

Mass in B Minor

Saturday, March 29, 2025 • 7:30 p.m.

First Methodist Church

Harmonia Orchestra and Chorus

William White, conductor



Clarice Alfonso, soprano • Arwen Myers, soprano • Sarah Larkworthy, mezzo-soprano
Brendan Tuohy, tenor • Zachary Lenox, baritone

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Mass in B Minor, BWV 232

Missa

Kyrie eleison

Christe eleison

Kyrie eleison

Gloria in excelsis

Et in terra pax

Laudamus te

Gratias agimus tibi

Domine Deus

Qui tollis peccata mundi

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

Quoniam tu solus sanctus

Cum Sancto Spiritu

— intermission —

Symbolum Nicenum

Credo in unum Deum

Patrem omnipotentem

Et in unum Dominum

Et incarnatus est

Crucifixus

Et resurrexit

Et in Spiritum Sanctum

Confiteor

Et expecto

Sanctus

Sanctus

Pleni sunt coeli

Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem

Osanna

Benedictus

Osanna

Agnus Dei

Dona nobis pacem

*Please silence cell phones and other electronics, and refrain from the use of cameras and recording devices during the performance.
Refreshments will be available in the Fine Center during intermission.*

Harmonia Orchestra and Chorus

William White, music director • George Shangrow, founder

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Maestro's Prelude

Dear listener,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this evening's performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's immortal masterpiece, the Mass in B minor.

You can read in your program notes about the history of the work itself, but allow me to tell you a bit about Harmonia's history with the piece. The group first performed the work on April 3, 1978, at Meany Theater. The program for that occasion makes special mention of the fact that the performance is being given by a "Baroque-sized Chorus and Orchestra," though, somewhat amusingly, it then goes on to give special thanks to the Cox Music Center for generously providing the "Allen Digital Computer Organ System 1230" for the evening's performance!

The Mass received subsequent performances in October 1982 (at Blessed Sacrament), June 1985 (Meany, as part of the Bach Year), March 1989 (Meany), March 1995 (FFMC), March 2000 (Benaroya) and June 2006 (Blessed Sacrament), all directed by George Shangrow, as well as April 2014 (FFMC, with Clinton Smith conducting). Tonight's performance is the organization's ninth outing with the work.

I know that there are some people in the audience tonight who have attended each and every one of these performances (and indeed, there is one special person, soprano Nancy Shasteen, who has performed in all nine of them) and I can only marvel at your dedication to this organization and its ongoing legacy.

Of course, there will be a good many of you who are coming to this work for the first time, and I consider it a real privilege to be able to introduce you to this music, which has a special quality of the eternal about it. Perhaps some of you are new to Bach entirely, in which case you've really picked the right piece to start with, since he likely intended it as a compendium of his best work.

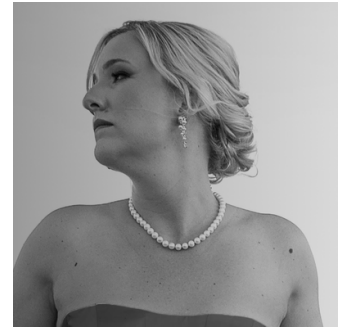
Whatever you've come here expecting from this piece, I guarantee that you're going to find it, and you're going to find it in abundance. It is a work of infinite beauty, and one that will continue to be a mainstay of our repertoire for many years to come.



P.S. It's quite possible that the music of J.S. Bach would not hold its position in our life today were it not for the tireless efforts of a much later composer, Felix Mendelssohn. As luck would have it, we'll be presenting a rare gem by Mendelssohn at our next concert, his *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*, an extremely entertaining oratorio about a group of Middle Ages-pagans who successfully use their magic powers to spook an encroaching group of Christian monks. It's rather far afield from the loftiness of Bach's Mass in B minor, but it's a fun work that hardly ever gets performed and I hope you'll be here to experience it!

