

An Afternoon of BACH

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2009 – 3:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Linda Tsatsanis, soprano
Melissa Plagemann, mezzo-soprano
Stephen Wall, tenor
Brian Box, baritone
Quinton Morris, violin

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE -- SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
George Shangrow, conductor

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Lutheran Miss in G Major, BWV 236

Chorus: *Kyrie*

Chorus: *Gloria*

Bass Aria: *Gratias*

Soprano/Alto Duet: *Domine Deus*

Tenor aria: *Quoniam: Adagio*

Chorus: *Cum Sancto Spiritu*

Concerto for Violin in a minor, BWV 1041

Without tempo indication

Andante

Allegro assai

Quinton Morris, violin

– Intermission –

Cantata BWV 79, "Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn' und Schild"

Chorus

Alto Aria

Chorale: "Nun danket Alle Gott"

Bass recitative

Soprano/Bass Duet

Chorale

Chorus

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

OUR SOLOISTS

Canadian soprano **Linda Tsatsanis** enjoys an active and diverse career. Hailed as "ravishing" (New York Times) and possessing a voice with "crystalline purity" (Seattle Times), Ms. Tsatsanis' career spans the concert hall, opera stage, and performance in movies and television. Ms. Tsatsanis has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Auburn Symphony, and Pacific Baroque Orchestra and has made recent appearances at the Indianapolis, Boston and Bloomington Early Music Festivals. She keeps a demanding performance schedule in the Pacific Northwest in addition to performances around the United States and Canada. Ms. Tsatsanis holds degrees from the University of Toronto and Indiana University. She has a new solo album with Origin Classical, *And I Remain: Three Love Stories*, and can also be heard on recordings by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Naxos. Ms. Tsatsanis is a member of *Plaine & Easie*, winners of the 2009 Early Music America Medieval/Renaissance Competition. Currently, Ms. Tsatsanis is living in Seattle where she studies with Joyce Guyer.

Melissa Plagemann has been praised by audiences and the press for her "clear, burnished voice" (Tacoma News Tribune) and "attractively expressive mezzo" (Crosscut Seattle). She performs frequently with the finest musical organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest, and is rapidly becoming known for the passion and musical intelligence she brings to performances on opera and concert stages alike. Upcoming performances include Handel's *Messiah* with the Tacoma and Auburn Symphonies, Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio* with Orchestra Seattle, *The Nutcracker* and *West Side Story Suite* with Pacific Northwest Ballet, *Rosina* with the newly formed Vashon Opera, and performances with the Second City Chamber Series, the Affinity Chamber Players, and at the American Harp Association national conference. She is on the faculty at Pacific Lutheran University.

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

Violin Susan Carpenter Dean Drescher Stephen Hegg Manchung Ho Fritz Klein** Pam Kummert Mark Lutz Stephen Province* Elizabeth Robertson Theo Schaad Janet Showalter Kenna Smith-Shangrow	Viola Katherine McWilliams* Lorraine Perrin Andrew Schirmer Ella Wallace Cello David Boyle Annie Roberts Katie Sauter Messick Matthew Wyant*	Bass Jo Hansen* Steve Messick Flute Jenna Calixto Shari Müller-Ho* Oboe David Barnes John Dimond*	Bassoon Judy Lawrence* Flugelhorn David Cole Janet Young*	Harpichord/Organ Robert Kechley Timpani Dan Oie ** <i>concertmaster</i> * <i>principal</i>
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SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

Soprano Barbara Anderson Crissa Cugini Kyla DeRemer Cinda Freece Alexandra Heron Jill Kraakmo Peggy Kurtz Lila Woodruff May Kia Sams Nancy Shasteen	Melissa Thirloway Liesel van Cleeff Alto Sharon Agnew Julia Akoury Thiel Jane Blackwell Deanna Fryhle Pamela Ivezic Ellen Kaisse Theodora Letz	Suzi Means Laurie Medill Annie Thompson Kristin Zimmerman Tenor Ronald Carson Jon Lange Timothy Lunde Thomas Nesbitt Vic Royer	Jerry Sams David Zapolsky Bass Andrew Danilchik Stephen Keeler Dennis Moore Jeff Thirloway Skip Viau Richard Wyckoff
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Tenor **Stephen Wall** has appeared frequently with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers. He has been featured in leading and supporting roles with Seattle Opera for the past 25 years. He also has appeared with the Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Tacoma Opera. He 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*. In addition to his solo appearances Mr. Wall has served as the music director for many music theater productions in Western Washington. He maintains an active voice studio in Seattle.

