Men’s gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh lead 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 dessert) 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 staking 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 chorus is followed by a bass recitative and an aria in which gifts are brought to the manger to the accompaniment of the two rhapsodic oboes da caccia following one another in imitations. On the word “Gebet,” the soloist scatters great voice-falls 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 waiting triple meter accompanied by the full orchestra, with the weight 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 swerving 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 “blessed 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 Gloria is divided into five movements of varying textures and tempi in the manner of an aria, 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 Bacterian 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. All of Bach’s short masses, the one in F major has six movements. The Kyrie, probably dating from Bach’s time in
accompanied by an orchestra featuring a variety of instruments. Cantatas were based on a dramatic or lyric poetic narrative, either sacred or secular. In Germany, the cantata developed into the most significant type of Lutheran sacred music. Its various elements unified by the all-encompassing framework of the flute, or violin, and the chorale, 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. Cantatas of Lutheran church services were written in about sixty cantatas per year—one for each Sunday and additional working days for holy days and special occasions. Bach, the greatest master of the cantata, 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 indescribable wealth of musical creativity, technical expertise, and passionate spirituality found in these marvels works, which constitute the core of Bach’s vocal output.

Contata 101: Himmn von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott
This little-known but powerful work, “Take from us, Lord, thy faithful God,” is a “choral cantata” in which a familiar chorale tune is used as the foundation upon which the entire work is constructed. The known phrase of this chorale melody very well, must have enjoyed a thrill of recognition when, in the middle of a complex musical texture, the very familiar melody of the chorale phrase was set forth and words associated with them sprang to mind.

The readings for the 10th Sunday after Trinity (usually falling in late August), for which this famous chorale tune of four verses is composed, is aimed at the first phrase of the chorale melody; this gives way to an alternation, in varying combinations, of the chorale melody with another musical phrase in composition. In the middle section, the oboes play the entire chorale tune in harmony while the bass sings his independent melodic line. The musical polyphony then reappears to balance the structure of the movement.

Movement 1, a tenor chorale-recitative, is similar in structure to the last section of the chorale, and in this movement the tenor sings phrases of the chorale tune that alternate with these, more declamatory passages, while the continuo part, using material derived from the chorale melody, provides rhythmic interest.

The chorale tune is reinterpreted for the moment of the cantata by reflecting the reading from Luke. Is based on a 1584 hymn by Martin Luther, which is the first that Bach set for the chorale and is used throughout the whole of the chorale and the instrumental material. The melody serves as a "relief" over and around which other musical lines are constructed. The chorale and the chorale tune has been used in all movements except the second, which alone is free of any obvious references to the corresponding section of Pastor’s poem.

In keeping with the somber subject matter, the solemnity, stiffness, and sometimes darkly dissonant first movement of the cantata takes the form of a "paraphonic" (vocal composition) written in an "old-fashioned" style harmonically and structurally, with the chorale melody (cantus firmus) sung line by line in the chorale tune. The theme of the chorale, also known as the offering of gifts, both material and spiritual, the scripture readings for this fast Sunday, which celebrates the manifestation of the Christ Child to the Magi, and which is written on January 6th in Western Christianity, is Isaiah 60:1-6 (one day the healthen peoples will come from afar and turn to God.)

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Contata 66: Sie werden aus Salea oder kommen
The text of the cantata, which is based on a number of the first annunciation choruses Bach produced after assuming his Leipzig duties in 1723, is a theme during which he appears to have composed a recitative and chorale for this text. The theme of this Epihany cantata’s unknown libretto is the offering of gifts, both material and spiritual, the scripture readings for this fast Sunday, which celebrates the manifestation of the Christ Child to the Magi, and which is written on January 6th in Western Christianity, is Isaiah 60:1-6 (one day the healthen peoples will come from afar and turn to God.)

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1. Choral
Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott,
Die schwere Straf und große Not,
Wir mit Sünden Zähle
Verdient habent allzuam.

Bettler, Krieg und treuer Zeit,
Für Seuchen, Feuer und Kranken Leid.
"Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 1

2. Aria T
Handle nicht nach deinen Rechten
Mit blinder Schilderung,
In die Hände einer falschen Seele zu geben.

Laß den Schwert der Fehde nicht,
Hochster, höre unser Flehen,
Daß uns nicht durch dichtes Sieg
Wie Jerusalem vergeben!

