in opera and oratorio. Out of the dramatic “Hallelujah” emerges the first major theme (“The kingdom of this world”), extending into the full declaration of the rule of Christ. A short fugue celebrates his reign before returning to the “Hallelujah” motive. Some Handel commentators believe that he quoted from the hymn “Wake, Awake” (by Philipp Nicolai, see *Lutheran Service Book*, 516) several times in *Messiah*. We cannot be sure Handel intended that, but the descending figure at “The kingdom of this world” does resemble the seventh phrase of the hymn (“The Bridegroom comes, awake”).

It is good to hear Handel’s music today in a celebration of biblical texts containing the core of the Christian message. Perhaps through overuse this astounding music has become almost too well known. It often literally devalued into “elevator music” or department store background, as many of us recall from our experience shopping while barely audible excerpts from *Messiah* drift in and out of the surrounding hubbub. The powerful scriptural promises are submerged. That becomes music for the sake of sentiment, but it is not proclamation of God’s love. Today we hear *Messiah* paired with Bach’s oratorio and performed in a context recalling the faith of the Church. That allows us to remember *Messiah*’s more profound message. Handel was once complimented on the excellent entertainment provided to the audience by a performance of *Messiah*. He replied, “I am sorry if I only entertained them. I wish to make them better.” If music is God’s gift to people on earth, its highest and proper purpose is to proclaim God’s good news and arouse in us a response of joy. That is the spirit of this hearing of *Messiah*’s great choruses.

Program notes by Victor E. Gebauer
Professor emeritus, Concordia University,
St. Paul, Minnesota

Text and Translation

Christmas Oratorio, Part I—For Christmas Day, BWV 248, Johann Sebastian Bach

1. Chorus

*Jauchzet, frohlocket! Auf, preiset die Tage,
rühmet, was heute der Höchste getan.*

*Lasset das Zagen, verbannet die Klage,
stimmet voll Jauchzen und Fröhlichkeit an!*

*Dienet dem Höchsten
mit herrlichen Chören!*

Laßt uns den Namen des Herrschers verehren!

Rejoice, exult! Give honor to these days,
be filled with praise for what the Highest One
has accomplished today.

Set all fear aside, stamp out lamentation,
strike up a full song of joy and merriment!

Serve the Highest One
with majestic choirs!

Let us glorify the name of the Lord!

2. Recitative, Jeral Becker, Tenor

Evangelist:

*Es begab sich aber zu der Zeit, daß ein Gebot
von dem Kaiser Augusto ausging, daß alle
Welt geschätzt würde, und jedermann ging,
daß er sich schätzen ließe, ein jeglicher
in seine Stadt. Da machte sich auch auf
Joseph aus Galiläa, aus der Stadt Nazareth,
in das jüdische Land zur Stadt Davids, die da
heißet Bethlehem; darum, daß er von dem
Hause und Geschlechte Davids war: auf daß
er sich schätzen ließe mit Maria, seinem
vertrauten Weibe, die war schwanger! Und
als sie daselbst waren, kam die Zeit daß sie
gebären sollte.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor
Augustus that all the world should be registered.
Every one went, each one to his own city,
to be registered. Joseph also went from the town
of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city
of David called Bethlehem, because he was
descended from the house and family of David.
He went to be registered with Mary, to whom
he was engaged and who was expecting a child.
While they were there, the time came for her
to deliver [her child].

3. Recitative, Katharine Lawton Brown, Alto

Mary (and all who believe the Promise):

*Nun wird mein liebster Bräutigam,
nun wird der Held aus Davids Stamm
zum Trost, zum Heil der Erden
einmal geboren werden.*

*Nun wird der Stern aus Jakob scheinen,
sein Strahl bricht schon hervor;
auf, Zion, und verlasse nun das Weinen.
Dein Wohl steigt hoch empör.*

Now my beloved Bridegroom,
now the Hero of David's house,
for the consolation and salvation of the earth
at long last is born.

Now will the Star of Jacob shine,
whose beams of light have already appeared.
Arise, Zion! Stop your weeping.
Your prosperity and well-being ascends to the
skies.

