

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE ■ SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR
2005-2006 SEASON

B minor Mass

Saturday, June 10, 2006 ■ 8:00 PM
Blessed Sacrament Church

Catherine Haight, *soprano*
Melissa Plagemann, *mezzo-soprano*
Stephen Wall, *tenor*
Brian Box, *baritone*

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
George Shangrow, *conductor*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
1685-1750

Mass in b minor, BWV 232

MISSA

Kyrie

Kyrie eleison ■ Christe eleison ■ Kyrie eleison

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis ■ Et in terra pax ■ Laudamus te

Gratias agimus tibi ■ Domine Deus

Qui tollis peccata mundi ■ Qui sedes ad dextram 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 etiam pro nobis ■ Et resurrexit

Et in Spiritum sanctum ■ Confiteor unum baptisma

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum

SANCTUS

OSANNA, BENEDICTUS, AGNUS DEI

ET DONA NOBIS PACEM

Osanna in excelsis ■ Benedictus ■ Osanna repetatur

Agnus Dei ■ Dona nobis pacem

Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.
The use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted.

PROGRAM NOTES

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Mass in b minor, BWV 232

J. S. Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, on March 21, 1685, and died in Leipzig on July 28, 1750. In addition to vocal soloists and chorus, his Mass in b minor is scored for 2 flutes, 3 oboes (two doubling oboes d'amore), 2 bassoons, horn, 3 trumpets, timpani, strings and continuo.

"I had to work hard," said Johann Sebastian Bach. "Anyone who works as hard will get just as far." The hard-laboring, long-suffering, incomparably talented German composer was born in 1685 in Eisenach, Germany, into a family that had produced church and town-band musicians for over 150 years. Orphaned at ten, he was raised by an older brother who was an organist, and who taught young Sebastian music. The boy was endlessly curious about every aspect of the art.

Bach began his professional career at 18, when he was appointed organist at a church in Arnstadt. At 23, he became court organist and chamber musician to the Duke of Weimar. During his nine years in this post (1708-1717), he gained fame as an organ virtuoso and composer. From 1717 to 1723, Bach served the Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen, producing suites, concertos, sonatas for various instruments, a great amount of keyboard music, and the six Brandenburg Concertos. Not long after the death in 1720 of his wife, Maria Barbara, the mother of his seven children, the composer married Anna Magdalena, a young singer who proved to be a loyal and understanding wife; she also provided her mate with thirteen more children.

When he was 38, Bach took the position of Cantor of St. Thomas's in Leipzig, one of the most important musical posts in Germany. He taught at the choir school, which trained the choristers of the city's chief churches (he had to teach non-musical subjects as well); he also served as music director, composer, choirmaster, and organist of St. Thomas' Church. In this post, Bach produced monumental musical masterworks, though he was occupied by the cares of his large family and circle of friends, and the tasks of a very busy professional life. He also suffered ongoing struggles with the officials of town, school, and church, who never recognized that they were dealing with perhaps the greatest musical genius ever born. The composer described himself as living "amidst continual vexation, envy, and persecution . . ." but he remained in Leipzig for 27 years. At last, his eyesight failed, and he suffered a stroke followed by a raging fever. He died July 28, 1750, leaving a small worldly estate, but bequeathing an incalculable wealth of musical treasures to succeeding generations.

Even before his death, Bach's music was considered outmoded and unfashionable, even by his own talented sons, who helped to shape the new music of their own generation. During some seven decades, Bach's music was all but forgotten, and it took musicians to rediscover this musical master. Mozart apparently heard Bach's motet, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, with a shock: "What is this? Now there is something we can learn from!" he said, and it was Beethoven's brilliant playing of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" that first gained him a reputation as a virtuoso performer in Vienna. But it was under Felix Mendelssohn in 1829 that the great St. Matthew Passion was performed for the first time since its composer's death, and thereafter, interest in and publication, study, and performance of Bach's works began to flourish worldwide.

Bach lived in a world where musicians were servant-craftsmen, and he wrote music for his masters in the churches, palaces, and town councils of 18th-century Germany. He dedicated much of his music, however, to "the glory of God alone;" and indeed, the glory of his music, some of the greatest of all time, brings us joy in the performing and in the hearing.

