MARSH CHAPEL AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY
University Interdenominational Protestant Service of Worship
Sunday, November 20th, 2016 - 11:00 a.m.
The Last Sunday after Pentecost

The Reverend Doctor Robert Allan Hill, Dean

THE BACH EXPERIENCE
The thirtieth cantata performed during the Interdenominational Protestant Worship Service

This program is an insert to your worship bulletin.

Johann Sebastian BACH
Meine Seel erhebt den Herren, BWV 10
(1685-1750)

MaryRuth Lown, soprano
Katherine Growdon, mezzo-soprano
Ethan DePuy, tenor
Joseph Hubbard, bass

MARSH CHAPEL CHOIR AND COLLEGIUM

SCOTT ALLEN JARRETT CONDUCTING

For more information about Music at Marsh Chapel, visit www.bu.edu/chapel/music.
J. S. BACH Meine Seel erhebt den Herren, BWV 10

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach on 21 March 1685 and died in Leipzig on 28 July 1750. He composed hundreds of cantatas for both sacred and secular purposes, over 200 of which survive. This is the thirtieth cantata performed by the Marsh Chapel Choir and Collegium as part of The Bach Experience.

Meine Seel erhebt den Herren was first performed on 2 July 1724 for the Feast of the Visitation. It is scored for SATB soloists, SATB chorus, two oboes, trumpet, strings, and continuo. Its duration is approximately 20 minutes.

Our theme of arrival for this year’s Bach Experience continues today with Meine Seel erhebt den Herren BWV10, originally composed for the Feast of the Visitation on 2 July 1724. The Visitation recalls Mary’s announcement of her conception to her sister Elizabeth, who was celebrating her own miraculous conception at her old age. It is one of those few passages of the Gospels filled with pure joy and praise, untainted by persecution or Jesus’ eventual sacrifice – indeed, upon Mary’s arrival, John the Baptist leapt in Elizabeth’s womb (Luke 1:41), her reaction prompting Mary’s recitation of the Magnificat. Bach’s music is similarly, and uncharacteristically, without allusion to later darkness.

The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), the basis for this cantata’s libretto, is perhaps the most-recited text in the Christian liturgy, and has accordingly occasioned perhaps the most musical settings of any single text. It formed the bedrock of the twice-daily Vespers service in the Catholic Liturgy of the Hours, a practice which survived the Reformation and remains in regular use today, particularly by the Lutheran and Anglican Churches. A German Magnificat setting (from Martin Luther’s German Bible) by Johann Hermann Schein (1586-1630) was sung every afternoon at Vespers in Leipzig; Bach’s own setting was written for the feast day during which the Magnificat was read during the Gospel reading.

As the Magnificat text and its liturgical use bridges the Reformation, so too does the music to which it was sung in the Lutheran church. Meine Seel erhebt den Herren is the fifth in the chorale cantata cycle; while it most certainly was composed in the style of a chorale cantata, the cantus firmus is not a chorale at all but rather the ninth Gregorian psalm tone, the foundation of the aforementioned Schein Magnificat sung daily and familiar to Bach, his musicians, and the community at large. Just as the cantata provides a gloss on the familiar tune, so too does the anonymous libretto gloss the biblical text in movements 2, 3, 4, and 6 (the others quoting directly from Scripture, plus the doxology).

The exuberance of the Magnificat and its moment in the Gospel is made clear in the breathless excitement of the opening chorus and succeeding aria for soprano, both written in an Italian concertante style. Bach infuses the music with energy not just from characteristically active lines in the violins, oboes, altos, and singers, but also with rapid sixteenth-note motion in the continuo. Even the cantus firmus is in shorter notes – half- and quarter-notes – than the whole- and half-note motion Bach usually
uses to highlight the tune in his rich contrapuntal textures. At verse 2 of the Magnificat, the cantus firmus migrates to the alto from the soprano, allowing the highest voice to participate in the chorus’s energetic propulsion. In a compositional technique unique to Bach but familiar to us from such choruses as the opening of the *St. Matthew Passion* BWV244, the final ritornello in the tonic is joined by the singers, marked by a rising fifth of the first violin (and oboe), bringing the chorus to a spritely and almost abrupt conclusion. The ending is only abrupt, however, if one does not proceed to the similarly energetic aria for soprano, strings, and oboes, heard almost as a continuation of the chorus in its relative major key. The soprano continues the Magnificat in Mary’s voice, singing a song of praise and thanks.

