

J. S. Bach

Christmas
Oratorio
Part 1



Sunday, December 3, 2017
5:00 PM

West End United Methodist Church
2200 West End Ave. Nashville, TN 37203

West End Chancel Choir and Orchestra
Matthew Phelps, conductor
Kyle Collier, Evangelist

Bach's Christmas Oratorio

By Susan Harrell

The Christmas Oratorio by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was first heard in Leipzig during the winter of 1734/35 at St. Nicholas Church, where Bach was the organist and choirmaster. The original score contains details of when each section was performed, including how it was incorporated within the church services on the Feast Days over a two-week period between Christmas Day (December 25, 1734) and Epiphany (January 6, 1735). An oratorio is a non-staged musical drama based on Biblical stories using the aria, recitative and ensemble styles of the Baroque Era. But while most oratorios were intended to be performed in a single evening, Bach conceived the idea of an oratorio to stretch through the entire Christmas season

The Christmas Oratorio is comprised of six cantatas, and today the choir will perform the first three: The First Part (for Christmas Day) announces the birth of Christ; in the Second Part (for December 26) the angels appear to the shepherds in the field; and in the Third Part (for December 27) the shepherds find Jesus lying in the manger and return to their fields. Although parts of the libretto are poetic, much of it is taken from the German translation of the Bible. Bach used portions of the nativity story from the Gospels of Luke and Matthew in retelling the story.

The Christmas Oratorio makes great use of chorales. Of the 64 movements, 14 are chorales. The chorale was an invention of Martin Luther, who wanted to create a type of church music in which the congregation could participate. A chorale is a hymn-like melody sung in German (or the vernacular) with a simple melodic line and chordal accompaniment sung by the altos, tenors and basses or played by the organ.

What to listen for during the performance: The first chorale in the oratorio "How Shall I Fitly Greet Thee" is a very recognizable one (Bach also used this chorale in the St. Matthew Passion). We know this tune in our hymnal as "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded". And the chorale "Break Forth, O Beauteous Morning Light" will be familiar to West Enders as a long-standing part of our Candle-lighting service. The oboe plays an important role in the oratorio – it represents the shepherd's pipes as they are keeping watch in their fields. The tenor soloist is the Evangelist who narrates the story of the birth of Christ. In order to keep clear what is narrative and what is commentary – all the Evangelist's recitatives are *secco* (dry with simple chords from the cello and harpsichord), while the other recitatives are with obbligato instruments or string accompaniment. The rich chorales reflect the voice of the people, as they were hymn tunes mostly well known to Bach's protestant congregation.

This oratorio has been part of the Christmas choral tradition for nearly 300 years and its message of peace and hope is still true today. Thank you for coming and enjoy the concert!

Christmas Oratorio Part 1
By J. S. Bach
Sunday December 3, 2017
Five o'clock in the afternoon

Christmas Oratorio

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

Christmas Day

1. Chorus: Shout ye Exultant
2. Evangelist: And in those same days
3. Recitative: At last, beloved Savior mine
4. Aria: Prepare thyself Zion
5. Chorale: How can I fitly greet Thee
6. Evangelist: And there she brought forth her first-born son
7. Chorale: He came among us meek and poor
8. Aria: Mighty Lord of all Creation
9. Chorale: Ah, Jesus Child, my heart's delight

Monica Coombs, alto
Ben Troxler, bass

Second Christmas Day

10. Sinfonia
11. Evangelist: And abiding in the field in that same country
12. Chorale: Break forth, O beauteous morning light
13. Evangelist: And the angel spoke and said
14. Recitative: What God to Abraham had sworn
15. Aria: Happy shepherds, haste
16. Evangelist: This sign do I give you
17. Chorale: Behold in gloomy stable stall
18. Recitative: So go ye there, ye shepherds
19. Aria: Sleep Thou, my Dearest, and rest Thee awhile
20. Evangelist: And sudden there appeared with the Angel
21. Chorus: Glory to God in the Highest
22. Recitative: 'Tis well, ye Angels, joyful sing
23. Chorale: In chorus now to Thee we raise

Margy Bredemann, soprano
Laura Webb, mezzo soprano
Patrick Dunnevant, baritone

Third Christmas Day

24. Chorus: Ruler of Heaven
25. Evangelist: And as the Angels were gone into Heaven from them
26. Chorus: Let us even now go to Bethlehem
27. Recitative: Redeemer of His Folk
28. Chorale: That God has blessed His people thus
29. Duet: Lord, Thy Mercy, Thy Compassion
30. Evangelist: And the shepherds hastened
31. Aria: Hold thou forever this blessing in wonder
32. Recitative: Ah yea, my heart will ever cherish
33. Chorale: Thee, my Master, faithful serving
34. Evangelist: To their flocks the shepherds then returned
35. Chorale: Rejoice and sing

Emma Jackson, soprano
Monica Coombs, alto
Ben Troxler, bass



The Masterworks Series at West End is made possible by the Coffman Music Endowment Fund
the Holcomb Chancel Choir fund, and by generous donations to our Music Department.
You can make a donation by contacting Cindy Siemer at csiemer@westendumc.org or at 321-8500, ext. 8822.

