



WASHINGTON BACH CONSORT

Dana Marsh, Artistic Director

Christmas Oratorio

Weihnachts-Oratorium, BWV 248

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)





bach interactions

Nine virtual programs offer some of the finest works in the cantata and oratorio repertory. You'll enjoy the Washington Bach Consort as you've never heard them before, but you'll also gain revelations and insights into the music itself coming from our two resident Bach scholars, Michael Marissen and Daniel R. Melamed. Supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the J. Reilly Lewis Legacy Fund, Bach Interactions is a new digital concert experience offering the expressive heights of Bach's musical language as well as the story behind its creation.

The series features three renowned cantatas, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, BWV 140, *Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir*, BWV 131, and *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, BWV 61, followed by all six parts of Bach's beloved *Christmas Oratorio*, BWV 248. Each part will be presented on its intended day of liturgical observance, over the twelve days of Christmas to the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6).

Bach Interactions is supported by gifts from the **J. Reilly Lewis Legacy Fund** and the **National Endowment for the Humanities**.

OUR MISSION

Founded in 1977 by the late Dr. J. Reilly Lewis, the Washington Bach Consort is a professional choral and orchestral ensemble based in Washington, DC that is committed to ensuring that current and future audiences experience the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries, by:

1. performing the music of Bach and his contemporaries to the highest artistic standards,
2. sharing the joy of Bach's music by broadening audiences in the nation's capital,
3. nurturing the appreciation of Bach's music through education and community outreach activities, and
4. interpreting the music of Bach for audiences of today, thereby ensuring his legacy.

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Weihnachts-Oratorium, BWV 248

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Dana Marsh, Artistic Director

Part I

Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage, BWV 248^I

Friday, 12.25.20 at 8 p.m. YouTube & Facebook



NEW YOUTUBE & FACEBOOK DATES ↓

Part II

Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend, BWV 248^{II}

Thursday, 1.7.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part III

Herrscher des Himmels, erhöere das Lallen, BWV 248^{III}

Thursday, 1.14.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part IV

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben, BWV 248^{IV}

Thursday, 1.21.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part V

Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen, BWV 248^V

Thursday, 1.28.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part VI

Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben, BWV 248^{VI}

Thursday, 2.4.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

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PART IV

PRESENTER
Daniel R. Melamed

CHORUS

SOPRANO

Amy Nicole Broadbent
Elijah McCormack, *soloist*

ALTO

Reginald Mobley
Kristen Dubenion-Smith,
soloist

TENOR

Patrick Kilbride,
soloist (Evangelist)
Matthew Loyal Smith

BASS

Jason Widney, *soloist*
Jonathan Woody

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

Andrew Fouts,
concertmaster
Tatiana Chulochnikova,
soloist

VIOLONCELLO

John Moran

OBOE

Geoffrey Burgess
Margaret Owens

HARPSICHORD

Leon Schelhase

VIOLONE

Jessica Powell Eig

HORN

Brad Tatum
Paul Hopkins

ORGAN

Adam Pearl

VIOLA

Risa Browder

TEXT & TRANSLATION

**Aufs Fest der Beschneidung Christi. Frühe zu St.
Thomæ; Nachmittage zu St. Nicolai.**

Tutti

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben
Vor des Höchsten Gnadenthron!
Gottes Sohn
Will der Erden
Heiland und Erlöser werden,
Gottes Sohn
Dämpft der Feinde Wut und Toben.

**On the feast of the circumcision of Christ. Early
at St. Thomas; in the afternoon at St. Nicholas.**

All

Bow with thanksgiving, bow with lauding
Before the Most High's Throne of Grace!
God's Son
Is willing to become the earth's
Savior and redeemer;
God's Son
Dampens the enemies' fury and rage.

Normal = free poetry *Italics = scriptural text* **Bold = chorale text**



TEXT & TRANSLATION (cont'd.)

Evangelist

Und da acht Tage um waren, daß das Kind beschnitten würde, da ward sein Name genennet Jesus, welcher genennet war von dem Engel, ehe denn er im Mutterleibe empfangen ward.

Recitativ und Choral

Immanuel, o süßes Wort!
Mein Jesus heißt mein Hort,
Mein Jesus heißt mein Leben.
Mein Jesus hat sich mir ergeben;
Mein Jesus soll mir immerfort
Vor meinen Augen schweben.
Mein Jesus heißet meine Lust,
Mein Jesus labet Herz und Brust.
Komm! Ich will dich mit Lust umfassen, Mein
Herze soll dich nimmer lassen.
Ach, so nimm mich zu dir!

**Jesu, du mein liebstes Leben,
Meiner Seelen Bräutigam,
Der du dich vor mich gegeben
An des bittern Kreuzes Stamm!**

Auch in dem Sterben sollst du mir
Das Allerliebste sein;
In Not, Gefahr und Ungemach
Seh ich dir sehnlichst nach.
Was jagte mir zuletzt der Tod für Grauen
ein? Mein Jesus! Wenn ich sterbe,
So weiß ich, daß ich nicht verderbe.
Dein Name steht in mir geschrieben,
Der hat des Todes Furcht vertrieben.

ARIA

Flößt, mein Heiland, flößt dein Namen Auch
den allerkleinsten Samen
Jenes strengen Schreckens ein?
Nein, du sagst ja selber nein;
Sollt ich nun das Sterben scheuen?
Nein, dein süßes Wort ist da!
Oder sollt ich mich erfreuen?
Ja, du Heiland sprichst selbst ja.

Evangelist

And as eight days were up, when the child would be circumcised, his name was called Jesus, [the name he] was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb.

Recitative and chorale

"Emmanuel," o sweet word!
My Jesus is called "my refuge,"
My Jesus is called "my life."
My Jesus has submitted himself to me;
My Jesus shall evermore, to me,
Hover before my eyes.
My Jesus is called "my delight,"
My Jesus refreshes heart and breast.
Come! With delight I will embrace you,
My heart shall never leave you.
Oh, so take me to you!

**Jesus, you, my most beloved life,
My soul's bridegroom,
You who has given himself for me
On the beam of the bitter cross!**

Even in dying shall you be to me
The most beloved of all;
In need, danger, and affliction
I gaze after you most ardently.
How in the end might death [be able to] scare
Me with fright? My Jesus! When I die,
I know that then I will not be ruined.
Your name, inscribed within me,
Has driven out the fear of death.

ARIA

Is it, my Savior, is it [true] that your name instills
Even the very tiniest seed
of that stark horror [of the Day of Judgment]?
No, yes you yourself say, "no";
Now shall I shy away from having to die?
No, your sweet word is there!
Or shall I rejoice?
Yes, you yourself, Savior, declare, "yes."