3. Choral and Recitative T
Acht Herr Gott, durch die treue dein
Wir unser Land in Fried und Ruhe sein.

Wem ein Unglück ereilt droht,
So ruft wir
Bannherger Gott, du es
In solcher Not:
Mit Trost und Rettung uns erscheint
Du kannst ihn dem leidlichen Zerreissen.
Den Handel und die Liebe wehren.
Bewege uns zu einer großen Gnad
Und straft uns nicht auf frischer Tat.
Wenn unsere Füße wanken wollen
Und wir auf mysteriöse Weise zu sprechen.
Wohin uns deiner Güte bei
Und die Bande der Welt
Mach das Herz der kleinen Kinder
Und die Proklamationen.
Dein Zorn und & Gern von uns sei
"(Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 3)

4. Aria (with instrumental Choral) B
Warum willst du so zornig sein?
Es schüchtern dein Eifers Flammen schweigen Schon über unser Haupt zusammenschließen.

Auch du siehst dir die Straßen ein
Und treug aus väterlicher Hult
Mit unsern schwachen Fleisch Geduld!

(Instrumental Choral): Warum willst du so zornig sein?
über uns arme Würmlein? Weißt du doch wohl, du treuer Gott,
nicht wir sind die Unwissenden, und dumme.
Es ist ja vor deinem Angesicht
Unser Schwächen verborgen nicht
"(Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott," verse 4)

5. Choral and Recitative T
Die Sünde hat uns verleibt sehr.
So müssen auch die Frömsten sagen
Und die wahrhaftigen Apstel klagen.
Der Teufel plagt uns noch viel mehr.
Ja, dieser böse Gestalt.
Der von Anbeginn ein Mörder heilt,
Sucht uns um unser Heil zu bringen
und ein Süsses zu werden.
Die Welt, auch unser Fleisch und Blut
Uns allezeit verführt tut.

6. Choral and Recitative T
Sin has corrupted us greatly.
Thus must even the most virtuous say
And even its counterfeit:
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 an Ubschee becomes bitter.
The world, and even our flesh and blood,
constantly betrays us.
Wir treffen hier auf dieser schmalen Bahn  
Sehr viele Hindernisse im Guten an.  
Solch Elend kennst du, Herr, allein:  
Helfer, helf uns, die Herrlichkeit zu  
Dienst, die dem guten Wohle ist.  
Du kannst uns nicht stärker machen!  
Ach, las uns dir berichten sein.  
(‘Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott,’ verse 5)  

6. Aria (Duett) S A  
Gedenk an Jesu bitter Tod!  
Nimmer, nimmer deines Schmerzens  
Und an deiner Wunden wo sich zu Herzen,  
Die sind ja für die ganze Welt;  
Die Zahlung und das Lägelied;  
Erzeuge mich zu deiner Kennerin;  
Barmerger Gott, Barmerger!  
Ich seufze stets in meiner Seele:  
Gedenk an Jesu bitter 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 allezeit deines Heilens Wort,  
Nichts anderes sei wir’s Wunsche und Worte;  
Verhilfe ein selbes Stüdelenein,  
Auf daß wir ewig bei dir sein.  
(‘Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott,’ verse 7)  

Cantata No. 65  
1. Chor  
Wir werden aus Saba alle kommen,  
Gold und Weihrauch, und mit dem Herren Lob verkünden.  
(Isaiah 60:6)  

2. Chorale  
Die Königre kein eines Saba  
Wenn sie gekommen aus Saba,  
Sie bringen gold, incense, myrrh, mahn  
Hallelujah!  
(‘Puer natus in Bethlehem,’ verse 4)  