4. Alto Aria, Katharine Lawton Brown

Mary (and all who believe the Promise):

*Bereite dich, Zion, mit zärtlichen Trieben,
den Schönsten, den Liebsten bald bei dir zu sehn!
Deine Wangen
müssen heut viel schöner prangen,
eile, den Bräutigam sehlichst zu lieben.*

Bereite dich, Zion . . .

Prepare yourself, Zion, with tender affection:
You, who soon will behold the fairest and dearest one,
your cheeks
must shine all the more lovely today.
Hurry to love the Bridegroom ardently.

Prepare yourself, Zion . . .

5. Chorale

*Wie soll ich dich empfangen,
und wie begegn ich dir?
O aller Welt Verlangen!
O meiner Seele Zier!
O Jesu, Jesu, setze
mir selbst die Fackel bei,
damit, was dich ergötze,
mir kund und wissend sei!*

How shall I receive you?
And how shall I embrace you?
Oh you, desired so by all the world!
Oh you, my soul's adornment!
Oh, Jesus, Jesus! Place
alongside me the lamp [of understanding]
by which—as you desire—[I may receive you]
as proclamation and [saving] knowledge.

6. Recitative, Jeral Becker, Tenor

Evangelist:

*Und sie gebar ihren ersten Sohn,
und wickelte ihn in Windeln, und
legte ihn in eine Krippen, denn sie hatten
sonst keinen Raum in der Herberge.*

And she gave birth to her firstborn Son
and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and
laid him in a manger, because there was
no place for them in the inn.

7. Chorale and Recitative, David Berger, Bass / Select Sopranos

Er ist auf Erden kommen arm,
*Wer kann die Liebe recht erhöh
die unser Heiland für uns hegt?*
daß er unser sich erbarm,
*Ja, wer vermag es einzusehen,
wie ihn der Menschen Leid bewegt?*
und in dem Himmel mache reich,
*Des höchsten Sohn kömmt in die Welt,
weil ihm ihr Heil so wohlgefällt:*
und seinen lieben Engeln gleich.
*So will er selbst
als Mensch geboren werden.*
Kyrieleis!

Sopranos: He came to earth in poverty,
Bass: Who can do justice to such love,
which our Savior holds / has for us?
that he might have mercy upon us,
Yes! Who is really capable of comprehending
how man's plight moved him?
and give us treasure in heaven:
The most high Son arrives in this world,
because it pleased him to win its salvation.
And make us like his dear angels.
That is why he was willing
to be born as a man.
Lord have mercy!

8. Bass Aria, David Berger

*Großer Herr und starker König,
liebster Heiland, o wie wenig
achtest du der Erden Pracht!
Der die ganze Welt erhält,
ihre Pracht und Zier erschaffen,
muß in harten Krippen schlafen.*

Großer Herr . . .

Great Lord and mighty King!
Beloved Savior! Oh, how very little
you value earthly pomp!
It is you who preserves the entire world
It is you who created it by your power!
Now you must sleep in a hard manger stall.

Great Lord . . .

9. Chorale

*Ach, mein herzliebes Jesulein!
Mach dir ein rein sanft Bettelein,
zu ruh in meines Herzens Schrein,
daß ich nimmer vergesse dein.*

Oh, little Jesus, my heart's true love!
Make for yourself a clean and soft little bed
in which you may rest—within the shrine of my heart,
so that I may never forget your place there.

Great Choruses from *Messiah*, Georg Frideric Handel

“And the Glory of the Lord”

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together;
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

“Glory to God in the Highest”

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth, good will towards men.

“His Yoke Is Easy”

His yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

“Behold the Lamb of God”

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away
the sins of the world.

“Hallelujah”

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
The kingdom of this world is become
the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ;
and he shall reign for ever and ever.
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

Christmas Oratorio, Final Chorale from Part VI, BWV 248, J. S. Bach

*Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen
an eurer Feinde Schar,
denn Christus hat zerbrochen
was euch zuwider war.
Tod, Teufel, Sünd, und Hölle
sind ganz und gar geschwächt,
bei Gott hat seine Stelle
das menschliche Geschlecht.*

Now are you thoroughly avenged:
For it is the army of your enemies
that Christ has destroyed—
that army which was dead set against you.
Death, devil, sin, and hell
are entirely and thoroughly brought down.
The human race has its place [restored]
at God's side.

