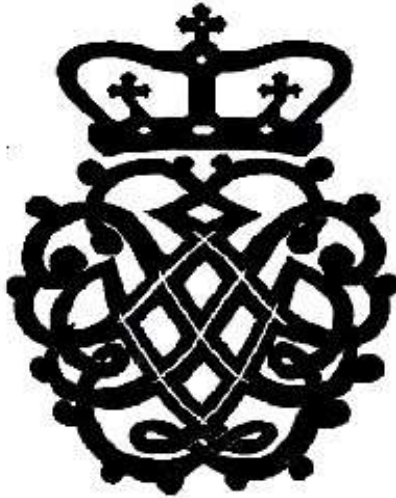


Saturday, December 10th, 2011
St. Paul's Chapel

Winter Concert

The Bach Society



Columbia University

**With special thanks to the
Office of the University Chaplain**

www.bachsociety.com

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 *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. During David Rosenmeyer's 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. Tonight's concert is the first of the group's fourth season under the direction of Geoffrey McDonald.

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.

Director

Geoffrey McDonald has served as Music Director of the Columbia University Bach Society since the fall of 2009, and as Conductor of the Philadelphia Young Artists' Orchestra since the fall of 2010. He has also been the Assistant Conductor for the American Symphony Orchestra and the Gotham Chamber Opera since the fall of 2009, and has worked on several critically-acclaimed performances and opera productions, most recently the World Premiere of Nico Muhly's opera "Dark Sisters" in November of 2011. For the past two summer seasons, he has been in residence as the Assistant Conductor for the Bard Summer Musical Festival, which featured a highly-regarded performance of Aare Merikanto's "Schott" Concerto with members of the American Symphony Orchestra and violinist Miranda Cuckson. His orchestral and choral conducting have received praise from the New York Times and the Philadelphia Inquirer.

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 both in Music Performance (Conducting) and German. 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 internationally 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 of incidental music for stage and film productions.

Assistant Conductor – Nicholas Chong

Board

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Programs

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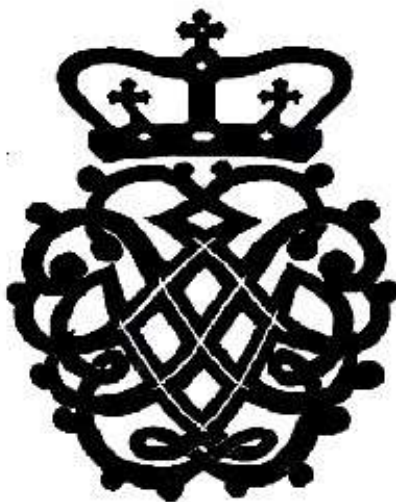
Soloists

Melissa Harvey, soprano

Vanessa Cariddi, alto

Chad Kranak, tenor

Adam Fox, bass



The Bach Society Orchestra

Violin I

Jeremy Martin (Concertmaster)
Jing Guo
Yiling Hu
Veena Kumar
Wei Leong
Jason Maron
Kanako Morimoto

Violin II

Grace Catherine Greiner (Principal)
Matthew P. McKelway
Rebecca Sopchik
Divya Subramanian
Caroline Tan
Preeti Varathan

Viola

Nathen Huang (Principal)
Asalia Goldberg
Rayleigh Lei

Cello

Hannah Rubashkin (Co-Principal)
Jenny Schiff (Co-Principal)
Shorna Sailsman

Bass

Harry Schley

Flute

Rachel Susser
Sarah Wald

Oboe

Jennifer Altman-Lupu
Phil Rashkin

French Horn

Patrick Kaifosh

Trumpet

Scott Aronin
Léonie Deschenes
Matthew Sullivan

Harpsichord

Robbie Kubala

Timpani

Aaron Burger

The Bach Society Chorus

Soprano

Emily Buttner
Kimberly Corliss
Nikkan Das
Meaghan Lueck
Valérie Pinkerton
Alyssa Ramos-Ávila
Emily Ratner
Wenyu Yang

Alto

Katie Craddock
Arden Hegele
Amelia Keyes
Maureen Lackner
Ariel Moger

Tenor

Juan Estrada

Bass

Justin Birmingham
Axel Domeyer
Adam S. Fox
Zachary Gonzalez-Ruskiewicz
Adrian Montufar
Stephen Pearson

Tonight's Program

Cantata 48 (selections)

J.S. Bach (1685 – 1750)

Chorus, “Ich elender Mensch”

Aria (tenor), “Vergiebt mir, Jesus, meine Sünden”

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4

J.S. Bach

Serenade for String Orchestra

E. Elgar (1857 – 1934)

Christmas Oratorio (selections)

