



BACH
2025-2026



The Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana

Sarah Riskind, Music Director

presents

**Back-to-Back Bach:
275th Anniversary Celebration**

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Grace Lutheran Church

Champaign, IL

This performance is sponsored by Robin Sahner

PROGRAM

Magnificat in D Major, BWV 243

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Nini Marchese, *Soprano 1*

Leslie Hochman, *Soprano 2*

Kendra Wieneke, *Alto*

Cody Parrott, *Tenor*

Jack Bertrand, *Bass*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Gloria in excelsis Deo, BWV 191

Johann Sebastian Bach

Leslie Hochman, *Soprano*

Cody Parrott, *Tenor*

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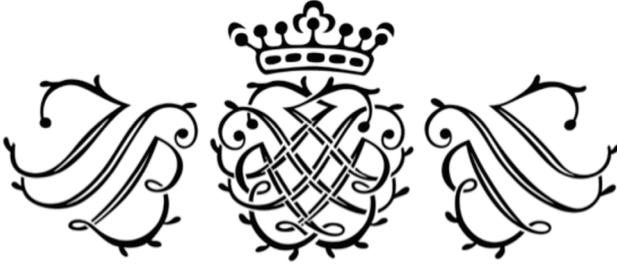
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PROGRAM NOTES

Sarah Riskind, Music Director



Today, we honor a composer who is central to who we are as the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana. Though we enjoy performing a wide range of repertoire, with Baroque music as the core and inspiration of each season, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) is the source of our BACH nickname and our logo.

Bach used his seal throughout his years in Leipzig. As this image shows, he created it by combining his initials JSB in mirror image, topped with a crown. With the Bach monogram in our logo, we retain our connection to the past even as we explore connections to other repertoire and new ways of engaging with our community.

2025 marks the 275th anniversary of J. S. Bach's death, and for our tribute to our namesake, we offer two beloved works with five-part chorus, soloists, and orchestra: the *Magnificat in D Major BWV 243* and the *Gloria in excelsis Deo cantata BWV 191*. Both were first performed in Leipzig at Christmas, and both texts have far-reaching messages about peace and justice.

Magnificat in D Major, BWV 243

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord..."

The Song of Mary known as the Magnificat is about praise, gratitude, and awe. It's about one humble human being realizing that she is valued and loved by her divine Creator. This Creator "has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty." In this world full of tragedy, tyranny, injustice, war, and poverty, what does it feel like to receive a sign that there is hope for a better world? How impactful is it to feel that we are not alone, and that our presence matters?

This canticle echoes the Song of Hannah from the Hebrew Bible (1 Samuel 2:1-10) and is part of evening Vespers or Evensong in many traditions of Western Christianity and morning Matins in Eastern Christianity. When J. S. Bach was

working at St. Thomas in Leipzig (1723-1750), the Magnificat was normally sung in German as part of Evensong, but it was sung polyphonically in Latin for major festivals.

Bach composed the original E-flat major version of this Magnificat for Christmas 1723, soon after he came to Leipzig. This version included four inserted pieces telling parts of the Christmas story, which were left out when he created the D major version about 7-10 years later. The new version also included flutes instead of recorders, more polished harmony and counterpoint, and an appropriate key for the trumpets more readily available. Today, the D major Magnificat is the standard setting; audiences everywhere enjoy the bright and festive sound.

The joyful, bubbling opening themes of the *Magnificat anima mea* first movement lead into the second soprano's *Et exsultavit*, accompanied by strings. The exquisite first soprano aria *Quia respexit humilitatem* with oboe d'amore expresses Mary's humility, followed by the chorus of *Omnes generationes* with *Omnes, omnes* echoing across each voice part to depict "all generations." It is unsurprising that Bach would choose the bass soloist for *Quia fecit mihi magna* ("For He who is mighty has done great things for me"). In *Et misericordia*, the alto/tenor duet with strings and flutes, the descending bass line follows the "lament bass" convention (think of "Dido's Lament" from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*).

The brassy chorus *Fecit potentiam* ("He has shown strength with his arm") combines punchy dotted rhythms with extensive virtuosic lines, while the tenor soloist in *Deposuit* paints the plummeting of the mighty with descending lines and more dotted rhythms. In *Esurientes implevit bonis* ("He has filled the hungry with good things"), the alto and flutes provide tender contrast from what came before. In the treble voice trio that follows, *Suscepit Israel*, the oboes slowly play the Lutheran ninth-mode Magnificat psalm tone melody in the tradition of the cantus firmus ("firm song"). Emphasizing the idea of lineage, Bach sets *Sicut locutus est* as a straightforward fugue accompanied only by *basso continuo*. The *Gloria Patri* (the Doxology "add-on") provides grandeur and likely a Holy Trinity reference in the form of the triplet rhythm, followed by a return to the original Magnificat material with the *Sicut erat* text.

