

Bach in the Time of Covid

Nov 8, 2020 at 1:30 pm & 7 pm

Zion Lutheran Church

2313 S. Hanna St., Fort Wayne, IN

Bach Collegium—Fort Wayne

Daniel G. Reuning, Artistic Director

SOLOISTS

Stephanie Mekonen, soprano
Ashlee Bickley, mezzo-soprano & alto
Mark Laseter, tenor
Keith Brautigam, bass-baritone

SOPRANOS

Rosalie Geller
Cheryl Gigler
Meghan Holst
Susan Mittelstaedt
Tess Reiling
Barbara Reuning
Denise Riemenschneider
Jean Ross
Roberta Schmidt
Teresa Stachofsky

ALTOS

Audrey Almdale
Kimberly Brown
Susan Firestone
Joan Landin
Elizabeth Mudrack
Natalie Reynolds
Sharon Zych

TENORS

Jeremy Allyn
Sheldon Bixler
Kris Howard
Aaron Reynolds
Jesse Steinbacher
Joel Steinbacher

BASSES

David Almdale
James Almdale
Martin Gigler
Joseph Goodroad
Steven Ross
David Schotte
Richard Sovitzky
Peter Steinbacher
Thomas Tobey

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Jason L. Thompson, violin -- Emily Thompson, violin -- Derek Reeves, viola
Lara Turner, cello -- Marilyn Fung, bass
Patricia Reeves, flute
Wayne Peterson, portative organ -- Michael Hollman, Zion organ

Contact us at (260) 485-2143, www.bachcollegium.org
or on Facebook at Bach Collegium—A Baroque Music Ensemble

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Program

Musikalische Exequien, SWV 279-281.....H. Schütz
1585-1672

Part One -- (In the form of a Missa brevis)

INTROIT

Bible/Hymn/Litrugy References

1. Cantor: Naked was I when I came from my mother's womb
Job 1:21
2. Soloists: Naked, yea, again I will be when returning.
The Lord, He has given: the Lord, He has taken.
Blessed be the name of the Lord and praised.

KYRIE (Choral paraphrase with soloists' biblical interpolations)

3. Choir: Lord God, Father in heaven, have mercy on us all! Kyrie eleison!
4. Soloists: Christ's my life and being, Philippians 1:21
Death's for me then my gain.
Look ye, He's the Lamb of God, John 1:29
Who the world's sin doth bear.
5. Choir: Jesus Christ, Thou Son of God, have mercy on us all! Christe eleison!
6. Soloists: As we live, so live we to the Savior. Romans 14:8
As we die, so die we to the Savior.
Thus, whether living, whether dying,
We're e'er with the Savior.
7. Choir: Lord God, Holy Spirit, have mercy on us all! Kyrie eleison!

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS (Paraphrased with Bible verses and hymn stanzas)

8. Cantor: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, John 3:16
9. Soloists: That whoever on Him believeth, he shall never perish,
but have life that is everlasting.
10. Choir: He spoke to His beloved Son: Text: Nun freut euch, st. 5
'Tis time to have compassion. M. Luther, 1523
Then go, bright Jewel of My crown, Tr: R. Massie
And bring to all salvation. Tune: Es ist gewißlich
From sin and sorrow set them free, J. Klug, 1525
Slay bitter death for them that they
May live with Thee forever.
11. Soloists: The blood of Christ Jesus, the very Son of God, 1 John 1:1b
Us cleanses from all transgression.
12. Choir: Through Him our sin's forgiven, Text: L. Helmbold, 1575
Thus, life to us He's given. Tune: Nun laßt uns Gott, st. 6
To heaven He doth guide us; N. Selnecker, 1587
O God, how great Thy goodness!