TEXT & TRANSLATION (*cont'd.*)

Recitativ und Choral

Wohlan, dein Name soll allein
In meinem Herzen sein!
So will ich dich entzückt nennen,
Wenn Brust und Herz zu dir vor Liebe brennen.
Doch, Liebster, sage mir:
Wie rühm ich dich, wie dank ich dir?

**Jesu, meine Freud und Wonne,
Meine Hoffnung, Schatz und Teil,
Mein Erlösung, Schmuck und Heil,
Hirt und König, Licht und Sonne,
Ach! wie soll ich würdiglich,
Mein Herr Jesu, preisen dich?**

ARIA

Ich will nur dir zu Ehren leben,
Mein Heiland, gib mir Kraft und Mut,
Daß es mein Herz recht eifrig tut!
Stärke mich,
Deine Gnade würdiglich
Und mit Danken zu erheben!

Choral

**Jesus richte mein Beginnen,
Jesus bleibe stets bei mir,
Jesus zäume mir die Sinnen,
Jesus sei nur mein Begier,
Jesus sei mir in Gedanken,
Jesu, lasse mich nicht wanken!**

Recitative and chorale

Well then, your name alone shall
Be in my heart!
These are what I, in a trance, will call you,
When [my] breast and heart burn with love for you.
But tell me, Most Beloved:
How may I glorify you, how may I thank you?

**Jesus, my joy and gladness,
My hope, treasure, and portion,
My redemption, adornment, and salvation,
Shepherd and king, light and sun,—
Oh!—how shall I worthily
Praise you, my lord Jesus?**

ARIA

For honor I will live only to you;
My Savior, give me power and courage,
That my heart will do it right zealously!
Strengthen me
To exalt your grace worthily
And with thanksgiving!

Chorale

**May Jesus direct my embarking;
May Jesus remain with me ever;
May Jesus bridle my inclinations;
May Jesus only be my desire;
May Jesus be in the plans I devise;
Jesus, let me not waver!**

(transl. Daniel R. Melamed and Michael Marissen)





PART V

PRESENTER
Michael Marissen

CHORUS

SOPRANO

Amy Nicole Broadbent,
soloist
Laura Choi Stuart

ALTO

Sarah Davis Issaeldhoury
Kristen Dubenion-Smith,
soloist

TENOR

Patrick Kilbride
Gregório Taniguchi,
soloist (Evangelist)

BASS

Steven Combs, *soloist*
Jonathan Woody

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

Andrew Fouts,
soloist, concertmaster
Tatiana Chulochnikova

VIOLA

Risa Browder

VIOLONCELLO

John Moran

VIOLONE

Jessica Powell Eig

OBOE D'AMORE

Margaret Owens
Geoffrey Burgess

HARPSICORD

Leon Schelhase

ORGAN

Adam Pearl

TEXT & TRANSLATION

Am Sonntage nach dem Neuen Jahr. In der Kirche zu St. Nicolai.

Tutti

Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen,
Dir sei Lob und Dank bereit'.
Dich erhebet alle Welt,
Weil dir unser Wohl gefällt,
Weil anheut
Unser aller Wunsch gelungen,
Weil uns dein Segen so herrlich erfreut.

Evangelist

*Da Jesus geboren war zu Bethlehem im jüdischen
Lande zur Zeit des Königes Herodis, siehe, da kamen
die Weisen vom Morgenlande gen Jerusalem und
sprachen:*

Chorus

Wo ist der neugeborne König der Juden?

Recitativ

Sucht ihn in meiner Brust,
Hier wohnt er, mir und ihm zur Lust!

On the Sunday after New Year's. At St. Nicholas Church.

All

May honor, God, be sung to you,
May laud and thanks be extended to you.
All the world exalts you,
Because our well-being pleases you,
Because today
The wish of all of us has come true,
Because your blessing gladdens us so splendidly.

Evangelist

*When Jesus was born at Bethlehem in the Jewish region at
the time of King Herod, look: there came the wisemen of
the Orient to Jerusalem, saying:*

Chorus

Where is the newborn King of the Jews?

Recitative

Seek him in my breast;
Here he dwells, to my and his delight!

Normal = free poetry *Italics* = scriptural text **Bold** = chorale text

TEXT & TRANSLATION (cont'd.)

Chorus

*Wir haben seinen Stern gesehen im Morgenlande und
sind kommen, ihn anzubeten.*

Recitativ

Wohl euch, die ihr dies Licht gesehen,
Es ist zu eurem Heil geschehen!
Mein Heiland, du, du bist das Licht,
Das auch den Heiden scheinen sollen,
Und sie, sie kennen dich noch nicht,
Als sie dich schon verehren wollen.
Wie hell, wie klar muß nicht dein Schein,
Geliebter Jesu, sein!

Choral

**Dein Glanz all Finsternis verzehrt,
Die trübe Nacht in Licht verkehrt.
Leit uns auf deinen Wegen,
Daß dein Gesicht
Und herrlichs Licht
Wir ewig schauen mögen!**

ARIA

Erleucht auch meine finstre Sinnen,
Erleuchte mein Herze
Durch der Strahlen klaren Schein!
Dein Wort soll mir die hellste Kerze
In allen meinen Werken sein;
Dies lässet die Seele nichts Böses beginnen.

Evangelist

*Da das der König Herodes hörte, erschrak er und mit
ihm das ganze Jerusalem.*

Recitativ

Warum wollt ihr erschrecken?
Kann meines Jesu Gegenwart
euch solche Furcht erwecken?
O! solltet ihr euch nicht
Vielmehr darüber freuen,
Weil er dadurch verspricht,
Der Menschen Wohlfahrt zu verneuen.

Evangelist

*Und ließ versammeln alle Hohepriester und
Schriftgelehrten unter dem Volk und erforschte von
ihnen, wo Christus sollte geboren werden. Und sie
sagten ihm: Zu Bethlehem im jüdischen Lande; denn
also stehet geschrieben durch den Propheten: Und
du Bethlehem im jüdischen Lande bist mitnichten die
kleinst unter den Fürsten Juda; denn aus dir soll mir
kommen der Herzog, der über mein Volk Israel ein
Herr sei.*

Chorus

*We have seen his star in the Orient and have come to
worship him.*

Recitative

Well for you, you who have seen this light;
It has taken place for your salvation!
You, my Savior, you are the light
That shall shine also to the gentiles, and they
[These gentiles, the wisemen], they do not know you
Yet, [even now] as they already want to revere you.
How bright, how clear must not your luminosity be,
Beloved Jesus!