Why is this work so widely beloved? Perhaps it's the way each movement so beautifully captures the essence of its text, without being excessively long. Maybe it's the exciting feast day-sized Baroque orchestra with trumpets and timpani alongside woodwinds and strings. I could even make a case for the achingly gorgeous *Quia respexit* and *Suscepit Israel* being the most compelling parts of the entire piece. No matter what you connect with the most, we hope you are uplifted by J. S. Bach's incredible *Magnificat*.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, BWV 191

Like the *Magnificat*, Bach's *Gloria* cantata fills our ears with the celebratory sound of a festive orchestra and five-part choir in D Major. This work was also performed at Christmas, most likely at the University church in Leipzig in 1742. The label "cantata" is a loose one, with Latin text from the Mass Ordinary and no structural basis in Lutheran chorales. However, as mentioned earlier, including Latin in Lutheran worship was not uncommon in some regions.

When the first few measures ring out, those of you who are hardcore classical music fans and choral singers may find the music surprisingly familiar. The reason is this: Handel was not the only Baroque composer to reuse material, though perhaps he should take home the prize!

In 1733, Bach composed an extended *missa brevis*, a short mass with only Kyrie and Gloria. He sent the performance parts to the new Elector of Saxony in Dresden, whose court was Catholic, in a bid to become the court composer. Unfortunately for him, the music was filed away instead of being added to the repertoire, likely because it was not *brevis* enough. This specific piece was apparently never performed in Bach's lifetime, but he did become the Royal Court Composer three years later.

Now, back to 1742 for the piece being performed this evening: This *Gloria* cantata only has three movements. The first was essentially unchanged from the beginning of Bach's aforementioned 1733 Mass for the Dresden Court. The soprano/tenor duet, which enjoyed a former life as a longer fifth movement entitled *Domine Deus*, became *Gloria Patri* (the first part of the Doxology text, which you will recall from the *Magnificat*). Finally, the grand chorus originally serving as the ninth movement *Cum Sancto Spiritu* in 1733 became *Sicut erat in principio* in the 1742 cantata.

However, the saga continues: When Bach assembled the Mass in B Minor in 1748-1749, he used the 1733 Kyrie and Gloria as the first two parts. Whether you are analyzing the B Minor Mass for golden ratios and crucifix symbolism or taking in the sublime strains of this pivotal work, it is difficult to argue its inclusion in any list of top choral masterworks.

Now, looking at the music of *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, BWV 191: it is filled with memorable themes and intricate counterpoint (though perhaps I am the only one being kept awake at night by endless *Et in terra pax* fugues). After the excitement of the opening Gloria, the gentler *Et in terra pax* ("and on earth peace") lifts up a yearning as powerful as ever, for human beings to live in harmony. The sweet *Gloria patri* soprano/tenor duet with strings and flutes provides a moment of stillness. In the third movement, *Sicut erat in principio* builds energy with unison statements in dialogue and sustained chord progressions, leading into the rousing chorus of the *et nunc et semper* fugue.

As we celebrate the legacy of this church musician from the 1700s, let us be grateful for what choral music does: it brings together a group of people to share their most innate instrument, the voice; it gives these singers a common goal in overcoming challenges and reaching higher levels of expression; it gathers our audiences together for one day to share an ephemeral experience that reaches their emotions; and it connects all of us to everyone from the past and future who heard and performed this music.



COMING UP NEXT

Mark your calendar, as BACH's 29th season continues!

Messiah Sing-along

4 pm Sunday, November 30

A favorite holiday tradition! Join in singing Handel's famous melodies or just enjoy listening. Music scores available at the door.

Winter Comfort

4 pm Sunday, March 8, 2026

Enjoy an hour of exquisite choral music from the Middle Ages to today. Highlights include Josef Rheinberger's ravishing *Abendlied* and Franz Biebl's popular and equally gorgeous *Ave Maria*. You'll leave feeling inspired, relaxed, and restored!

As the Deer Longs

4 pm Sunday, May 31, 2026

Seeking hope and reassurance "as the deer longs for water" — those are the themes of Psalm 42, the uplifting text for this concert. Discover composer Marianna Martines, and hear how Palestrina's version flows sweetly, like a refreshing stream.