A native of Washington, baritone **BRIAN BOX** received his Master's degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University in 1985. Mr. Box performs frequently with many Northwest ensembles, including OSSCS, Seattle Choral Company, Seattle Pro Musica, Bellevue Chamber Chorus, and Choir of the Sound, and has performed with Rudolf Nureyev, singing Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* to Mr. Nureyev's dance. He has collaborated with OSSCS in such works as Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, and *Christmas Oratorio*, the world premieres of Huntley Beyer's *St. Mark Passion* and *The Mass of Life and Death*, and is featured on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah*. 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*. For Tacoma Opera, Mr. Box created the role of Franz in Carol Sams' *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. He has also performed extensively with Seattle Opera's education program and Northwest Operas in the Schools.

TEXT TRANSLATIONS

Lutheran Missa in G, BWV 236

KYRIE

1. Chorus (S, A, T, B): Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

GLORIA

2. Chorus (S, A, T, B): Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee.

3. Aria (B): We give Thee thanks for thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty. O Lord Jesus, only begotten son!

4. Duet (S/A): O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

5. Aria (T): For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high.

6. Chorus (S, A, T, B): With the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Our Violin Soloist

Dr. Quinton Morris enjoys a multifaceted career as a concert violinist, chamber musician, teacher, director and founder of The Young Eight String Octet. He holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the North Carolina School of the Arts, a Master of Music degree (with distinction) from the Boston Conservatory, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied violin with Daniel Ching, first violinist of the Miró String Quartet. His past teachers include Lynn Chang, Max Levinson, Irina Muresanu and Walter Schwede.

Dr. Morris has performed solo and chamber music in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. As the artistic/executive director and founder of America's only string octet, he has performed with the Young Eight in chamber music recitals across the country. Comprised of distinguished string players from the nation's most prestigious music schools and conservatories, The Young Eight celebrated its fifth anniversary with a national Black college tour and hosted its inaugural Emerging Composers Competition for young composers. The ensemble performs regularly at Seattle Symphony's Benaroya Hall and has received honors for its Seattle performances.

Dr. Morris is Director of Chamber and Instrumental Music and Assistant Professor of Music at Seattle University. This is his concerto debut with Orchestra Seattle. He will present solo recitals at Seattle's Town Hall and the Bach Concert Series at the Lady of Fatima Church. Dr. Morris was recognized

during Black History Month by the State of Washington's House of Representatives for his accomplishments as both a teacher and musician.

OSSCS and SU Collaborate

OSSCS and SU have joined in a new collaborative effort this year. Second year students in the growing solo and chamber music program at Seattle University will have an opportunity to receive university credit while performing with Orchestra Seattle, attending rehearsals and performing in concerts that occur at least twice per quarter. Students must successfully pass an audition to participate.

Maestro Shangrow will assist students in being mentored through the principal players of the orchestra. The partnership program will concentrate on helping students to be better performers and creating a learning environment that is healthy for both the student and organization.

A Delicious Way to Support OSSCS!

OSSCS violinist and Board Treasurer Jason Hershey and his mother, a gifted pastry chef, are launching a new business, Seattle Rum Cakes. If you have never tasted one of these marvelous cakes, you have really missed a wonderful experience! Many of us in the OSSCS family can vouch for the superb quality of these cakes, which have been a favorite item at the last two OSSCS Annual Auctions. Now, just in time for the holidays, Seattle Rum Cakes has donated 25 fresh, delicious, incredible Rum Cakes to Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, available to YOU for a donation to OSSCS of \$50. For an additional donation of \$100, the Maestro himself will deliver a cake to your door, and even help you sample it! Don't miss this great opportunity to receive one (or more!) of these great cakes while supporting your favorite musical organization!

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www.seattlerumcakes.com , COMING SOON!

BWV 79 - "Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild"

Cantata for Reformation

1. Chor

Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild. Der Herr gibt Gnade und Ehre, er wird kein Gutes mangeln lassen den Frommen. (Psalm 84:12)

2. Arie A

Gott ist unsre Sonn und Schild!
Darum rühmet dessen Güte
Unser dankbares Gemüte,
Die er für sein Häuflein hegt.
Denn er will uns ferner schützen,
Ob die Feinde Pfeile schnitzen
Und ein Lästehund gleich billt.

