

# An Afternoon of BACH

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2008 – 3:00 PM  
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Catherine Haight, soprano  
Kathryn Weld, mezzo-soprano  
Stephen Rumph, tenor  
Brian Box, baritone  
ORCHESTRA SEATTLE -- SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS  
George Shangrow, conductor

## PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Cantata BWV 101, "Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott"  
Chorus  
Tenor Aria  
Soprano recitative and chorale  
Bass aria  
Tenor recitative and choral  
Soprano and Alto Duet  
Choral

Cantata BWV 65, "Sie warden aus Saba alle kommen"  
Chorus  
Choral and carol  
Bass recitative  
Bass aria  
Tenor recitative  
Tenor Aria  
Choral

– Intermission –

Lutheran Miss in F Major, BWV 233  
Chorus: Kyrie  
Chorus: Gloria  
Bass Aria: Domine Deus  
Soprano aria: Qui tollis  
Alto aria: Quoniam  
Chorus: Cum Sancto Spiritu

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

## TEXT TRANSLATIONS

### Cantata No. 101

#### 1. Choral

**Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott,  
Die schwere Straf und große Not,  
Die wir mit Sünden ohne Zahl  
Verdienen haben allzumal.  
Behüt für Krieg und teurer Zeit,  
Für Seuchen, Feur und großem Leid.  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 1)**

#### 2. Arie T

Handle nicht nach deinen Rechten  
Mit uns bösen Sündenknecten,  
Laß das Schwert der Feinde ruhn!  
Höchster, höre unser Flehen,  
Daß wir nicht durch sündlich Tun  
Wie Jerusalem vergehen!

#### 3. Choral und Rezitativ S

**Ach! Herr Gott, durch die Treue dein**  
Wird unser Land in Fried und Ruhe sein.  
Wenn uns ein Unglückswetter droht,  
So rufen wir,  
Barmherzger Gott, zu dir  
In solcher Not:  
**Mit Trost und Rettung uns erschein!**  
Du kannst dem feindlichen Zerstören  
Durch deine Macht und Hilfe wehren.  
**Beweis an uns deine große Gnad**  
Und straf uns nicht auf frischer Tat,  
Wenn unsre Füße wanken wollen  
Und wir aus Schwachheit straucheln sollten.  
**Wohn uns mit deiner Güte bei**  
Und gib daß wir  
Mur nach dem Guten streben,  
Damit allhier  
Und auch in jenem Leben  
**Dein Zorn und Grimm fern von uns sei.**  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 3)

#### 4. Arie (mit instrumental Choral) B

**Warum willst du so zornig sein?**  
Es schlagen deines Eifers Flammen  
Schon über unserm Haupt zusammen.  
Ach stelle doch die Strafen ein  
Und trag aus väterlicher Huld  
Mit unserm schwachen Fleisch Geduld!

#### (Instrumental Choral:

**Warum willst du so zornig sein?  
Über uns arme Würmelein?  
Weißt du doch wohl, du treuer Gott,  
daß wir nichts sind als Erd und Kot;  
es ist ja vor deinem Angesicht  
Unser Schwachheit verborgen nicht.)**  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 4)

#### 5. Choral und Rezitativ T

**Die Sünd hat uns verderbet sehr.**  
So müssen auch die Frömmsten sagen  
Und mit betrännten Augen klagen:  
**Der Teufel plagt uns noch viel mehr.**  
Ja, dieser böse Geist,  
Der schon von Anbeginn ein Mörder heißt,  
Sucht uns um unser Heil zu bringen  
Und als ein Löwe zu verschlingen.  
**Die Welt, auch unser Fleisch und Blut  
Uns allezeit verführen tut.**

#### 1. Chorale

**Take away from us, Lord, faithful God,  
the heavy punishment and great suffering,  
which we, with countless sins  
have too much deserved.  
Protect us against war and precarious times,  
against sieges, fire, and great sorrow.**

#### 2. Aria T

Do not deal with us wicked servants of sin  
according to your justice;  
let the sword of the enemy rest!  
Highest, hear our pleading,  
so that, through sinful acts,  
we might not be destroyed like Jerusalem!

#### 3. Chorale and Recitative S

**Ah! Lord God, through your love**  
our country shall enjoy peace and quiet.  
If an unlucky storm threatens,  
then shall we call,  
merciful God, on You  
in such necessity:  
**appear to us with comfort and rescue!**  
You can turn aside the inimical destruction  
through your power and aid.  
**Reveal to us your great mercy**  
and do not punish us in the very act,  
when our feet want to wander  
and we are apt to stumble out of weakness.  
**Dwell among us with Your goodness**  
and grant that we  
strive only after goodness,  
so that here  
and also in the other life  
**may your anger and wrath be far from us.**

#### 4. Aria (with instrumental Chorale) B

**Why are you so angry?**  
The flames of Your vengeance  
strike down already upon our heads.  
Ah, put punishment aside  
and with fatherly indulgence  
harbor mercy for our weak flesh!