J.S. Bach

Chorus, “Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage”

Aria (alto), “Bereite dich, Zion”

Choral, “Wie soll ich dich empfangen”

Aria (bass), “Großer Herr”

Aria (soprano), “Nur ein Wink von seinen Händen”

Choral, “Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein”

Ave Verum Corpus K.618

W. A. Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Reception to Follow

Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach's **Cantata 48**, often called simply by the first line of its famous first movement, “Ich elender Mensch” (“Wretched man that I am”), is a liturgical work intended for performance on the 19th Sunday after Pentecost, typically in mid-October. The first performance of the work was in 1723, soon after Bach had moved from Köthen to accept a new post at Leipzig, where he was required to write a multi-movement cantata for choir and orchestra every week based on the Scriptural text for that Sunday. Cantata 48 is one of the works in Bach's first yearly cycle of religious pieces. The text of the first movement is taken from Romans 7:24, and, spoken from the point of view of a tortured sinner, it stresses the New Testament belief of the need for spiritual redemption. The complex (yet concordant) harmonies in the orchestra and choral parts heighten the tension and strain of the speaker's spiritual position. The tenor aria, “Vergiebt mir, Jesus, meine Sünden,” which is accompanied by strings and winds, has substantially different orchestration and rhythm that supports the more hopeful outlook expressed in the text.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 is one of six Brandenburg concerti by Bach, written at an uncertain period in his early career (perhaps as early as the mid-1710s), and presented by the composer to the Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt in 1721. Quite unnecessarily, Bach's dedication begs the Margrave to show his works mercy, and “not to judge their imperfection with the rigor of [his] discriminating and sensitive taste”: evidently, the works were met with approval and they remain perennial favourites of Bach aficionados. Concerto No. 4 is especially notable for its innovative orchestration and the variety of instruments performing at once. In the first and third movements, the main contrapuntal melodies are played by the first violin and two echoing flutes or recorders, while additional strings and keyboard continuo play in accompaniment. The second movement features the continuo group (violin and flutes) without accompaniment. In modern performances, the concerto can take on several forms: in addition to its original orchestration, the piece is frequently played with soloists on each part, or by two keyboardists.

Edward Elgar's **Serenade for String Orchestra**, written in 1892 and performed publicly in 1896, dates to an early period in Elgar's compositional career: he achieved fame with the *Enigma Variations* (1899) and with the ever-popular *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* (1899), but was struggling to make a name for himself at the time of the composition of this piece. In contrast to the baroque music of Bach and the classical style of Mozart (featured later in the program), the Serenade represents a far later stage in the development of classical music as it verged into modernism. While Elgar was strongly influenced by nineteenth-century European Romantics, such as Brahms, Wagner and Mendelssohn, his work is considered distinctly British, and is clearly representative of the next compositional generation, with increasingly chromatic harmonies and unusual rhythms (the Serenade for String Orchestra, for instance, takes 6/8 and 12/8 time in the first and third movements; this time signature is often associated with folk music, such as Celtic fiddle music, but Elgar's piece has an entirely different feel). The Serenade itself is a short work for strings in E minor, in three movements, with an alternating fast-slow-fast tempo. While the composer's works had mixed reviews following his death in the middle of the twentieth century, a strong Elgar revival has taken place in the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The **Christmas Oratorio**, composed in 1734, dates to a high point in Bach's career: he had settled into his prestigious post as Canon at Thomaskirche (St. Thomas's Church) in Leipzig, and he was also music director at two other churches in the city. Much of the music from the Christmas Oratorio is cleverly reworked from earlier choral material that Bach had composed in his role as Canon. The Christmas Oratorio is one of three Bach oratorios written for a Church holiday (the others are the Easter Oratorio and the Ascension Oratorio, performed at Pentecost). The work is divided into six parts, each designed to be performed on a different day of the Christmas season, for a total of about three hours of musical material. The libretto reflects the readings of each day of Christmas celebration in the liturgical calendar. All the selections performed this evening are taken from the first part of the Oratorio (celebrating the Birth of Jesus) except for the soprano aria, which occurs in the sixth part (celebrating the Adoration of the Magi). After Bach's death, the piece fell out of the repertoire, and was revived for performance only in 1857; it is now one of Bach's most beloved choral works.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's **Ave Verum Corpus**, written less than six months before the composer's death, is one of his most popular and enduring works. The libretto dates back to the 14th century, and has variously been attributed to Popes Innocent III, IV and VI, though the authorship remains uncertain. The text, which celebrates the feast of Corpus Christi, continues to form part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, and is spoken during the consecration of the Host as a reminder of the presence of Christ during communion. Mozart wrote his musical rendition of the sacred text as a gift for Anton Stoll, the musical coordinator at a church near Vienna and a friend of Joseph Haydn. Complementing the ancient tradition of the text, the piece takes the form of a motet, a choral genre that looks back to the medieval and Renaissance periods. However, Mozart also incorporates contemporary features: the four-part motet is accompanied by eighteenth-century stringed instruments and organ. Perhaps surprisingly, Mozart's minimalist manuscript contains almost no annotations and changes, and virtually no directions—the only dynamic marking is the opening “sotto voce”—and the piece appears to have emerged organically from the composer's mind in its final form.