The American Kantorei

Robert Bergt, Music Director and Conductor
Jeral Becker, Assistant Conductor and Choir Personnel Director
Wanda Becker, Concertmaster and Orchestra Personnel Director

Chorus

Soprano

Joy Boland, Principal
Jean Baue, Co-Principal
Kathryn Crumrine
Melissa Kinsey
Marita Hollander
Mary Roth
Camille Marolf
Heather Schwan
Katherine Gastler
Halle Warmbier
Jodi Kratzer

Alto

Katharine Lawton Brown, Principal
Jane Robinson, Assistant Principal
Donita Obermann
Meghan Garvin
Sarah Frawley
Loretta Ceasar-Striplin
Elizabeth Horsley
Mona Houser
Paula Bohr
Anne Tinetti
Ellee Mietzner

Tenor

Jeral Becker, Principal
Arie Perry, Assistant Principal
William Larson
Greg Gastler
Anthony Heinemann
John Powel Walsh
Steve Paquette
Jason Swan

Bass-baritone

David Berger, Principal
Jay Willoughby
Matthew Warmbier
Matthew Meyer
Paul Mueller
Brandt Klawitter
John Eyer
Samuel Cotten
Earl Birkicht

Orchestra

Violin I

Wanda Becker, Concertmaster
Paul Huppert
Christine Sasse
Cynthia Bowermaster

Violin II

Kaoru Wada, Principal
Marilyn Park Ellington
Jane Price
Tova Braitberg

Viola

Holly Kurz, Principal
Sarah Borchelt

Cello

Kenneth Kulosa

String Bass

Frederick DeVaney

Flute

Paula Kasica, Principal
Jennifer Adams

Oboe

Ann Homann, Principal
Eileen Burke

English Horn

Cathleen Woelbling Paul, Principal
Diane Lieser

Bassoon

Robert Mottl

Trumpet

John Korak, Principal
Mary Weber
Jason Harris

Timpani

Alan Schilling

Rehearsal Accompanist

Mieko Hironaka Bergt
Joan Bergt

Welcome!

By almost all accounts, we are living in a time when much of the population no longer knows the cultural basics of our American society. On-the-street reporters ask basic questions and we are appalled by many ignorant answers. Biblical illiteracy is one part of this “dumbing down.” Many know that Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus but that’s where their knowledge stops. So today’s *Bach at the Sem* gives us the theologian’s comprehensive understanding of Jesus’ birth. Hearing Part I of his *Christmas Oratorio* and then five Great Choruses from Handel’s *Messiah*, we follow with the closing Lenten chorale melody to the entire Bach *Christmas Oratorio*, “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” Music director Robert Bergt says, “For Bach the purpose of Christmas is of no value, unless we see its completed action and fulfillment in the Good Friday event.” Bergt goes on to say, “Bach changed the key from minor to major, a shocking thing to do. He also composed fanfare-like passages between each phrase of the chosen hymn stanza that heralds VICTORY over devil, death, sin, and all temptations. Herein lies the purpose and fullest meaning to Jesus’ incarnation. That is why we sing this chorale after Handel’s famous and much-loved ‘Hallelujah!’”

Our deep thanks to Rev. Bergt, to the American Kantorei, and to you for joining us this afternoon. The entire Concordia Seminary family wishes to you and yours the blessing of this holy season.

Dale A. Meyer
President

A Few Composers' Thoughts on the Significance of Bach

Mozart—*“Now there is music from which a man can learn something.”*

Beethoven—*“Not Brook but Ocean should be his name.”* (In German, “Bach” means “brook.”)

Schumann—*“Playing and studying Bach convinces us that we are all numskulls.”*

Brahms—*“Study Bach; there you will find everything.”*

Gounod—*“If all the music written since Bach’s time should be lost, it could be reconstructed on the foundation that Bach laid.”*

Verdi—*“O you happy sons of the North! You who have been reared at the bosom of Bach, how I envy you!”*

Reger—*“Bach is the beginning and the end of all music.”*

Rimsky-Korsakov—*“I had no idea of the historical evolution of the civilized world’s music and had not realized that all modern music owes everything to Bach.”*

Stravinsky—*“Oh, if only I could have been a ‘little Bach’ for one day in my lifetime!”*