#### (Instrumental Chorale:

**Why are you so angry?  
Against us poor little worms?  
For You know well, loving God,  
that we are nothing but earth and dung;  
indeed before your face  
our weakness is not hidden.)**

#### 5. Chorale and Recitative T

**Sin has corrupted us greatly.**  
Thus must even the most virtuous say  
and with tear-stained eyes lament:  
**The devil plagues us even more.**  
Yes, this evil spirit,  
who even from the beginning was called a murderer,  
seeks to cheat us from our salvation  
and like a lion to devour us.  
**The world, and even our flesh and blood,  
constantly betray us.**

Wir treffen hier auf dieser schmalen Bahn  
Sehr viele Hindernis im Guten an.  
**Solch Elend kennst du, Herr, allein:**  
Hilf, Helfer, hilf uns Schwachen,  
Du kannst uns stärker machen!  
**Ach, laß uns dir befohlen sein.**  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 5)

#### 6. Arie (Duet) S A

Gedenk an Jesu bitterm Tod!  
Nimm, Vater, deines Sohnes Schmerzen  
Und seiner Wunden Pein zu Herzen,  
**Die sind ja für die ganze Welt**  
**Die Zahlung und das Lösegeld;**  
Erzeig auch mir zu aller Zeit,  
Barmherzger Gott, Barmherzigkeit!  
Ich seufze stets in meiner Not:  
Gedenk an Jesu bitterm Tod!  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 6)

#### 7. Choral

**Leit uns mit deiner rechten Hand**  
**Und segne unser Stadt und Land;**  
**Gib uns allzeit dein heiliges Wort,**  
**Behüt für's Teufels List und Mord;**  
**Verleih ein selges Stündlein,**  
**Auf daß wir ewig bei dir sein.**  
("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 7)

### Cantata No. 65

#### 1. Chor

*Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen,  
Gold und Weihrauch bringen  
und des Herren Lob verkündigen.*  
(Isaiah 60:6)

#### 2. Choral

**Die Kön'ge aus Saba kamen dar,**  
**Gold, Weihrauch, Myrrhen brachten sie dar,**  
**Alleluja!**  
("Puer natus in Bethlehem," verse 4)

#### 3. Recitativ B

Was dort Jesaias vorhergesehn,  
Das ist zu Bethlehem geschehn.  
Hier stellen sich die Weisen  
Bei Jesu Krippe ein  
Und wollen ihn als ihren König preisen.  
Gold, Weihrauch, Myrrhen sind  
Die köstlichen Geschenke,  
Womit sie dieses Jesuskind  
Zu Bethlehem im Stall beehren.  
Mein Jesu, wenn ich itzt an meine Pflicht gedenke,  
Muß ich mich auch zu deiner Krippe kehren  
Und gleichfalls dankbar sein:  
Denn dieser Tag ist mir ein Tag der Freuden,  
Da du, o Lebensfürst,  
Das Licht der Heiden  
Und ihr Erlöser wirst.  
Was aber bring ich wohl, du Himmelskönig?  
Ist dir mein Herze nicht zuwenig,  
So nimm es gnädig an,  
Weil ich nichts Edlers bringen kann.

#### 4. Arie B

Gold aus Ophir ist zu schlecht,  
Weg, nur weg mit eitlen Gaben,

We encounter here upon this narrow path  
many obstacles to goodness.  
**Such misery You alone, Lord, know:**  
Help, Helper, help us weak ones,  
You can strengthen us!  
**Ah, let us be obedient to you.**

#### 6. Aria (Duet) S A

Think on Jesus' bitter death!  
Take, Father, Your Son's pain  
and the ache of His wounds to heart,  
**They are indeed, for the whole world,**  
**the payment and ransom;**  
show to me as well, at all times,  
merciful God, mercy!  
I sob constantly in my anguish:  
think on Jesus' bitter death!

#### 7. Chorale

**Lead us with Your right hand**  
**and bless our city and land;**  
**give us Your holy word always,**  
**guard against the devil's deceit and harm;**  
**grant a blessed little hour to us,**  
**in which we shall be eternally with You!**

#### 1. Chorus

*They will all come forth out of Sheba,  
bringing gold and incense  
and proclaiming the praise of the Lord.*

#### 2. Chorale

**The kings came out of Sheba,**  
**they brought gold, incense, myrrh along,**  
**Hallelujah!**

#### 3. Recitative B

What Isaiah prophesied there  
has happened in Bethlehem.  
Here the wise men stand  
next to Jesus' manger  
and mean to praise him as their King.  
Gold, incense, and myrrh are  
the precious gifts,  
with which they honor this Jesus-child  
in a stable in Bethlehem.  
My Jesus, when I think about my duty now,  
I must also turn to Your manger  
and likewise be thankful:  
for this day is a day of joy for me,  
since You, o Prince of Life,  
have become a light to the heathens  
and their Savior.  
But what could I present to You, heaven's King?  
If my heart is not too insignificant for You,  
then accept it graciously,  
since I can offer nothing more noble.