Chorale

**Your luster consumes all darkness,
Turns the murky night into light.
Lead us along your pathways,
That we may see your face
And glorious light
Eternally!**

ARIA

Light up, too, my dark inclinations,
Light up my heart
With the clear luminosity of your streams of light!
Your word shall be the brightest candle to me
In all my works;
This will let the soul embark on nothing evil.

Evangelist

*When Herod the King heard that, he was alarmed, and with
him all of Jerusalem.*

Recitative

Why would you all want to be alarmed?
Can the presence of my Jesus
Arouse such fear in you?
O! Shouldn't you
Rather be glad about that,
Because he promises through it
To renew the welfare of humankind.

Evangelist

*And [Herod] had all the chief priests and scripture experts
among the people gather, and inquired of them, where
[the] Christ was expected to be born. And they told him: "at
Bethlehem in the Jewish region; for so it stands written by
the prophet, 'And you Bethlehem in the Jewish region are
by no means the smallest among the princes of Judah; for
out of you shall come to me the leader who would be a ruler
over my people Israel.'"*

TEXT & TRANSLATION (cont'd.)

ARIA

Ach, wenn wird die Zeit erscheinen?
Ach, wenn kömmt der Trost
der Seinen?
Schweigt, er ist schon würklich hier!
Jesu, ach so komm zu mir!

Recitativ

Mein Liebster herrschet schon.
Ein Herz, das seine Herrschaft liebet
Und sich ihm ganz zu eigen givet,
Ist meines Jesu Thron.

Choral

**Zwar ist solche Herzensstube
Wohl kein schöner Fürstensaal,
Sondern eine finstre Grube;
Doch, sobald dein Gnadenstrahl
In derselben nur wird blinken,
Wird es voller Sonnen dünden.**

ARIA

Oh, when will the time appear?
Oh, when shall the consolation of
His own [saved people] come?
Silence!—he really is already here!
Jesus, oh then come to me!

Recitative

My Most Beloved already rules.
A heart that loves his Lordship,
And gives itself to him completely for his own,
Is [to be] my Jesus' throne.

Chorale

**True, such a heart-cellar [for Jesus to dwell in] is
Certainly no choice hall of princes,
But rather a dark pit;
Yet, as soon as your grace-filled stream of light
Flashes in this same [pit],
It will seem full of sunlight.**



PART VI

PRESENTERS

Michael Marissen
Daniel R. Melamed

CHORUS

SOPRANO

Katelyn Aungst
Margot Rood, *soloist*

ALTO

Roger O. Isaacs, *soloist*
Sarah Davis Issaekhouri

TENOR

Matthew Hill,
soloist (Evangelist)
Patrick Kilbride

BASS

David Rugger, *soloist*
Jason Widney

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN

Andrew Fouts,
concertmaster
Tatiana Chulochnikova

VIOLONCELLO

John Moran

TRUMPET

Josh Cohen
Joelle Monroe Dennis
Anthony Ferry

HARPSICHORD

Leon Schelhase

VIOLA

Risa Browder

VIOLONE

Jessica Powell Eig

TIMPANI

Michelle Humphreys

ORGAN

Adam Pearl

OBOE, OBOE D'AMORE

Geoffrey Burgess
Margaret Owens

TEXT & TRANSLATION

Am Feste der Offenbarung Christi. Frühe zu St. Thomæ. Nachmittag zu St. Nicolai.

Tutti

Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben,
So gib, daß wir im festen Glauben
Nach deiner Macht und Hülfe sehn!
Wir wollen dir allein vertrauen,
So können wir den scharfen Klauen
Des Feindes unversehrt entgehn.

Evangelist

*Da berief Herodes die Weisen heimlich und erlernet
mit Fleiß von ihnen, wenn der Stern erschienen wäre.
Und weiset sie gen Bethlehem und sprach:*

Herodes

*Ziehet hin und forschet fleißig nach dem Kindlein,
und wenn ihr's findet, sagt mir's wieder, daß ich auch
komme und es anbete.*

On Epiphany. Early at St. Thomas. In the afternoon at St. Nicholas.

All

Lord, when our insolent enemies snort,
Then grant that we in steadfast faith
Will look to your strength and salvation!
We want to put our trust in you alone,
So that we can escape
The enemy's sharp claws unharmed.

Evangelist

*Then Herod convened the wisemen secretly and sought
with diligence to learn from them when the star might have
appeared. And [he] directed them to Bethlehem, saying:*

Herod

*Set out and search diligently for the little child, and when
you find it, report this to me, so that I, too, may come and
worship it.*

Normal = free poetry *Italics* = scriptural text **Bold** = chorale text

TEXT & TRANSLATION (*cont'd.*)

Recitativ

Du Falscher, suche nur den Herrn zu fällen,
Nimm alle falsche List,
Dem Heiland nachzustellen;
Der, dessen Kraft kein Mensch ermißt,
Bleibt doch in sichrer Hand.
Dein Herz, dein falsches Herz ist schon,
Nebst aller seiner List, des Höchsten Sohn,
Den du zu stürzen suchst, sehr wohl bekannt.

ARIA

Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen
Stürzt ohnmächtger Menschen Macht.
Hier wird alle Kraft verlacht!
Spricht der Höchste nur ein Wort,
Seiner Feinde Stolz zu enden,
O, so müssen sich sofort
Sterblicher Gedanken wenden.

Evangelist

Als sie nun den König gehöret hatten, zogen sie hin. Und siehe, der Stern, den sie im Morgenlande gesehen hatten, ging für ihnen hin, bis daß er kam und stund oben über, da das Kindlein war. Da sie den Stern sahen, wurden sie hoch erfreuet und gingen in das Haus und funden das Kindlein mit Maria, seiner Mutter, und fielen nieder und beteten es an und taten ihre Schätze auf und schenkten ihm Gold, Weihrauch und Myrrhen.

Choral

**Ich steh an deiner Krippen hier,
O Jesulein, mein Leben;
Ich komme, bring und schenke dir,
Was du mir hast gegeben.
Nimm hin, es ist mein Geist und Sinn,
Herz, Seel und Mut, nimm alles hin,
Und laß dir's wohlgefallen!**

Evangelist

Und Gott befahl ihnen im Traum, daß sie sich nicht sollten wieder zu Herodes lenken, und zogen durch einen andern Weg wieder in ihr Land.

Recitative

You deceitful one, just try to bring down the Lord;
Use all your deceitful cunning
To have it in for the Savior;
He, whose power no human comprehends,
Remains nonetheless in safe hands.
Your heart, your deceitful heart,
With all its cunning, is already very well known
To the Son of the Most High, whom you seek to overthrow.

