

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE ■ SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
GEORGE SHANGROW, MUSIC DIRECTOR
2000-2001 SEASON

Magnificat

Friday, December 1, 2000 ■ 8:00 PM

Eastside Foursquare Church

Sunday, December 3, 2000 ■ 3:00 PM

Immaculate Conception Church

Joyce Allison, *soprano*
Emily Lunde, *mezzo-soprano*
Robert McPherson, *tenor*
Jerry Sams, *tenor*
Steven Tachell, *baritone*

Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
George Shangrow, *conductor*

HENRY PURCELL
1659-1695

Magnificat, from Morning and Evening
Service in B-flat, Z. 230

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER
1645-1704

Magnificat in G Major

Robert McPherson, *tenor* ■ Jerry Sams, *tenor*
Steven Tachell, *baritone*

ANTONIO VIVALDI
1678-1741

Magnificat in g minor, RV 610

*Magnificat anima mea – Et exultavit –
Et misericordia – Fecit potentiam –
Desposuit – Esurientes – Suscepit Israel –
Sicut locutus – Gloria patri*

Joyce Allison, *soprano* ■ Emily Lunde, *mezzo-soprano*
Robert McPherson, *tenor*

INTERMISSION

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
1685-1750

Magnificat in D, BWV 243

*Magnificat anima mea – Et exultavit –
Quia respexit – Omnes generationes –
Quia fecit – Et misericordia – Fecit potentiam –
Desposuit – Esurientes – Suscepit Israel –
Sicut locutus – Gloria patri*

Joyce Allison, *soprano* ■ Emily Lunde, *mezzo-soprano*
Robert McPherson, *tenor* ■ Steven Tachell, *baritone*

Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.
Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted during the performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

In the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Mary bursts into joyful song to the Lord when she goes to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who is soon to give birth to John the Baptist. Mary has recently learned that she will become the mother of Jesus, and the first phrase of her song of praise in Latin is “Magnificat anima mea, Dominum” (“My soul magnifies the Lord”). This “Song of Mary” has therefore become known as “The Magnificat,” and its text, in English and in Latin, has received the entire range of musical treatments over the past two millennia, from single-line “plainsong” settings to complex and dramatic arrangements for choirs, soloists, and all kinds and combinations of instruments. Almost every great church composer has composed settings of this canticle. In this performance you will hear four settings of the *Magnificat*, one by each of four different composers of the Baroque era (the period of music history from 1600 to 1750). As you listen, let your spirit, like Mary’s, rejoice and be lifted in thanksgiving for the blessings you enjoy, especially this marvelous music!

HENRY PURCELL

Magnificat, from Morning and Evening Service, Z. 230

Henry Purcell was born in London around 1659 and died there on November 21, 1695. This setting of the Magnificat, originally part of Purcell’s Morning and Evening Service in B-flat major, is performed here by a capella chorus in a transposition to the key of C.

King James II’s Attorney General referred to Henry Purcell as “the Orpheus Britannicus...a greater musical genius England never had.” Composer, organist, and bass and countertenor singer, he ranks among the finest musicians of the Baroque period, and among the greatest of all English composers. Purcell excelled in every musical field he entered, composing operas and incidental music for plays; odes and “welcome songs;” secular cantatas; anthems and other sacred music; and secular songs, chamber music, and keyboard pieces. He was exceptionally skillful in setting the English language and employed to particularly fine effect the ground bass, in which ever-varying musical phrases are accompanied by a repeated pattern of bass notes. It is unfortunate that his music is heard relatively rarely today, though *Dido and Aeneas*, his operatic masterpiece written in 1689 for a fashionable girls’ school, remains the earliest English opera that is still staged regularly.

By the age of eight, Purcell was already writing music. He became a chorister at the Chapel Royal in 1668, and studied composition with John Blow, the organist of Westminster Abbey, whom he succeeded in 1679. In 1682 he became one of the organists of the Chapel Royal, where he also sang in the choir and was later appointed organ maker and keeper of the king’s instruments. He died in 1695, probably of tuberculosis.

Purcell sets the English text of the *Magnificat* for four-part chorus that alternates with smaller groups of singers (first and second soprano and alto; alto, tenor, and bass; and first and second alto, tenor, and bass). The “Glory be to the Father...” is a canon (round) for soprano, alto, and tenor, which is accompanied by the bass and which features surprising harmonies!