#### 4. Aria B

Gold from Ophir is too meager;  
away, away with vain gifts

Die ihr aus der Erde brecht!  
Jesus will das Herze haben.  
Schenke dies, o Christenschar,  
Jesu zu dem neuen Jahr!

that you mine from the earth!  
Jesus wants to have your heart.  
Offer this, o Christian throng,  
to Jesus for the new Year!

### **5. Recitativ T**

Verschmähe nicht,  
Du, meiner Seele Licht,  
Mein Herz, das ich in Demut zu dir bringe;  
Es schließt ja solche Dinge  
In sich zugleich mit ein,  
Die deines Geistes Früchte sein.  
Des Glaubens Gold, der Weihrauch des Gebets,  
Die Myrrhen der Geduld sind meine Gaben,  
Die sollst du, Jesu, für und für  
Zum Eigentum und zum Geschenke haben.  
Gib aber dich auch selber mir,  
So machst du mich zum Reichsten auf der Erden;  
Denn, hab ich dich, so muß  
Des größten Reichtums Überfluß  
Mir dermaleinst im Himmel werden.

### **5. Recitative T**

Do not scorn,  
O You the light of my soul,  
my heart, that I bring to You in humility;  
it contains such things  
within itself  
that are the fruits of Your spirit.  
The gold of faith, the incense of prayer,  
the myrrh of patience are my gifts,  
that You shall have, Jesus, for ever and ever  
as Your due and as my offering.  
Only give Yourself also to me,  
then You will make me the richest one on earth;  
for, having You,  
the abundance of the greatest kingdom  
must some day be mine in Heaven.

### **6. Arie T**

Nimm mich dir zu eigen hin,  
Nimm mein Herze zum Geschenke.  
Alles, alles, was ich bin,  
Was ich rede, tu und denke,  
Soll, mein Heiland, nur allein  
Dir zum Dienst gewidmet sein.

### **6. Aria T**

Take me to Yourself as Your own,  
take my heart as a present.  
All, all that I am,  
what I say, do, and think,  
shall alone, my Savior,  
be dedicated to Your service.

### **7. Choral**

**Ei nun, mein Gott, so fall ich dir  
Getrost in deine Hände.  
Nimm mich und mach es so mit mir  
Bis an mein letztes Ende,  
Wie du wohl weißt, daß meinem Geist  
Dadurch sein Nutz entstehe,  
Und deine Ehr je mehr und mehr  
Sich in ihr selbst erhöhe.  
("Ich hab in Gottes Herz und Sinn," verse 10)**

### **7. Chorale**

**Well now, my God, so I settle  
comforted into Your hands.  
Take me and make it so for me  
until my final end  
as You best know, so that my spirit  
is developed through its purpose,  
and Your honor more and more  
shall exalt itself.**

## **Lutheran Missa in F, BWV 233**

### **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): O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.

4. Aria (S): Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

5. Aria (A): 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 SOLOISTS

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

Mezzo-soprano **KATHRYN WELD** has made a name for herself as a gifted and versatile concert singer. As an early music specialist, she has been a featured soloist with such ensembles as the Philharmonia Baroque, under the direction of Nicholas McGegan, Music at St. John's in New York, the Magnificat Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco, and the Portland Baroque Orchestra, with whom she was heard in a live broadcast of *Messiah* on National Public Radio. Ms. Weld made her Carnegie Hall debut to critical acclaim in a performance of Bach's *B Minor Mass*, with Musica Sacra. She was previously a winner of Musica Sacra's Bach Vocal Competition. She has also made two solo appearances with the New York Philharmonic, one with Charles Dutoit conducting De Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat*, and the other under Kurt Masur's baton in *Peer Gynt*. Kathryn is recently returned from Munich, Germany, where she appeared as a soloist with the Bayerischen Rundfunkchor (Bavarian Radio Choir), the Consortium Musicum of Munich, and the Munich Baroque Orchestra, among others. She is delighted to return once again to sing with OSSCS, with whom she has been a frequent soloist. In the Northwest, she has also appeared with the Oregon Symphony, the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Pro Musica, and many others.