ARIA

Just one signal from his hands
Overthrows the feeble strength of humankind.
Here all power is mocked!
The Most High has to utter just one word
To put a stop to the insolence of his enemies.
O, then the plans of mortals
Will have to be immediately cut short.

Evangelist

Having heard the king, then, they set out. And look: the star that they had seen in the Orient went forth before them, until, having come [to Bethlehem], it settled over [the place] where the little child was. When they saw the star, they became exceedingly glad and went into the house and found the little child with Mary its mother, and bowed down and worshiped it, and opened their treasures, giving it gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Chorale

**Here I stand at your manger,
O little Jesus, my Life;
I come to bring and give to you
What you have granted me.
Take this, it is my spirit and inclination,
Heart, soul and courage; take this all,
And let it please you greatly!**

Evangelist

And God commanded them in a dream that they should not direct themselves back to Herod, and [they] set off by another way back to their country.

TEXT & TRANSLATION (cont'd.)

Recitativ

So geht! Genug, mein Schatz geht nicht von hier,
Er bleibet da bei mir;
Ich will ihn auch nicht von mir lassen.
Sein Arm wird mich aus Lieb
Mit sanftmutsvollem Trieb
Und größter Zärtlichkeit umfassen;
Er soll mein Bräutigam verbleiben,
Ich will ihm Brust und Herz verschreiben.
Ich weiß gewiß, er liebet mich,
Mein Herz liebt ihn auch inniglich
Und wird ihn ewig ehren.
Was könnte mich nun für ein Feind
Bei solchem Glück versehren!
Du, Jesu, bist und bleibst mein Freund;
Und werd ich ängstlich zu dir flehn:
Herr, hilf!, so laß mich Hülfe sehn!

ARIA

Nun mögt ihr stolzen Feinde schrecken;
Was könnt ihr mir für Furcht erwecken?
Mein Schatz, mein Hort ist hier bei mir!
Ihr mögt euch noch so grimmig stellen,
Droht nur, mich ganz und gar zu fällen,
Doch seht! mein Heiland wohnt hier.

Recitativ

Was will der Höllen Schrecken nun,
Was will uns Welt und Sünde tun,
Da wir in Jesu Händen ruhn!

Choral

**Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen
An eurer Feinde Schar,
Denn Christus hat zerbrochen,
Was euch zuwider war.
Tod, Teufel, Sünd und Hölle
Sind ganz und gar geschwächt;
Bei Gott hat seine Stelle
Das menschliche Geschlecht.**

Recitative

So go! [It is] enough that my Treasure will not go
From here; he stays with me;
I will also not let him [free] from me.
His arm will embrace me out of love
With gentle desire
And greatest tenderness;
He shall remain my bridegroom;
I will entrust breast and heart to him.
I know for certain that he loves me;
My heart also loves him deeply
And will honor him eternally.
Now, at such good fortune, how could any enemy
Harm me!
You, Jesus, are and remain my friend;
And if I anxiously beseech you:
"Lord, save [me]!", then let me see salvation!

ARIA

Now you insolent enemies might horrify;
[Yet] how could you arouse any fear in me?
My Treasure, my Refuge is here with me!
You do still so like to feign being fierce;
Just [go ahead and] threaten to bring me down
Completely; but look! My Savior dwells here.

Recitative

What will the horrors of hell intend now,
What will World and Sin intend to do to us,
Since we rest in Jesus' hands!

Chorale

**Now you all are well avenged
Of your band of enemies,
For Christ has broken apart
What was against you.
Death, devil, sin, and hell
Are completely diminished;
The human family
Has its place by God.**



DANA MARSH, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dana Marsh began his musical training as a boy chorister at St. Thomas Church Choir School in New York and at Salisbury Cathedral in England. He earned his undergraduate degree in organ performance at the Eastman School of Music and received masters and doctoral degrees in historical musicology from the University of Oxford. Praised by *The Los Angeles Times* as an “energetic and persuasive conductor,” and by *The Washington Post* as “a superb choral conductor, energetic and precise,” Marsh has entered into fruitful collaborations with the London Mozart Players, Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, the Choir of St. Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, the Portland Baroque Orchestra, and the Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, among others. As an acclaimed countertenor soloist and consort singer (1992–2008), he performed with the American Bach Soloists, Concert Royal of New York, New York Collegium, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and the Academy of Ancient Music. As a singer/soloist with the Choir of New College Oxford while undertaking his D.Phil. research, he toured frequently with the Academy of Ancient Music, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the European Union Baroque Orchestra, recording 15 discs with New College Choir, one of which won the Gramophone award in early music in 2008. Marsh was Assistant Director of Music and Director of Chapel Music at Girton College Cambridge, and he currently serves as Director of the Historical Performance Institute at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

MEET THE PRESENTERS



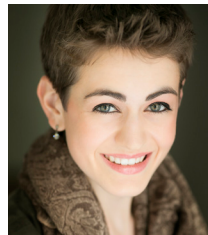
Michael Marissen is Daniel Underhill Professor Emeritus of Music at Swarthmore College, where he taught from 1989 to 2014. He has also been a visiting professor on the graduate faculties at Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania. His publications include *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos* (Princeton, 1995), *Creative Responses to Bach from Mozart to Hindemith* (editor; Nebraska, 1998), *Lutheranism, anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion* (Oxford, 1998), *An Introduction to*

Bach Studies (co-author Daniel R. Melamed; Oxford, 1998), *Bach's Oratorios* (Oxford, 2008), *Tainted Glory in Handel's Messiah* (Yale, 2014), *Bach & God* (Oxford, 2016), and essays in *Harvard Theological Review*, *The Huffington Post*, *Lutheran Quarterly*, and *The New York Times*.



Daniel R. Melamed is professor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and serves as president of the American Bach Society and director of the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project. His books *Hearing Bach's Passions* and *Listening to Bach: the Mass in B Minor and Christmas Oratorio*, for general readers, are available from Oxford University Press.

