

ST. MATTHEW PASSION

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2007 – 7:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Wesley Rogers, Evangelist
Michael Delos, Jesus

Jessica Robins-Milanese, soprano
Melissa Plagemann, mezzo-soprano
Stephen Wall, tenor
Brian Box, baritone

Ronnee Fullerton, viola da gamba
Lisa Lewis, harpsichord
Robert Kechley, organ

SEATTLE CHILDREN'S CHORUS
Kris Mason, director

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

George Shangrow, conductor

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)
St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244

Part One

– Intermission –

Part Two

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

ORCHESTRA I

VIOLIN

Stephen Provine**
Sue Carpenter
Stacey Dye
Avron Maltezyky
Mark Lutz
Gregor Nitsche*
Maria Hunt
Jason Hershey
Nicole Tsong

VIOLA

Katherine McWilliams*
Beatrice Dolf
Andrew Schirmer

VIOLA DA GAMBA

Ronnee Fullerton

HARPSICHORD

Lisa Lewis
* *principal*
** *concertmaster*

SOPRANO

Sue Cobb
Crissa Cugini
Kyla Deremer
Susan Dier
Dana Durasoff
Cinda Freece
Kiki Hood
Kaye Koffird
Jill Kraakmo
Jana Marlow
Lila Woodruff May
Linda Mendez
Wendy Moi
Nancy M. Shasteen
Melissa Thirloway
Liesel Van Cleeff
Pat Vetterlein

CELLO

Julie Reed*
Valerie Ross
Annie Roberts

BASS

Jo Hansen*

FLUTE

Jenna Calixto
Shari Müller-Ho*

OBOE

John Dimond*
David Barnes

BASSOON

Judith Lawrence

ORGAN

Robert Kechley

RECORDERS

Kiki Hood
Judith Lawrence

ALTO

Sharon Agnew
Carolyn Cross Avery
Jane Blackwell
Carol Burleson
Ann Ercikson
Deanna Fryhle
Courtney Fuller
Ellen Kaisse
Lorelette Knowles
Theodora Letz
Adrienne McCoy
Suzi Means
Laurie Medill
Christine Rickert
Julia Akoury Thiel
Annie Thompson

ORCHESTRA II

VIOLIN

Fritz Klein*
Susan Ovens
Janet Showalter
Dean Drescher
Sue Herring*
Stephanie Endy
Theo Schaad

VIOLA

Sam Williams*
Jim Lurie
Audrey Don

CELLO

Matthew Wyant*
Katie Sauter Messick

BASS

Steve Messick

FLUTE

Melissa Underhill*
Virginia Knight

OBOE

Steve Cortelyou*
Susan Worden-Jacoby

BASSOON

Jeff Eldridge

TENOR

Ronald Carson
Ralph Cobb
Gunnar Goerlitz
Alvin Kroon
Jon Lange
Timothy Lunde
Thomas Nesbitt
Vic Royer
Brian Russell
Jerry Sams
David Zapolsky

BASS

Stephen Brady
Steve Carl
Andrew Danilchik
Douglas Durasoff
Marc Fitchette
Larry Maloney
Paddy McDonald
Dennis Moore
Jeff Thirloway
Richard Wycoff

Seattle Children's Chorus is in its 18th season celebrating the joy of music! The Chorus performs an outstanding variety of sacred and historical choral literature that inspires each chorister to strive for vocal excellence. The lives of over 200 choristers between the ages of 7 and 18 are enriched through the vocal and choral training offered in four progressive choirs. In addition to formal concerts in the Seattle and Everett areas, *Arioso*, the advanced treble choir, has sung throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The choir has toured in Great Britain, Scandinavia, Central Europe and Canada. *Arioso* has sung at regional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and has been a featured choir at the Pacific International Children's Choir Festival in Eugene, Oregon and the Fort Worden Children's Choir Festival in Port Townsend, Washington. Kris Mason is the Director.