3. Recitative B  
Wenn Jesus predigt, so hat es sich verherrlichen,  
Dies ist zu Bethlehem geschehn.  
Hier stellen sich die Weisen zu Jesu Kripp ein  
Und wollen ihm als ihren König preisen.  
Gold, Weihrauch, Myrrhe, und  
Die kostlichen Geschenke,  
Womit sie dieses Kindlein  
Zu Bethlehem im Stehen setzen.  
Mein Jesu, wenn ich lass an mein Pflicht gedenken,  
Muß ich mich auch zu derer Krippen kehren  
Und gleichfalls dankbar sein:  
Denn dieser Tag ist ein Tag der Freuden,  
Da du, o Lebenslein  
Das Licht der Heiden  
In deiner Erbatter wirst.  
Was aber bring ich, du Himmelskönig?  
Ist dir mein Herze nicht zuzuweisen,  
So spricht es gütlich dir,  
Weil ich nichts Eders bringen kann.  
(‘Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott,’ verse 5)  

4. Aria B  
Gold aus Ophir ist zu schlecht,  
Weg, nur weg mit eitlen Gaben,  
Wein, nicht nach dem Wein genug!  
Here at last, Bach obtained the freedom to compose music, which he and his great organ works were written during his nine years of Weimar, and he also composed many cantatas for the duke’s chapel and for various guilds, biretaries, 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 Cantor in Leipzig.

When Duke Wilhelm Ernst’s Kapellmeister died in 1716, Bach expected to be given his post, but when it was given to his old Kapellmeister’s relative Barmherzig, Bach resigned. The duke angrily refused to let his renowned concertmaster take an appointment as Prince Leopold’s Kapellmeister 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 a series of Brandenburg Concertos, written during Bach’s years at the Cöthen court. For a time, Bach’s situation seemed ideal. By the summer 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 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 was not only beautiful in appearance to Bach’s first family, but went on to bear his 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, 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 appreciation, or even acquaintance, and began to persuade Leopold to spend less time with his musicians. Bach soon began to feel somewhat unneeded and neglected, and obtained a vacation as its 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 educated in divinity. 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 Sebaldus, the High Prelate of the University of Magdeburg, the prestigious post of Cantor of the venerable St. Thomas’s Church, though he was third choice after the famous and extremely prolific composer, Georg Philipp Telemann, and indeed the offer, as did the renowned Darmstadt court conductor, Christoph Graupner, for financial reasons. Bach, however, accepted his prestigious post, which made him municipal director of Leipzig’s church and soon found himself with a very heavy workload indeed. He was required to write and perform music weekly for the town’s two major musical organizations, St. Thomas’s and St. Nicholas’s, to look after the boys of 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 students. Most of whom were allowed into the church council by the council since their inability to read music. In addition, he had ever more children of his own to instruct in music. Their 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 church, orchestra, soloists, keyboard players, and soloists with large instrumental virtuosi, no less than nearly 300 cantatas, and such magnificent works as the St. John Passion, the St. Matthew Passion, the Christmas Cantata, 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 of students drawn from the university. He 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 popular of his compositions. He was also appointed part-time court composer to the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, Augustus III, who dedicated to him the two lost 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 (the may have suffered a stroke by mid-1749). Weighed down by years due to heredity, overwork, and poor living, Bach was nearly blind by 1749. He agreed to two painless eye operations in the spring of 1750, but they were failures, and his headaches became progressively worse. After suffering a second stroke that was rapidly followed by a 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 outdated and unflattering, 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 not forgotten, and it took musicians to rediscover this musical master. Mozart apparently heard Bach’s motet, Singet dem Herrn einen Lieder. With a shock: “Who is this man? Is there something we can learn from him?” he said, and It was Beethoven’s brilliant playing of Bach’s “Well-Tempered Clavier” that made him a reputation as a soloist and performer in Vienna. But it was under Felix Mendelssohn in 1829 that the great St. Matthew Passion was performed for the first time in its composer’s tomb, and thereafter in print, publication, and study, and performance of Bach’s works began to flourish worldwide.

Bach lived in a world where musicians were servants, Craftsmen in the service of their masters in the churches, parishes, and town councils of 18th-century Germany. He dedicated much of his music, however, to “the glory of God alone,” which made it possible for Bach’s music to be the greatest of all time, bringing 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 accompanying form of vocal music typically consisting of a solo arias and recitatives, duets, and choruses, most frequently
Die ihr aus der Erde brecht! Jesus will das Herz haben. Schenke deni, o Christenheit, Jesus zu dem neuen Jahr!