In his later years, Bach appears to have planned a number of musical collections as summations for posterity of his compositional skills and his artistic development over some 30 years. Indeed, he produced superlative retrospective collections 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. Was the mighty Mass in b minor, whose movements constitute a veritable encyclopedia of styles, techniques, forms, and treatments, also intended as such a musical

legacy, but for choral forces singing the Latin text of the Mass? Bach compiled the Mass from two main sources: a 1724 Sanctus, and a Missa (consisting of Kyrie and Gloria) first performed in April 1733 for the new ruler, Friedrich Augustus III, on his visit to Leipzig to accept the town's oath of allegiance (Bach had submitted the Missa with a petition asking that he be appointed court composer, but he was initially denied). He also adapted many other sections of the work from his other cantatas' arias and choruses. Only a few movements seem to have been written specifically for the Mass when Bach assembled it sometime between 1745 and 1750. There is no evidence that Bach intended this elaborate and complex work for performance on any specific occasion. A complete setting of the Latin text of the Mass had a place in the liturgy of Bach's Lutheran church, since St. Thomas' Church was the "official chapel" of the local university (whose scholars routinely worked in Latin). However, a setting that was so long and that required such large and well-trained musical forces would have had little prospect of performance, though such a grand work might conceivably have been performed on some highly significant occasion, such as the beginning of a university term. In any case, there is no evidence that the Mass in b minor was ever performed in its entirety in any context, sacred or secular, during Bach's lifetime. Although various portions of the Mass were performed over the next sixty years, it was not until 1859 (more than a century after Bach's death) that the entire Mass was heard in a single performance (in Leipzig, under the direction of Felix Mendelssohn). Bach seems to have viewed the mass as the most historically enduring of musical forms, and thus it may well have been that he invested so much care and energy in this great work in order to leave it 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. The original manuscript shows that Bach divided the work into 4 major sections, the first entitled Missa (the Kyrie and Gloria), the second called *Symbolum Nicenum* (the Credo), the third being the Sanctus, and the fourth entitled *Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei et Dona nobis pacem*. Each section is further divided to produce 26 independent movements. Of the 17 choruses in this Mass, ten are set for five voices (SSATB) in the Italian Baroque choral tradition, five are set for four voices (SATB), one is written for 6 voices (SSAATB), and one is for two antiphonal four-voice choirs.

The forceful Kyrie I, a five-part fugue reminiscent of a funeral march, is followed by a contrasting *Christe* (a lovely soprano duet). The Kyrie II is 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 its syncopated entrances.

The contrasting Gloria is a joyous hymn of thanksgiving and praise. Its opening section ("Gloria") is a reworking of a lost instrumental concerto to which Bach later added the chorus parts. The "Et in terra pax" is a new composition joined seamlessly to the "Gloria;" its gently rocking eighth-notes set a mood of peace and comfort. In the "Laudamus te," the solo violin and solo soprano voice compete in soaring, seraphic praise. The glowing "Gratias agimus," somber "Qui tollis," and exuberant "Cum Sancto spiritu" are all adaptations of pieces from cantatas which, like all the reworkings in the Mass, have been chosen and rewritten with such care and skill that in most cases the new work surpasses the original. The two jubilant choruses, the opening "Gloria" and the closing "Cum Sancto spiritu," both resplendent with clarino trumpets and timpani, frame the entire nine-section movement.

Like the Gloria, the Credo (or *Symbolum Nicenum*) has a self-contained musical architecture. Its nine sections are arranged in a symmetrical structure, with the Crucifixus at the core, and the other pieces framing it on either side corresponding to one another in form and weight in the following pattern: A ("Credo" and "Patrem") – B ("Et in unum") – C ("Et incarnatus est," "Crucifixus, and "Et resurrexit") – B ("Et in spiritum sanctum") – A ("Confiteor" and "Et expecto").

In the "Credo," the five-part chorus and the two violin parts develop the Gregorian chant melody associated with the text in the Roman Catholic liturgy. The "Patrem" is an adaptation of a chorus from *Cantata 171*. The soprano-alto duet "Et in unum Dominum" is followed by the choral "Et incarnatus est," which features a descending line