Libretto

Bach, Cantata 48

Chorus

Ich elender Mensch, wer wird mich erlösen
vom Leibe dieses Todes?

Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from
the body of this death?

Aria (tenor)

Vergibt mir Jesus meine Sünden,
So wird mir Leib und Seel gesund.
Er kann die Toten lebend machen
Und zeigt sich kräftig in den Schwachen,
Er hält den längst geschloßnen Bund,
Daß wir im Glauben Hilfe finden.

If Jesus forgives my sins,
then my body and soul will be healed.
He can make the dead alive
and shows himself powerfully in the weak,
He upholds the long-sealed covenant,
so that we might find help in faith.

Bach, Christmas Oratorio

Chorus

Jauchzet, frohlocket! auf, preiset die Tage,
Rühmet, was heute der Höchste getan!
Lasset das Zagen, verbannet die Klage,
Stimmet voll Jauchzen und Fröhlichkeit an! Dienet
dem Höchsten mit herrlichen Chören,
Lasst uns den Namen des Herrschers verehren!

Triumph, rejoicing, rise, praising these days now, Tell
ye what this day the Highest hath done!
Fear now abandon and banish complaining,
Join, filled with triumph and gladness, our song!
Serve ye the Highest in glorious chorus,
Let us the name of our ruler now honor!

Aria (alto)

Bereite dich, Zion, mit zärtlichen Trieben,
Den Schönsten, den Liebsten bald bei dir zu sehn!
Deine Wangen
Müssen heut viel schöner prangen,
Eile, den Bräutigam sehnlichst zu lieben!

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection,
The fairest, the dearest soon midst thee to see!
Thy cheeks' beauty
Must today shine much more brightly,
Hasten, the bridegroom to love with deep passion.

Choral

Wie soll ich dich empfangen
Und wie begegn' ich dir?
O aller Welt Verlangen,
O meiner Seelen Zier!
O Jesu, Jesu, setze
Mir selbst die Fackel bei,
Damit, was dich ergötze,
Mir kund und wissend sei!

How shall I then receive thee
And how thy presence find?
Desire of ev'ry nation,
O glory of my soul!
O Jesus, Jesus,
Set out for me thy torch,
That all that brings thee pleasure
By me be clearly known.

Aria (bass)

Großer Herr, o starker König,
Liebster Heiland, o wie wenig
Achtest du der Erden Pracht!
Der die ganze Welt erhält,
Ihre Pracht und Zier erschaffen,
Muss in harten Krippen schlafen.

Mighty Lord, O strongest sovereign,
Dearest Savior, O how little
Heedest thou all earthly pomp!
He who all the world doth keep,
All its pomp and grace hath fashioned,
Must within the hard crib slumber.

Aria (soprano)

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.

Choral

Ach mein herzliebes Jesulein,
Mach dir ein rein sanft Bettelein,
Zu ruhn in meines Herzens Schrein,
Dass ich nimmer vergesse dein!

Mozart, Ave Verum Corpus

Ave verum corpus, natum
de Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine,
cuius latus perforatum
unda fluxit et sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum
in mortis examine.

Translation credits:

Cantata 48:
Emmanuel Music, Web publication, copyright Pamela Dellal:
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Christmas Oratorio:
Z. Philip Ambrose, translator; Web publication, copyright Z.P. Ambrose:
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Ave Verum Corpus:
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But a wave of his own hand will
Bring down feeble human might.
Here is all dominion mocked!
Speak the Highest but one word,
His opponents' pride to finish,
Oh, then surely must at once
Change its course all mortal purpose.

Ah my belove'd Jesus-child,
Make here thy bed, clean, soft and mild
For rest within my heart's own shrine,
That I no more fail to be thine!

Hail, true Body, truly born
Of the Virgin Mary mild
Truly offered, wracked and torn,
On the Cross for all defiled,
From Whose love pierced, sacred side
Flowed Thy true Blood's saving tide:
Be a foretaste sweet to me
In my death's great agony.