5. Recitative T

6. Aria T
Nimm mich dir zu eigen hin, Nimm mein Herz zum Geschenke. Ich werde nicht sein; was ich rede, tu und denke, So wird mein Heiland, nur allein dir dienen gewöhnt sein. "Ich hab dich in Gottes Herzen, sin" verse 10"

Lutheran Missa in F, BWV 233

KYRIE
Chorus (S, A, T, B): Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. GLORIA
Chorus (S, 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, the Father Almighty, O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  

4. Aria (S): Thou that taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that taketh 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, Jesus Christ, art most high.  


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

5. Recitative T
Do not scorn, O You the light of my soul, my heart, that You bring to me in humility; it contains such things within itself that are fruits of Your spirit. The gold of faith, the incense of prayer, the myrrh of patience are my gifts. O 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. Aria T
Take me to Yourself as Your own, take my heart as a present. All that I have, what I say, do, and think, shall alone, my Savior, be dedicated to Your service.

7. Choral
All that is mine, my God, so fall I dir Getrosten in deine Hände. Nimm mich und make me so mit mir Bis an meine letzten, wie du woltest, daß meinem Geist Dadurch seines Nutzen treffe, Und deine Ehr und mehr und mehr sich um페stehle. "Ich hab ich in Gottess Herzen und Sinn," verse 10"

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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 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 Shangraw. 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.

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

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<td>Susan Carpenter</td>
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STEPHEN RUMP 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 Lieb von der Erde with Northwest Master Festival, and Mozart's Requiem with both Walla Walla Symphony and Northwest Sinfonietta. Recent credits include Tamar 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 Donzelli's Daughter of the Regiment. For Tacoma Opera, Mr. Box created the role of Franz in Cora Sams' The Pied Piper of Hamelin. He has also performed extensively with Seattle Opera's education program and Northwest Operas in the Schools.
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 chorale
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 ari: Gloria
Alto arie: Quamquam
Chorus: Cun Santio Spíritu

Men’s gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh lead to the use of the phrase ‘lessons’ at the Feast of the Epiphany and in this cantata.

The opening movement of the cantata, in a swinging 12/8 meter (a carovan of camels saivng across the desert) and based on the reading from Isaiah, begins with the announcement by the horn (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 union, over 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 stilling 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” obbes da caccia (whose tone color was a sonic novelty in Bach’s time). This chorus is followed by a bass recitative and an aria in which the words to the second movement are repeated, in the style of a madrigal. The soloist, with the voice of the plucked strings, sings a melody that is a fitting fit only to be tossed away. The aria ends with a string imitative among the obbes 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 Waltz-time meter accompanied by the full orchestra, with the weight of the style perhaps emphasizing the recitativo'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 the swelling with the words “all” in a cyclone of rapid notes.

The cantata concludes with another chorus, a four-phrase setting of a 1528 French melody, “Whom my God will, 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 “blessed 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 Gloria is divided into five movements of varying textures and tempos in the manner of a cantata, and because the movements 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 we know that he intended 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 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 obbes and horns). The theme of the first “Kyrie” section appears inverted in the “Choral,” and the two are combined in the final “Kyrie.”

The five sections of the Gloria are arranged so that three arias, all of which were striking instrumental solos, are framed by two choruses accompanied by the full orchestra, the Allegro “Gloria in excelsis,” in an exuberant 6/8 meter and exploring with energy, in the analogy of a multitude of rapidly-running notes into an imitative musical torrent as voices and instruments try to outdo one another in giving joyful praise to God on high. The final 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 obbes: both it and the fourth section, an alto aria accompanied by solo violin and continuo, are reworked from the 1726 Cantata 102. The effervescent “Cun Santio Spíritu,” an intricately-wrought imitative “presto” for chorus and full orchestra adapted from the first movement of the 1723 Cantata 40, invites performers 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.oscss.org
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(b. 1685, Eisenach; d. 1750, Leipzig)

Notes by Lorelei 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 Sabo 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 lieber 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 Heinrich (Pfandmann)—the cantata is scored for four-part chorus with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists and an orchestra of transverse flute, 2 oboes, 2 violins, viola, and continuo.