MEET THE ARTISTS



With a voice that “shimmers” (DC *Metro Theater Arts*), Washington, DC-based soprano **Amy Nicole Broadbent** has garnered recognition as a versatile and dynamic performer. An advocate for new music, in 2016 Broadbent was selected by composer Robert Kyr as a soloist for the world premiere of his cantata *Song of the Beloved*. Professional achievements include winning first-place in the 2015 National Society of Arts and Letters' Winston Voice Competition, first place at local and regional levels of NATS competitions, and prizewinner for the New York Oratorio Society Competition at Carnegie Hall, the Annapolis Opera Competition, the Bethlehem Bach Competition, and the Franco-American Grand Concours Vocal Competition. As an ensemble musician, Amy has performed with many of the nation's top professional choirs. She is currently a vocalist in the United States Navy Band Sea Chanters Chorus, with the rank of Musician First Class. Amy holds degrees from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Geoffrey Burgess has played a key role in the early music revival on three continents. Australian by birth, he played Baroque oboe around the globe, and is known equally as a scholar of early music. He was a member of Les Arts Florissants in Paris for twenty years, and since relocating to the U.S. in the 90s, has appeared

regularly as soloist, orchestral and chamber musician with the Washington Bach Consort, Philadelphia Bach Collegium, Concert Royal (New York), Mercury (Houston), the Boston Early Music Festival Ensemble, Publick Musick (Rochester), Pegasus Early Music, and is a member of the virtuoso chamber ensemble Kleine Kammermusik.

In addition to numerous recordings of orchestral and operatic repertoire, Geoffrey's solo recordings include music of the Bach Family, newly commissioned works for Baroque oboe and harpsichord, and Classical chamber music with the Cambini Winds. Dr Burgess has taught at Stony Brook, Duke, and Columbia Universities, and on the faculties of Oberlin, Longy and Amherst summer schools. He is currently Baroque Oboe Instructor at the Eastman School of Music, and is sought after as a master teacher, giving workshops and guest lectures at venues such as the Utrecht Early Music Festival, the conservatories in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Paris, and the Mozarteum in Salzburg. As well as author of the standard work on the oboe in the English language (*The Oboe*, Yale UP, 2004), his writings include *Well-Tempered Woodwinds: Friedrich von Huene and the Making of Early Music in a New World* (Indiana UP, 2015), and a critical edition of Bruce Haynes's Nachlass, *The Pathetick Musician: Moving an Audience in the Age of Eloquence* (Oxford UP, 2016). He is currently writing a historical novel based on the life of Bach's oboist Caspar Gleditsch with the provisional title *The Thorn of the Honey Locust*.



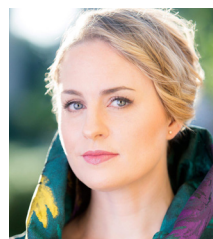
Praised for her "fine performances" (*The Washington Post*), "dark plush romantic violin sound" (*New York Concert Review*) and "thrilling technique and bravura style" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), Ukrainian- American violinist

Tatiana Chulochnikova maintains an active career as a soloist, orchestra leader and chamber musician with performances spanning the United States.

Born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Tatiana began playing violin at the age of seven and made her professional debut at 14 playing Bruch's violin concerto with the Kharkiv Philharmonic. Tatiana received her professional training at the Tchaikovsky College of Music and Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. She also holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and the Juilliard School.

An award-winning violinist, Tatiana recorded her debut solo album in 2016—a world premiere recording of violin works by the late 19th century composer Theodore Akimenko. The CD was released worldwide in July 2016 on the British recording label *Toccata Classics* and earned several very enthusiastic reviews, including from *Fanfare Magazine* (US) which called it "a fascinating release" and *Classica Magazine* (France) which described the interpretation as a "total commitment and a free lyricism that goes straight to the heart."

For details, please visit Tatiana's website at tatiana.com



Praised for her "plush" mezzo-soprano voice (*The Baltimore Sun*) and voice of "sweet clarity" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*), **Kristen Dubenion-Smith** enjoys an active performing career in opera, oratorio and sacred vocal chamber music, specializing in music of the medieval, renaissance and baroque eras.

In 2010, Ms. Dubenion-Smith co-founded the award winning, Washington, DC-based medieval ensemble, Eya. Highlights of their 2019-2020 season include concerts on the Academy of Early Music Series (Ann Arbor, MI) and hosting an Irish Festival at Georgetown University with the Irish Embassy.

2019-2020 soloist engagements include performances with the Bach in Baltimore Concert Series, The City Choir of Washington, the Washington National Cathedral Baroque Orchestra, Cathedra Consort, the Dryden Ensemble, The Reston Chorale, Handel Choir of Baltimore, the Arts Chorale of Winchester, the Cathedral Choral Society and the Washington Bach Consort.



Violinist **Andrew Fouts** is honored to have served as a concertmaster with the Washington Bach Consort since 2010. *The Washington Post* has praised his performances with the Consort as being "exemplary on the highest part, playing with clean intonation and radiant tone." Other mentions by the *Post* have praised his "deeply expressive solos" and "mellifluous sound and sensitive style."

Hailing from Northern California, Andrew resides in

Pittsburgh and is a member of the city's acclaimed early music ensemble, Chatham Baroque. The ensemble maintains a robust concert season, averaging 80 performances a year, comprising its Concert Series, Peanut Butter & Jam Sessions for kids, work in early childhood centers of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, touring across North and South America, and collaborations with other Pittsburgh arts organizations including the Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Pittsburgh Camerata, Quantum Theatre, Carnegie Mellon, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

The 17/18 Season includes appearances with Apollo's Fire, the Four Nations Ensemble, and in recital with Seattle harpsichordist Byron Schenkman.

In 2008 Andrew won first prize at the American Bach Soloists' International Baroque Violin Competition. He has taught at the Madison Early Music Festival and the Oficina de Música de Curitiba, Brazil, and can be heard on recordings with Chatham Baroque, American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Musik Ekklesia, and Alarm Will Sound. His principal teachers were Charles Castleman at the Eastman School of Music, and Stanley Ritchie at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.



Matthew Hill, tenor, from Laurel, Maryland, enjoys a varied career as a soloist and ensemble singer, based in Washington, DC. Past solo concert work includes Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Rachmaninoff's *All-Night Vigil*, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, and the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew* and *St. John Passions*. He also performs regularly with the American Bach Soloists, Washington Bach Consort, and Washington National Cathedral Choirs. As a choral musician, Matthew sings weekly at Christ Church Georgetown and is a member of the United States Air Force Band Singing Sergeants. Recent opera credits include his debut with Washington National Opera as Older brother in *Dead Man Walking*, Patre in Gounod's *Sapho* with Washington Concert Opera, Parpignol in *La Bohème* with Wolf Trap Opera, Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with the Maryland Opera Studio, and Damon in *Acis and Galatea* with New Dominion Chorale. Matthew has won 2nd place in the National Society of Arts and Letters Dorothy Lincoln-Smith Competition, won the Choralis Young Artist Competition, 4th place in the Oratorio Society of

New York Competition, 2nd place in Vocal Arts DC Art Song Competition, and 3rd place at the Metropolitan Opera National Council Middle Atlantic Regional Competition. Matthew received both his Master and Bachelor of Music degrees from the University of Maryland.