Solo Artists

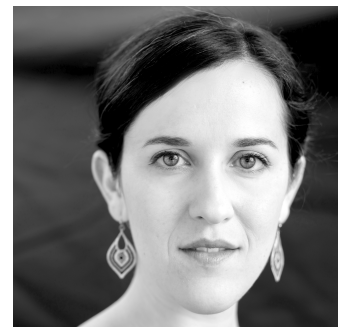
Soprano **Clarice Alfonso** has been praised by audiences for her musical elegance, passion and dynamic expression. Recent engagements include Rosita in Seattle Opera's *Frida Kahlo*, Lucy in *The Telephone* with Puget Sound Concert Opera, Pamina with Northwest Opera in Schools, Gretel with Engage Opera (Kingston), Sister Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica* with Puget Sound Concert Opera, and Samuel Barber's *Knoxville:*



Summer of 1915 at the Seattle Art Museum. An avid singer of not just classical music, Ms. Alfonso is one of the founders of Forte! Chicago, an all-women's opera improv ensemble, and frequently performs concerts consisting of art song, early music and cabaret. On the concert stage, she has appeared at Chicago's Orchestra Hall, with the esteemed organist David Briggs, and with North Corner Chamber Orchestra, Salt Creek Symphony and Chicago College of Performing Arts Orchestra, as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* in both Chicago and Carnegie Hall with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She regularly sings at the St. James Cathedral and Temple Beth Am in Seattle, as well as with the Emerald Ensemble, Opus 7 and Opera on Tap. Upcoming performances include music of Tallis, Allegri and Pergolesi at St. James Cathedral.

Praised for her "crystalline tone and delicate passage-work" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, soprano **Arwen Myers**

captivates audiences with timeless artistry and exquisite interpretations. Transmitting a warmth and "deep poignancy" on stage (*Palm Beach Arts Paper*), she shines in solo performance across the U.S. and beyond. With outstanding technique and mastery of a wide range of vocal colors, her dazzling oratorio and solo appearances feature repertoire from the Baroque to modern day. Recent and upcoming solo highlights include: Handel with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra; Bach and Purcell with Portland Baroque Orchestra; Vivaldi, Monteverdi and Gabrieli with Early Music Vancouver; Handel with Oregon Bach Festival; and Fauré with the Indianapolis Symphony. Of her title role in Handel's *Semele* with American Bach Soloists Academy, *San Francisco Classical Voice* noted, "some of these star turns were shiny indeed, with soprano Arwen Myers leading the way... her musicality and demure demeanor remained a renewable pleasure." A native of Augusta, Georgia, she holds advanced degrees from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

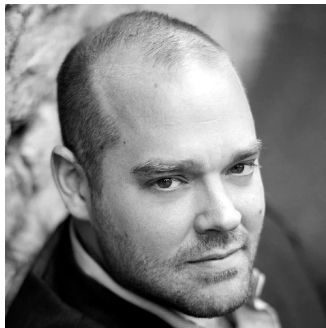


Mezzo-soprano **Sarah Larkworthy** is a student of José Luis Muñoz in Seattle, where she also works as a software engineer. Previously a resident of the Washington, D.C., area, she sang Kate Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* with Baltimore Concert Opera and performed with the Potomac Vocal Institute. She holds a BM in music and a BA in Physics from Oberlin College and Conservatory. Other notable credits include: La Contessa



in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Micaela in *La Tragédie de Carmen* with Seagle Music Festival, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with Oberlin in Italy, and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* with Oberlin Conservatory. She can also be heard singing with the Seattle Symphony Chorale. Outside of singing and staring at computer screens, she likes to cook, knit, roller skate badly, and make up new nicknames for her partner and cat.

Tenor **Brendan Tuohy** has been lauded by *The Cincinnati Post* for his “big, bold tenor edged with silver,” and he continues to move audiences both in the U.S. and overseas. Recent appearances include Nemorino in *L’elisir d’amore* with Tacoma Opera, David Lang’s *The Little Match Girl Passion* with Eugene Opera, and the role of Rent-a-Cop in the world premiere of Evan Mack’s *Yeltsin in Texas*. In 2018 he returned to the Grant Park Music Festival to sing Haydn’s *Theresienmesse*, following a 2017 performance of Beethoven’s Ninth. Other engagements have included Rachel Portman’s *The Little Prince* with Opera Theater Oregon, Haydn’s *The Seasons* and Handel’s *Messiah* with Harmonia, Britten’s *War Requiem* at the University of Washington, and the iSing International Music Festival in Suzhou, China. He has performed on the opera stage at Eugene Opera, City Opera Bellevue, Vashon Opera and Berlin Opera Academy, and in concert with the Oregon Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Pacific MusicWorks and Symphony Tacoma. Recent performances include Dvořák’s *Stabat Mater* with the Northwest Symphony. Mr. Tuohy completed his academic training at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with a master’s degree in vocal performance.