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER

Magnificat in G Major

Charpentier was born in Paris around 1634, and died there on February 24, 1704. In addition to vocal soloists and chorus, this work is scored for 2 flutes, strings and continuo.

The French Baroque composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier was not as successful materially as his powerful Paris contemporary, Jean-

Baptiste Lully (who was King Louis XIV’s director of music), but Charpentier was considered by many to be Lully’s musical equal, and perhaps even his superior. Although he never held a position in the musical establishment of Louis XIV, he achieved considerable esteem through his musical ability, productiveness, and versatility. He studied music in Rome, and wrote a large number of sacred works, producing both vocal and instrumental music for churches, private chapels, and convents. He also wrote many theater compositions, including incidental music for plays, chamber operas, and two full-scale lyric tragedies. He was in the service of the French crown prince, and was appointed master of music at the Jesuit Church of St. Louis and later at the Sainte-Chapelle. In Charpentier’s *Magnificat*, solos, a trio and a duet alternate with sections for four-part chorus. Note the composition’s many contrasts: sonic (solo voices give way to ensembles and to the chorus), metric (there are sections in duple meter and in triple meter), and textural (chordal and contrapuntal writing appear in the ensemble and the choral sections).

ANTONIO VIVALDI

Magnificat, RV 610

Vivaldi was born March 4, 1678, in Venice and died July 28, 1741, in Vienna. In addition to vocal soloists and chorus, this work is scored for 2 oboes, strings and continuo.

According to his own account, within a year of his ordination to the priesthood in 1703, Antonio Vivaldi, Italian composer and master violinist, no longer wished to celebrate mass, possibly due to physical ailments (“tightness of the chest”). It may be, however, that Vivaldi was feigning illness – he is said to have left the altar at times in order to write down a musical idea. In the year of his ordination, Vivaldi was appointed *maestro di violino* at the Ospedale della Pietà, one of the Venetian girls’ “orphanages.” (This “hospital” was in fact a home for the illegitimate daughters of noblemen and their numerous mistresses; it was generously endowed by the girls’ “anonymous” fathers; the young ladies were well cared-for; and the musical standards were high. Many of Vivaldi’s 550 concerti were exercises that he would play with his talented students). He was associated with the Pietà, usually as music director, until 1740, teaching, composing oratorios and concertos (a type of music built upon the “competition” between a small orchestra and various solo instruments) for weekly concerts, and establishing an international reputation. Vivaldi also composed and produced operas in Venice from 1713 on, and traveled to Rome, Mantua, and elsewhere to supervise his operas’ performances. About 1740 he took a position at the court of Emperor Charles VI in Vienna.

Vivaldi’s setting of the *Magnificat* is for four-part chorus, soloists, and orchestra. It consists of nine relatively brief numbers, seven sung in this performance by the chorus and two by soloists. “Et exultavit” is sung by soprano, alto, and tenor soloists in turn, who are joined by the chorus at the words, “omnes generationes” (“all generations”). “Et misericordia” is a sorrowful section, with the word “timentibus” (“that fear him”) being emphasized through long, sustained notes, descending lines, and harsh chromaticism. The “Deposuit” section is written entirely in octaves, for the voices and for their accompanying instruments. The words “He has put down” are set to descending lines, and the words “and has exalted” to ascending lines. “Esurientes implevit” is a duet for two soprano soloists, who fill the emptiness of the word “inanes” (“empty”) with an abundance of rapidly-running notes! “Sicut locutus” is set imitatively for soprano, alto, and bass, and the full chorus returns to conclude the work with the “Gloria patri.”