3. Choral

Nun danket alle Gott
Mit Herzen, Mund und Händen,
Der große Dinge tut
An uns und allen Enden,
Der uns von Mutterleib
Und Kindesbeinen an
Unzählig viel zugut
Und noch itzund getan.
("Nun danket alle Gott," verse 1)

4. Rezitativ B

Gottlob, wir wissen
Den rechten Weg zur Seligkeit;
Denn, Jesu, du hast ihn uns durch dein Wort gewiesen,
Drum bleibt dein Name jederzeit gepriesen.
Weil aber viele noch
Zu dieser Zeit
An fremdem Joch
Aus Blindheit ziehen müssen,
Ach! so erbarme dich
Auch ihrer gnädiglich,
Daß sie den rechten Weg erkennen
Und dich bloß ihren Mittler nennen.

5. Arie (Duett) S B

Gott, ach Gott, verlaß die Deinen
Nimmermehr!
Laß dein Wort uns helle scheinen;
Obgleich sehr
Wider uns die Feinde toben,
So soll unser Mund dich loben.

6. Choral

Erhalt uns in der Wahrheit,
Gib ewigliche Freiheit,
Zu preisen deinen Namen
Durch Jesum Christum. Amen.
("Nun laßt uns Gott, dem Herren," verse 8)

Chorus No. 1 Repeat

Psalm 84:12 (mov't. 1); "Nun danket alle Gott," verse 1: Martin Rinckart 1636 (mov't. 3); "Nun laßt uns Gott, dem Herren," verse 8: Ludwig Helmbold 1575 (mov't. 6)

1. Chorus

God the Lord is sun and shield. The Lord gives grace and honor, He will allow no good to be lacking from the righteous.

2. Aria A

God is our sun and shield!
Therefore this goodness
shall be praised by our grateful heart,
which He protects like His little flock.
For He will protect us from now on,
although the enemy sharpens his arrows
and a vicious hound already barks.

3. Chorale

Now let everyone thank God
with hearts, mouths, and hands,
Who does great things
for us and to all ends,
Who has done for us from our mother's wombs
and childhood on
many uncountable good things
and does so still today.

4. Recitative B

Praise God, we know
the right way to blessedness;
for, Jesus, You have revealed it to us through Your
word,
therefore Your name shall be praised for all time.
Since, however, many yet
at this time
must labor under a foreign yoke
out of blindness,
ah! then have mercy
also on them graciously,
so that they recognize the right way
and simply call You their Intercessor.

5. Aria (Duet) S B

God, ah God, abandon Your own ones
never again!
Let Your word shine brightly for us;
although harshly
against us the enemy rages,
yet our mouths shall praise You.

6. Chorale

Uphold us in the truth,
grant eternal freedom,
to praise Your name
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(b. 1685, Eisenach; d. 1750, Leipzig)

Notes by Lorelette Knowles

The theme of gifts—God's gifts to us and ours to God and to one another, and Bach's gifts to God and to us of his incomparable music—is a satin ribbon that ties up the unusual package of musical treasures that we offer to you this afternoon. Join us in opening this gift and enjoy it to the utmost!

"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 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. Maria Barbara, Bach's wife and the mother of his seven children, died in 1720, and the composer soon married Anna Magdalena, a young singer who proved to be a loyal and understanding wife, and who provided her mate with thirteen more children.

In 1723 when he was 38, Bach took the position of Cantor of St. Thomas' Church in Leipzig (a city even crazier for coffee than is Seattle: "Bring me a bowl of coffee before I turn into a goat!" Bach once demanded), one of the most important musical posts in Germany. (Werner Neuman, in his 1961 book, *Bach: A Pictorial Biography*, writes that, when Christoph Graupner, a German harpsichordist and composer much more famous than Bach in his time but today a largely-forgotten minor musician, refused the post of Cantor, Leipzig mayor Abraham Platz observed: "Since the best man could not be obtained, mediocre ones would have to be accepted.") Bach taught at the choir school, which trained the choristers of the city's chief churches (he had to teach non-musical subjects as well), and also served as music director, composer, choirmaster, and organist of St. Thomas' Church. In this post, which he held for the rest of his life, Bach produced monumental musical masterworks, including the *Christmas Oratorio*, the *St. Matthew Passion*, the *Mass in B-Minor* ("Why waste money on psychotherapy when you can listen to the *B-Minor Mass*?" asks contemporary American composer, Michael Torke, whose saxophone concerto we will perform next March), *The Musical Offering*, and *The Art of the Fugue*, though he was occupied by the cares of his large family and circle of friends, the tasks of a very busy professional life, and 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. Though the composer described himself as living "amidst continual vexation, envy, and persecution . . ." 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 only a very modest material estate, but bequeathing us a wondrous wealth of musical treasures of which his cantatas provide particularly glittering examples.