The Passion According to St. Matthew

by Johann Sebastian Bach

Written in Leipzig during the late 1720s, J. S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion is scored for two orchestras of winds, strings, and continuo, two SATB choruses, children's chorus, and six soloists.

Biographical Notes:

Bach was born in Eisenach on March 21, 1685, 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, an organist who taught young Sebastian music. Bach began his professional career at 18, when he was appointed organist at a church in Arnstadt, and 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, and a large number of works for keyboard. In 1720, Maria Barbara, Bach's wife and the mother of his seven children, died, and the composer soon married Anna Magdalena, a young singer who provided her spouse not only with great support and understanding, but also with thirteen more children.

When he was 38, Bach accepted the position of Cantor of St. Thomas' Church in Leipzig, one of the most significant musical posts in Germany. He taught at the choir school and 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 by 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 the man generally considered history's greatest musical genius. 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 an insignificant worldly estate, but bequeathing incalculable musical riches to succeeding generations.

Historical Notes:

The tradition of presenting on Good Friday one of the four Gospel narratives which describe Jesus' suffering ("passion") and death dates back some 1000 years, and continues today in most liturgical churches. According to church tradition, texts from the Gospels can be chanted or read only by members of the clergy. Lay people, however, have traditionally been allowed to participate in the presentation of the Passion narratives, and it was this that allowed more elaborate musical settings of Passion texts to develop. From medieval times, these texts were chanted, a medium voice singing the words of the narrator ("Evangelist"), a lower voice singing those of Jesus, and higher voices singing the words spoken by the Jews. By the late 1400s, Passion settings appeared in which the simple plainchants began to be embellished by the addition of more vocal lines to create harmonies. In the 17th century,

Passions began to receive more operatic treatments: orchestral accompaniments were included, and the biblical passages began to be paraphrased or expanded by insertions of free poetic texts.

J. S. Bach composed five settings of the Passion story, only two of which survive: the St. John Passion of 1723, and the St. Matthew Passion, in which the zenith of "oratorio-style" Passion composition was reached. The work is a dramatic musical setting of Martin Luther's German translation of the 26th and 27th chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, with 28 additional texts for the arias and a few choruses written especially for the Passion by Picander, one of Bach's frequent collaborators. The composition of the work seems to have extended over a number of years, and appears not to have been completed even by the time of the Passion's performance on Good Friday of 1729, thought by many to be the work's first presentation (it might have been performed for the first time on Good Friday, April 11, 1727; it was certainly presented on April 15, 1729, and on March 30, 1736, and it might have been performed in 1740 as well). In any event, the monumental masterpiece, as it has come down to us in an excellent autograph full score and a complete set of parts corresponding to the 1736 version, achieved its final form through a series of revisions and rearrangements. Though highly popular today, the St. Matthew Passion descended into the grave of oblivion after 1740, and remained thus entombed for nearly a century until Felix Mendelssohn resurrected it in 1829.

The St. Matthew Passion, which has been called "the most noble and inspired treatment of its subject in the whole range of music," displays Bach's mastery of vocal and instrumental technique in a wide variety of musical forms, but remains consistent throughout in spiritual feeling. Bach makes frequent use of musical illustration ("tone painting") to enhance the meaning of the text, and also employs abundant tonal, numerical, and harmonic symbolism without doing the least violence to the aesthetic beauty of the music. The more musically- and theologically-sophisticated listeners of Bach's day would have understood and appreciated such subtleties, but they remain hidden from most of us today because we no longer speak this "musical language." The music of the Passion is indeed sublime and the text is immensely powerful emotionally, but it is the way in which Bach combines the music with the text that distinguishes the St. Matthew Passion as the greatest sacred work ever composed. If you follow your translations, you will be better able to understand the story, and you will also gain deeper insight into the genius of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Musical commentary:

The St. Matthew Passion consists of approximately 24 "scenes" organized into two large parts, each framed by a pair of powerful choruses. Throughout the massive work, Bach employs double chorus and orchestra to produce highly dramatic choral dialogue and strongly compelling crowd scenes. As the story of Jesus' last days, his suffering, and his death unfolds, the solo tenor "Evangelist" serves as the narrator; the soloists sometimes portray the various individual characters in the drama, and at other times, in their arias, they represent the soul of the faithful Christian believer who meditates on the spiritual meanings of the events described;

and the two choirs play the parts of the people of Jesus' day in the freely-composed choruses, and, when they sing Bach's incomparable chorale (hymn tune) settings, they represent the congregation of Bach's time as they ponder the implications of Christ's Passion for themselves as a church community. The formal structure of "story section followed by recitative and aria that comment upon the narrative" dominates the entire work. Following the musical and dramatic elements of the narrative with this in mind will help both to clarify the progressions in the work, and to explain the length of some of the pieces.

The opening and closing choruses of Part One each contain a chorale melody sung by a choir of treble voices. In the first chorus, a tremendous chorale-fantasia whose painfully throbbing bass line brings to mind a funeral procession, all of humankind is called to participate in the Passion story. Over its dialogue text (and some incredibly complex musical counterpoint), Bach presents the chorale tune, "O Lamb of God Unspoiled," as an emotional counterpoint to the tragedy that follows.

A dramatic recitative begins the "Last Supper" portion of the Passion. Note that Jesus' words are always accompanied by a "halo" of strings (this is not the case in the St. John Passion, but the practice is descended directly from earlier sacred works, such as the Seven Last Words, by Heinrich Schütz).

As this section continues, Bach contrasts the chorale that asks what crime Jesus has committed with the scene that describes the elders, scribes, and priests suggesting that Jesus not be killed during the feast of the Passover. Then follow descriptions of the woman anointing Jesus with expensive ointment, the disciples' chiding her for her wasteful action, and Jesus' rebuke of the disciples for their criticism. The ensuing alto recitative and aria complete the section with deeply personal comments on the preceding actions.

In a gentle chorus, the disciples ask Jesus where the Passover feast will be celebrated. The mood of His answer is again in direct contrast with that of the chorus. He says that one of them will betray Him; this, of course, Judas has already done. The disciples now ask, "Lord, is it I?", and in the chorus, Bach sets the word "Lord" exactly eleven times, leaving the question from the twelfth disciple, Judas the betrayer, for the next recitative. Judas asks, "Is it I, Rabbi?" framing the question differently. Bach builds upon this distinction in setting up the actual betrayal scene that occurs later in the work, in which Judas will once again greet Jesus as "Rabbi."

The Passover supper scene contains the only real aria sung by Jesus in the entire work: Accompanied by the halo of strings, it is one of the most beautiful moments in the work. After the soprano recitative and aria, which comment on Jesus' words, comes one of the more descriptive of Jesus' recitatives. Notice the upward-moving scale, which starts in the cello part and ends in the Evangelist's lines as Jesus and his disciples ascend the Mount of Olives. Bach scatters the sheep with a very sprightly string accompaniment that takes a sober turn at the end of the section.

Next comes an illustration of Bach's use of tonality to make a philosophical point. The joyful chorale extolling the virtues of the Savior/Shepherd is in E Major. Immediately come Peter's declaration that he will be absolutely faithful to Jesus whatever happens, and Jesus' prediction that Peter will deny Him three times. The following chorale, "I will stand here beside Thee," is

set one-half step lower, signifying the personal loss humankind must suffer through the example of the denial.

The next accompanied recitative and aria feature a solo tenor paired with a chorale melody sung by Choir II. The cello-bass repeated-note pattern symbolizes the trembling, tormented heart. The combination in canon of recorder and English horn (in Bach's score, an oboe da caccia or "hunting oboe" that was curved like a hunting horn and was pitched lower than today's "normal" oboe) is the first of the unique orchestrations Bach uses in the work. The wonder of these two movements is the great contrast between the uneasiness of the aria and the consoling comfort of the chorale.