**STEPHEN RUMPH** has established himself as a leading tenor in opera, concert, and oratorio. This season he sang Rodolfo in *La Boheme* with Tacoma Opera, Don Jose in *Carmen* with Skagit Valley Opera, *Das Lied von der Erde* with Northwest Mahler Festival, and Mozart's *Requiem* with both Walla Walla Symphony and Northwest Sinfonietta. Recent credits include Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with both Skagit Valley Opera and the University of Washington, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Tacoma Symphony, Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with the Lake Chelan Bach Fest, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* at Whitman College, Beethoven's *Mass in C* with both Orchestra Seattle and the Kirkland Choral Society, and the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* with Seattle Choral Company. Past performances have included *Messiah* with Tacoma Symphony, an evening of Puccini and Mozart duets with the Federal Way Symphony, and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* with Seattle's Early Music Guild.

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.

## ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

<b>Violin</b> Susan Carpenter Lauren Daugherty Stacey Dye Fritz Klein** Pam Kummert Gregor Nitsche Stephen Provine** Theo Schaad Janet Showalter Kenna Smith-Shangrow Peggy Spencer	<b>Viola</b> Katherine McWilliams* Andrew Schirmer Ella Wallace	<b>Bass</b> Jo Hansen* Ericka Kendall	<b>Bassoon</b> Judith Lawrence*	<b>Trombone</b> Paul Bogataj Moc Escobedo* David Holmes
	<b>Cello</b> Zon Eastes* Annie Roberts Matthew Wyant*	<b>Flute</b> Shari Müller-Ho* Melissa Underhill	<b>Horn</b> Don Crevie* Jim Henderson	<b>Harpichord</b> Robert Kechley
		<b>Oboe/English Horn</b> David Barnes* John Dimond Alicia Hall	<b>Trumpet</b> Janet Young	** <i>concertmaster</i> * <i>principal</i>

## SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

<b>Soprano</b> Hillary Anderson Erika Chang Crissa Cugini Kyla Deremer Cinda Freece Kiki Hood Jill Kraakmo Lila Woodruff May Jana Music Nancy Shasteen	Melissa Thirloway Pat Vetterlein	Lorelette Knowles Theodora Letz Suzi Means Laurie Medill Julia Akoury Thiel	Thomas Nesbitt Vic Royer Jerry Sams
	<b>Alto</b> Sharon Agnew Carolyn Cross Avery Jane Blackwell Brooke Cassell Ann Erickson Deanna Fryhle Courtney Juhl Ellen Kaisse	<b>Tenor</b> Ronald Carson Jon Lange Timothy Lunde Fred McIlroy	<b>Bass</b> Stephen Brady Andrew Danilcik Douglas Durasoff Alvin Kroon Dennis Moore Jeff Thirloway Richard Wyckoff

Men's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh leads to the use of these particular "lessons" at the Feast of the Epiphany and in this cantata.

The opening movement of the cantata, in a swinging 12/8 meter (a caravan of camels swaying across the desert?) and based on the reading from Isaiah, begins with the announcement by the horns (which in Bach's day were rarely used in indoor settings) of a rising theme which is taken up immediately by the rest of the orchestra and is soon stated in unison, over a span of three octaves, just before it is passed to the chorus. Each voice, from bass to soprano, sings this theme, and after its development into an imitative "prelude," the basses begin a grand fugue based on a modified version of the opening theme. The long passages of rapid notes to which the word "come" is set during the fugue suggest that the journey of the Magi is lengthy and arduous! Singers and instrumentalists close the movement by praising God together in the striking octave passage that concluded the movement's orchestral introduction.

In the second movement, a relatively straightforward four-part harmonization of the fourth verse of the traditional 1545 Christmas hymn, "A child is born at Bethlehem," Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled. The chorus is accompanied by recorders and the "exotic" oboes da caccia (whose tone color was a sonic novelty in Bach's time). This chorale is followed by a bass recitative and an aria in which gifts are brought to the manger to the accompaniment of the two rustic oboes da caccia following one another in imitation. On the word "Gaben," the soloist scatters great voice-fuls of notes as if gold is an offering fit only to be tossed away. The aria ends with triple imitation among the oboes and the continuo that might bring to mind the triple gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh.

A tenor recitative now leads to an aria in a waltzing triple meter accompanied by the full orchestra, with the wealth of sound perhaps emphasizing the recitative's closing reference to "the greatest overflow of riches." The beautiful tenor melody is initially accompanied by the continuo alone, giving the text, "Take me for your own" a particular poignancy. The importance of offering one's entire self to God is stressed by swirling the word "all" in a cyclone of rapid notes.

The cantata concludes with another chorale, a simple four-part setting of a 1528 French melody, "What my God wills, may it always be," which is often associated with Paul Gerhardt's 1647 hymn text, "I have surrendered to God's heart and mind." Bach encourages his listeners to "fall, comforted, into God's hands" as they end their Epiphany celebration.