Plus.... Five Cities Baroque Festival Opening Concert

Tuesday, June 16

Details to Be Announced



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TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Magnificat in D Major, BWV 243

translation by Thomas Nelson (New King James Version)

46 Magnificat anima mea Dominum,	My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 Et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.	And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; Omnes generationes ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent.	For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
49 Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.	For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.
50 Et misericordia a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.	And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.
51 Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.	He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.	He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly.
53 Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.	He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.
54 Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiae suae.	He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,
55 Sicut locutus est ad Patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula	As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.
Gloria Patri, gloria Filio, gloria et Spiritui Sancto!	Glory to the Father, glory to the Son, glory also to the Holy Spirit!
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.	As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.	Amen.

Gloria in excelsis Deo, BWV 191

translation by Francis Browne

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. | Glory to God on high and on earth peace to men of good will. |
| 2. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui sancto. | Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. |
| 3. Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum, amen. | As it was in the beginning and is now and always will be
And for age after age, amen. |



ABOUT BACH

Founded by Chester L. Alwes in 1996, the non-profit Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana (BACH) is devoted to the performance of choral music in the Champaign-Urbana area. BACH specializes in music of the Baroque but performs works from all periods. Its 50-member volunteer choir joins with professional instrumentalists and soloists in several concerts each year. To build deeper connections through music, smaller groups of singers also visit hospitals, assisted living centers, and local organizations. Music Director Sarah Riskind is in her fifth year leading BACH.

BACH Mission Statement

BACH performs exceptional choral music to create culturally vibrant experiences, cultivate musicianship, and foster community.

Follow us on



MEET THE ARTISTS

Conductor and composer **Dr. Sarah Riskind** is in her fifth season as Music Director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana. With the BACH Choir, she has highlighted stunning repertoire from many historical periods, from pairing Dietrich Buxtehude with Caroline Shaw to exploring the meaning of canon in a concert entitled The Three Bs (featuring music by Margaret Bonds, Harry T. Burleigh, and Lili Boulanger). She is the Director of Traditional Music at Willow Hill United Methodist Church and has also spent many summers as choral director and faculty at The Walden School's summer programs for creative musicians in Dublin, New Hampshire. Previously, she was the Director of Choral Activities at Eureka College in central Illinois, where she received the T. A. Abbott Award for Faculty Excellence from the Higher Education and Leadership Ministries of the Disciples of Christ. As a composer, Dr. Riskind has a large catalogue of choral music, chamber music, and art songs, including many settings of Jewish texts and a four-movement Oz Cantata for chorus, soloists, and string quartet. In addition to her work in classical music, she is a fiddler and vocalist in the Peoria-based Irish band Turas. She holds a DMA in Choral Conducting from University of Washington, an MM in Choral Conducting from University of Wisconsin at Madison, and a BA in Music from Williams College. www.sarahriskind.com

Jonathan Young is Director of Music at the Catholic Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Champaign, Illinois. Jonathan holds a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, a Master of Music in Organ Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music, and completed doctoral coursework and recitals at the University of Illinois. An avid student of automotive aerodynamics and aerodynamic efficiency, Jonathan earned an Associate of Engineering Science degree at Parkland College in 2021 and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Broadway and orchestral veteran, recipient of shared Emmy, Tony, Grammy, Grand Prix du Disque, and multiple awards, **Barbara Hedlund** enjoys an active career as orchestral and chamber musician, recording artist, orchestra and college music festival administrator, music editor and publisher, orchestra founder, executive director, music librarian, professor, adjudicator, associate producer for Public Radio Television, concert, opera, and theatre productions,

a City of Urbana Public Arts and Culture Commissioner, young artist scholarship sponsor and mentor. From 1996 to 1999, she and her husband Ronald wore many hats as founders, sponsors, performers, fundraisers, administrators, and crew for the Baroque Artists, originally housed and administered in their home studio.

Jack Bertrand is a conductor, baritone, and educator based in Urbana, Illinois. A board member of BACH, he has appeared with the ensemble as a soloist in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and *Messiah* and Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostris*. Jack teaches Theatre Arts at Edison Middle School and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Music Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He also holds a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Michigan State University. Recent performances include the Five Cities Baroque Festival and Parkland College Theatre's productions of *The Wedding Singer* and *White Christmas*. Jack's work bridges education, performance, and scholarship, emphasizing creativity and connection through the arts.