In the bass recitative, "The Savior falls low before His Father," the strings constantly move downward in an arpeggio figure, except when the text speaks of God's uplifting mercy. In the aria, the setting of the words fits the voice so perfectly that the opening ascending sixth on "gladly" emerges effortlessly. The wonderful chromatic setting of the words, "Kreuz und Becher," ("Cross and cup") contrasts with the music of the second section of the aria, "His lips with milk and honey flowing," and demonstrates Bach's constant desire to heighten the emotional meaning of the text using all the devices at hand--he even changes the tonality from minor to major.

Leading to the end of Part One are the Evangelist's sections describing Jesus praying in the garden, while none of His disciples are able to maintain the vigil with Him. Then the soldiers and priests come to arrest Jesus and, in one of the most dramatic moments in the Evangelist's part, Judas says, "The one I kiss is he," and in an almost tender exchange between Jesus and Judas, Jesus is recognized and taken.

The grief-filled duet that follows contains many canons and is reminiscent of the chorale melody. In Part One's opening chorus, questions from Choir II interrupt the music sung by Choir I; here, the crowd of disciples interrupts the duet, crying "Loose Him, halt ye, bind Him not!" This leads into the explosive double chorus, "Have lightning and thunder vanished in the clouds? Let Hell engulf the false betrayer!" Bach's use of antiphonal choruses and rapidly shifting harmonies in this piece is truly amazing for its time!

After a highly charged dramatic recitative comes the final chorus of the first part: "O Man, bewail thy grievous sin," Bach's loveliest setting of this chorale tune. This chorale-fantasia was originally intended to be the opening chorus of his St. John Passion (in a key one-half step lower), but Bach instead placed this piece here as a hopeful closing chorus.

Between the two parts of the Passion, you will be able to move about and enjoy refreshments; Bach's listeners were treated to a sermon that probably lasted well over an hour!

Part Two of the St. Matthew Passion opens with an unusual dialogue between the alto soloist and Choir II. Note that, with each entrance of the chorus, the harmonies grow stranger and, in a way, wander further afield. The chorus/solo ends on a singularly unresolved note with the alto asking, "Ah, where has my Jesus gone?"

The drama is continued with the introduction of the two false witnesses who perform a strange duet in which the second witness sings very mechanically after the first, as if he were taking care to repeat exactly a prearranged tale. Jesus, however, remains silent. The tenor recitative is accompanied by oboes and an arpeggiated figure in the cello, which plays

exactly 39 "strokes," symbolizing the scourging of Jesus. In the aria, Bach uses great contrasts in setting the text, which depict the emotional meanings of the words patience, shame, scorn, and false tongues.

Jesus' trial in the Judgment Hall is followed by outbursts from the crowd. Here, as in the later crowd scenes, it is the job of the Evangelist to maintain the drama's tautness. Bach moves the story forward by keeping the Evangelist's interjections brief and energetic. The chorale that ends this section is particularly bittersweet.

Next comes Peter's denial of Jesus; Peter is asked by two individuals, and then by a group of people, if he knows who this man (Jesus) is. All three times Peter's reply is 'no,' and after the third denial the cock crows. In the original clefs in which the piece was written, Peter's last line, "I know this man not," and the following line, "And immediately the cock crew," were identically-written notes. The Evangelist's words, "And Peter went out and wept bitterly," and the ensuing alto aria with violin obbligato ("obbligato" referring to the fact that this decorative countermelody is indeed essential to the integrity of the music), are two of the most intimate moments in the work.

There follows a very worldly return to the story. Judas tries to return the thirty silver pieces, his betrayal fee, to the High Priests, but his attempt is in vain; the priests tell him that in no way can he absolve himself of the evil that he has done. In despair and remorse, Judas hangs himself. In the duet that follows, the two priests state that they cannot even put the "blood-money" into the treasury; the bass plays thirty notes up to the end of the musical flurry on the word "legen," as the thirty pieces of silver are counted out. A bass aria with violin obbligato follows, this one contrasting strongly with the alto aria mentioned above.