Patrick Kilbride received degrees from Northwestern University, University of Maryland Opera Studio, and fellowships from the Aspen Opera Theater Center and Tanglewood Music Festival. He made his U.S. debut in Monteverdi's

Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria with the Boston Early Music Festival. Winning the 24th International Concours de Chant in Clermont-Ferrand, France, he made his European debut in a French national tour of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in 2015-2016. He has sung roles with Festival Aix-en-Provence, the Britten-Pears Aldeburgh Festival, Opera Lafayette and Heartbeat Opera, debuting at the Opéra royal de Versailles, Théâtre Gérard Philippe, Paris, Grand Théâtre Luxembourg, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Upcoming performances include a new production of John Blow's *Venus and Adonis* with Opera Lafayette, appearances with the Washington Bach Consort, Cathedral Choral Society, and his debut at the Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, Lisbon, Portugal.
www.PatrickKilbride.com



Elijah McCormack, male soprano, completed his Master's degree in voice at Indiana University's Historical Performance Institute in May 2019, where he studied with Steven Rickards. He recently appeared as the soprano soloist in

the Dallas Bach Society's *St. John Passion*, garnering critical praise for his "powerful" delivery and "expressive sophistication" (*Dallas Morning News*). Last Summer, at the American Bach Soloists Academy, he performed works by Handel, Buxtehude, Lotti, and Bach, most notably the role of Erato in Handel's *Terpsicore*. He was also featured as a young artist at the Boston Early Music Festival, where he sang works by Agostino Steffani.

In his two years at Indiana University, he sang roles in *Giulio Cesare* (Tolomeo) and *Hansel and Gretel* (Dewman), and also appeared as a soprano soloist in the Historical Performance Institute's performance of

Bach's St. John Passion directed by John Butt. Outside of the Jacobs School, he has sung roles in Handel's *Alcina* (Oberto), Cavalli's *Didone* (Amore), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Cherubino) and *The Turn of the Screw* (Miles). He completed his Bachelor's degree at Skidmore College in 2016, where he studied with Sylvia Stoner-Hawkins and made his role debut as Arsameses in Handel's *Serse*.



Particularly noted for his "crystalline diction and pure, evenly produced tone" (Miami Herald), countertenor **Reginald Mobley** is highly sought after for Baroque, Classical and modern repertoire. Recent highlights include an

extensive tour of sixteen concerts around Europe singing Bach's Matthäus-Passion with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists led by Sir John Eliot Gardiner; an ensemble to which he returned for a further European tour, where international reviews commented on his "purity of timbre" and "homogeneity of tone." He also performed concerts of Händel's *Messiah* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Purcell's *King Arthur* with the Academy of Ancient Music in London, and Mozart's *Requiem* with Orkiestra Historyczna in Poland. Further highlights include tours of Germany with Freiburg Barockorchester, and Balthasar-Neumann Choir and Ensemble, performing at prestigious venues across Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium.



In demand as a performer on historical oboes, **Meg Owens** appears regularly with many of North America's baroque orchestras, including American Bach Soloists, Ars Lyrica, Folger Consort, National Cathedral Baroque

Orchestra, Opera Lafayette, Tafelmusik, Tempesta di Mare, and Washington Bach Consort. Recent concerts include solo appearances with REBEL, Four Nations, Sebastian Chamber Players, and Berkshire Bach Society. Hailing from eastern North Carolina, Ms. Owens earned degrees in oboe performance at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the Manhattan School of Music, and the City University of New York. Ms. Owens teaches historical oboes at Indiana University, modern oboe at George Mason University, and directs Mason's baroque chamber orchestra.

Baroque oboe by Randall Cook (Basel, 2014), after Jonathan Bradbury (London, early 18th century); baroque oboe d'amore by Bernard Schermer (Basel, 1998), after J.H. Eichentopf (Leipzig, early 18th century); oboe da caccia by Sand Dalton (Lopez Island, WA, 2000), after Eichentopf.



Margot Rood, hailed for her "colorful and vital" singing by *The Washington Post*, performs a wide range of repertoire, and is in demand as a soloist with conductors including Harry Christophers, Scott Metcalfe, Patrick Dupré Quigley, Stephen Stubbs, Franz Welser-Möst, and Beth Willer.

Recognized particularly for her commitment to early music, Margot is a former Lorraine Hunt Lieberson Fellow at Emmanuel Music, where she is often featured on Emmanuel's nationally-known Bach cantata series. She is frequently booked for Bach performances with the likes of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort, South Florida's Enlightenment Festival, Handel + Haydn Society, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and the Washington Bach Consort. Handel's *Messiah* is a signature piece, which she has performed with Toronto's Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, TENET Vocal Artists, Seraphic Fire, Bach Collegium San Diego, Rhode Island Philharmonic, and New Jersey Symphony. Other appearances include Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and annual concerts as well as tours and recordings with acclaimed renaissance ensemble Blue Heron.

Margot is a recent recipient of the St. Botolph Club Foundation's Emerging Artist Award for her work in new music. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in the world premiere of Shawn Jaeger's *Letters Made with Gold*. Recent and upcoming solo appearances also include the Cleveland Orchestra (*Stravinsky Threni*), Boston Symphony (*Benjamin Dream of the Song*), New World Symphony (Reich *The Desert Music*), and A Far Cry (Golijov *Three Songs*).

Notable recording releases include Blue Heron's *Ockeghem Songs, Vol. 1*, *La Renommée* in Lalande's *Les Fontaines de Versailles* and *La Paix* in Charpentier's *Les Arts Florissants* with Boston Early Music Festival (CPO), and the role of Emily Webb on Monadnock Music's recording of Ned Rorem's *Our Town* (New World Records). She has recorded repertoire from the medieval to the 21st-century on the Coro, Albany Records, Blue Heron, BMOP Sound, Toccata Classics,

and Sono Luminus labels. Her solo recording with composer Heather Gilligan, *Living in Light*, is now available. She can also be heard on Blue Heron's *Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks Vol. 5*, which won the Gramophone Award for Early Music in 2018.



Baritone **David Rugger** enjoys a blossoming career in oratorio, early music, and ensemble singing. David received his PhD in musicology from Indiana University, where he also studied voice and was active in the Historical Performance

Institute. Recent performances include appearances with the St. Louis Bach Society, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Conspirare, Mountainside Baroque, Dayton Bach Society, Vocal Arts Ensemble (Cincinnati), and Seraphic Fire. In his scholarship, David explores the relationship between vocal sound, the body, and identity in the long twentieth century, especially in England and America. He has given papers at the national meetings of the American Musicological Society, the North American British Music Studies Association, and the Midwest Victorian Studies Association. David is writing a book about singing Bach's vocal music from non-specialists. He currently teaches at the University of Indianapolis and Butler University. More information can be found at davidrugger.com.