The recitative for tenor that follows, in which the perspective shifts to a narrator role (similar to an Evangelist, but without biblical text), is an exercise in Baroque text painting: notice the thirty-second-note turn on “Gewalt” (“force”), the unaccompanied word “bloß” (“bare”), and the chromatic triplet run on “zerstreun” (“scatter”). The recitative leads into an aria for bass, the text of which draws connections between the Magnificat and the Beatitudes, perhaps allowing us to read a bit more into Bach’s choice of voice type. Musically, we notice yet another extremely active continuo line, even for a continuo aria such as this one. It is interesting that Bach takes these verses of the Magnificat, which could be described as the darkest in their destruction of the proud and mighty, and sets them rather cheerfully: I challenge the listener to refuse a smile during the continuo’s arpeggiated sequences.

The cantata’s stateliest movement is by far the duet for alto and tenor, in which the unadorned chant tone returns in the trumpet as the continuo and singers create a three-voice fantasia around it. We are immediately reminded of the corresponding verse in his Latin Magnificat (composed roughly seven months earlier) for three high voices, continuo, and oboe; in fact, a later reprisal of this cantata replaced the trumpet with two oboes. That Bach chose to respect the Biblical text and lend it gravitas with the instrumental chant tune in two separate (and very different) settings suggests that this verse held particular significance for him.

The final recitative transitions into an arioso upon the “scattering” of Abraham’s seed, as the tenor recites the ultimate lesson of the Magnificat. These words draw the long arc of God’s promise from his original covenant with Abraham to the deliverance of Jesus. The arioso leads to a beautiful harmonization of the chant tone for the proclamation of the doxology to end the cantata.

—Brett Kostrzewski, November 2016
I. Chorus

Meine Seel erhebt den Herren,
Und mein Geist freut sich Gottes, meines Heilandes;
Denn er hat seine elende Magd angesehen.
Siehe, von nun an
werden mich selig preisen alle Kindeski
nd.

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;
for He has regarded His lowly handmaid.
Behold, from now on
all generations will call me blessed.

II. Aria (S)

Herr, der du stark und mächtig bist,
Gott, dessen Name heilig ist,
Wie wunderbar sind deine Werke!
Du siehest mich Elenden an,
Du hast an mir so viel getan,
Daß ich nicht alles zähl und merke. (da capo)

Lord, you who are strong and mighty,
God, whose name is holy,
how wonderful are Your deeds!
You have looked upon wretched me,
You have done so much for me,
that I cannot count or tell it all. (da capo)

III. Recitative (T)

Des Höchsten Güt und Treu
Wird alle Morgen neu
Und währet immer für und für
Bei denen, die allhier
Auf seine Hilfe schaun
Und ihm in wahrer Furcht vertraun.
Hingegen übt er auch Gewalt
Mit seinem Arm
An denen, welche weder kalt
Noch warm
Im Glauben und im Lieben sein;
Die nacket, bloß und blind,
Die voller Stolz und Hoffart sind,
Will seine Hand wie Spreu zerstreun.

The goodness and love of the Highest
is renewed every morning
and endures for ever and ever
with them, who from here
look for His help
and trust Him in true fear.
He also uses force
with His arm
against those, who are neither cold
nor warm
in faith and in love;
who are naked, bare, and blind,
who are full of pride and arrogance,
will be scattered like straw by His hand.

IV. Aria (B)

Gewaltige stößt Gott vom Stuhl
Hinunter in den Schwefelpfühlh;
Die Niedern pflegt Gott zu erhöhen,
Daß sie wie Stern am Himmel stehen.
Die Reichen läßt Gott bloß und leer,
Die Hungrigen füllt er mit Gaben,
Daß sie auf seinem Gnadenmeer
Stets Reichtum und die Fülle haben.

The mighty God casts from their thrones,
down into the sulphurous pit;
the humble God means to exalt,
so that they are as the stars in heaven.
The rich God leaves bare and empty,
the hungry He fills with gifts,
so that, from the sea of His grace
they might always have their full of riches.
V. Duet (AT) with instrumental chorale

Er denket der Barmherzigkeit
Und hilft seinem Diener Israel auf.

( Instrumental Chorale: The German Magnificat)

VI. Recitative (T)

Was Gott den Vätern alter Zeiten
Geredet und verheißen hat,
Erfüllt er auch im Werk und in der Tat.
Was Gott dem Abraham,
Als er zu ihm in seine Hütten kam,
Versprochen und geschworen,
Ist, da die Zeit erfüllet war, geschehen.
Sein Same mußte sich so sehr
Wie Sand am Meer
Und Stern am Firmament ausbreiten,
Der Heiland ward geboren,
Das ew'ge Wort ließ sich im Fleische sehen,
Das menschliche Geschlecht von Tod und allem Bösen
Und von des Satans Sklaverei
Aus lauter Liebe zu erlösen;
Drum bleibt's darbei,
Daß Gottes Wort voll Gnad und Wahrheit sei.