Misla 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, and an orchestra of 2 horns, 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 violins, viola, and continuo, it might have been performed for the first time in 1738 or 1739.

The Composer

A little more than a month after the birth of George Frederick Handel in Halle on February 23, 1685, in the Turngau town of Eisenach (about 30 miles from Halle, 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 ceremonies in the Thuringian town hall, and who later accepted a position as court musician for the local duke. He was an accomplished singer and player of the violin and cello, and the young Sebastian may have learned those instruments from him, as well as 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 to live in Berlin and began his musical education at the age of 8. Bach was taught music by his father, and his brothers, Johann Christoph, newly-married, and organist at Ohrdruf, in his new environment, the knowledge-hungry Sebastian continued to excel in his harmonic and orchestral studies. A famous, but possibly apocryphal, story from this period has the 12-year-old Sebastian secretly removing a manuscript of clavier compositions by the accomplished composers Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Pachelbel, and Frobenius from a forbidden bookcase in his older brother's home, copying the music by moonlight to avoid detection, and stealthily replacing the

Lutheran Missa in F, BWV 233

KYRIE

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

GLORIA

Chorus (S, A, T, B): Glory 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.

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.

Aria (S, A, B): Thou hast taken away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that taketh away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.

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

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

6. Aria (Duett) S A

7. Choral
Leit uns mit deiner rechten Hand Und segne unser Stadt und Land; Gib uns allerzeit deines Heiligen Wirt, Unserkennbar, deinen Hirt; Vorsicht sei euer Stütze, 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 Wohlzahlen und des Herren Lob verkünden. (Isaiah 60:6)

2. Chor
Die Könige aus Saba kamen dar, Gold, Wehlrauch, Myrrhen brachten sie dar, Alleluja! ("Puer natus in Bethlehem," verse 4)

3. Recitativ B

4. Aria B
Gold aus Ophir ist zu schlecht, Weg, nur weg mit eitlen Gaben, Weimar. Here at last, Bach obtained the freedom to compose as he chose, and his great organ works were written during his nine years of Weimar, and he also composed many cantatas for the duke's chapel and for various church festivities, weddings, baptisms, 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 was expected to be given his post, but when it was given to the old Kapellmeister's relative, the court Kapellmeister resigned. The duke angrily refused to let his renowned concertmaster take an appointment as Prince Leopold's Kapellmeister at Anhalt-Cöthen, which he 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 serious works of instrumental music. Most of which have, 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. By 1720, he returned from a trip with his patron to domestic devastation: His beloved wife, Mariabraun, had suddenly taken ill, had died, and had been buried, leaving their 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 was not only a companion to Bach's first family, but went on to bear his 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 Sebci and Anna Magdalena, Prince Leopold married his cousin, and soon the musical life of the court was threatened, since the young princess appears to have been totally devoted to music and appreciation, and began to persuade Leopold to spend less time with his musicians. Bach soon began to feel somewhat neglected and neglected, and joined a reputation as a difficult, uninviting. 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 position of cantor of the very venerable St. Thomas's Church, though he was third choice after the famous and extremely prolific composer, Georg Ph. Telemann, and indeed the offer, as did the renowned Darmstadt court conductor, Christoph Graupner, for financial reasons. Bach, however, accepted his prestigious post, which made him musical director of Leipzig's church and soon found himself with a very heavy workload indeed. He was required to write and perform weekly for the town's St. Thomas's and St. Nicholas's, to look after the boys of St. Thomas's School and teach them music and Latin, and to compose works for town events. He had little free time, and his performers were largely schools' bands, some of whom were allowed into the council despite their inability to read music. In addition, he had ever more children of his own to instruct in music. These 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, orchestras, soloists, keyboard players, and in such settings as the magnificent cantatas, such as no small work as the St. John Passion, the St. Matthew Passion, the Christmas Oratorio, the Magnificat, the six German motets for special occasions. In 1729 Bach took over as director of a group, founded by Telemann, known as the "Collaeum Musicum," which was commissioned to perform on Sundays to gatherings of listeners 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 opulent of his compositions. He was also appointed part-time court composer to the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, Augustus III, 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 look 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 (the may have suffered a stroke by mid-1749). Weak-minded for years due to heredity, overwork, and poor lighting, Bach was nearly blind by 1749. He agreed to have two daytime 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 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 outdated and unflattering, even by his own talented sons, who helped to shape the music of their own generation. For some 70 years after his death, Bach's music was almost forgotten, and it took musicians to rediscover this musical master, Mozart apparently heard Bach's motet, Singet dem Herrn eine neue Lieder, with a shock: "What is this? Is there something we can learn from it?" he said, and it was Beethoven's brilliant playing of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" that gained him a reputation as a great performer in Vienna. But it was under Felix Mendelssohn in 1829 that the great St. Matthew Passion was performed for the first time, and his composer's death, and thereafter the St. Matthew Passion and publication, study, and performance of Bach's works began to flourish worldwide.