Praised for “a broad, resonant baritone that is exquisitely controlled throughout his entire range,” **Zachary Lenox** has performed across North America, including the roles of Silvio (*Pagliacci*), Marcello (*La Bohème*), Marullo (*Rigoletto*), Count Almaviva (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Guglielmo and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*), Father (*Hansel and Gretel*), Sid (*Albert Herring*), Gianni

Schicchi and Betto (*Gianni Schicchi*), and Dick Deadeye (*H.M.S. Pinafore*). He has appeared with Portland Opera Opera Parallèle, Pacific Music Works, Cascadia Chamber Opera, Portland Summerfest, Portland Chamber Orchestra, Portland Concert Opera, Eugene Concert Choir, Bravo Northwest and the Astoria Music Festival. Concert appearances include Handel’s *Messiah*, *Samson* and *Judas Maccabeus*, Haydn’s *Lord Nelson Mass*, Schubert’s *Mass in G*, the Verdi and Fauré Requiems, and many works of J.S. Bach, including both the role of Jesus and the baritone arias in the *St. Matthew Passion* with Harmonia. Recent and upcoming engagements include Orff’s *Carmina Burana* with the Seattle Philharmonic, Mozart’s *Requiem* with Seattle Choral Company, and Beethoven’s Ninth with the Oregon Symphony, Auburn Symphony and Willamette Master Chorus.



Program Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach Mass in B Minor, BWV 232

Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, on March 21, 1685, and died in Leipzig on July 28, 1750. This work, featuring music composed between 1714 and 1748, calls for 2 flutes, 3 oboes (2 doubling oboe d’amore), 2 bassoons, horn, 3 trumpets, timpani, strings and continuo, plus vocal soloists and chorus.

During his later years, Bach appears to have planned various musical collections as summations for posterity of his compositional skills and his artistic development over some 30 years. Indeed, he produced superlative retrospectives of keyboard works in various forms containing considerable quantities of earlier material carefully reworked with the wisdom of age and experience, including the *Klavierübung*, *Dritter Teil*, a collection of organ works to be played in conjunction with the German text of the mass. The monumental Mass in B Minor (called “The Great Catholic Mass” by C.P.E. Bach), whose movements constitute a veritable encyclopedia of the musical styles, techniques, forms and treatments from Bach’s day and preceding generations, was also intended as such a musical legacy, but for choral forces singing the Latin text of the mass.

Bach compiled BWV 232 from two principal sources: a *Sanctus* composed for use at Christmas 1724 and a *Missa* (consisting of a Kyrie and Gloria) probably written in 1733. He adapted other sections from arias and choruses of his numerous cantatas (only a few movements seem to have been newly composed). Bach assembled the Mass late in life (between 1745 and 1750) and no evidence survives that it was ever performed in its entirety in any context (sacred or secular) during his lifetime. A complete setting of the Latin text of the mass had a place in the liturgy of Bach’s Lutheran church (St. Thomas’ Church was the “official chapel” of

the local university, whose scholars worked in Latin), yet a lengthy setting requiring large and well-trained musical forces would have had little prospect of performance, even though such a grand work might conceivably have been performed on some highly significant occasion, such as the beginning of a university term.

Although portions of the Mass did receive performances during the ensuing decades, it was not until 1859 (more than a century after Bach's death) that the entire work was heard in a single performance (in Leipzig, with Karl Riedel conducting). Bach seems to have viewed the mass as the most historically enduring of musical forms, which may explain why he invested so much care and energy in order to leave this great work as part of his "last musical will and testament" for his family, for the glory of his maker, and for the edification of future generations.

Bach structured this masterpiece in such a way that both its anthologized nature and its sense of unity are evident. His manuscript splits it into four major groupings: **Missa** (the Kyrie and Gloria); **Symbolum Nicenum** (the Credo); **Sanctus**; and **Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem**. Each group is further divided to produce 26 independent sections (not counting the repetition of the Osanna). Three stunningly powerful outcries, calling on God for help, open this mighty work, followed by an introspective instrumental interlude that sets in motion a forceful five-part fugal **Kyrie**, reminiscent of a funeral march. A warm and personal **Christe**, a love-duet accompanied by decorative violin, leads to a second **Kyrie**, a four-part fugal chorus in the "old style" of polyphony — one can hear anguished pleas for God's mercy in the fugue's tortured, chromatic subject and syncopated entrances.