Jesus' trial proceeds. Pilate asks the crowd which prisoner should be set free, and their unanimous outburst is "Barabbas!" This exclamation is immediately followed by the "Crucify Him!" chorus, which is a fughetto (short fugue) with a jagged subject that describes tonally the ugliness of the crowd and the act of crucifixion.

The following soprano recitative and aria hold the heart of the entire Passion: "For love of me my Savior is dying." This aria's only accompanying instruments are obbligato flute and two mournful and haunting English horns. As the movement ends and a tranquil mood is established, the Evangelist interrupts and the crowd repeats the "Crucify Him!" chorus, this time a whole step higher in pitch, as the chaotic crowd's hysteria and the musical tension escalate.

Pilate's attempts at ridding himself of guilt are thwarted by the polyphonic crowd chorus, "His blood be upon all of us and on our children." There follows an alto recitative and aria that depict the weeping of the believer's heart. The soldiers now array Jesus in a purple robe and a crown of thorns and mock Him (listen for the flutes) saying, "We hail thee, O King of the Jews," and then they spit on Him and strike His head with a reed. Then follows the famous Passion Chorale, "O head, full of blood and wounds."

When Jesus is being led away to be crucified, a man named Simon is compelled to carry his cross. This is depicted in an incredible bass aria accompanied by viola da gamba, whose difficult chords and ornaments, string crossings, and dotted rhythms illustrate the dragging of the cross. The text speaks of

sharing the burden with Jesus, as he bears the burdens of the people. The length of the aria corresponds to the length of the agonizing ordeal.

Mocking crowd choruses now ask Jesus why, if he is God's son, he cannot take Himself down from the cross. The following alto recitative and aria are orchestrated in an unusual manner using two oboes da caccia. Choir II interrupts the soloist, asking where "they," the "forsaken little chicks," should come for mercy, and receive the answer: to Jesus' arms.

The next section describes the death of Jesus. Here, for the only time, as He asks why his Father has forsaken him, Jesus' words are not accompanied by the glow of strings, but by the continuo organ and cello alone. Constantly harassed by the crowd, Jesus cries out His last words and expires. The choirs then sing together the last and most moving of the five settings of the Passion Chorale that, in varying keys and harmonizations, appear throughout this work, almost as a refrain.

Now an earthquake rumbles in the accompaniment, and the graves of the righteous are opened. All of this terrifies the onlookers, and the captain of the guard and those with him observe with awe, "Truly, this was the Son of God!" Bach sets this text in two measures of exquisite choral music--perhaps the most sublime passage in the entire work!

The Passion narrative is completed with a heartrendingly beautiful bass recitative and aria, but the musical work does not end here. The insolent crowd enters once more and, in a very rude chorus, intimates to Pilate that, if no guards are placed around Jesus' tomb, His disciples will come in the night, steal His body, and claim that He has been resurrected. Pilate permits a watch to be set; the guards are put in place as a stone is rolled across the mouth of the tomb, sealing it. Jesus is now bid goodnight in a sorrowful, yet adoring four-section recitative and chorus. The closing portion of the Passion, "Here at the grave we all sit weeping," concludes the narrative of Jesus' suffering on Good Friday. The Passion story remains unfinished at this point, however; there has as yet been no resurrection. We keep vigil, contemplating both the depth of our own wretchedness and the even greater depth of Jesus' redemptive love.

In the Passion's original liturgical context, the motet, "Behold, how the righteous man suffers!" and the Lutheran chorale, "Now thank we all our God," in which praise is rendered for God's unfailing goodness, would have followed the presentation of the Passion. Thus the Good Friday worship experience of Bach's listeners would have concluded with thanksgiving for the glorious redemption of humanity accomplished by Jesus' death. They would have returned to church on Easter morning to participate in the final act of the Holy Week drama--the Resurrection--and we may join them if we so choose.