13. Soloists: For our citizenship is in heaven, Philippians 3:20-21a
 From whence we also look for our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.
 He our mortal body will change to immortality, (1 Corinthians 15)
 For it will be fashioned like His own glorious body.
14. Choir: Life on this earth's a vale of tears. Text: Ich hab mein Sach, st. 3
 Distress and trouble, grief and fears. J. Leon, 1582
 Here dwell we but a few short days,
 Filled with adversities;
 Who's fixed on these is never at peace.
15. Soloists: Although your sins be as red as crimson, Isaiah 1:18b
 They shall yet be as white as snow;
 And though they be as red as scarlet,
 They shall yet be as white as lambs' wool.
16. Choir: His Word, His Font, His Table Text: J. Helmbold, 1575
 Sustain us through all evil. Tune: Nun laßt uns Gott, st. 5
 In faith, O Spirit, Holy, N. Selnecker, 1587
 Teach us to trust thee solely.
17. Solo: Go, My people into a chamber, Isaiah 26:20
 And shut the door behind thee,
 And hide thyself there for just a little while
 'Til the wrath doth pass thee over.
18. Soloists: But the souls of the faithful are in God's own hands, Wisdom 3:1-3
 And no more pain e'er will touch them.
 In the mind of those without faith's full understanding,
 They seemed to die.
 And their departure was viewed as pain and sorrow,
 And their going forth as destruction,
 But they are in peace now.
19. Solo: Lord, if I have Thee only, Psalm 73:25-26
 Then need I no more from earth or from heaven.
20. Soloists: Though mine own flesh and spirit do fail,
 Yet art Thou my God,
 Forever my heart's Repose and Portion.
21. Choir: He is the Health and Text/Tune: Mit Fried und Freud, st. 4
 Saving Light of the nations. M. Luther, 1524
 He enlightens those who know Him not,
 And He feeds them.
 He is for His own Israel
 Their Joy, Reward, and Glory.
22. Soloists: Now our life endures but seventy years, Psalm 90:10
 And if strength holds, may be eighty years.
 And though our days may have their success,
 They still have toil and trouble.

23. Choir: With anguish sore our days are fraught
While here on earth we flourish
And soon man-kind shall come to naught,
For we must soon all perish.
While here in this dark vale of tears,
Our life is labor, grief, and fears
Though we appear to prosper.

Tune: Aus tiefer Not II
(Herr, wie du willst)
W. Dachstein, 1525
Text: Ach, wie elend ist, st. 1
J. Gigas, 1566

24. Solo: I know that my Redeemer lives
And he will raise me up from my coffin on the Day of Judgment.
And though in the ground my skin corruptible endured corruption,
Yet I, in mine own new flesh, shall I see God.

Job 19:25-26

25. Choir: Since Thou from death hast been arisen,
The grave shall not retain me.
My greatest comfort here is given,
No fear of death will claim me.
For where Thou art, there I shall be;
Thus, I will always dwell with Thee,
And will go forth rejoicing.

Text: Wenn mein Stündlein, st. 4
N. Hermann, 1562

26. Soloists: I'll not let Thee go, except Thou me bless.

Genesis 32:26b

27. Choir: To me He spake: Hold fast to Me.
I am Thy Rock and Castle;
Myself, thy Ransom I will be,
For thee I strive and wrestle;
Life shall from death the victory win,
My innocence shall bear thy sin;
So art thou blest forever.

Text: Nun freut euch, st. 7a & 8b
M. Luther, 1523
Tr. R. Massie
Tune: Es ist gewißlich
J. Klug, 1535

Part Two – Offertory Motet Psalm 73:25-26

Choir (Double Chorus): Lord, if I have Thee only,
Then need I no more from earth or from heaven.
Though mine own flesh and spirit do fail,
Yet art Thou my God,
Forevermore my heart's Repose and Portion.

Part Three – Canticle Motet: *Nunc Dimittis* – Luke 2:29-32 (with Soloists' Interpolations)

Cantor: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant...

Choir:
In peaceful rest depart,
As Thou hast spoken.
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared before all people.

Soloists:
Blessed are the faithful,
They who have died in Jesus.
Revelation 14:13
They now rest from their labors,
And their works do follow them.

(Moving soloists symbolize the passing of the soul heavenward.)

<u>Choir:</u>	<u>Soloists:</u>	
A Light to enlighten the Gentiles,	They are in the hands of Jesus.	Wisdom 3:1
	There shall no harm come nigh them.	
And the Glory of Thy people Israel.	Blessed are the faithful,	Revelation 14:13
	They who have died in Jesus.	

