In 1723 Bach was offered a job as Cantor and Director of Music at St. Thomas' Church and Choir School in Leipzig, a position he would hold for 27 years. One of his duties Bach was to provide music for each Sunday's church service, as well as various feast days. Bach thus set about composing a five-year cycle of cantatas, amounting to 60 cantatas a year, for a total of 300 works of an average duration of 25 minutes. While some of his contemporaries composed an equal or greater number of cantatas, what makes Bach's feat so remarkable is that he accomplished it in five years, producing one cantata a week during that period (on top of all other duties as a performer, teacher and choir director) -- not to mention that the works are of such uniformly high quality.

While the vast majority of Bach's more than 200 surviving cantatas date from his time in Leipzig, the next town council, begain composing these works as early as 1707; his earliest known cantata, Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131, dates from that year and was composed shortly after Bach arrived to take up his new position. Bach was hired by the town council of Mühhausen and assigned as organist at St. Blasius' church, although he served as general music director of the entire city as well. The superintendent at St. Blasius, a Pietist, and thus did not have any interest in music; hence, the five cantatas that Bach composed during his brief one-year tenure in Mühhausen were written for various public occasions, rather than for specific church services. It is believed that BWV 131 was composed in response to a fire that swept through the town on May 20, 1707, two weeks prior to Bach's arrival, destroying at least half of the municipality. Another, Gott ist mein König, BWV 71, was written for the town council, and the new town council's politicians were so impressed that they had the composition engraved in copper -- it was to be the only cantata Bach would see published during his entire lifetime.

In the next year, 1708, Bach was appointed as maestro di cappella at the big church of St. Thomas' School in Leipzig. In the same year, Bach's cousin, Maria Barbara Bach, was appointed as maestro di cappella at the small church of St. Mark's School in Leipzig, and thus he was able to support himself and his family. Bach began his composition career by writing cantatas for the St. Thomas' Church, and his compositions soon became popular throughout Germany. In 1723, Bach was appointed as Kantor of the church, and he began to compose cantatas for the church. Bach's cantatas were highly influential in the development of the German church cantata, and they were widely performed throughout Germany. Bach's cantatas were also highly influential in the development of the opera, and they were performed in theatres throughout Europe. Bach's compositions were also influential in the development of the symphony, and he is often considered the father of the modern symphony.
In 1723 Bach was offered a job as Cantor and Director of Music at St. Thomas' Church and Choir School in Leipzig, a position he would hold for 27 years. His duties included being in charge of all music for church services, as well as performing during the feast days of the church. Bach set about composing a five-year cycle of cantatas, amounting to 66 cantatas a year, for a total of 300 works of an average duration of 25 minutes. While some of his contemporaries composed an equal or greater number of cantatas, what makes Bach's feat so remarkable is that he accomplished it in five years, producing 66 cantatas in a single day. One can a week during that period (on top of all other duties as a performer, teacher and choir director) – not to mention that the works are of such uniformly high quality. While the vast majority of Bach's more than 200 surviving cantatas date from his time in Leipzig, he also composed works as early as 1707. His earliest known cantata, Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir, BWV 131, dates from that year and was composed shortly after Bach arrived to take up his new position in the Lutheran church. Bach was hired by the town council of Mühlhausen and assigned as organist at St. Blasius' church, although he served as general music director of the entire city as well. The superintendent at St. Blasius was a Pietist, and thus did not have any favorite hymn. Hence, the five cantatas that Bach composed during his brief one-year tenure in Mühlhausen were written for various public occasions, rather than for specific church services. It is believed that BWV 73 was written for a fire that swept through the town on May 20, 1707, two weeks prior to Bach's arrival, destroying at least half of the municipality. Another, Gott ist mein König, BWV 71, was written for the inauguration of a new town council. The politicians were so impressed that they had the composition engraved in copper – it was to be the only cantata Bach would see published during his entire lifetime. In Amstetten, where Bach had been employed the previous three years, he had met the love of his life, Cäcilia Ester, his cousin, Maria Barbara Bach. She wed Sebastian on October 17, 1727 at the small church in Domheim, with the Reverend Johann Lorenz Staufler officiating; a recent widower, Staufler would soon remarry, to Maria Barbara's aunt, Regina Wiedemann. Bach biographer Philip Spitta proposed that the cantata Der Herr denket an uns, BWV 196, was written for the ceremony in Domheim uniting Reverend Staufler and Maria Barbara Wiedemann. There is no evidence for or against this hypothesis, but it does seem to fit the available facts: The Mühlhausen council cantata, BWV 71, was scored for a relatively large ensemble, including three trumpets, five oboes, and 10 violins. The reduced instrumentation in the Domheim cantata had an impressive number of instrumentalists at his disposal during this time. The Domheim church, however, was quite small and perhaps this explains why Bach chose to use a more intimate ensemble consisting of mostly strings and continue for the wedding cantata.