Notes by Lorelette Knowles, George Shangrow, and Kay Verelius



OUR SOLOISTS

WESLEY ROGERS divides his busy singing career between opera and oratorio. Recent concert engagements have included performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Haydn's *Creation*, Honnigar's *King David*, Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins*, and the world premiere of Hawley's *Seattle*. Wesley has appeared with the Seattle Choral Company, the Meridian Symphony, the Cascadian Chorale, the Bremerton Symphony, and Belle Arte Concerts. In March 2003, Wesley performed the role of Damon in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with Santa Fe Pro Musica. On the operatic stage he was most recently seen in the role of Martin in Sun Valley Center for the Arts' production of Copland's *The Tender Land*. Summer 2002 found Wesley returning to the Lake Chelan Bach Festival where he performed the role of Bastien in Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienna*. He performed the role of Laurie in Mark Adamo's *Little Women* at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz, California. Shortly after moving to the Pacific Northwest, Wesley made his Seattle Opera debut in 2001 as Maintop in Britten's *Billy Budd*. He returned the next season as the Fourth Jew in Strauss' *Salome*. Wesley has also performed roles with companies including Opera Memphis, Washington East Opera, Obsidian Opera, Seattle Community Outreach Productions, and the University of Washington Opera Theatre. He recently completed his Master of Music degree from the University of Washington.

Bass-baritone MICHAEL DELOS has won critical acclaim for his performances in a diverse repertoire of over three dozen operatic roles, including Faust, the title roles in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, Olin Blitch in Floyd's *Susannah* and Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* — the role of his European debut with L'Opera de Monte Carlo, Monaco. He joined the roster of the New York City Opera in 1987 and is a welcome guest artist with Vancouver (BC) Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Seattle Opera, Opera Utah, Portland Opera and Hawaii Opera Theater. A highly respected concert artist, Mr. Delos has appeared with many major symphony orchestras, including those of Detroit, Tokyo, Osaka, Seattle, Calgary, Edmonton, Oregon, Sacramento and Spokane.

JESSICA ROBINS MILANESE, lyric coloratura soprano, is a magnetic performer who brings a natural, grounded depth to her characters and is known for her sense of humor both on and off the stage. Praised by the *Seattle Times* as a singer "vocally vibrant and admirably graceful...even under fire," she is a versatile artist, comfortable on the opera, concert, musical theater and even puppet theater stage. Most recently, Jessica performed the roles of Héro (*Béatrice et Bénédicte*), Blonde (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) and Lucy (*The Telephone*) all with Tacoma Opera. Other recent operatic roles include Norina (*Don Pasquale*), Susanna (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Marie (*Daughter of the Regiment*) and Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) which she performed with the 2005 Astoria Music Festival where she was named winner of the Astoria Music Festival Vocal

Competition. As a preview artist for the Seattle Opera Guild, Jessica has sung the roles of Olympia (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*) and Nanetta (*Falstaff*). Jessica joined the Seattle Opera Young Artist's Program in 2004. She performed the role of Pamina in their adaptation of *The Magic Flute* and returned as a guest artist the following season to sing the role of Barbarina in their production of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. On the concert stage, Jessica has performed as a soloist with the Bremerton Symphony, Orchestra Seattle, Northwest Sinfonietta, the Yakima Symphony and the Olympia Chamber Orchestra where she recently sang the role of Gabriel in Haydn's *The Creation* and Lieschen in J.S. Bach's *Coffee Cantata*. Jessica grew up in Missoula, Montana, received her Bachelor of Music from the University of Colorado, Boulder and has studied with William Eddy of Tacoma, Washington for the past nine years.

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). 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.

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). Last season, Mr. Wall sang roles in Seattle Opera's productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *La Fanciulla del West*.

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. 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*.

RONNEE FULLERTON is a prominent member of Seattle's multi-faceted early musicians. He is accomplished on a variety of historical stringed instruments: bass and treble violas da gamba, baroque and modern violin, arabic ud, vielle, rebab, and psaltery. In addition, he composes, sings (early, celtic, and sephardic/arabic), and teaches music. A founding member of La Lira and a core member of Baroque Northwest, Ronn has also done numerous recitals for the Early Music Guild and was a long time member of the Tacoma Symphony.