INTERMISSION (15 minutes)

Organ Prelude – ***Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland***, BWV 659.....J. S. Bach
(*Savior of the Nations, Come*) 1685-1750
Michael Hollman, guest organist

Advent Cantata -- ***Savior of the Nations, Come***, BWV 61.....J. S. Bach
(*Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*, Tr. M. Carver, b. 1977)

1. Choir: Savior of the nations, come, Nun komm..., st. 1
Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel, world, and all that is,
That God chose a birth like this.
2. Recitative Solo: The Savior has descended,
Assumed our humble flesh and blood
In mercy splendid,
Accepts us as His blood-relations true.
O highest, greatest good!
What hast Thou failed for us to do,
Still day and night,
Thy people's needs addressing?
Thou com'st, and mak'st Thy light
To shine with fullest blessing.
3. Aria Solo: Come, Jesus, come, Thy church now visit
And grant to her a blest new year,
The glory of Thy name extending,
Sound teaching to preserve unbending,
Both pulpit bless and altar here.
4. Recitative Solo: Look ye, look ye! I stand at the door and knock thereon.
If anyone shall hearken to My voice, and shall open it, Revelation 3:20
Then I will come in unto him, and with him will I have My Supper,
And he with Me.
5. Aria Solo: Now my heart, be opened wholly,
Jesus comes, thy Guest to be.
I am dust and ashes lowly
Yet will He not scorn to see
His desire performed in me:
To become His dwelling solely.
Oh, how blessed I shall be!

6. Choir: Amen, amen!
Come and meet me!
Quickly greet me!
With deep yearning.
Lord, I look for Thy returning.

Wie schön leuchtet, st. 7

Two Excerpts from the Oratorio *St. Paul*, Op. 36..... F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
1809-1847

16. Chorale

“Wake, awake, for night is flying,”
The watchmen on the heights are crying:
“Awake, Jerusalem, arise!
The Bridegroom comes, awake!
Your lamps with gladness take!
Alleluia!
With bridal care
Yourselves prepare
To meet the Bridegroom, who is near.”

26. Chorus

How lovely are the messengers, that preach us the Gospel of peace.
To all the nations is gone forth the sound of their words,
Throughout all the lands their glad tidings.
How Lovely are the messengers, that preach us the Gospel of peace.

PROGRAM NOTES

Today’s Program *Bach in the Time of Covid* recognizes how importantly the musical arts serve to lift our spirits during these times of such distress and loss. Its preparation and presentation follow the careful consideration for our safety. We are guided by the aerosol studies from the Universities of Colorado and Virginia and by our own state’s instructions.

Several of the composers of the music in this Program personally experienced the effects of times like ours, and all of the pieces offer comfort and hope.

Heinrich Schütz’s *Musikalische Exequien* is a dramatic piece, composed in 1635 for the funeral of Prince Heinrich von Reuss. Here is a setting of a unique, inspirational text the Prince himself chose and had inscribed for posterity on his copper coffin, a text he commissioned Schütz to set to music for his funeral. It was a time when the nation was suffering from the ravages of plague and the Thirty Year’s War. This first vernacular Requiem inspired Brahms two hundred years later and greatly influenced the composition of his *Ein Deutsches Requiem*.

The *Musikalische Exequien* is divided into three sections, each with unique forces:

Part One is a 6-voice choir setting (SSATTB) that alternates with a variety of contrasting solo combinations. The text begins with an Introit verse from Job 1 and continues with a paraphrase of the first two Ordinaries of the historic Mass, the “Missa brevis.” It expands the three-fold *Kyrie* (“Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, have mercy”) to include four biblical verses of explanation, and the *Gloria in excelsis* (“Glory to God in the highest”) to include ten biblical verses and seven hymn stanzas, all identified in the preceding Program pages.

Part Two is a double choir (SATB-SATB) setting of Psalm 73:25-26 (“Lord, if I have Thee only, I need nothing more...Thou art my heart’s Repose and Portion.”), which was the sermon text.

Part Three is a 5-voice choir setting (SATTB) of a paraphrase of the traditional Vespers Canticle, the *Nunc Dimittis*, the Song of Simeon (“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace”). As the 5-voice choir sings the Canticle, a trio of soloists (SSB) sings a text from Revelation 14:13 (“Blessed are the dead, who die in Jesus...”) and Wisdom 3:1 (“...There shall no harm come nigh them.”). The soprano soloists represent the angels bearing the soul of the Prince to heaven, and the bass, the soul of the Prince himself. To symbolize this, the soloists will move from the front toward the back of the church, which reflects Schütz’s own performance instructions. When Schütz, however, performed this in a venue with multiple galleries, at levels that rose into the heights of the building, sets of soloists were placed at each level. Each set would sing a phrase alone, the first starting at the lowest level with each following phrase sung alone at a higher level. With the sound literally rising into the heights, the symbolism of the angels bearing the soul of the Prince to heaven was thus made dramatically realistic.