A native of Washington, baritone BRIAN BOX received his Master's degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University. In 1990, he created the role of the Wanderer in the Pacific Northwest premiere of The Nutcracker and A Midsummer Night's Dream on and Seattle Opera's preview concerts. Her repertoire runs from early music to classic and contemporary works. She has a special affinity for music of the Baroque period, having performed at the great Bach passions as well as many of Handel's oratorios, including Messiah, which she has recorded with OSSCS. In March of 2002 she appeared with the Choir of the Sound on their annual University of Washington's Bach Festival in B Minor in a period-instrument performance with the Northwest Chamber Chorus, and in May she performed Beethoven's Missa solemnis with OSSCS at Benaroya Hall.

Soprano ERIK HILL came to the Northwest in 1995 from Tennessee, where she received her Master's degree from Middle Tennessee State University. Since her arrival in Seattle, she has established herself as one of the outstanding young opera and concert artist. In October of 1997, she made her debut with Seattle Opera as Barbarina in The Marriage of Figaro, returning in the 2000-2001 season to sing Pagenas in The Magic Flute and Xenia in Boris Godunov. Last season she appeared in their productions of Dvořák's Rusalka and Verdi's Un ballo in maschera. One of twelve young singers to be chosen for Seattle Opera's first national competition in 1996, she was the recipient of a performance prize, the audience award, and a scholarship award for her portrayal of Despina in Così fan tutte. In September of 1999, the Seattle Times named her one of Seattle's "Rising Stars."

Ms. Richter is equally at home singing concert repertoire. She has been featured at Benaroya Hall with the Northwest Chamber Orchestra in Handel's Allegro, J.S. Bach's St. Mary's Passion, and in a meditative and with the Seattle Symphony in concert versions of Deems Taylor's opera Peter Ibbetson and Strauss' Die Fledermaus. She has also been featured with the Spokane Symphony, Fort Collins Symphony, Walla Walla Symphony, Bellephonics, Pacific Northwest Wind Symphony, Northwest Sinfonia, and Bremerton Symphony. With OSSCS, she has performed Handel's Dix Partitions and drawn praise from the Seattle Times. In 2003 she sang in B minor, St. John Passion and St. Matthew Passion, Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers and Stravinsky's Pulcinella. Mrs. Richter recently released her first CD, Someone to Watch Over Me, recorded with the Northwest Sinfonia.

Tenor STEPHEN WALL has appeared frequently with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers since 1983, and has appeared in numerous musical theatre roles with Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Tacoma Opera, and hasSolo ARTISTS
SUMMER FESTIVAL IV
SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 2002 3:00 PM
ILLSLEY BALL NORDROM RECITAL HALL
BENARAYA HALL

Terri Richter, soprano
Emily Lunde, mezzo-soprano
Stephen Wall, tenor
Brian Box, baritone

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
Conductor: Justin Cole

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL (1685-1759)
Concerto Grosso in B-flat major, Op. 6 No. 7 (HWV 353)
Largo – Allegro – Adagio
Largo e piano
Andante – Adagio
Hommage

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)
Der Herr denket an uns, BWV 196
Sinfonia
Chorus: Der Herr denket an uns
Aria: Er segnet, die den Herrn furchten
Duet: Derr Herr segue eich je mehr und mehr
Chorus: Ihr seid die Gesegneten des Herrn

– Intemissio –

HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)
Selections from The Fairy Queen, Z. 629
First Music: Prelude
Second Music: Rondeau

ACT IV
Symphony
Spring: “Thou art a thousand years young”
Winter: “Now winter comes slowly”

ACT V
Prelude
The Plain: “O let me weep!”
Entry Dance
A Chinese Man: “Thus the gloomy world”
“Thy shall be as happy as they’re fair”

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