"Music is an agreeable harmony for the honor of God and the permissible delights of the soul."—J. S. Bach

Missa Brevis in G-major, BWV 236

Bach's four "Lutheran Masses," like most of the "brief masses" composed in protestant Germany during the Baroque era, consist of only the Kyrie and Gloria texts of the Mass. They are all called "cantata masses," both because their *Glorias* are divided into five movements of varying textures and tempi in the manner of a cantata, and because the masses appear to contain re-workings of movements (some of Bach's finest and probably his favorites, which he wanted to preserve by making them parts of masses that would be performed relatively often) from his earlier sacred cantatas. The circumstances surrounding their writing remain obscure. It is likely that they were intended by Bach for performance on festive occasions in his churches in Leipzig, but they might have been composed for the Catholic court of the Saxon Elector at Dresden as part of Bach's duties as Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Court Composer (Bach obtained this post in 1736), or possibly for the Elector himself in gratitude for his granting Bach the court composer position.

The fascinating *Missa Brevis* in G-major, for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists, four-part chorus, two oboes, two violins, viola, and continuo, was probably written in Leipzig around 1738 or 1739, and first performed soon after its composition. The first movement, an imitative and often chromatic *Kyrie*, in which the instruments double the voices, is a "parody" (reworking or rearrangement) of the initial chorus of Bach's 1723 Cantata 179, *Siehe du, daß deine Gottesfurcht nicht Heuchelei sei* ("See to it that your fear of God be not hypocrisy"), whose original text deals with the dangers of serving God with a deceitful heart (hence the descending chromaticism and rather dissonant closing harmonies). The movement begins with what German writer and musicologist Alfred Dürr calls a "counter-fugue," in which, with each new entry of the musical subject, that subject is inverted. The exclamations, "Kyrie eleison" and "Christe eleison," are given distinct motifs, which are varied and interwoven over the course of this two-section movement; this structure is unusual in that *Kyrie* movements normally display a tripartite structure because of the traditional threefold statement of the two texts—"Lord, You are merciful! Christ, you are merciful!"—in the liturgy: "Kyrie eleison! Christe eleison! Kyrie eleison!" In this *Kyrie*, however, because of the structure of the cantata movement of which it is a parody, the two texts and their accompanying motifs are combined into a second section.

The *Gloria* consists of a skillful paraphrase of Cantata 79's intricately-constructed opening movement with the timpani omitted; the two upper voices of the choir immediately present modified versions of the horns' fanfare theme that appears throughout Cantata 79's first and third movements, while the oboes and strings accompany with running eighth-notes. The sopranos and altos return with the *Gloria*'s opening text and the fanfare theme after an instrumental interlude (the middle portion of Cantata 79's three-section introductory *sinfonia*), the two lower choral parts are added to the texture at "Et in terra pax," and the movement continues with the remaining music from Cantata 79.

The music, in a waltz-like triple meter, with which Bach sets the challenging bass aria, *Gratias agimus tibi*, derives from the fifth movement (also a bass aria) of the 1723 Cantata 138, *Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz* ("Why are you troubled, my heart?"). The first violin's sixteenth-note figuration introduces and accompanies the bass solo, and a rhythmic pattern of "slow-fast-fast/fast-fast-slow/fast-fast-slow" recurs throughout the movement. The *Domine Deus*, a duet for soprano and alto with unison violin accompaniment, is a reworking of Cantata 79's fifth movement (a soprano-bass duet), but the vocal lines in this mass movement are somewhat more imitative. Bach returns to Cantata 179 to find, in its third movement, the music for the *Quoniam*, a rather contemplative tenor solo in 4/4 meter that features a highly florid oboe introduction and accompaniment and distinct syncopations. The *Missa Brevis*' concluding section, *Cum sancto spiritu*, provides, in substance, texture, sonority, and mood, a suitable counterpart to the first section of the Gloria. It based on the opening choral movement of the 1726 cantata, *Wer dank opfert, der preiset mich*, ("Whoever offers thanks praises me"), BWV 17, but for the cantata movement's substantial orchestral introduction, Bach substitutes a short and stately chordal opening in 4/4 meter in which the chorus chants the words, "Cum sancto spiritu." This quickly gives way to a two-section chorus in an energetic triple meter that features an imitative texture displaying long roller-coaster passages of running sixteenth-notes into which the words, "in gloria dei patris. Amen," are frequently and enthusiastically interjected as spirited outbursts of joy!