illustrating the concept of Christ's coming down from heaven to become human. The "Crucifixus," a heart-rending lament constructed from another cantata chorus, is cast in the form of a passacaglia, a slow dance in triple meter that consists of variations over a repeated, chromatically-descending bass line. This piece, in e minor, takes an unexpected harmonic turn six measures before the end, and the final cadence in G major allows the piece to end in hopeful expectation. The exultant chorus, "Et resurrexit," proclaims the triumph of the resurrection with trumpets and tympani, and features a virtuosic solo line for the basses of the chorus. In the aria, "Et in spiritum sanctum Dominum," the oboes d'amore join the bass voice as equal musical partners. The five-part choral "Confiteor" takes the form of a chorale fantasia; the slow, meditative music that accompanies the appearance of the text "Et expecto" features highly unusual harmonies that shift kaleidoscopically as the listener ponders what the confession of faith in the Creed might lead one to expect. This transitional passage leads directly into the closing outburst of choral and instrumental jubilation, "Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum," a reshaping of another cantata chorus in concerto form. Bach uses a trinity of musical motifs contrapuntally to express the excitement of anticipation, rejoicing, and resurrection to everlasting life.

The transcendent six-part Sanctus, festooned with trumpets, drums, and winds, features a swaying triplet rhythm; one can picture the saints joining the heavenly hosts in procession to the throne of the

Heavenly King. The form of 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 God's glorious splendor.

The Osanna, repeated after the Benedictus to build a tripartite structure, is the only double chorus movement of the Mass, and is a reshaping of the opening chorus of Cantata 215. The solo instrument that accompanies the solo tenor in the Benedictus is not specified, but a flute works well. The Agnus Dei is an alto solo whose model is an aria from the Ascension Oratorio. The music of the final chorus, Dona nobis pacem, is identical with that of the "Gratias agimus" in the Gloria. The reappearance of this music suggests that this prayer for peace becomes Bach's own prayer of thanksgiving for the serenity he has found after a lifetime of writing music for God's glory in 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.

Notes by Lorelette Knowles

SOLO ARTISTS

Soprano CATHERINE HAIGHT is a favorite of Seattle audiences, having performed with a variety of Northwest musical groups over the past fifteen years. In June of 2003 she was privileged to appear as a soloist along with Jane Eaglen and Vinson Cole as a part of the gala program that officially opened McCaw Hall, Seattle's new opera house. Ms. Haight has been a featured soloist with Pacific Northwest Ballet in their productions of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* for over ten years and these performances have taken her to the Kennedy Center, and Melbourne, Australia, where she received glowing reviews. Ms. Haight is especially familiar with the Baroque repertoire, having performed most of the major works of Bach and Handel, but she is equally at home with the composers of the Classical and Romantic eras. A frequent performer with OSSCS, her most recent collaboration with the ensembles was a performance of *Messiah* last year. She has made three recordings, including *Messiah*, with OSSCS and conductor George Shangrow. Ms. Haight is a member of the voice faculty at Seattle Pacific University.

Tenor STEPHEN WALL has appeared frequently with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers since 1985. He has been featured in leading and supporting roles with Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Tacoma Opera, and has soloed with the symphonies of Seattle, Vancouver, Spokane, Everett, Bellevue, Yakima, Pendleton, Great Falls and Sapporo (Japan). Mr. Wall appears on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah* and sang the role of Joe in Seattle Opera's heralded production of *La Fanciulla del West*.

MELISSA PLAGEMANN, mezzo-soprano, performs frequently throughout the Pacific Northwest, and has appeared with some of the area's finest ensembles, including the Seattle Symphony, Tacoma Opera, Skagit Opera, the Seattle Choral Company, Kitsap Opera, and NOISE, among others. Highlights of the 2005-2006 season for Ms. Plagemann include Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* with Kitsap Opera, and Penelope in scenes from Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* with the Seattle Early Music Guild's Accademia d'Amore (led by acclaimed lutenist Stephen Stubbs). Operatic repertoire in recent seasons includes both 2nd and 3rd

Ladies in Mozart's *Magic Flute*, the title role in *Carmen*, and the Marquise in Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*. Concert engagements this season include Mozart's *Requiem* with the Columbia Chorale of Oregon and Bach's *Cantata 18* at the Town Hall Bach Festival. In March of 2005, she appeared with the Seattle Symphony in Benaroya Hall, singing the title role in semi-staged scenes from *Carmen*. Other favorite concert performances have included Bach's *Johannes Passion* and *Magnificat*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Handel's *Messiah*. Ms. Plagemann is also an enthusiastic and sought-after performer of new music, and has performed with several ensembles dedicated to performing the works of living composers, including Sonic Lab, 16 visions/Fisher Ensemble, and the Esoterics vocal ensemble. She is a founding member of the Seattle New Music Ensemble, and with them has had the opportunity to perform several staples of 20th century repertoire, including Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and John Cage's *Aria*. Awards for Ms. Plagemann include first prizes in the 2004 Seattle Ladies' Musical Club competition/tour and the Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan Society's annual competition. She holds degrees in music from the University of Victoria, Canada, and Indiana University in Bloomington.