#### Missa Brevis in F major, BWV 233

Bach's four "Lutheran Masses," like most of the "brief masses" composed in protestant Germany during the Baroque era (about 1600-1750), 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 reworkings of movements (some of his finest and probably his favorites) from Bach's earlier sacred cantatas. The circumstances surrounding their writing remain obscure. Perhaps they were intended by Bach for performance on festive occasions in his churches in Leipzig, but some scholars contend that, much more likely, these masses were 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.

Like all of Bach's short masses, the one in F major has six movements. The Kyrie, probably dating from Bach's time in

Weimar and scored for SATB chorus and orchestra, is one continuous imitative contrapuntal movement in which Bach uses two themes: the music of a phrase from Luther's German Litany (sung by the basses), and the Lutheran tune that normally accompanies the text, "Christ, Lamb of God" (played by the oboes and horns). The theme of the first "Kyrie" section appears inverted in the "Christe," and the two are combined in the final "Kyrie."

The five sections of the Gloria are arranged so that three arias, all of which feature striking instrumental solos, are framed by two choruses accompanied by the full orchestra. The glittering "Gloria in excelsis," in an exuberant 6/8 meter and exploding with energy, spills its multitude of rapidly-running notes into an imitative musical torrent as voices and instruments try to outdo one another in giving joyous praise to God on high. The second section of the Gloria, an aria in 3/8 time for bass with string accompaniment, features a sparkling virtuosic part for the first violin. The third section is a challenging soprano solo decorated by the oboe; both it and the fourth section, an alto aria accompanied by solo violin and continuo, are reworked from the 1726 Cantata 102. The effervescent "Cum Sancto Spiritu," an intricately-wrought imitative "presto" for chorus and full orchestra adapted from the first movement of the 1723 Cantata 40, invites performers and listeners to join "with the Holy Spirit," as the Missa Brevis concludes, in cascading, tumbling, tumultuous praise to a glorious God.

Please Join Us for Our Holiday Offerings!

**Handel: MESSIAH**

Sunday afternoon,  
December 7 at 3:00 p.m.

**Bach: CHRISTMAS ORATORIO**

Monday evening,  
December 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Both concerts at  
First Free Methodist Church

[www.ossccs.org](http://www.ossccs.org)

**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!*

**Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen**, scored for four-part chorus with alto, tenor, and bass soloists and an orchestra of 2 horns, 2 recorders, 2 oboes da caccia (tenor oboes), 2 violins, viola, and continuo (a bass instrument and a keyboard instrument that together provide the harmonic foundation of a piece), was written in Leipzig in 1723 or very early in 1724, with its first performance taking place on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, 1724.

**Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott** was probably composed in Leipzig in 1724 and given its first performance on August 13, 1724. With texts by Martin Moller (movements 1, 3, 5, and 7) and an unknown author (movements 2, 4, and 6)—perhaps Christian Friedrich Henrici (Picander)—the cantata is scored for four-part chorus with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists and an orchestra of transverse flute, 2 oboes, taille (alto bassoon or tenor oboe), horn, 3 trombones, 2 violins, viola, and continuo.

**Missa Brevis in F major**

This setting of the first two sections of the Latin mass (Kyrie and Gloria) was composed in Leipzig, probably around 1737, using movements from other cantatas (BWV 102 and 40, and perhaps some that have been lost). Scored for four-part chorus with soprano, alto, and bass soloists, with an orchestra of 2 horns, 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 violins, viola, and continuo, it might have been performed for the first in 1738 or 1739.

**The Composer**

A little more than a month after the birth of George Frederick Handel in Halle in February 1685, in the Thuringian town of Eisenach (about 30 miles from Halle, and near Wartburg Castle, Martin Luther's hiding place), Johann Ambrosius Bach and his wife, Elisabeth, welcomed both spring and their eighth child, Johann Sebastian. Ambrosius, like most of the other members of the extended Bach family, was a skilled and successful professional musician, who performed ceremonial music at the Eisenach town hall, and who later accepted a second position as court musician for the local duke. He was an accomplished singer and player of the violin and viola, and the young Sebastian may have learned those instruments from him, and the organ from Ambrosius' cousin, "the profound composer" Johann Christoph Bach, organist at St. George's Church, where Sebastian soon became an experienced chorister.