Scores for the Christmas oratorio were given by Mary Lawrence Breinig and her family
to the greater glory of God in memory of John Boyers Breinig and his love for Bach.

West End Chancel Choir
Matthew Phelps, conductor

Andrew Risinger, associate conductor and accompanist • Melissa Gramling, assistant conductor

Soprano 1

Jane Benson
Erica Brandon
Margy Bredemann
Christina Egan
Lee Fentriss
Ruby Fowinkle
Laural Hemenway
Melissa Hudson
Kimberly Pace-Furse
Jewell McGhee Rader
Sarah Sisk

Soprano 2

Mary Dietrich
Carla Fox
Melissa Gramling
Emma Jackson
Betty Magee
Elsa Mueller

Alto 1

Mary Lawrence Breinig
Elsie Clark
Jean Gray
Becky Heywood
Margie Hogshead
Abigail Lawrence
Marvine Longwood
Carol Poston
Sarah Sharp
Carol Stewart
Carleen Vollmer
Molly Wineland
Jonna Whitman

Alto 2

Mary Bond
Eleanor Cobb
Monica Coombs
Anne Gilmour
Susan Harrell
Colleen Phelps
Theresa Santillan
Aleta Trauger
Allison Williams

Tenor 1

Scott Brons
Andrew Campbell
Brian Payne
John Wiseman

Tenor 2

Doug Arnold
Mason Boudrye
Cory Cox
Randy Cox
Brian McKinney
Ken Nelson
Clark Perkins

Baritone

Tyler Bowman
Patrick Dunnevant
Rob Hancock
J. L. Nave
Chris Peacock
Leon Rader
Adam Young

Bass

David Clark
Massey Hemenway
Steve Hyman
David McNeel
Ethan Rust
Ben Troxler
Justin Westley
Ted Wiltsie

Orchestra

Violins: Isabel Bartles, Denise Baker, John Maple, Allison Gooding, Adrian Evarkiou Kaku, Erin Hall*, Amy Hellman, Jeremy Williams, Jung-Min Shin, Anna Lisa Hoepfinger

Violas: Chris Farrell, Judith Ablon, Clare Yang

Cellos: Keith Nicholas, Steve Drake, Larissa Maestro

Basses: Kevin Jablonski, Kate Munagian

Flutes: Erik Gratton, Carolyn Treybig

Oboes: Roger Wiesmeyer, Titus Underwood, Rebecca Van de Venn, Keith Sorrels

Trumpet: Preston Bailey, Pat Kunkee, Alec Blazek

Tympani: Colleen Phelps

* Concertmaster

Upcoming events at West End United Methodist Church

Christmas Candlelighting Service

December 10, 5:30 PM (Bells begin ringing at 5:10 PM)

Join the combined forces of music ministry at West End for our annual celebration of Lessons and Carols. Early arrival is recommended.

Christmas Eve at West End

December 24

Family Service at 4:00 PM

Evening Service at 10:30 PM (Music begins at 10:00 PM)

Christmas Eve services are some of the most beautiful of the church year. Our family service involves a pageant featuring the children and youth of our church. Our evening service includes music by our Chancel and Sanctuary choir, along with prelude featuring our 136 rank Moller organ and the annual singing of O Holy Night. Communion is served at both services. Please join us and bring friends and family.

Vocal Arts Nashville

March 4, 4:30 PM

Nashville's newest professional choir will complete their performance of Bach's Six Motets, along with a performance of Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzes featuring pianist Marilyn Shields-Wiltsie

Beethoven Festival

March 23, 24, and 25

Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas

March 23 7 PM Lipscomb University

March 24 10 AM Steinway Gallery Recital Hall

March 24 7 PM Lipscomb University

Hear all 32 piano sonatas performed by 20 pianists from all over the region.

The concert includes West End members Marilyn Shields-Wiltsie, Steve Hyman, and Colleen Phelps; and West End staff members Matthew Phelps and Andrew Risinger.

Beethoven's Mass in C

March 25, 4:30 PM

West End UMC Sanctuary

West End's Chancel Choir and the Concert Choir from Lipscomb University will join forces and perform Beethoven's Mass in C with orchestra under the baton of guest conductor Earl Rivers. Dr. Rivers is the Director of Choral Activities at the College Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, former Artistic Director of Vocal Arts Ensemble Cincinnati, and the former artistic advisor to the World Choir Games. The concert will also feature the Ellison Trio in a performance of Beethoven's Triple Concerto.

