

The *Mass in B Minor* is monumental and sublime



The *Mass in B Minor*, regarded as the summit of J.S. Bach's musical genius, rivals Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* for being the greatest musical masterpiece of all time. It is a satisfying, complex, pleasing, and challenging amalgam of smaller pieces composed by Bach over several decades of his life and completed in his penultimate year. He, unlike you, never had the opportunity to hear it performed.

Our Palm Sunday (April 13th) performance of this great work is not to be missed! As the lights dim at 3 pm, the Chorus will be joined by renowned vocal soloists (see page 3) with accompaniment by a 15-piece chamber orchestra. Set in the cathedral-like sanctuary of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Williamsport, not too much imagination is required to soar spiritually. As a Catholic mass created by a Lutheran musical preacher, the *Mass in B Minor* reaches beyond the theological tenets from which it arose, intoning love, suffering, and universal redemption.

Tickets are available at Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, the Otto Book Store, from Chorus members, and at the door. Advance purchases include a \$2 discount off the box office prices of \$12 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. All

children under 12 who are accompanied by a ticketed adult, will be admitted without charge. 🎵

Looking ahead

to our 2014-15 Season

Sunday, Oct. 26: Ghoultide Scarols — a family concert with seasonal and scary fare.

Sunday, Nov. 23: Praise Parisienne — French Romantic music, both secular and sacred, for organ and chorus.

Sunday, Apr. 26, 2015: Cloud of Witnesses — celebrating all those extraordinary people in our lives who are now in the clouds.



Singers' Corner

In many ways, it was the winter of our discontent—long, snow-filled, gray days and frigid polar vortices. So, on January 18th, some 20 Chorus members retreated indoors where we

played, ate, and rehearsed bits and pieces of our repertoire together. Hosted by Music Director Ned Wetherald at the State College Presbyterian Church, the group enjoyed a Saturday free from our

usual routines and, once arrived, without concern about the outdoors, which we fortunately could not see. There were scavenger hunts, sectionals, ensem-

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Ned's Notes...



Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach on March 21, 1685 and died in Leipzig on July 28, 1750. His legacy to humanity is beyond price, his influence beyond measure, and his stature beyond question. (Scott Fogle-song, Scholar in Residence, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra)

A prime reason Bach receives such accolades is the composition featured in our April concert, his *Mass in B Minor*. "One of the pinnacles of human achievement," says novelist Douglas Adams. "The greatest work of music of all ages and of all peoples," says critic and publisher Hans-Georg Nägeli. "Why waste money on psychotherapy when you can listen to the *B Minor Mass*?" says composer Michael Torke.

In Bach's day, he was better known as an organist than as a

composer, and few of his works were published during his lifetime. In fact, in some ways his music was old-fashioned and outmoded. At the same time, Bach's music was the culmination of the Baroque era (1600-1750). It displayed the best compositional practices of the time and included musical ideas not just from Germany, but from all over Europe. Thankfully, composers who followed in Bach's footsteps realized his genius. Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and others studied and admired his work.

This great masterpiece now being rehearsed by the Chorus was not written in one heroic effort; it is rather a compilation of works covering a period of about 40 years. Parts of the mass were begun while Bach worked in Weimar in the early 1700's. He wrote a large section in 1733 in an attempt to get a position with the new Elector of Dresden. Not much came of that effort, but 12 years later, in 1745, Bach recycled parts of that 1733 work into a new "Gloria in Excelsis", which seemed to encourage him to flesh out the *Mass in B Minor*. Much of the *Mass in B Minor* reworks previous cantatas, called parody movements, which was common at the time. Some scholars believe that the entire *Mass in B Minor* is made up of repurposed compositions.

Bach never heard the entire *Mass in B Minor* performed. His son, Carl Phillip Emmanuel, preserved the manuscript and even arranged a few performances, but

it was not until the Bach revival of the 19th century that the work gained its rightful status as a cornerstone of Western music. Now a staple of the repertoire, the *Mass in B Minor* provides both singers and audiences with beauty, excitement, and passion.



"Ned's Notes" is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Ned Wetherald. Currently in his seventeenth year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Ned is minister of music at State College Presbyterian Church. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music and choral conducting from Shenandoah University.

"This performance is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency."

70th SEASON

Mass in B Minor

J.S. Bach

Palm Sunday, Apr. 13, 2014

3 pm

**St. Mark's Lutheran Church
142 Market St., Williamsport**

Audience reception to follow.