VII. Chorale

Lob und Preis sei Gott dem Vater und dem Sohn
Und dem Heiligen Geiste,
Wie es war um Anfang, jetzt und immerdar
Und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit, Amen.

Translation: Pamela Dellal
MARSH CHAPEL CHOIR
Scott Allen Jarrett, Conductor
Justin Thomas Blackwell, Associate Conductor
Sean Watland, Conducting Fellow
Margaret Weckworth and Phoebe Oler, Music Program Administrators

Sopranos
Heather Bachelder, Palmer, AK
Xing Hu, Chengdu, China
Annette Jochum, Durham, NC
Catherine Lindsay, New Haven, CT
*Mary Ruth Lown, West Columbia, SC
Phoebe Oler, Boston, MA
Emily Regier, Belmont, MA
Erin Sanborn, Wakefield, MA
Kasey Shultz, Seattle, WA
*Carey Shunskis, Upper Darby, PA
Sharon Solomon, Marietta, GA
*Jacquelyn Stucker, Jamaica Plain, MA
Margaret Weckworth, Greensboro, NC

Altos
Candace Brooks, Branford, CT
Meredith Cler, Ripon, WI
*Douglas Dodson, Spearfish, SD
Elizabeth Eschen, Cazenovia, NY
Maddy Frumkin, Charlotte, NC
Kira Garvie, Ghent, NY
*Kim Leeds, Watertown, MA
Kimi Macdonald, Londonderry, NH
Katie Moore, Moorestown, NJ
Britt Simonson, Okemos, MI

Tenors
*Ethan DePuy, Rochester, NY
Steven Merrill, Wausau, WI
George Silvis, III, Cambridge, MA
*Patrick T. Waters, Guilford, CT
Sean Watland, Chicago, IL

*Basses
David Ames, Newton Centre, MA
*Junhan Choi, South Korea
Daniel Fallu, Goffstown, NH
Alex Handin, Guilderland, NY
Samuel Horsch, Gibson City, IL
*Joseph Hubbard, Pflugerville, TX
Kevin Neel, Charlotte, NC
Steve Pinner, Hudson, MA
Tim Sullivan, Somerville, MA

*Choral Scholar
MARSH CHAPEL COLLEGIUM

Violin I
Heidi Braun-Hill, concertmaster
Sean Larkin
Andrew Salo

Violin II
Nelli Herskovits-Jabotinsky
Michael Hustedde
Anna Griffis

Cello
Guy Fishman

Contrabass
Nathan Varga

Trumpet
Christopher Belluscio

Organ
Justin Blackwell

Librarians
Margaret Weckworth
Phoebe Oler

Viola
Daniel Doña
Chris Nunn

Bassoon
Kaitlin Noe

PREVIOUS BACH CANTATA PERFORMANCES

Performed during the Sunday morning Interdenominational Protestant Worship Service.

BWV 1: Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern (2/8/15)
BWV 4: Christ lag in Todesbanden (4/17/16)
BWV 6: Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden (11/15/15)
BWV 7: Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam (9/25/16)
BWV 29: Wir danken dir, Gott (9/28/08)
BWV 31: Der Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubilieret (2/7/16)
BWV 34: O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe (9/26/10)
BWV 39: Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot (1/31/10)
BWV 61: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (12/2/07)
BWV 62: Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (12/12/10)
BWV 66: Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen (9/27/15)
BWV 67: Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ (4/6/08; 4/12/15)
BWV 70: Wachet! Betet! Betet! Wachet! (11/22/09)
BWV 71: Gott ist mein König (9/30/12)
BWV 72: Alles nur nach Gottes Willen (1/27/08)

BWV 77: Du sollt Gott, deinen Herren, lieben (2/10/13)
BWV 78: Jesu der du meine Seele (11/9/14)
BWV 79: Gott der Herr ist Sonn und Schild (2/19/12)
BWV 105: Herr, gehe nicht ins Gericht (11/6/11)
BWV 106: Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit (10/28/07)
BWV 111: Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit (1/25/09)
BWV 131: Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir (9/27/09)
BWV 140: Wachtet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (12/2/12)
BWV 147: Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben (11/23/08)
BWV 148: Bringet dem Herrn Ehre seinen Namens (4/26/09)
BWV 149: Man singet mit Freuden vom Seig (9/25/11)
BWV 171: Gott, wie dein Name, so ist auch dein Ruhm (1/30/11)
BWV 172: Erschallet, ihr Lieder, erklenget, ihr Saiten! (4/29/12)
BWV 190: Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied (9/28/14)
BOSTON UNIVERSITY  Marsh Chapel

Rev. Dr. Robert Allan Hill
Dean and Chaplain of the University

Br. Lawrence A. Whitney, LC+
University Chaplain for Community Life

Jessica Chicka
University Chaplain for International Students

Ray Bouchard
Director of Marsh Chapel

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