The contrasting **Gloria** presents a joyous paean of praise and thanksgiving. After a rollicking "Gloria in excelsis," gently rocking eighth notes set a mood of peace and comfort in the "Et in terra pax." In the "Laudamus te," solo violin and solo soprano compete in seraphic praise, followed by a soprano-tenor duet ("Domine Deus") featuring solo flute and softened strings. In the pensive "Qui sedes," solo mezzo-soprano and oboe d'amore (an "alto oboe") ask for Christ's mercy, while solo horn and two bassoons accompany the baritone in "Quoniam tu solus sanctus." Bach adapted the glowing "Gratias agimus," somber four-part "Qui tollis" and exuberant "Cum Sancto Spiritu" from cantatas that — like all the reworkings in the Mass — he selected and rewrote with such care and skill that in most cases the new work surpasses the original. Two jubilant choruses, the dancing "Gloria" and the effervescent "Cum Sancto Spiritu," both resplendent with clarino trumpets and timpani, frame the nine-section movement.

Like the Gloria, the **Credo** (or **Symbolum Nicenum**) exhibits a self-contained musical architecture, its nine sections arranged symmetrically with the "Crucifixus" at the core. In the "Credo," five-part chorus and two violin parts

develop the first phrase of a Gregorian chant melody, introduced in sustained notes by the tenors and then sung in similar fashion by the other voices. The imitative choral "Patrem" leads to a gentle soprano-alto duet ("Et in unum Dominum"), in which the accompanying oboes d'amore echo and follow one another through the lovely world the Lord created. Then comes the weepingly beautiful "Et incarnatus est" (perhaps the last major musical movement Bach completed), its descending lines illustrating Christ coming down from the heavenly realms to become human.

The "Crucifixus," a heart-rending lament reworked from a 1714 cantata chorus, is cast in the form of a pas-sacaglia, a slow dance in triple meter that consists of variations over a repeated, chromatically descending bass line. The explosively exultant chorus "Et resurrexit" proclaims the triumph of the resurrection with trumpets and timpani, featuring a virtuosic line for the basses of the chorus. In the aria "Et in Spiritum," oboes d'amore join the bass voice as equal musical partners. The "Confiteor" takes the form of a five-part chorale fantasia in which the slow, meditative music that accompanies the appearance of the text "Et expecto," with its unsettling, kaleidoscopically shifting harmonies, leads listeners to ponder what the confession of faith in the Creed might indeed lead one to expect. This uncertain transitional passage leads directly into the closing outburst of choral and instrumental jubilation, "Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum." Bach employs a trinity of musical motives contrapuntally to express the excitement of anticipation, rejoicing and resurrection to everlasting life.

In the transcendent six-part **Sanctus**, festooned with trumpets and drums, saints join the heavenly hosts in procession to the throne of the Heavenly King as bass voices — like great chiming bells — proclaim the holiness of the Lord of Hosts. This movement is modeled on that of the church sonata, with its grand and stately opening section followed by a spirited and festive fugue ("Pleni sunt coeli et terra") as Heaven and Earth are filled with glorious splendor.

The **Osanna**, repeated after the Benedictus to build a tripartite structure, is the only double-chorus movement. Bach does not specify the instrument that accompanies the tenor in the **Benedictus**, but a flute is the usual choice (as it is this evening). In the pensive **Agnus Dei**, violins hesitate and sigh as they contemplate, with the alto soloist, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The final chorus, **Dona nobis pacem**, repeats the music of the "Gratias agimus" in the Gloria, suggesting that this prayer for peace becomes Bach's own prayer of thanksgiving for the serenity he has found after a lifetime of writing music glory under very trying circumstances. It forms a most fitting conclusion for this work, the ultimate example of Bach's genius (called "the perfect synthesis of music and theology" and the "greatest musical composition of all times and peoples") and Bach's supreme statement of his profound Christian faith.