SOLO ARTISTS

A highly sought-after stage actress and concert soloist, soprano **Joyce Allison** has performed extensively as a soloist with many orchestras, opera companies and theaters including Theatre Magnifique, Bellevue Opera, Cascade Symphony, The Musical Company, Eastside Musical Theater, NOISE, Seattle Opera Guild and Broadway Rose. As a concert soloist, she has had the privilege of singing under the batons of Robert Shaw, Joseph Walnig and James DePriest, performing works including the Mass in b minor, *St. John Passion* and *St. Matthew Passion* of Bach, Fauré's *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*. She was the Opera Diva in the highly acclaimed musical and theatrical tour de force Teatro Zinzanni and has sung with the Seattle Opera Chorus since 1996. The *Oregonian* has said of her work that it is "especially appealing" and her "soaring soprano and plucky demeanor are all one could ask for in a heroine." Building on the foundation of her degree in vocal performance, Miss Allison also is an esteemed director, composer, writer and private vocal instructor, teaching out of her home in Kirkland. She specializes in vocal technique and personalized coaching in many styles.

One of the Pacific Northwest's premier mezzo-sopranos, **Emily Lunde** is a Seattle native who has sung extensively with many of the area's finest ensembles, including the Seattle Symphony, OSSCS, Northwest Sinfonietta, Seattle Choral Company, Choir of the Sound, Everett Symphony and Walla Walla Symphony. Ms. Lunde also performs regularly with the Pacific Northwest Ballet in their productions of *The Nutcracker* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her repertoire runs the gamut from early music to classical and contemporary works. She has a special affinity for music of the Baroque period, having performed both of the great Bach passions as well as many of Handel's oratorios, including *Messiah*, which she recently recorded with OSSCS. Ms. Lunde has recently been featured at Benaroya Hall in performances of Maurice Ravel's *Shéhérazade*, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with OSSCS, and in a concert performance of Deems Taylor's opera *Peter Ibbetson* with the Seattle Symphony.

Tenor **Robert McPherson** was hailed for his "honesty, clarity and sweet lyricism" in his signature role, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, in his Opera Memphis debut, a role he will reprise with Greensboro Opera and Santa Barbara Grand Opera in 2001. A masterful interpreter of Rossini's work, his performances include Don Ramiro (*La Cenerentola*), Lindoro (*L'Italiana in Algeri*) and Don Narciso (*Il Turco in Italia*). Mr. McPherson's versatility and range has led to success in a variety of roles, including Ferrando (*Così fan Tutte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Tamino (*Die*

Zauberflöte), Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Sam (*Susannah*), Curley (*Of Mice and Men*), Roméo (*Roméo et Juliette*), Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), and Il Duca (*Rigoletto*). In addition to Opera Memphis, he has performed with Pacific Opera Victoria, Opera San José, Tacoma Opera, Eugene Opera, and Spokane Opera. In 2001 he will make his Dallas Opera debut as Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Equally adept in concert repertoire, Mr. McPherson made his professional debut with the Seattle Symphony at the age of twenty-three, and has since performed Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, and the role of the Shepherd in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. He has also performed with the Mexico City Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, American Sinfonietta, Masterworks Chorale of San Mateo, New West Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and the Carmel Bach Music Festival in such works as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*, and Haydn's *Creation*. With Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers he has been a featured soloist in Huntley Beyer's *St. Mark Passion* and Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*.

Tenor **Jerry Sams** has been an active soloist and chorus member with the Seattle Chamber Singers from the early years of the ensemble through the present. With OSSCS he has been a featured soloist in most of the great Handel oratorios, as well as many Bach cantatas and works of Mozart and other masters of the choral repertoire. Mr. Sams studied voice at Pomona College and the University of California at Santa Barbara, and since that time has sung with many of the choral groups in the Bay Area and the Pacific Northwest.

Baritone **Steven Tachell**, a native of Seattle, began his professional singing career as resident bass-baritone in St. Gallen, Switzerland. His travels led him back to the United States, where he sang leading roles with Seattle Opera, Boston Opera, Arizona Opera, Chattanooga Opera and other regional opera houses. His appearances over the years with Seattle Opera included Sharpless in *Madame Butterfly*, Ping in *Turandot*, and many other supporting roles. While in New York, he was seen in a nationally televised performance of Richard Strauss' early opera *Guntram* (with Eve Queler and the Opera Orchestra of New York), in the title role in *Don Giovanni*, and as Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dulcamara in *L'Elixir d'Amour*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Tonio in *I Pagliacci*, and Escamillo in *Carmen*. As a concert soloist, Mr. Tachell has appeared with the Seattle, Sapporo, and Spokane Symphonies, Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, and numerous others on the East Coast and in Europe.

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