



**The Broadway Symphony
and
The Seattle Chamber Singers**
George Shangrow, Conductor

present

Johann Sebastian Bach's
MAGNIFICAT IN D-MAJOR
AND
**ORCHESTRAL SUITES
I AND IV**

September 29, 1985 3:00 p.m.
Meany Hall, University of Washington Campus

The Broadway Symphony and The Seattle Chamber Singers are now entering their seventh and seventeenth seasons, respectively. Under the dynamic leadership of their founder and musical director, George Shangrow, the two ensembles have achieved great respect and status in the artistic community of the Pacific Northwest, and continue to lead the way in featuring local solo artists and composers. The Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers produce their own annual concert seasons, independent of government and academic affiliations, and have goals to become a fully professional performing arts group. During calendar year 1985, these dedicated musicians will have produced and performed over 32 concerts of the music of J. S. Bach, in honor of his 300th birthday. These were in addition to their regular season programming in both 84-85 and 85-86! Above all else, love of music and energetic, entertaining performances are what the Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers give to their audiences.

George Shangrow is the musical director and conductor of the Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers. His musicianship and leadership provide the basis for the success of both of these groups. He has become known and respected for his role in music education in the Puget Sound neighborhood, having been a lecturer for Seattle Opera, Ladies Musical Club, Womens University Club, Classical Music Supporters, Seattle University, and Seattle Central Community College. Since 1969 he has been Director of Music at the University Unitarian Church, where he has built a strong music program and has produced many popular series of concerts, including "Basically Baroque", the Bach Year Cantata Series, and Evenings in Vienna. Several of Seattle's professional and amateur ensembles have featured Shangrow as guest conductor, including the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony Players Organization, the Seattle Philharmonic, the Northwest Boy Choir and the Choir of the Sound. He is frequently invited to adjudicate competitions for both professional and student competitions. He has active membership in the American Choral Directors Association, National Opera Association, and the American Guild of Organists.

Guest soloists

Ann Erickson has often been a featured soprano soloist with the Seattle Chamber Singers. She has performed in several of the Bach Year cantatas and in former seasons did solo work in the several Handel oratorios produced by the Chamber Singers. Presently she is one of the lead-singers at University Unitarian Church and teaches in elementary school music programs.

Carmen Leon makes her debut with the Broadway Symphony and Seattle Chamber Singers with this performance of the Bach Magnificat. She has rich experience in baroque oratorio. She recently was the featured soloist with the Opus 4 Quartet, and she is currently the mezzo-soprano soloist at Trinity Episcopal Church in Seattle.

Barton Nye Green was the tenor soloist in two of the Broadway Symphony — Seattle Chamber Singers Bach extravaganzas: The St. John Passion and the Mass in b-minor. Green is a student at the University of Washington in vocal performance, and a member of the Collegium Musicum. He will be the new tenor soloist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Seattle, and is scheduled to solo with several of the Seattle area's choral ensembles during 1985-86.

Norman Smith, bass, has returned to Seattle after enjoying a successful career in Opera in Essen, Germany. He studied music at the University of Washington working principally with Leon Lishner. He has performed extensively in the Northwest, including leading roles with U of W Opera. He is the bass soloist at St. James Cathedral in Seattle.

The Broadway Symphony and The Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, *Conductor*
September 29, 1985 3:00 p.m. Meany Hall

Johann Sebastian Bach's

Orchestral Suite No. I in C Major, BWV 1066

Ouverture
Courante
Gavotte I and II
Forlane
Minuet I and II
Bourree I and II
Passepied I and II

Orchestral Suite No. IV in D Major, BWV 1069

Ouverture
Bourree I and II
Gavotte
Minuet I and II
Rejouissance

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Magnificat in D Major, BWV 243

Chorus
Mezzo-soprano aria
Soprano aria
Chorus
Bass aria
Mezzo-soprano and tenor duet
Chorus
Tenor aria
Mezzo-soprano aria
Chorus (trio)
Chorus
Chorus

Program Notes on the Orchestral Suites

by Gary Fladmoe

Suite No. 1 in C Major, BWV 1066

Most, if not all, of the orchestral music of Johann Sebastian Bach comes from that segment of his career spent in Kothén, the capital of a principality within the Duchy of Anhalt. Bach moved there in December of 1717, and the time spent in Kothén represented a time away from his active service in the Lutheran Church.

Bach's orchestral music seems to define itself rather tightly into three classifications — concerto grossi as represented by the six works dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg, Four Suites for Orchestra, and the Concerti for Solo and Duo instruments. As the purist looks at the suites, the conclusion can be reached that the commonly held concept of the suite was not what Bach intended by his venture into the form. The common Baroque suite is a series of dances arranged in order of allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue with optional extra dances. Bach combined the French Overture style (slow, dotted rhythm — fast fugato — slow, dotted rhythm) with his collection of dances. He purposely chose the title Overtures in French to identify his suites, a seeming allusion to the style popularized by Lully before him. Music writer Kay Jaffee has even gone so far as to compare Bach's orchestral suites to the collections of music from Tchaikovsky ballets or the compilations of dance music from popular Broadway shows which typically feature an overture-like section followed by "highlights" of favorite dance music from the particular larger work.