The eight-year-old Sebastian attended the local Latin School, where Luther had studied, and did very well, but in May of 1694, his mother died; his father remarried the following January, but himself died the next month, leaving his widow with probably five children. Sebastian and his brother Johann Jakob were taken into the home of their oldest brother, Johann Christoph, newly-married, and organist at Ohrdruf. In his new environment, the knowledge-hungry Sebastian continued to excel in his musical and academic studies. A famous, but possibly apocryphal, story from this period has the 12-year-old Sebastian secretly removing a manuscript of clavichord compositions by such accomplished composers as Böhm, Buxtehude, Pachelbel, and Fosberger from a forbidden bookcase in his older brother's home, copying the music by moonlight to avoid detection, and stealthily replacing the

original. Johann Christoph, however, discovered the painstaking copy, and confiscated it, having denied his brother access to the manuscript because he believed the music too difficult!

By 1700, Johann Christoph Bach had two children of his own, and was unable to support Sebastian any longer. So the fifteen-year-old musician left Ohrdruf to finish his education in the town of Lüneburg, some 200 miles to the north, where he had won a scholarship to the choir school of St. Michael's Church, which provided him with room, board, and instruction. During the next three years, Sebastian sang in the choir, played the violin in the orchestra, studied the music of past composers and traditional composition methods, and improved his organ-playing by studying with the famous organist, Georg Böhm. When he had completed his academic studies at St. Michael's, however, Sebastian found himself unable to attend a university because he lacked the necessary funds, and he therefore returned to Thuringia and found a post in 1703 as organist at the New Church in Arnstadt.

In his new position, the eighteen-year-old Sebastian was paid well, but his compositional and technical brilliance as an organist caused him trouble with his employers, because his creative improvisations on and accompaniments to hymn tunes proved confusing to the congregation. The unruly behavior of his choristers and instrumentalists, many of whom were older than he, irritated the rather hot-tempered and perfectionistic young musician; at one point, he engaged in a street-brawl with a bassoon player named Geyersbach, whom Sebastian had called a "nanny-goat bassonist." The situation deteriorated further when Sebastian took four months off to visit the celebrated organist-composer, Dietrich Buxtehude, in the distant town of Lübeck (according to tradition, he made the 400-mile round-trip on foot!), when he had originally arranged for an absence of only four weeks. Upon his return in January of 1706, he found himself facing a furious town council complaining that he had been away from his post too long, his playing was becoming even more complex and confusing than ever, and worse yet, he had been heard accompanying the singing of a "strange maiden" in the organ loft! The impatient young genius realized that he would have to find a work setting in which he would have more freedom to explore his musical ideas and to compose and perform more challenging music.

The young singer in the organ gallery was probably Maria Barbara Bach, one of Sebastian's second cousins, and, like the rest of the Bach family, a good musician. Both she and Sebastian were not only musicians and cousins, but were also orphans, and both lived for a time with their mutual relative, the Mayor of Arnstadt. They were married in the fall of 1707, after Sebastian had found a new position as organist at the Church of St. Blaise in Mühlhausen. But he left this post within a year, having found that the Pietist pastor of the church really preferred church music to be very simple, and that the musical freedom he so greatly desired was not to be found at St. Blaise's.

In July of 1708, Bach was appointed court organist and chamber musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, a fervent Lutheran and an enthusiastic musical patron, and the first of Bach's twenty children was born soon after his arrival in

Weimar. Here at last, Bach obtained the freedom to compose for which he had longed. Most of his great organ works were written during his nine years at Weimar, and he also composed many cantatas for the duke's chapel and for various secular occasions, such as birthdays, weddings, and special events at the University of Leipzig. By this time, his superlative skills as an organist and his expertise in the construction of pipe organs had earned him considerable celebrity, and his fame brought him many pupils and numerous opportunities to perform on organs in neighboring cities. In addition, he was later promoted to the newly-created post of Concertmaster.

When Duke Wilhelm Ernst's Kapellmeister died in 1716, Bach expected to be given his post, but when it was given to the old Kapellmeister's relatively untalented son for various political reasons, Bach resigned. The duke angrily refused to let his renowned concertmaster take an appointment as Prince Leopold's court conductor at Anhalt-Cöthen, which he was offered in August 1717, and had him imprisoned for a month; eventually, the headstrong composer was released, discharged in disgrace, and allowed to leave Weimar with his young family.

As Kapellmeister at Anhalt-Cöthen, Bach began to produce an amazing abundance of instrumental works (most of which have, most unfortunately, been lost) for Prince Leopold, who treated Bach with respect and affection. Sonatas and concertos for the violin and the flute, and the justly famous Brandenburg Concertos, were written during Bach's years at Cöthen. For a time, Bach's situation seemed ideal, but in July of 1720, he returned from a trip with his patron to domestic devastation: his beloved wife, Maria Barbara, had suddenly taken ill, had died, and had been buried, leaving him with his four surviving children (three had died in infancy) to care for. Seventeen months later, the 36-year-old Sebastian Bach married Anna Magdalena Wilcken, a 20-year-old soprano also employed by the Cöthen court; she not only became stepmother to Bach's first family, but went on to bear her husband thirteen children, of whom only six survived infancy (of the composer's ten surviving offspring, one son died of a sudden fever in his early twenties, while another was mentally challenged).