**Visit us:
williamsportcivicchorus.org**

April's soloists sing Bach's melismata with heavenly voices



Elizabeth Oliver, soprano. A regular performer in the Philadelphia area as an opera and concert soloist, the Lansdale native has appeared as the soprano soloist with the

Doctors' Chamber Orchestra in Schubert's *Mass in G Major*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and Ignaz Holzbauer's *Mass in C Major*. Liz' favorite operatic roles are Amina in Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, Clorinda in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, Madame Silverpeal and Madame Goldentrill in Mozart's *The Impresario* (in different productions), Nella in *Gianni Schicci*, Frasquita in *Carmen*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Gretchen in Victor Herbert's *The Red Mill*, and Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore*. These productions have been variously staged with The Delaware Valley Opera Company, Lancaster Opera Company, Rose Valley Chorus & Orchestra, and ConcertOPERA.



Faith Dunkleberger, soprano. A long-time member of the Civic Chorus and soloist for its 2012 performance of Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Faith is from Danville and graduated from the Crane

School of Music with a bachelor's in music where she played the part of Lucy in Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Telephone*. Currently a member of the Christ Episcopal Church Choir, she earned a second bachelor's in elementary education at Bloomsburg University followed by a graduate degree for reading specialist certification.

Ms. Dunkleberger is a substitute teacher in Williamsport, works as projectionist at the Cinema Center, and instructs Zumba fitness classes. She also enjoys traveling and herb gardening for relaxation.



Janice Mianulli, mezzo-soprano. In her fourth Civic Chorus appearance, Jan has performed more than 75 major choral works, including the

Bach *Mass in B Minor*, and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. She has appeared with the Nittany Valley Symphony Orchestra, the Pennsylvania Chamber Orchestra, and at Lincoln Center. More recently, she was alto soloist for the premiere of *Voices of the Holocaust*, commissioned by the State College Choral Society, and the Duruflé and Mozart *Requiems*. Ms. Mianulli holds a bachelor of music education degree from Westminster Choir College and a master of music degree from Penn State. Presently a voice instructor at Juniata College, she conducts the Women's Chamber Choir there, directs the choir at Grace Lutheran Church in State College, and teaches voice privately.



Timothy Oliver, tenor. Tim is originally from Ralston and is known to the Civic Chorus' audience for his rendition of Septimius in *Theodora* last year. With a music degree from Lycoming College, Tim has performed over 40 op-

eratic roles and is sought after for repertoire in the *bel canto* style. Since leaving the Williamsport area, he has appeared professionally with various ensembles in Philadelphia's Verizon Hall, Perelman Theater, Basilica of Peter & Paul, and New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. He is a member of the American Guild of Musical Artists, a board member for the Delaware Valley Opera Company, and he sings with the Vox Amadeus Ensemble. Mr. Oliver owns and operates the Cunningham Piano Company, a piano retailer and rebuilder founded in 1891.



Kevin Grace, bass. From Pottsville, Mr. Grace currently lives in New York City, appearing on the stages at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the New York City Opera, St. John the Divine, New

York City Center, and the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. He studied voice at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA, and upon graduating, joined Opera International, a Kutztown University program, on a full scholarship to an intensive Young Artists' residency in Fuggi, Italy, with veteran soprano, Antoinetta Stella. In 2005, he debuted as Happy in *La fanciulla del West* with the New York City Opera at Lincoln Center. Kevin remained an active performer with that company until its closing earlier this year. With his forthcoming debut in Williamsport, Mr. Grace will add to his notable concert soloist repertoire that includes works like Fauré's *Requiem*, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, and Orff's *Carmina Burana*.



**WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS**

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**70th
Anniversary
Season**

*and a Williamsport “first”—our
April 13th performance of Bach’s
Mass in B Minor*



WILLIAMSPORT CIVIC CHORUS NEWSLETTER

“The Williamsport Civic Chorus is an open community of singers dedicated to making fine music accessible to all through education, participation, and inspiration.”

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ble rehearsals, and, I almost forgot to mention, munchies and lunch. Good thing that nourishment was of the finger food variety, because the Church’s spoons were otherwise occupied in showcasing the talents of our members. Thank you, Ned, and the SCPC staff and congregation for hosting such a motley crew! 🎵



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