Gregório Taniguchi crafts compelling performances that move audiences. His dedication to rhetoric in music draws listeners to hear historical works as a dynamic and living part of our musical culture, illuminating classics for a modern

audience. Contemporary vocal music and new works by emerging composers likewise come alive through his communicative artistry.

Gregório has empowered narratives with an intuitive sense for storytelling as the Evangelist in Bach's *St. John Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Æneas in Cavalli's *La Didone*, Miles Zegner in Missy Mazzoli's *Proving Up*, and Septimius in Handel's *Theodora*. He has toured Ecuador with the emerging ensemble Las Aves and presented historically-informed 17th-century Italian and Spanish sacred repertoire in the cathedrals of Quito during Holy Week. He advocates for the intimate connections created by chamber music and regularly presents recitals of classic and contemporary art song. He has worked closely with

pioneers of the early music movement as well as the next generation, including Paul Elliott, Scott Allen Jarrett, Jeffrey Thomas, and John Butt. As one of the nation's finest choral artists, he has appeared with Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Clarion Vocal Ensemble, Seraphic Fire, Cantus, Washington Bach Consort, Oregon Bach Festival, and Staunton Music Festival.

Gregório is passionate about being an active part of the community of artists, supporting composers in recording new works as a studio singer and in faith communities as a choral scholar. He also serves as a language coach, especially in his native Portuguese.



Bass-baritone **Jonathan Woody** is a sought-after performer of early and new music in New York and across North America. He has been featured with historically-informed orchestras such as Apollo's Fire, Boston Early Music Festival,

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Portland Baroque Orchestra and New York Baroque Incorporated, earning praise as "charismatic," "riveting," and "wonderfully dramatic." Jonathan is also committed to ensemble singing at the highest level and has performed with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, TENET, the Clarion Music Society and New York Polyphony, among others. An avid performer of new music, Jonathan has premiered works including Ellen Reid's *prism* (2019 Pulitzer Prize winner), Ted Hearne's *The Source*, Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* (NYC premiere), and Du Yun's *Angel's Bone* (2017 Pulitzer Prize winner). He has appeared with Staunton Music Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Portland Bach Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Oregon Bach Festival, Opera Lafayette, Gotham Chamber Opera, and Beth Morrison Projects. Jonathan has recorded with the Choir of Trinity Wall Street (Musica Omnia), Boston Early Music Festival (RadioBremen), and New York Polyphony (BIS Records). Jonathan's musical pursuits extend beyond his voice and he has been commissioned as a composer for groups including Lorelei Ensemble, the Handel + Haydn Society, and the Uncommon Music Festival. Currently based in Brooklyn, NY, Jonathan holds degrees from McGill University and the University of Maryland, College Park, and is represented by Miguel Rodriguez of Athlone Artists.

www.athloneartists.com/artists/jonathan-woody/



bach interactions

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Part I

Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage, BWV 248^I
Friday, 12.25.20 at 8 p.m. YouTube & Facebook



NEW YOUTUBE & FACEBOOK DATES ↓

Part II

Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend, BWV 248^{II}
Thursday, 1.7.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part III

Herrscher des Himmels, erhöere das Lallen, BWV 248^{III}
Thursday, 1.14.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part IV

Fallt mit Danken, fällt mit Loben, BWV 248^{IV}
Thursday, 1.21.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook

Part V

Ehre sei dir, Gott, gesungen, BWV 248^V
Thursday, 1.28.21 at 8 p.m on YouTube & Facebook

Part VI

Herr, wenn die stolzen Feinde schnauben, BWV 248^{VI}
Thursday, 2.4.21 at 8 p.m. on YouTube & Facebook



ABOUT THE MUSIC: HOW SHALL I RECEIVE YOU?

Modern interest in J. S. Bach as a composer of church music owes a great deal to one celebrated moment: the Berlin performance of a version of his *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829 under the musical direction of Felix Mendelssohn. The context was a concert, not a liturgy; and the performing organization was the Berlin Sing-Akademie, a bourgeois amateur society that had been founded in the late eighteenth century to promote the private study of great music from the past for the artistic and moral edification of its middle-class members. The effect was sensational, beginning the restoration of Bach's large-scale concerted vocal music to the repertory.

To the concert repertory, that is—this music had become largely unsuited to its original liturgical purposes not long after Bach's death. This was only partly a matter of the notes; it was the text that created problems. Tastes in religious poetry changed rapidly, making the wild and graphic imagery of the *Passion's* recitatives and arias dated and perhaps tasteless. Even the chorales became outdated; the second half of the eighteenth century saw almost every hymn text revised to suit modern, more rationalistic tastes.

By the 1820s, Bach's passions and other concerted church music was historical, and it is no accident that its revival was in concert performances connected with cultural edification, with reverence for the past, and with a sense of that past as a foundation of German nationhood. The passions came to stand alongside the preludes and fugues of the Well-Tempered Clavier and a few organ works in representing Bach. They were regarded as serious and weighty, full of labyrinthine harmonies and contrapuntal complexities, as well as tragic, lamenting, dramatic and morally uplifting.

Against this background, the *Christmas Oratorio* was the last of Bach's major vocal-instrumental works to be rediscovered. As writers on Bach's music encountered the *Christmas Oratorio* they found it difficult to square with the music of the

passions and with the style they expected from their composer. The oratorio, in contrast to the passions, was sunny and smiling, simple, and *galant*—even to the point of suggesting of doubt about Bach's authorship. (Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was suggested as a possible compiler, for example.) Its lighter style, aligning better with secular music, was a source of puzzlement.

And then they discovered the parody origin of much of the *Christmas Oratorio* in actual secular compositions—that Bach had reused music composed for other non-liturgical purposes, fitted with new texts. This created multiple problems, if not a crisis. Not only was there the musical style of the oratorio to deal with, there was also the issue of originality, closely associated in the nineteenth century with the concept of genius, and the apparent clash of the solemn purpose of Bach's sacred music with its frivolous secular origins.

The complete edition of Bach's works begun in 1850 was forced to confront this in the preface to its 1856 publication of the *Christmas Oratorio*. The strategy of the editor, Wilhelm Rust, was to emphasize the role of chorales, which were both sacred and original to the composition, and to declare that the apparent secular origin of the music was essentially a red herring. Bach knew all along, he suggested, that the music he composed for those secular occasions would find use in sacred works. Several problems disappeared with this assertion because the notes became sacred by their nature, conceived that way from the start and remaining so whether used in a secular work or a sacred one. The originality problem was inherently solved, too, because this explanation let Bach off the hook; if he had been planning to use this music in a sacred composition all along then there was no lack of imaginative genius anywhere in the process.