In December 1721, a week after the marriage of Bach and Anna Magdalena, Bach's employer, Prince Leopold married his cousin, and soon the musical life of the court was threatened, since the young princess appears to have been totally devoid of musical interests or appreciation, and began to persuade Leopold to spend less time with his musicians. Bach soon began to feel somewhat unneeded and neglected, and, after the death of his first wife, and fifteen years of making music in noblemen's courts, he felt an urge to write religious music again. He also wanted his musically-gifted children to be near a good university. So the Bach family prepared for another move.

In 1723, Leipzig was an important trading center in Saxony that was governed by a town council; in May, they offered Sebastian Bach the highly influential position of cantor at the venerable St. Thomas's Church, though he was their third choice after the famous and extremely prolific composer, Georg Philipp Telemann, refused the council's offer, as did the renowned Darmstadt court conductor, Christoph Graupner, for financial reasons. Bach, however, accepted this prestigious post, which made him musical director of Leipzig's churches, and soon found himself with a very heavy workload indeed. He was required to write and perform music weekly for the town's two main churches, St. Thomas's and St. Nicholas's, to look after the boys at St. Thomas's School and teach them music and Latin, and to compose works for town events. He

had little rehearsal time, and his performers were largely schoolboys, some of whom were allowed into the choir by the council despite their inability to read music! In addition, he had ever more children of his own to instruct in music.

Though his working conditions were very difficult, his conflicts with those in authority over him were frequent and sometimes bitter, his compensation was barely adequate, and he often considered leaving Leipzig, Bach remained at St. Thomas's for 27 years, until the end of his life. Here he did have, however, the opportunity to compose and perform very large-scale works for choirs, orchestra, soloists, keyboard players, and visiting instrumental virtuosos. He wrote nearly 300 cantatas, and such magnificent works as the St. John Passion, the St. Matthew Passion, the Christmas Oratorio, the Magnificat, and six German motets for special occasions.

In 1729 Bach took over as director of a group, founded by Telemann, known as the "Collegium Musicum," which was composed largely of music students from the university who met to perform on Friday evenings at a local coffeehouse; for this group, he wrote, among other works, the light-hearted Coffee Cantata, which is perhaps the most opera-like of his compositions. He was also appointed part-time court composer to the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, Augustus III, in 1736, and dedicated to him the first two sections of the Mass in B Minor, one of the greatest religious works ever composed.

By 1750, Bach had begun to work less, partly because his constant struggles with his employers had reduced his interest in his duties as cantor, and also because his health was failing (he may have suffered a stroke by mid-1749). Weak-sighted for years due to heredity, overwork, and poor lighting, Bach was nearly blind by 1749. He agreed to have two painful eye operations in the spring of 1750, but they were failures, and his health rapidly worsened. After suffering a second stroke that was rapidly followed by a fierce fever, Bach died on July 28, 1750, just ten days after his sight was suddenly but only briefly restored. He left only a small estate, and his long-suffering widow, Anna Magdalena, became and remained an almshouse resident until her death ten years later.

Almost before he died, Bach's music was considered outmoded and unfashionable, even by his own talented sons, who helped to shape the new music of their own generation. For some 70 years after his death, Bach's music was all but forgotten, and it took musicians to rediscover this musical master. Mozart apparently heard Bach's motet, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, with a shock: "What is this? Now there is something we can learn from!" he said, and it was Beethoven's brilliant playing of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" that first gained him a reputation as a virtuoso performer in Vienna. But it was under Felix Mendelssohn in 1829 that the great St. Matthew Passion was performed for the first time since its composer's death, and thereafter, interest in and publication, study, and performance of Bach's works began to flourish worldwide.

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

## THE MUSIC

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, 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 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 marvelous works, which constitute the core of Bach's vocal output.

#### Cantata 101: Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott

This little-known but powerful work, "Take from us, Lord, you faithful God," is a "chorale cantata" in which a familiar chorale tune is used as the foundation upon which the entire work is constructed. Bach's listeners, who knew these chorale melodies very well, must have enjoyed a thrill of recognition when, in the middle of a complex musical tapestry, the very familiar melodic threads of the chorale unexpectedly shone forth and words associated with them sprang to mind.