A native of Washington, baritone BRIAN BOX received his Masters degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University in 1985. Mr. Box performs frequently with many Northwest ensembles, including Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, Seattle Choral Company, Seattle Pro Musica, Bellevue Chamber Chorus, and Choir of the Sound. He has performed with Rudolf Nureyev, singing Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* to Mr. Nureyev's dance. Mr. Box has been a frequent featured soloist with OSSCS in such works as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, and *Christmas Oratorio*, and appears on their new CD recording of Handel's *Messiah*, as well as on previous albums of music by Bach and Vaughan Williams. The regional winner of San Francisco Opera's 1988 Merola Opera Program, he made his Seattle Opera debut as the Corporal in Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment* and has subsequently performed the roles of Corphee in *Don Carlos*, the Shepherd in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Lucas' friend in *The Passion of Jonathan Wade*. For Tacoma Opera, Mr. Box created the role of Franz in the world premiere of Carol Sams' *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. He has also performed extensively with Seattle Opera's Education Program and Northwest Operas in the Schools.

We wish to thank our co-producers of the 2005-2006 season:



KYRIE

Kyrie eleison.

Chorus

Lord, have mercy.

Duet

Christe eleison.

soprano, alto

Christ, have mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

Chorus

Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo,

Chorus

Glory be to God on high,

Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Chorus

And on earth peace to men of good will.

Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te.**Aria***alto*We praise thee,
we bless thee,
we worship thee,
we glorify thee.

Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam.

Chorus

We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,

Duet*soprano, tenor*O Lord God, heavenly King,
God the Father Almighty,
O Lord, the only-begotten Son,
Jesus Christ, the Most High,
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

Deus Pater omnipotens,

Domine Fili unigenite,

Jesu Christe altissime,

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,

Qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.**Chorus**Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,
miserere nobis.**Aria***alto*Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy upon us.Quoniam tu solus sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,

tu solus altissimus Jesu Christe,

Aria*bass*For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high,Cum Sancto Spiritu in gloria Dei Patris,
Amen.**Chorus**With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father,
Amen.

INTERMISSION

CREDO (SYMBOLUM NICENUM)

Credo in unum Deum.

Chorus

I believe in one God.

Credo in unum Deum,
Patrem omnipotentem,
factorem coeli et terrae,
visibilium omnium et invisibilium;**Chorus**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible;Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,
Filius Dei unigenitum
et ex Patre natum ante omnia secula;
Deum de Deo,
lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
genitum, non factum consubstantialem Patri,
per quem omnia facta sunt;
Qui propter nos homines
et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.**Duet***soprano, alto*And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
and born of the Father before all worlds;
God of God,
light of light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
Who for us men
and for our salvation came down from heaven.Et incarnatus est
de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine,
et homo factus est.**Chorus**And was incarnate
by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato,
passus et sepultus est.**Chorus**And was crucified also for us
under Pontius Pilate,
suffered and was buried.

Et resurrexit tertia die
secundum scripturas,
et ascendit in coelum,
sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris,
et iterum venturus est
cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos,
cuius regni non erit finis;

Et in Spiritum Sanctum Dominum et vivificantem,
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit;
qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur;
qui locutus est per Prophetas;
Et unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum.

Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum
et vitam venturi saeculi,
Amen.

Chorus

And the third day he rose again
according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
sitteth at the right hand of the Father,
and shall come again
with glory to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end;

Aria
bass

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the prophets;
And in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Chorus

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

Chorus

And I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come,
Amen.

SANCTUS

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria eius.

Chorus

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of his glory.

OSANNA, BENEDICTUS, AGNUS DEI ET DONA NOBIS PACEM

Osanna in excelsis

Chorus

Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.

Aria
tenor

Blessed is he who cometh
in the name of the Lord.

Osanna in excelsis

Chorus

Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Aria
alto

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

Dona nobis pacem.

Chorus

Grant us peace.

Translation: © 1984 Z. Philip Ambrose

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

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Stephen Provine**					

* *principal*
** *concertmaster*

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