Bach lived in a world where musicians were servants who had to be taken into the house for music; the idea of the master in the churches, parishes, and towns of 18th-century Germany. He dedicated much of his music, however, to "the glory of God alone," which made his music of grandiose proportions, 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, "canticare," to sing), is a common form of vocal music typically consisting of two parts: the text, 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 poetical narrative, either sacred or secular. In Germany, the cantata developed into the most significant type of Luthern sacred music. Its various elements unified by the all-encompassing character of the choral 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. Cantata or Lutheran church music was written for about sixteen cantatas per year—one for each Sunday and additional holidays and holy days and special occasions. Each, 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 suggest its incomparable wealth of musical creativity, technical expertise, and passionate spirituality found in these marvellous works, which constitute the core of Bach’s vocal output.

Cantata No. 101

Himm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott
This little-known but powerful work, “Take from us, Lord, your faithful God,” is a “choral cantata” in which a familiar choral tune is used as the foundation upon which the entire work is constructed. Known for its chorale melody, the chorale melodies very well, must have enjoyed a thrill of recognition when, in the middle of a complex musical tapestry, the very familiar chorale is presented anew, the words set forth and words associated with them sprang to mind.

The readings for the 10th Sunday after Trinity (usually falling in August), for which the contrapuntal and the musical phrases of the chorale tune that alternate with these, more decorative passages, while the chorale, part, material derived from the chorale melody, provides rhythmic interest.

Cantata No. 101: Himm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott

1. Choral


2. Aria T

Handliche nicht nach deinen Rechten Mit blassen Sündenzerren, Laß den Schwert der Feinde nahl, Höchster, höre unser Fliehen, Doch noten, durch dich allein Wie Jerusalem vergehen!

3. Choral und Recitative S


4. Arie (mit instrumental Choral) B

Warum willst du so zornig sein? Es folgen deines Eifers Flammen Schon über unser Haupt zusammen. Ach stelle dich die Stirn ein und treq aus väterlicher Huld Mit unserm schwachen Fleisch Geduld!

5. Choral und Recitative T


TEXT TRANSLATIONS

1. Choral

Take away from us, Lord, your faithful God, the heavy punishment and great suffering, which we with our wicked sins have too deserved. Protect us against war and precarious times, against siege, 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 your mighty power we might not be destroyed like Jerusalem!

3. Choral and Recitative S

Ach Lord God, through your love our country shall enjoy peace and quiet. If an unforgiving 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 imminent destruction through your power and aid.

4. Aria (with instrumental Choral) B

Wherefore art thou angry? The flames of Your vengeance strike down already upon our heads. Ah, put punishment aside and with faithfull indulgence harbor mercy for our weak flesh!

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

5. Choral and Recitative T

Sin has corrupted us greatly. Thus must even the most virtuous say and confess their corrupted hearts. The devil plagues us even more. Yes, this evil spirit even even from the beginning of the creation was a murderer, seeks to cheat us from our salvation and like a evil one deceive us.

The world, and even our flesh and blood, constantly beare us.
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ALLEGRO [$100-$249]
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Melanie Carlson
Rodney Combellick
Clayton & Carol Cook
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Kyla DeRemer
Nancy Dillworth
John Dimond
Richard & Judy Dolf
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