Violin Concerto in a-minor, BWV 1041

Bach was best-known during his lifetime as an organist, but he was also a skilled violinist who wrote exquisitely for that instrument. His son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, said of his father: "In his youth, and until the approach of old age, he played the violin cleanly and penetratingly," and "He understood to perfection the possibilities of all stringed instruments." Bach composed at least three concertos for solo violin, only two of which have come to us in their original form, and it is possible that he produced this concerto for solo violin, strings, and basso continuo when he was in Cöthen, writing large quantities of instrumental music for Prince Leopold, his patron, who prided himself on his musical taste and who, until he married a woman who had no appreciation for music, played the violin, viola da gamba, and keyboard instruments. Bach might also have written this work for the concerts he conducted in the 1730s in Leipzig. In Bach's time, it was common practice to transcribe violin pieces for a keyboard instrument, and the clavier concerto in g-minor, BWV 1058, is an arrangement for harpsichord (or piano) of this violin concerto.

The work consists of three contrasting movements in the fast-slow-fast arrangement typical of the concerto of the Baroque period (about 1600 to 1750). Bach uses the musical motifs of the work's opening *Allegro moderato* movement, in a vigorous 2/4 meter, to construct the "ritornello form" (a structure featuring alternating refrain and verses) characteristic of the first and third movements of Baroque concertos as the soloist and orchestra converse in alternation and together. The string ensemble's initial motif, consisting of two rising "short-long" note pairs, reappears throughout the movement as if a story's protagonist (the solo violin) is being warned repeatedly of some impending calamity by a group of

onlookers: "Watch OUT! BeWARE!" The solo violin, however, in strong, surging sixteenth-notes, rushes on, heedless, ignoring the admonitions of the orchestra.

The slow second movement, a song with recurring orchestral refrain in C-major and 4/4 meter, is founded on a bass ostinato featuring three repeated notes. One can picture a shadowed room in which a clock's pendulum swings hypnotically while the lovelorn, introspective solo violin sings long, florid phrases frequently featuring triplet figures as the clock whispers and the pensive strings sigh in sympathy.

Near the end of the energetic *Allegro assai* closing movement, which also displays ritornello form, is in the intense home key of a-minor, and dances in compound-triple (9/8) meter, Bach employs the instrumental technique known as "bariologie," which is often found in Baroque music for bowed instruments, and in which there is a rapid alternation between a static note, usually played on a string not pressed down by the player's finger, and varying notes that create a tune either below or above the unchanging note. It is as if the solo violin, seeking relief and distraction from its lonely, wistful musings, leaves the dusky middle movement to join, leaping and whirling, in a lively though vaguely melancholy and unsettled gigue.

Cantata No. 79: *Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn und Schild* ("God the Lord is sun and shield")

A cantata (from the Italian word, "cantare," "to sing"), is a composite form of vocal music typically consisting, in Bach's time, of four to six or more separate movements, including solo arias and recitatives (short passages of music based on the rhythms of speech), duets, and choruses, most frequently accompanied by an orchestra featuring a variety of instruments. Cantatas were based on a dramatic or lyric poetic narrative, either religious or secular. In Germany, the cantata developed into the most significant type of Lutheran sacred music, its various elements often unified by the all-encompassing presence of the Lutheran chorale, or hymn. The sacred cantata was an integral part of Lutheran worship, being related, along with the sermon and its associated prayers, to the Gospel reading for the day. Cantors of Lutheran churches were required to furnish cycles of about sixty cantatas per year—one for each Sunday and additional works for holy days and special occasions. Bach, the greatest master of the cantata form, seems to have composed five cycles of cantatas, but out of more than 300 works, only about two hundred have been preserved. No general description can begin to suggest the infinite variety and the indescribable wealth of musical creativity, technical expertise, and passionate spirituality found in these endlessly-fascinating works, which constitute the core of Bach's vocal output.

