The Bach Society

The Columbia University Bach Society was founded in 1999 and has since come to play a major role in musical life on campus and throughout the city. Members include students from various programs at the university, as well as other young musicians from around New York. The group presents several concerts a year and sponsors an annual concerto competition, offering student instrumentalists the rare opportunity to perform solo works with orchestral accompaniment.

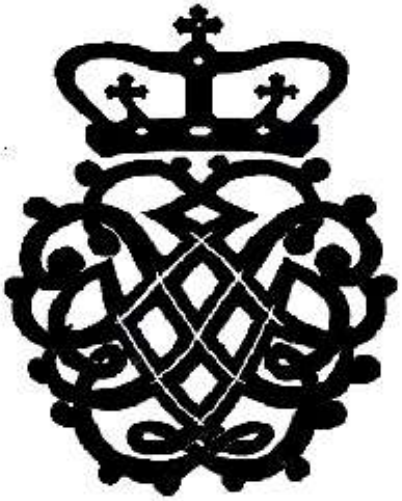
During three highly successful years under the direction of Columbia alumnus Ken-David Masur, the Bach Society toured Germany, produced and performed Handel's opera *Acis and Galatea*, and released its debut CD. In the fall of 2002, Ken Selden became the new Music Director and led the Society in four concerts of diverse orchestral, choral and chamber music. Under David Rosenmeyer, during his six-year tenure as Music Director, the Society expanded its repertoire to include contemporary music, premiering three pieces by contemporary New York composers in the spring of 2005, as well as one by Bach Society tenor Joseph Rubinstein in the spring of 2007. This evening's concert concludes the group's second season under the direction of Geoffrey McDonald.

www.bachsociety.com

The Bach Society relies on the support of many generous donors. Please do not hesitate to contact us at **bach@columbia.edu** with any questions. All donations are tax-deductible.

Saturday, December 11th, 2010
St. Paul's Chapel

The Bach Society



Columbia University

With special thanks to the Office of the University Chaplain

www.bachsociety.com

Director & Board

Geoffrey McDonald is enjoying his second season as Music Director of the Columbia University Bach Society and recently began his first season as Conductor of the Philadelphia Young Artists' Orchestra. He is also an Assistant Conductor for the American Symphony Orchestra, the Gotham Chamber Opera, and the New Amsterdam Singers. This past summer he served as Assistant Conductor at the Bard Summer Music Festival, which featured performances of the music of Alban Berg and a staged production of Franz Schreker's *Der Ferne Klang*. An avid instrumental and vocal performer, Geoff studied piano, cello, and voice from an early age. He graduated in 2009 with a Masters in Orchestral Conducting from Mannes College, where he studied with David Hayes. While at Mannes he was the recipient of the Alma Askin Scholarship, the Felix Salzer Techniques of Music Award, and the Mannes Theory Essay Prize, for an article on Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. He earned his B.A. degree Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University in 2007, where he majored in Musicology and earned minors in both Music Performance (Conducting) and German. While at Princeton, Geoff was the Assistant Conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Princeton University Sinfonia. For three years he was also the Music Director of the Princeton Katzenjammers, the nation's oldest co-ed collegiate a cappella group and an award-winning chamber choir. Upon graduating he was awarded the inaugural Edward T. Cone Memorial Prize for excellence in combining music scholarship with performance. A devotee of diverse musical styles and genres, Geoff maintains a busy performing schedule in the indie-rock band Miracles of Modern Science and is an active composer.

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The Bach Society Chorus

Soprano	*Alto*	*Tenor*	*Bass*
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	Samia Zaidi		

The Bach Society Orchestra

Violin I	*Violin II*	*Viola*
Trevor Cohen	Allison Duh	Nora Donovan
Jess Geiger	Yiling Hu (Principal)	
Wei Leong	Junko Nakajima	
Jason Maron	Divya Subramanian	
Jeremy Martin (Concert Master)	Caroline Tan	
	Cameron Willis (Co-principal)	

Cello	*Bass*
Jan Bohrenkämper	Nick Buonincontri
Jennet Dickenson	Harry Schley
Hannah Rubashkin (Co-principal)	
Jenny Schiff (Principal)	

Flute	*Clarinet*	*French Horn*
Adrian Montufar	Victor Chang	Andrew Knowlton

Harpsichord
Jocelyn Stewart

Despite his professional success as a priest and composer, Vivaldi died poor, in 1741, and interest in his work would not be revived until the twentieth-century resurgence of Early Music. Though a manuscript of RV 589 was rediscovered in the 1920s, the Gloria was not performed in its original version until 1957. A little over half a century later, it is widely considered a staple.

The Gloria tends to leave listeners with an impression of Vivaldi's characteristic brightness and warmth—though highly fraught, surprising harmonies and diminished chords surface in darker movements (Et in terra pax, Gratias agimus tibi), revealing the composer's tonal range. Fugal passages, along with the relative brevity of all twelve movements, generate a momentum that makes the Gloria feel coherent, despite the variety of moods and ideas explored throughout.

George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759) – Concerto grosso in G minor

Undeterred by a stroke and the collapse of his opera company, Handel composed his Twelve Grand Concertos for the London publisher John Walsh in 1739; they were published together as Opus 6 (HWV 319 – 330) in 1740.