J. S. Bach’s Advent Cantata BWV 61, *Savior of the Nations, Come*, was composed in 1714, when Bach was concertmaster in Weimar. Obligated to provide a cantata every month for the court church service, BWV 61 was the seventh of the cantatas he composed after his appointment. As the cantata for the First Sunday in Advent, the first Sunday of the Liturgical Year, it also became the first piece of the annual cantata set, which Bach began in Weimar.

This cantata text was compiled by Erdmann Neumeister, who framed his work with one hymn stanza at the beginning and a half hymn stanza of a different hymn at the conclusion. The hymn stanza in **Movement #1** is stanza one of the Hymn of the Day (*Hauptlied*) for Advent I, Luther’s adaptation of *Savior of the Nations, Come*, attributed to Ambrose of Milan (340-397). Bach sets the first phrase (“Savior of the nations, come”) as an urgent invocation with its melody sung in unison by each voice section separately and with an accompaniment composed in the style of a French Overture scored for strings. The choir then breaks into a four-part (SATB) homophonic rendering of the second phrase (Virgin’s Son, make here Thy home”), a sturdy pleading for Christ’s presence. The third phrase (“Marvel, world, and all that is”) is set in joyful triple time in the style of an awesome imitative motet. Finally, an abbreviated reprise of the opening movement declaims the last phrase (“That God chose a birth like this”), an appropriate setting for the response to the opening plea -- the Savior’s coming splendidly manifested in His birth.

Recitative #2 with a melodious unpretentious conclusion narrates the meaning of Jesus' humble descent, His birth as our human brother, who addresses all our needs. This leads on to the tenor **Aria #3**, praying that Jesus visit His church, blessing its new Liturgical Year with His presence at pulpit and altar, that His name be proclaimed and sound teaching be preserved. The 9/8 time signature and the violins and viola playing in forceful unison combine a "spirited" effect with serious solemnity. As the answer to this Aria, the bass **Recitative #4** quotes the words of Christ in Revelation 3:20 ("Behold, I stand at the door and knock...") with tapping pizzicato string accompaniment, expressively tone painting Jesus knocking at the door. **Aria #5** is the response of the faithful believer ("Now my heart, be opened wholly, Jesus comes thy Guest to be....Oh, how blessed I shall be!"), the very simplest and most sincere tunefulness, accompanied only by cello and organ. The half hymn stanza at the end in **Movement #6** is the final half of stanza 6 of Philipp Nicolai's *How Lovely Shines the Morning Star*. The unadorned hymn melody is sung by the sopranos ("Amen, amen, come and meet me, quickly greet me, with deep yearning. Lord, I look for Thy returning."). The fervent yearning for the final coming of Christ, expressed clearly with elongated notes by sopranos, is greatly intensified in the other voice parts and in the string accompaniment by exuberant imitation, reaching the heights of Advent exultation as the strings rise to their final high note G.

Mendelssohn's **Two excerpts from the Oratorio St. Paul**, Op. 36 are "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying," and "How Lovely Are the Messengers that Preach Us the Gospel of Peace." The libretto of this Oratorio narrates the biblical story of the life of St. Paul. "Wake, Awake..." is sung immediately after Saul (Paul) was converted on the road to Damascus, and "How Lovely Are the Messengers..." immediately after Paul and Barnabas were commissioned as missionaries to the Gentiles. "Wake, Awake..." is a four-part (SATB) harmonization of the End-Time hymn "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" by Phillip Nicolai. Unlike the original, the first half of the hymn is not repeated. Hence, the text, which is stanza 1 of the hymn, is also shortened. Vigorous instrumental fanfares are featured between phrases, and one is played as an introduction. "How Lovely Are the Messengers..." is a setting of Romans 10:15 & 18. It has a "lovely" memorable melody that is passed from one voice part to another, treated sometimes imitatively and at other times homophonically in three and four-part harmony. "How Lovely..." is perhaps the best known piece in the Oratorio, often sung by church, school, and community choirs.

The texts of the hymn "Wake, Awake,...," featured in the first of the two excerpts from Mendelssohn's Oratorio *St. Paul*, and of the hymn "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star" in the final movement of Bach's Advent Cantata BWV 61, were written by Phillip Nicolai (1556-1608). He was a pastor in Germany during the Great Plague, which took the lives of thirteen hundred of his parishioners. During that time of extreme stress and sorrow, Nicolai wrote these hymns, known respectively as the king and queen of chorales. They are uplifting and emphasize genuine hope: the final coming of Jesus, when full relief will be realized, and Jesus' present coming in His Word and Sacraments, truly sustaining us in all we endure.

+ Soli Deo Gloria +