An endearing and engaging educator, Ronnee is known for his innovative teaching style with young people. He is a music specialist for the Tacoma Public Schools and teaches for the Pacific Northwest Viols. Mr. Fullerton can be heard on Le Nuove Musiche's premier CD, *Dolce Desio*. Upcoming recording projects include a solo viola da gamba CD. Besides Seattle, Ronn has performed in California, Indiana, Oregon, Utah, and Florida. He has appeared in concert with Margriet Tindemans, Mary Springfels, Annalisa Pappano, David Morris, Matthias Maute, Janet See, Laury Monahan and Eric Mentzel, along with his regular collaborators, Kim Pineda, Elizabeth Brown, August Denhard, and Kathy Hansen.

LISA MICHELE LEWIS holds a master's degree in harpsichord from the University of Washington. She performs frequently with Benevolent Order for Music of the Baroque, and is a member of the Nouve Musiche and the Seattle String Ensemble.

ROBERT KECHLEY was born in Seattle in 1952. The music of Robert Kechley is familiar to audiences of Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers through the numerous works of this composer that have been premiered by both ensembles. These range from arrangements of brief folk songs and hymns to major symphonic and choral works, including the delightful *Symphony No. 2* ("Ferdinand the Bull"), a setting of Psalm 100 for organ, chorus and orchestra (performed in September of 2000 by OSSCS at Benaroya Hall) and a flute concerto (premiered by Jeffrey Cohan and Orchestra Seattle in February of 2002). Mr. Kechley grew up in Seattle and attended the University of Washington, where he studied harpsichord performance with Sylvia Kind and composition with Kenneth Benschopf, Robert Suderberg, William O. Smith, and others. A member of the Seattle Chamber Singers from the early days of the ensemble, he not only sang in the chorus but played oboe and keyboard. Mr. Kechley currently serves as principal harpsichordist for Orchestra Seattle.

Conductor and Music Director **GEORGE SHANGROW** founded the Seattle Chamber Singers in 1969 and Orchestra Seattle (formerly the Broadway Symphony) in 1979. A musician with a broad range of skills, Mr. Shangrow received his musical training at the University of Washington, where he studied conducting, baroque performance practice, harpsichord, and composition. He began his professional conducting career at the youthful age of 18 and has concentrated his musical efforts with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Seattle Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Tacoma Opera, Rudolf Nureyev and Friends, East Texas University Opera, Oregon Symphony and the Sapporo (Japan) Symphony. He was Music Director and Conductor of Pacific Chamber Opera from 1976 to 1978 and has conducted world premières of six operas and numerous other orchestral and choral works.

Mr. Shangrow has taught at Seattle University and Seattle Community College and is a frequent lecturer throughout the Northwest. He is currently on the faculty of the Seattle Conservatory of Music, where he teaches Music History, Conducting, and Literature.

He concertizes frequently as part of the Cohan-Shangrow Duo with flutist Jeffrey Cohan. Having toured Europe several times as keyboardist and conductor, he is a sought-after accompanist and has appeared in concert on the piano and harpsichord with many noted soloists and ensembles such as El Trio Grande, the Kronos Quartet, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony. He has recorded with London Records, Voyager Records, edel America, and Sonic Window Records. George Shangrow currently serves the University Christian Church as Director of Music. Seattle music lovers also knew him as a regular announcer on Classical KING-FM and host of the *Live By George* show, a nightly radio program featuring live, in-studio classical music performances.



After George Shangrow returned from a South America/Antarctica Cruise a year and a half ago, many have asked if he would consider doing that cruise again. It involves sailing from Santiago, Chile around South America and Cape Horn, south to Antarctica for scenic cruising for three days, and back north along the east coast of South America to Rio by way of the Falkland Islands and Buenos Aires. Included with the amazing cruise are ten sessions on classical music topics with George. These feature lively discussions, musical examples, and lots of amusement and education. Call George at (206) 528-1076 for more information, or email shangrow@msn.com. Departure in early January, 2008.

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