The concerti in Op. 6 are scored for violincello and two violins (the concertino, or smaller, featured group in a concerto grosso) and string orchestra with harpsichord (the ripieno, or larger ensemble). Manuscripts indicate that HWV 324 was originally drafted in four movements, like the influential concerti of Arcangelo Corelli. But in the end Handel scrapped a gavotte he had written for the work and concluded it instead with two separate allegros.

The first movement of Op. 6 No. 6 ranks with certain of Handel's tragic arias among his most affecting work; while he lived, it was often performed on its own. But Handel was especially fond of his pastoral third movement: the E-flat major musette, named after the dance form that itself is named after a bagpipe-like instrument used to accompany it. He scored HWV 324 so that the bass would call to mind this less common instrument.

Saturday, April 17th, 8PM, St. Paul's Chapel
Geoffrey McDonald, Music Director

Spring Program

Concerto Grosso in G minor, Op. 6 No. 6, HWV 324 — **George Frideric Handel**

I. Larghetto affettuoso
II. A tempo giusto
III. Musette: Larghetto
IV. Allegro
V. Allegro

Psalmes, songs and sonnets (selections) — **William Byrd**

X. "Let not the sluggish sleep"
III – IV. "In winter cold – whereat an ant"
XII. "Awake mine eyes"

Gloria in D, RV 589 — **Antonio Lucio Vivaldi**

I. Gloria in excelsis Deo
II. Et in terra pax
III. Laudamus te

Natasha Bhatia, soprano

Teresa Lii, soprano

Jordan Kisner, alto

IV. Gratias agimus tibi
V. Propter magnam gloriam
VI. Domine Deus

Josh Arky, bass

VII. Domine, Fili unigenite
VIII. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei

Nani Kang, alto

IX. Qui tollis peccata mundi
X. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris

Adam Fox, tenor

XI. Quoniam tu solus sanctus
XII. Cum Sancto Spiritu

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

Program Notes

William Byrd (c. 1540 - 1623) - *Psalmes, songs, and sonnets*

Renaissance songs may all sound very similar to modern ears, unused as we are to music that lacks an organized tonal thrust or trajectory. But diversity and eclecticism were the guiding ethic for composers of popular song collections during Byrd's era.

Byrd composed *Psalmes, songs and sonnets*, his third English song collection, in 1611, at age 71. Like its predecessors (published in 1588 and 1589), *Psalmes*… brings together an exciting variety of religious and secular texts, musical traditions and compositional techniques. Its contents are organized by the number of voice-parts required for each song—three, four, five and six—so that an array of genres is represented in every section. Although Byrd is remembered primarily for his sacred music, some of the collected songs reflect an engagement with madrigal form, whose popularity at the time made it difficult to ignore.

This evening's selections show the composer taking delight in his song texts, scoring a few select phrases, usually at turning points, homophonically (*more ventrous is than he that sleeps*; *then quoth the Ant*; *the sylvan choir*), driving home the moral punch lines with repeats, and text-painting on words like *joy* and *warbling*.

In winter cold - whereat an ant (nos. 3 - 4, three voices)

In Winter cold, when tree and bush were bare,
and frost had nipped the roots of tender grass,
the Ants with joy did feed upon their fare,
which they had stored while Summer season was—

to whom for food a Grasshopper did cry,
and said she starved if they did help deny;

whereat an Ant, with long experience wise,
and frost and snow had many Winters seen,

inquired what in Summer was her guise.
Quoth she, I sung and hopped in meadows green.
Then quoth the Ant, Content thee with thy chance;
to thy song now art thou like to dance.

Let not the sluggish sleep (no. 10, four voices)
[text: Geffrey Whitney (c. 1548 - c. 1601)]

Let not the sluggish sleep
close up thy waking eye,
until with judgment deep
thy daily deeds thou try.

He that one sin in conscience keeps
when he to quiet goes
more venturous is than he that sleeps
with twenty mortal foes.

Awake mine eyes (no. 12, four voices)

Awake mine eyes: see Phoebus bright arising
and lesser lights to shades obscure descending.
Glad Philomela sits, tunes of joy devising;
whilst in sweet notes from warbling throats
the sylvan choir, with like desire,
to her are echoes sending.

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741) - Gloria in D, RV 589

RV 589 is not Vivaldi's only setting of the Gloria text; a similar work, RV 588, is less widely familiar but well studied, and the now lost RV 590 receives mention in a catalogue. Furthermore, both RV 588 and 589 draw inspiration (and entire passages) from another setting of the Gloria in G, by Vivaldi's contemporary Giovanni Maria Ruggieri. But of all these Glorias, RV 589 stands alone as one of the most popular works in today's choral repertoire.

Vivaldi probably composed RV 589 in 1715, during his tenure as violin instructor and chief composer at the Pio Ospedale de la Pietà, in Venice. The Ospedale was both a convent and a girls' orphanage, where wealthy Venetians were known to drop off their illegitimate infant daughters. Funded by parents' anonymous donations and revenue from public concerts, the convent ran a celebrated music school that provided girls with top-notch instrumental and vocal training, as well as high-profile performance opportunities. When the now-famous Gloria in D premiered, lower voice parts were likely sung by girls specially trained for that purpose.