

## NOTES

The term Baroque originally applied to the ornate architecture of Germany and Austria during the 17th and 18th centuries and was borrowed to describe music developments from about 1600-1750. Bach and Händel were two of the greatest and latest Baroque composers and their works exhibit many of the features of the period: harmonic complexity, emphasis on contrast, use of continuo, new forms of music such as the suite and cantata, and the desire to represent emotions vividly. Yet the two composers were different, partly because of their geographical and career situations but also because of their personalities. Bach fused the Baroque developments of Italy and France with his own north German Lutheran heritage in his massive output of religious works. Händel's influences were from Germany, Italy and England and secular: even his dramatic oratorios, although great, were not written for the church but for concert situations.

That Bach and Händel were born in the same year is well known. An interesting connection between these two works is that they were written in the same year of 1707 when the two giants of music were both at the tender age of twenty-two.

In these works we can see a foreshadowing of the paths that each composer is to take. Bach's *Christ lag in Todesbanden* is deeply spiritual and psychologically powerful and he uses his skill of harmonic language, rhythm, counterpoint, and text to move the listener to a more spiritual realm. Händel, in contrast, is much more dramatic and flamboyant and we see promise of the great opera and oratorio composer he will become.

### *Christ lag in Todesbanden:*

Throughout his career, Bach (1685-1750) was required to write cantatas for church services and often on a weekly basis. His early cantata, *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, was written for Easter Sunday and is one of his most strictly organized cantatas. Some musicologists believe it may be his first composition in this genre; nonetheless it is certainly one of his greatest. The seven choral movements are each based on one of the verses of a hymn by Martin Luther which, in turn, was based on a 12th century Easter carol. This chorale tune is stated in each movement and is sometimes greatly embellished. A sinfonia prefaces the work and it, too, is built on the same chorale melody. The arias in the cantata were originally performed by the whole sections of the choir, as opposed to soloists which became the more normal practice; we will be performing the work in the original manner.

### *Dixit Dominus:*

In 1706, a young musician traveled to Rome to perform and study the Italian style. Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759) was twenty-two when he wrote his masterpiece *Dixit Dominus* in 1707. In this work Händel tested the virtuosity

of the Roman singers and instrumentalists. The vocal parts are all very instrumental in nature and it seems he was not at all concerned about vocal limitations. The work is set for five soloist parts and five choir parts: sopranos I and II, alto, tenor and bass. The orchestra is in five parts and incorporates violins I and II, viola I and II and continuo.

The first and last movements use a plainsong tune as a basis for musical development with the contrasting parts incorporating effective dancelike figures to give an exciting and varied texture. The two solos are effective through-composed arias. The soprano solo "Tecum principium" ("the power to rule") uses the triplet rhythms in a manner that helps to create a strong plaintive and pleading quality.

The fourth movement "Juravit Dominus" ("the Lord has sworn an oath") uses dramatically contrasting sections, one being a very sustained chordal structure while the other uses imitative material in sharp contrast.

"Tu es sacerdos in aeternum" ("you are a priest forever") has a fresh and optimistic quality. This movement incorporates two main contrasting ideas, one being a sustained line made up of mainly stepwise moving quarter notes and the other a run of sixteenth notes with a different syllable on each note. The melding of these two themes has a delightfully buoyant effect.

The sixth movement has several contrasting sections which appropriately represent the text, the most dramatic being "conquasabit capita in terra multorum" ("he shall shatter skulls on many lands") where he uses the singers and instrumentalists in a percussive and jarring manner which truly reflects the gruesome message of the text.

"De torrente in via bibet" ("he shall drink of the torrent in his way") is a stunningly beautiful and poignant duet for sopranos I and II supported by tenors and basses singing in unison.

The final movement again introduces the plainsong tune for a short while in the opening section. The closing section uses a repeated note theme with an intense rhythmic quality that is repeated imitatively in various parts. This combined with other interesting thematic material such as octave leaps creates a vocally athletic, thrilling and compelling close to this masterpiece by the young Händel.

## LAUDATE SINGERS

### SOPRANO I

Heidi Ackermann  
Marina Bennett  
Yasmine Bia  
Rachel Buttress  
Catherine Crouch

### SOPRANO II

Elyse Kantonen  
Jennifer Katchur  
Maureen Nicholson  
Jenny Vermeulen  
Alana Zerbe

### ALTO

Hilary Crowther  
Miriam Davidson  
Elspeth Finlay  
Liana LeBlanc  
Intan Purnomo

### TENOR

Kristopher Benoit  
Tristan Chalcraft  
Mark De Silva  
Paul Jungwirth  
Chris Robinson  
C.D. Saint

### BASS

Elliot Harder  
Charlie Louie  
Troy Martell  
George Roberts  
Adam Turpin  
Dheni Walsh

## GUEST INSTRUMENTALISTS

### VIOLIN I

Nancy DiNovo, principal  
Evelyn Creaser  
Bryan King

### VIOLIN II

Carolyn Cole, principal  
Patricia Armstrong

### VIOLA I

Angela Malmberg

### VIOLA II

Marcus Takizawa

### CELLO

Ariel Barnes

### VIOLONE

Natalie Mackie

### ORGAN & HARPSICHORD

Christopher Bagan

## Baroque Voices

### *Christ lag in Todesbanden, BWV 4*

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750

- |                                         |                               |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Sinfonia                             |                               |
| 2. Chorus (Verse I)                     | Christ lag in Todesbanden     |
| 3. Duet, Sopranos and Altos (Verse II)  | Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt |
| 4. Aria, Tenors (Verse III)             | Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn   |
| 5. Chorus (Verse IV)                    | Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg |
| 6. Aria, Basses (Verse V)               | Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm |
| 7. Aria, Sopranos and Tenors (Verse VI) | So feiern wir das hohe Fest   |
| 8. Chorale (Verse VII)                  | Wir essen und leben wohl      |

## INTERMISSION

### *Dixit Dominus, HWV 232*

Georg Friedrich Händel 1685-1759

- |                      |                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Soloists & Chorus | Dixit Dominus<br><i>Soloists: Heidi Ackermann, Elspeth Finlay, Mark De Silva</i>                                        |
| 2. Aria              | Virgam virtutis tuæ<br><i>Alto: Elspeth Finlay</i>                                                                      |
| 3. Aria              | Tecum principium in die virtutis<br><i>Soprano: Heidi Ackermann</i>                                                     |
| 4. Chorus            | Juravit Dominus                                                                                                         |
| 5. Chorus            | Tu es sacerdos in aeternum                                                                                              |
| 6. Soloists & Chorus | Dominus a dextris tuis<br><i>Soloists: Catherine Crouch, Heidi Ackermann, Mark De Silva, C.D. Saint, George Roberts</i> |
| 7. Soloists & Chorus | De torrente in via bibet<br><i>Soloists: Catherine Crouch and Heidi Ackermann</i>                                       |
| 8. Chorus            | Gloria Patri, et Filio                                                                                                  |

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