The readings for the 10th Sunday after Trinity (usually falling in August), for which this cantata was intended, are I Corinthians 12: 1-11 (God's spiritual gifts to believers are varied) and Luke 19: 41-48 (Jesus weeps over the impending destruction of Jerusalem and drives the money changers from the temple). The libretto, possibly written by Picander and reflecting the reading from Luke, is based on a 1584 hymn by Martin Moller dealing with the horrors of war and plague; it might have been particularly meaningful for Bach and his congregation after the devastations of the Thirty Years' War. Stanzas one, three, five, and seven of Moller's hymn are quoted directly while the other stanzas are paraphrased and set by Bach as arias. The chorale melody, often associated with Luther's chorale text, "Our Father in Heaven," plays a prominent role throughout this cantata, appearing in all movements except the second, which alone is free of any obvious references to the corresponding section of Moller's poem.

In keeping with its the somber subject matter, the solemn, strident, and sometimes darkly dissonant first movement of the cantata takes the form of a motet (a polyphonic vocal composition) written in an "old-fashioned" style harmonically and structurally, with the chorale melody (*cantus firmus*) sung line by line by the sopranos (doubled by the flute) in long notes, while the lower voices (doubled by the trombones) provide support, introducing the chorale melody imitatively in shorter notes prior to the sopranos' entrances. A four-measure "mourning motif," which begins with three repeated notes and moves upward and then downward, appears at once in the orchestra's introduction to the movement and recurs in various guises more than 30 times over its course as the instruments accompany the choral sections and present their own musical material in alternation with them. This pervasive motif can be heard in the orchestra as each choral section concludes and appears in the lower voice parts as well. Even more ubiquitous throughout the musical texture is a melancholy three-note "sighing motif" normally consisting of a downward leap followed by an upward half-step, and these

three omnipresent elements—the "mourning motif," the "sighing motif," and the chorale tune, unify this highly complex and arresting composition.

The tenor aria that continues the cantata contains no reference to the chorale melody, but is notable for the elaborately decorative part for flute (or violin) that accompanies the voice. This instrumental solo might represent the scattered heedlessness of those sinners who stand in need of mercy! Bach employs "tone painting" at several points: he allows the tenor to "rest" on a long, sustained note at the word "ruhn" ("rest"); the vocal line ascends on the word "Höchster" ("Highest"); the soloist "pleads" in drooping lines when the word "flehen" ("entreat") appears; and the vocal line descends at the word for "pass away" ("vergehen"). The following soprano recitative incorporates portions of the chorale melody and is accompanied by a repeated phrase in the continuo line that is derived from it.

The cantata's fourth movement is an extraordinary bass aria whose unusual structure arises from Bach's efforts to combine passion and intensity of expression with the quotation of the chorale melody in both vocal and instrumental parts. The aria opens with an "anxious" prelude for two oboes, tenor oboe, and bassoon, after which the bass enters with the first phrase of the chorale melody; this gives way to an alternation, in varying tempi, of portions of the chorale melody with freely composed material. In the middle section, the oboes play the entire chorale tune in harmony while the bass sings his independent line, and the music of the agitated prelude then reappears to balance the structure of the movement.

Movement 5, a tenor chorale-recitative, is similar in structure and mood to Movement 3. The tenor sings phrases of the chorale tune that alternate with freer, more declamatory passages, while the continuo part, using material derived from the chorale melody, provides rhythmic interest.

Many consider the sixth movement to be the highlight of the cantata. In this finely-wrought duet for soprano and alto accompanied by flute and oboe *da caccia*, in 12/8 meter and A-B-A form, phrases of the chorale tune are scattered throughout both the vocal and the instrumental material. The melody serves as a "trellis" over and around which other musical tendrils wind as one voice or instrument has the tune while another plays a counterpoint, the roles reverse, one part imitates another, and then they join in harmony. This duet is followed by the unadorned four-part harmonization of the of the chorale melody, sung by the chorus with the reinforcement of the full orchestra, that concludes the cantata with a prayer for guidance, protection, and blessing.

#### Cantata 65: Sie werden aus Saba alle kommen

This work is part of the first of the annual cantata cycles Bach produced after assuming his Leipzig duties in 1723, a time during which he appears to have composed approximately one cantata per week! The theme of this Epiphany cantata's unknown librettist is the offering of gifts, both material and spiritual. The scripture readings for this festival occasion, which celebrates the manifestation of the Christ Child to the Magi, and which is celebrated on January 6th in Western Christianity, are Isaiah 60:1-6 (one day the heathen peoples will come from afar and turn to God ) and Matthew 2: 1-12 (wise men from the East seek a newborn king). Verse 6 of the Isaiah passage, in which is set out the prophet's vision that "Sie werden von Saba alle kommen" ("They shall all come from Sheba"—"Sheba" referring to Ethiopia, but ultimately meaning "the most distant land"), concludes: "They shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." The association of this Old Testament passage with the Gospel's description of the Wise

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