For commentators, there remained the fundamental problem of the *Christmas Oratorio's* apparent lack of seriousness and weight compared to Bach's passions, and for this there was an interpretive solution that dated from the earliest critical writings on the work dating from the 1840s. The musical antiquarian Carl von

Winterfeld argued that Bach's use of certain chorale melodies deepened the theological seriousness of the *Christmas Oratorio*, in particular by drawing the work closer to his passion settings.

His principal example is the first chorale in the work, "Wie soll ich dich empfangen?" The text is a verse of an Advent hymn that asks of Jesus, "How shall I receive you?" Bach set this chorale stanza to a melody that students of his music will certainly recognize, but the way Winterfeld identified it was essential. He called the melody "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," familiar to many today in its English-language version, "O sacred head now wounded." This text is closely associated with the passion story and indeed is a chorale for Holy Week; it was part of a series of hymns that each reflected on a different body part of Jesus.

This was Winterfeld's opening and he charged through it, expressing wonder at the sounding of the notes of a passion chorale in a Christmas oratorio. He then argued for the close theological relationship between Christmas and Palm Sunday, and by extension to the passion story itself. He suggested that Bach anticipated the passion (and the *Passions*) by juxtaposing Christmas hymns like "Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ" and "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her" (both heard in the Christmas Oratorio) with a chorale melody associated with the crucifixion narrative.

This interpretation accomplished several things. For one it made Bach into a deep and serious thinker about the nature of the Christmas story. For another, it tempered the joyous exuberance of the *Christmas Oratorio* with something somber and presumably more fitting. Most importantly, it tied the *Christmas Oratorio*, with its suspect lightness and connections to secular music, firmly to Bach's passions. This was particularly true because the *St. Matthew Passion*'s interpolated texts include no fewer than five verses of "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden" and one verse of another hymn that uses the same melody; in many ways this chorale tune stood for that passion setting. And of course the *St. Matthew Passion* encapsulated everything that was valued about Bach.

This claim persists today—one runs across it again



Hans Rottenhammer (1564-1625), *Flower Garland Around a Painting of the Virgin and Child*, 1608.

and again in popular and critical writings alike. There is just one problem: In eighteenth-century terms it is almost certainly wrong. It is true that the melody Bach used for "Wie soll ich dich empfangen?" is today known as a passion chorale; in fact it is often called The Passion Chorale, as if there were only one. But this is a modern designation, and in fact one that almost certainly comes from the very centrality of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in the repertory. In Bach's time the melody was used for numerous different texts for different seasons, and tended to be identified as "Herzlich tut mich verlangen nach einem seel'gen End" (I long in my heart for a blessed end).

The *Christmas Oratorio* stanza "Wie soll ich dich empfangen?" is the first of an Advent hymn. It was not in the Leipzig hymnal, but there was an option open to Bach in setting it to music. Because hymn poetry was regular and limited to a relatively small number

of metrical patterns and stanza lengths, a hymn text could be sung to a variety of melodies. And in fact a 1736 hymnal published in Leipzig in which Bach had a hand suggests a tune for “Wie soll ich dich empfangen”: “Herzlich tut mich verlangen,” the melody Bach used in the Christmas Oratorio. But it is worth noting that the tune is not called “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” there, and that the hymnal also suggests the tune for texts variously assigned to the evening, penitence, communion, Advent, the passion, divine sovereignty and providence, temporal suffering, praise and thanks, death, and the feast of the Purification. Each time it is identified not as “O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden” (the passion text) but as “Herzlich tut mich verlangen,” a meditation on the believer’s wish for death and eternal joy. To Leipzig listeners, this was not exclusively or even primarily a passion melody

Winterfeld made the same argument about the final chorale of part VI of the *Christmas Oratorio*, which uses the same tune, this time splendidly set with trumpets and drums. The text, “Nun seid ihr wohl gerochen,” is a verse of the Christmas hymn “Ihr Christen auserkoren.” Like the first chorale in the oratorio it was not in the regular Leipzig hymnal, and its melody was probably not well known there. And as with the first chorale, Bach chose a tune that fit the meter—the same one as he used for “Wie soll ich dich empfangen.” Once again we are on shaky ground in claiming that his listeners would have heard a reference to the passion. We need to recognize that this was an argument with a purpose: drawing the *Christmas Oratorio* closer to the Bach passions with which it was implicitly and explicitly compared, and against which it had a hard time making a case for itself as a piece worthy of a devout composer.

The Berlin Sing-Akademie did not perform the *Christmas Oratorio* until 1857, the work’s first complete performance—Bach almost certainly never performed the whole work himself at one stretch, but rather over the course of six days spanning nearly two weeks. This performance was not so complete, however. It traversed all six parts of the oratorio but cut 17 numbers. A few of the eliminated movements were chorale settings (but not the “passion chorale”!) and one was a passage of gospel narrative, but most of the cuts were in solo music: eight of the work’s 13 arias and four of its 10 instrumentally accompanied recitatives.

This tipped the balance in the work towards the gospel narrative and to the framing choruses and chorales. It inverts the emphasis of the original, in which commentary in the form of poetic movements and chorales dominates. And with 200 chorus members and 50 instrumentalists, the Sing-Akademie’s performance of this version emphasized the powerful presentation of fully scored movements performed by large forces. The result resembled the cut-down versions of the *St. Matthew Passion* presented by the organization; those performances also eliminated most of the work’s arias, and their overall effect was dominated by movements like the opening chorus and by the gospel narrative. The elimination of so many of the *Christmas Oratorio*’s arias helped temper aspects of the work that seemed problematic (poetic texts and settings that called for solo vocal virtuosity) and drew the work closer to the form in which the *St. Matthew Passion* was known.

The reception of the *Christmas Oratorio* has continued to be influenced by that 1829 performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, which set the tone for the understanding of all of Bach’s sacred music. The various strategies that appeared to bring the *Christmas Oratorio* closer to Bach’s passions succeeded in explaining a puzzling work, but they established a particular perspective, inviting its interpretation in relation to the passions. The question posed in the *Christmas Oratorio*’s first chorale, “How shall I receive you?” is worth asking about the work itself. One answer is that we can try to listen to it for its own merits; we do not have to make Bach’s passion settings our first point of engagement with this matchless music.

Daniel R. Melamed

Daniel R. Melamed is professor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and serves as president of the American Bach Society and director of the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project. The material here is adapted from his book for general readers *Listening to Bach: the Mass in B Minor and the Christmas Oratorio* published by Oxford University Press.

Want more?

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