— Lorelette Knowles

Violin

Dean Drescher
Jason Forman
Manchung Ho
Maria Hunt
Fritz Klein
Ellyn Liu
Gregor Nitsche*
Susan Ovens
Jean Provine
Stephen Provine**
Theo Schaad
Chris Sheehy

Viola

Colleen Chlastawa
Deborah Daoust
Grant Hanner*
Katherine McWilliams
Stephanie Read
Karoline Vass

Cello

Christy Johnson
Max Lieblich
Katie Sauter Messick
Annie Roberts
Valerie Ross
Matthew Wyant*

Bass

Jo Hansen
Steven Messick*

Flute

Lisa Hirayama
Shari Muller-Ho*

Oboe / Oboe d'amore[♥]

Kieran Matz
Rebecca Salmon*[♥]
Margaret Siple[♥]

Bassoon

Jeff Eldridge*
Claire Garvais

French Horn

Carey LaMothe

Trumpet

Patrick Hunninghake
Nick Simko
Janet Young*

Timpani

Dan Oie

Harpsichord

Sheila Bristow

Organ

Wyatt Smith

Theorbo

Daniel Frizzell

Soprano I

Barb Anderson
Ann Bridges
Peggy Hudson
Alivia Jones
Veena Ramakrishnan
Kyla Roberts
Courtney Ross
Nancy Shasteen
Jennylynn Vidas
Cassandra Willock

Soprano II

Karen Dunstan
Susanna Erber
Miriam Espeseth
Hsing-Hui Hsu
Peggy Kurtz §
Esther Ranjbar
Pamela Silimperi
Cassie Van Pay
Kathryn Weld

Alto

Sharon Agnew
Elyse Christensen
Anjali Chudasama
Jennifer Chung
Emily Crawford
Deanna Fryhle
Pamela Ivezić
Ellen Kaisse
Jan Kinney
Theodora Letz §
Laurie Medill

Tenor

Matthew Blinstrub
Dan Charlson §
Sixing Chen
Jeremy Edelstein
William Ekstrom
John Garlid
Aaron Keyt
Lyon Stewart
Rick Thompson

Bass

Stephen Carl
Rory Flannery
Andrew Jones
Rabi Lahiri
Jeremy Pfister Schneider
Kevin Read
Gabe Salmon
Steve Tachell
Derrick White
William Willaford §
Rick Wyckoff

** concertmaster

* principal

§ section leader



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"I was quite moved by the Seattle Bach Festival's inaugural concert in Tacoma. I had never experienced Bach played on baroque instruments before, and I was excited to be introduced to instruments like Theorbo. The musicians were so eager and passionate in their playing. It was very exciting to watch. The vocal soloists were superb, as well as the chamber choir. The whole performance was exceptional. I hope to see more performances in the future."
— Julie M.

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THURS | APRIL 10 | 2025
7:30 pm | UW School of Music at Meany Hall

This recital brings music for solo baroque violin to life with the stunning choreography of Anna Mansbridge UW Artist-in-Residence Tekla Cunningham plays works for solo baroque violin by Pizzardi, Telemann, the newly commissioned "Recitative and Danza" by Melia Watras and J.S. Bach's d minor partita. See, hear and feel the heartbreak and solace of Bach's iconic Ciaccona as embodied on the Meany Hall stage by dancers Rbedzom Tingphye and Alejandro Frederickson in choreography by Anna Mansbridge. A collaboration with the University of Washington School of Music.

Bach and Telemann: Cantatas and a Concerto

MAY 9-11 | 2025
FRI, MAY 9 | 7:30 pm | Christ Church, Tacoma
SAT, MAY 10 | 7:30 pm | Trinity Lutheran, Lynnwood
SUN, MAY 11 | 3:00 pm | St. Mark's Cathedral, Seattle

Vocal Soloists: Danielle Reutter-Horrah, Cecilia Duarte, James Reese, Tyler Duncan. Choir: The Evergreen Ensemble

PROGRAM: Telemann Concerto for 3 oboes and 3 violins, TWV 44:43; JS Bach Cantata 140 "Wachet auf" and Cantata 147 "Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben"

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Jeff Crabb

Suzanne Denison

Susanna Erber ♪

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Judy Minninch

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Peter & Tjitske van der Meulen

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Evelyn Yenson

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Kyla DeRemer ♪

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Katherine McWilliams

Gregor Nitsche (5)

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