

EMMANUEL MUSE



Bach: A Signature Season
Johann Sebastian Bach.

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Emmanuel Music Bach Cantata Series, 2007-2008

With the joyful sound of Emmanuel Music violins, oboes, flutes and organ, the 2007-08 Bach Signature Season began on Sunday, September 16. The occasion called for a jubilant performance of J. S. Bach's Cantata BWV 163, *Nur jedem das Seine!* featuring soloists Kendra Colton, Krista River, Frank Kelley and Donald Wilkinson.

This cantata spotlights not only the music of Bach, but also the poetry of librettist Salomo Franck. A frequent Bach collaborator, Franck combined his poetic talents with duties as head of the Weimar Mint. In the vibrant bass aria of BWV 163, sung by Wilkinson, Franck employs coin symbolism, urging God to stamp his image on the poet's heart instead of the head of Caesar.

The above is just a sample of what is in store for this year's cantata audiences. Emmanuel Music presents a full Bach cantata each Sunday from September through May at the 10 am Sunday liturgy at Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston, where Emmanuel Music is the Ensemble-in-Residence. Its renowned Artistic Director is Craig Smith, who has conducted his musicians with warmth and inspiration for 37 years. While there is no admission charge for each cantata, voluntary contributions are most welcome.

Sharing the podium with Smith during the 2007-08 cantata season are such notable conductors as Michael Beattie, John Harbison, Edith Ho, Leonard Matczynski, Scott Metcalfe, James Olesen and Ryan Turner.

Bach cantatas at Emmanuel have provided musical nourishment to many--musicians as well as listeners. Such luminaries as Seiji Ozawa of the Boston

Symphony and Christopher Hogwood of the Handel & Haydn Society have also conducted the Orchestra and Chorus of Emmanuel Music in Bach cantatas. And many musicians from the Emmanuel Music ranks, whose Boston careers started with the cantatas, have gone on to careers in opera houses and concert halls around the world, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson and Sanford Sylvan being two of the most notable.

If any single event can be said to represent the heart and soul of Emmanuel Music, it is the weekly cantata performance. Prompt arrival --by 10 a.m.--is suggested for good seating. Cantata lovers who live nearby have joined visitors from all over the United States and the world to hear Bach at his best. Students from area high schools, colleges and universities also make up an important audience segment, listening to Bach as part of their music curriculum.

Emmanuel Music and its cantatas are accessible via public transportation. Take the MBTA Green Line to the Arlington Street Station. Emmanuel Church is just a block away on Newbury Street, off Arlington Street and the Boston Public Garden.

A most important feature of Emmanuel Music cantatas in Boston is that they are performed in the setting that Bach intended: within a liturgical service and with soloists, orchestra and chorus. Smith and his musicians have done the complete cantata cycle twice and are now well into the third. With some 200 cantatas of varying lengths in the Bach canon and a performance schedule of once a week for 10 months a year--around 36 weeks--it takes about 8 years for Emmanuel Music to complete the cantata cycle.

In addition to being a prolific composer of both sacred and secular works, Bach served for 27 years as choirmaster at the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, Germany. He wrote most of his cantatas for the Thomanerchor, its boys' choir, which originated in the 13th century. Today, that choir sings on Fridays and on Saturdays with the Gewandhaus Orchestra.

Through October 28, the weekly schedule of cantatas, motets and soloists for Emmanuel Music will include the following:

September 30:

Bach: Cantata BWV 84, *Ich bin vergnügt mit meinem Glücke*

Soloist: Jayne West

Motet: Schein: *Ich ruf zu dir*

Soloists: Ryan Turner, David Kravitz

October 7:

Bach: BWV 177, *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*

Soloists: Roberta Anderson, Krista River, Charles Blandy

Motet: Schütz: *So fahr ich hin*

October 14:

Bach: BWV 78, *Jesu, der du meine Seele*

Soloists: Roberta Anderson, Paula Murrphy, Matthew Anderson, Mark McSweeney

Boston Children's Chorus

Anthony Trecek-King, Artistic Director

October 21:

Bach: BWV 54, *Widerstehe doch der Sünde*

Soloist: Pamela Dellal

Motet: Schütz: *Verba mea auribus percipe, Domine – Quoniam ad te clamabo*

October 28:

Bach: BWV 47, *Wer sich selbst erhöhet*

Soloists: Kristen Watson, Donald Wilkinson

Motet: Demantius: *Wer sich selbst*

Education is an important component of the 2007-08 Bach Cantata Series. Three Sunday post-service discussions at Emmanuel will center around "Bach's Cantata Texts: Point and Counterpoint." Dates are October 21, November 11 and December 9. The discussions will analyze the historic and Biblical background, as well as the spiritual, theological and ethical questions and challenges raised by the Bach/Luther texts. Panelists will include The Rev. Dr. Maureen Dallison Kemeza, Priest-in-Charge, Emmanuel Church; Rabbi Howard Berman of Boston Jewish Spirit, a progressive reform congregation in residence at Emmanuel Church; and Craig Smith, Music Director, Emmanuel Church.

History bears repeating when it comes to Bach. The establishment of the Emmanuel Music organization stems directly from his music. When Smith joined Emmanuel Church as organist and choir director in 1970, he received a challenge from the Rector, Rev. Alvin Kershaw. It was to perform the complete cycle of Bach cantatas. Six years passed; then in the U.S. Bicentennial, Smith and Emmanuel Music were publicly recognized for their singular achievement by Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis.

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