Of the four suites, Nos. 2 and 3 are most frequently heard and movements such as the Air from the third suite have become all-time favorites among concert audiences, spawning a variety of transcriptions and arrangements. Suites 1 and 4 are far less known and recognized, but they nevertheless contain charming musical materials.

Suite No. 1 in C Major is scored for woodwinds and strings. It consists of seven movements: Overture, Courante, Gavottes I and II, Forlane, Minuets I and II, Bourrees I and II, and Passepieds I and II. As one can readily see, it deviates considerably from the typical Baroque dance suite! This suite was the first of the four to be composed.

Suite No. 4 in D Major is only a five-movement work, beginning as do each of the other three suites with an overture. This is followed in turn by Bourrees I and II, a Gavotte, Minuets I and II, and, lastly, Rejouissance (rejoicing)! Evidence tends to suggest that this suite was actually the second of the four to be composed. Bach utilized materials from the first movement in the first movement of his Cantata #110, *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens*, a practice not uncommon for this time. The date of the cantata has been established as 1725. It is conjectured that the suite was completed about the same time, thereby placing it second in the order of composition among the four suites, and again atypical of the form in general.

These two works lack the popularity of the other two suites in the set, but they contain much beautiful and even entertaining music. They have without question provided musicologists with food for investigative pursuits, and they provide remarkable insights into Bach as a secular composer, a different and refreshing view of the master.



Program Notes on Magnificat

by Reverend Dr. Rebecca Parker

Among the many delights of Bach's music is the brilliant way in which Bach gives musical expression to a religious sensibility. As an interpreter of the themes of Christian theology Bach goes beyond the illustrative drama we enjoy in Handel, to become a profound commentator on the meaning of the texts he sets. The subtlety and sensitivity of Bach's religious insight transcends dogmatism — his music is not a vehicle to give expression to a truth higher than art. In his work we find a perfect integration of belief and aesthetic, so much so that we might say in Bach's music it is revealed that belief itself is an aesthetic, a way of feeling and structuring the world that is simultaneously intellectual, emotional, and sensual.

In this capacity to create a highly integrated icon of structures of religious feeling Bach stands at the pinnacle of a tradition. Luther, the theologian whose rebellious exuberance inaugurated the reformed tradition Bach was part of was a great lover of music, who composed hymn tunes in between his battles with the Catholic church.

"God has preached the gospel through music, too, as may be seen in Josquin, all of whose compositions flow freely, gently, and cheerfully, are not forced or cramped by rules, and are like the song of the finch," Luther is reported to have said. The protestant spirit is in favor of freedom and cheer, and generally (at least in its natal innocence) hostile to constrictive rules. Luther's family and friends often gathered to sing, and Josquin de Prez (d. 1521) was a particular favorite. It is Luther to whom traditionally the saying has been ascribed:

*He who loves not women, wine, and song
Remains a fool his whole life long.*

The theological understanding of music attributed to music the power to shape the state of the soul. Thus joyful music created a joyful soul. If music were inelegant, corrupt, unintegrated, dogmatic, restrictive these unpleasant qualities would pollute the soul exposed to the music.

Augustine argues that music has the power to create in the soul a state of grace or a state of corruption depending on whether or not it embodies rhythms and structures of wholeness or disruption. Bach was well acquainted with these theories of music, and appears to have been quite interested in them, judging by the books in his library. Among his books was one by a contemporary physician who translated the theological notion to physiology. He contended that the body's cardio-vascular system was a network of vibrations. If the body's internal rhythm's were out of sorts a person would be ill. Health was restored when the body's blood vessels vibrated in harmony. Music, this physician believed, had the power to heal the body. An appreciation of Bach's music is deepened when we understand that he composed from a perspective that understood music to have the power to make the sick well, and to bring souls into a state of grace.

Bach's setting of the Magnificat text gives evidence of Bach's ability to embody the meaning of grace, and to create music that functions to impart grace to the listener. The Magnificat text is the canticle sung by Mary in the Gospel according to Luke at the moment when she greets her kinswoman Elizabeth. Each woman — one old, past the age of childbearing, and one young, and virginal — is expecting to give birth to a child who could not possibly be. The women, like certain foremothers before them, Hannah and Sarah, who also gave birth when it was impossible for them to do so, are caretakers of a mysterious knowledge. Their knowledge is that the impossible can

and does happen. Mary, on discovering she is pregnant goes to visit Elizabeth who has also conceived. When Elizabeth sees Mary the babe she is carrying leaps for joy in her womb, and Mary responds with her song of joy.

The Magnificat text celebrates the way in which God turns the world upsidedown. It's recurring theme is that the Divine conspires to reverse the ordinary established structure, to disrupt the flow of determinism and fate, and to inaugurate surprising transformations. The powerless become powerful, and the powerful are debased. The hungry have a feast and the rich find themselves empty-handed. All that is considered unimportant, useless, or degraded becomes the locus of supreme value. Mary and Elizabeth themselves are testimony to God's preference for turning the tables. As women they experienced themselves to be outcasts from society. The mysterious secret they bear is that they are not outcasts at all, but co-conspirators with the Divine Disturber.