Cantata 79, for the October 31 Festival of the Reformation (a religious holiday for Lutherans and others commemorating Martin Luther's posting in 1517 of a proposal to debate the Roman Catholic doctrine and practice of the granting of indulgences that is credited with initiating the Protestant Reformation), is scored for 2 horns, timpani, 2 transverse flutes, 2 oboes, 2 violins, viola, and continuo (an accompanying part for a bass instrument, often a cello, and a keyboard instrument, usually a harpsichord or an organ, that plays the harmonies). It was composed in Leipzig in 1725,

Bach's third year as Cantor there, and was first performed on October 31 of that year (284 years ago yesterday!), with a second performance on October 31, 1730.

The cantata's complex and majestic opening choral movement is a splendorous setting of Psalm 84:11 that begins with a lengthy and motivically and structurally significant orchestral "sinfonia" in which brave horn fanfares and a volley of eighth-notes from the timpani set a martial mood that reminds Bach's listeners that "God the Lord is sun and shield." This grand introduction presents two themes: that played immediately by the horns (it reappears in the third movement), and then a fugue subject (a short theme introduced first in one voice and then taken up by other voices that "chase" one another) based on note repetitions followed by sixteenth-note scalar passages, as if the tympani part has been heard, repeated, and elaborated by the other instruments. Following the fugue, the first theme appears again and is combined with the fugue before the choir enters with the first of its three sections of music, an a-b-a-b structure which is accompanied by the fugue subject in the orchestra. The three choral sections are separated by appearances of the ceremonial horn theme from the beginning of the sinfonia. The second choral section consists of a plainer presentation of the orchestral fugue which the instruments accompany with the fugue in its more elaborate form. When, to close of the first movement, Bach brings back the music from the opening and closing passages of the movement's initial sinfonia, he incorporates the first and last portions of the third section of the choir's music into the texture (a compositional technique called *Choreinbau*--"choral insertion") and builds an a-b-a structure whose middle portion is built on the return of the "b" music from the choir's first section. The horns' fanfare theme is sung by the sopranos as the movement's glorious procession ends, God's foes (including a corrupted church in need of reformation) having been routed.

The second movement of the cantata is an alto aria in compound duple (6/8) meter that features a decorative countermelody for solo oboe or flute that forms flowing interludes between the alto's phrases. Its anonymous text begins with the first movement's opening line. The continuo and the instrumental and vocal solo lines interweave to produce a rich and intricate texture. This is followed by a chorale (hymn) movement whose text, "Nun danket alle Gott" ("Now Thank We All Our God"), was written around 1636, in dire circumstances, by Martin Rinckart (1586-1649), and whose music is a straightforward four-part setting for choir, with orchestral accompaniment, of this text's familiar tune by Johann Crüger. The phrases of the chorale melody are accompanied and separated by the fanfare theme introduced by the horns and tympani in the first movement as God's good gifts, including a reformed faith, are celebrated.

The fourth movement, a brief bass recitative (vocal music whose "free" rhythms are those of speech) whose text is anonymous, might have followed the sermon in the liturgy of which it was a part, with its reference to knowing the right way to Salvation through Jesus' Word connecting it to the preacher's homily. During most of the easily-accessible song-like duet for bass and soprano that constitutes the fifth movement, whose free-verse text is also anonymous, the soloists' lines frequently move parallel to one another while the accompanying eight-measure countermelody, introduced after the duet's entrance and played by violins in unison, is repeated as a refrain and forms a type of ostinato (a term derived from the Italian for "stubborn" that refers to a

pervasively recurring note pattern) that leaps blithely about, often over distances of an octave.

The text of the cantata's final movement is the last verse of Ludwig Helmbold's 1575 hymn, "Nun laßt uns Gott dem Herren" ("Now let us [praise] God the Lord"). It is a six-part setting for choir and orchestra of Nikolaus Selnecker's 1587 chorale melody, "Wach auf, mein Herz, und singe" ("Awake, my heart, and sing"), in which the choir, doubled by the winds and strings, sings four of the parts, while the horns play the other two. This strong and festive conclusion to a celebratory cantata, filled with "agreeable harmonies for the honor of God," both "delights the souls" of the listeners, in 1725 and today, and assures them that they are granted eternal freedom to praise their gracious and victorious God!

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Handel: MESSIAH

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