Soprano **Leslie Hochman** is thrilled to be making her debut in the Champaign-Urbana area with BACH. She recently moved to the area from Dallas, where she performed with the American Baroque Opera Company, Orchestra of New Spain, Dallas Bach Society, and the Dallas Opera. She sang many leading and supporting roles as a resident artist with the Tri-Cities Opera (Binghamton, NY), including the title role in *The Merry Widow*, for which the *Ithaca Journal* described her singing as "lyrically beautiful, vocally expressive, and robust." Other roles with TCO include Mimì in *La Bohème*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*. Leslie has also performed with Connecticut Grand Opera, Regina Opera (Brooklyn, NY), Toledo Opera, and the Caramoor Bel Canto Festival (Katonah, NY). In 2009, she made her Avery Fisher Hall solo debut in Dallapiccola's *Volo di Notte* with the American Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Leon Botstein. Leslie holds a Master of Music in Opera from Binghamton University and a Bachelor of Music in Voice from the University of Texas.

Coloratura soprano **Nini Marchese**, praised for her "bright, supple soprano" (San Diego Story) and "riveting vocals" (Villages News), performs widely in opera and concert. This season she appears with Painted Sky Opera in *The Magic Flute* as Queen of the Night, returns to the Baroque Artists of Champaign Urbana as Soprano Soloist for the Bach *Magnificat* and to the Taylor Festival Choir for Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and the Fauré *Requiem*. She also performs with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Music of the Baroque in Chicago. Recent

performances include works with the Orpheus Chamber Singers, Opera Idaho, Dallas Opera, Opera Neo, Utah Festival Opera, the Dallas Bach Society, Bach Society Houston, the Foundation for Modern Music, the Houston Chamber Choir, and Spoleto Festival USA.

Conductor and Singer **Cody Parrott** has enjoyed a diverse career as a professional musician and educator for the past two decades. He currently serves on the Voice faculty of the School of Music at Illinois Wesleyan University where he is Director of Choral Activities and Visiting Assistant Professor of Voice. Prior to this appointment Dr. Parrott served on the faculty at Mississippi State University as the Associate Director of Choral Activities and as a Conducting Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin where, under his direction, the University Treble Chorus was named the Third Place Winner for the 2023 *American Prize in Choral Performance*. His doctoral research focused on modern voice science and how contemporary vocal pedagogy can be applied to the choral music classroom. He holds the Doctor of Music Arts in Conducting from the Sarah & Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin where he studied with Dr. J.D. Burnett, the Master of Music in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, and a Bachelor of Arts in Music with concentrations in Vocal Music and Music Education from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, TX.

Kendra Wieneke, mezzo-soprano, has enjoyed a diverse career as a classical singer, music educator, church musician, and nonprofit administrator. She studied at Eastman School of Music under the tutelage of Carol Webber and Jan Opalach and performed frequently with Eastman Opera Theater, notably singing the title role in Handel's *Serse* under the direction of renowned early music specialist Paul O'Dette. Other favorite roles include Bianca in *The Rape of Lucretia* (Britten), Anne in the collegiate premiere of Jake Heggie's *To Hell and Back*, and Martha in *The Secret Garden* (Simon/Norman). A dedicated recitalist and chamber musician, she has been featured in J.S. Bach's *Magnificat in D* (Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra), Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* (Eastman School of Music), Mozart's *Coronation Mass in C* (Voices), Handel's *Messiah* (Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra), and J. S. Bach's *Christ lag in Todes Banden* (Tallahassee Bach Parley). She appeared with the Peoria Bach Festival Chorus in 2025, served as Alto section leader for the Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City from 2023-2024, and has appeared frequently as a soloist and choir member with BACH since 2019. Outside of music, she is a dedicated yoga teacher and doting dog mom to her pup, Johann Sebastian Chewbacca – known to friends as Chewie.

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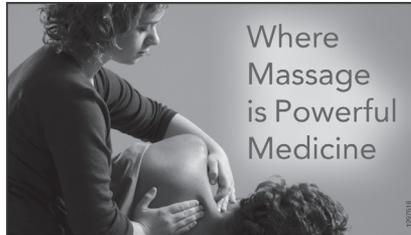


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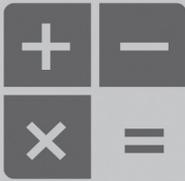


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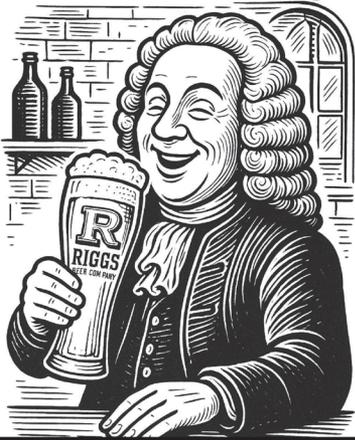




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