Bach's Magnificat was first performed on Christmas Day, 1723, during evening Vespers. The music celebrates the cosmic reversal that Christmas commemorates. The all-powerful, supreme, transcendent God has abandoned heaven in favor of earth. The King of the Universe abnegates the throne in order to materialize as a helpless infant wondered at by animals, peasants, and incomprehensible to all but the powerless, rejected, and disinfranchized. The Christian vision is essentially a comic notion: that nothing is the way we expect it to be. Bach's music carries this theme.

The opening chorus is bouyant, exuberant and celebrative, and is followed by a warmer more intimately gracious aria which leads into a third movement that is even more interior, and dark. The descent of God to earth is thus, perhaps, musically symbolized as a movement into depth. One can imaginatively superimpose the brilliant choir of angels singing to the shepherds over the opening chorus which comes to the ear like a burst of light, and the subsequent journey of the shepherds to kneel in the dark interior of the barn is echoed by the movement to closeness and intimacy that happens in the music.

Bach's setting of the third movement text, "For God has regarded the oppressed state of his (sic) servant, and henceforth I will be called blessed by all generations," is particularly marvelous. All but the last two words are sung by the solo soprano in a beautiful melody intertwined with the oboe. On the last two words (omnes generationes — all generations) the chorus enters becoming the many generations lauding Mary. One can almost visualize the flowering growth of a family tree as each entrance of the theme climbs up stepwise, over and over again. The dramatic reversal of Mary from solitary obscurity to communal reverence is thus celebrated with musical power.

The fourth movement gives expression to profound confidence and trust. The only aria to use a bass soloist, the music embodies a feeling of being "grounded." The foundation accompaniment in the cello and double-bass functions as a ground bass as its ritornello theme is repeated throughout the movement, evoking a sense of security.

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Bach sets the text "and his (sic) mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear him" by emphasizing the contrast between fear and mercy. When the singers sing "timentibus" the music is harmonically confused. But this tremulousness is followed by melodic consolation from the strings and flutes.

Movements six, seven, and eight form a thematic unit, at the center of the whole Magnificat. Here the Christmas theme of the dramatic reversals effected by God are given their most obvious and marvelous treatment in the text and the music. The Chorus enters to sing "He has shown strength in His arm" with a fist clenching theme. When the proud are scattered Bach disperses the word "dispersit" between different sections of the chorus and orchestra creating a musical image of disjunction. The movement comes to a climax and then is dramatically closed with a sudden adagio setting of the words "the imagination of their hearts." In this way the music caricatures the proud as supremely pompous. The sound puffs up with great dignity, but the listener is well advised to recollect that pride cometh before a fall.

The tenor aria presents just this sentiment as the words "he hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble" are sung. The music sweeps downwards as the powerful are dumped out of their thrones, and leaps upwards with the word exaltavit.

The fall of the proud and powerful is complete in movement eight. Pompousness has disappeared. The humble poor amble into view, with a foolishly cheerful theme played by pizzicato cellos and flutes. All that is humble, ordinary, and usually forgotten is here displayed as triumphant. Bach's comprehension of the comedy of the Gospels is nowhere else so brilliantly portrayed. Death, darkness, the roman empire, papal impudence, and all forms of false power are vanquished. The homey prevails. The zen-like conclusion to this movement tells you what happened to the rich.

The text to the Trio in movement nine speaks of God's faithful remembrance of God's promises. Bach evokes the meaning of memory by having the oboe in the background of the singers play slowly an old German Magnificat chant. As the singers sing, their song is haunted by the ancient voices of those who sang before.

Finally the Magnificat comes to a conclusion with grand choruses. The fugal setting of "As he spake to our forefathers..." continues the evocation of the ancestors who made their appearance in movement nine. The Gloria recalls us to the brilliant sounds of the opening movement. Florid coloratura phrases twists into homophonic acclamations. The words of the Great Thanksgiving prayer that precede the singing of the Sanctus come to mind: "joining our voices with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven whoforever sing this unending hymn of praise."

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After musically making present past generations, future generations, and the choir of angels, Bach concludes the Magnificat by repeating the music of the opening chorus when the words are sung "as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." All voices past, present, future, on heaven and on earth are joined where we began, with praise.

Bach might have enjoyed an epilogue from T. S. Eliot:

"The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Or, if Bach didn't care for that sentiment, at least he would have liked another line from Eliot, "You are the music, while the music lasts."

Rev. Rebecca Parker has been a member of the Broadway Symphony since its second year. She is Pastor at the Wallingford United Methodist Church. Rev. Parker and Wallingford Church are co-sponsors of the Solo Recital series of The Bach Year.

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George Shangrow, *Conductor*

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The Broadway Symphony

George Shangrow, *Conductor*

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(*oboe d' amore*)
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