

30 & 31 March
Sydney Opera House

JS BACH'S MAGNIFICAT IN D



SYDNEY
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON **Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley** AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

Simone Young

Chief Conductor

Donald Runnicles

Principal Guest

Conductor

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Conductor Laureate

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

*Chair supported by
Vicki Olsson*

FIRST VIOLINS

Harry Bennetts

Associate

Concertmaster

Fiona Ziegler

Assistant

Concertmaster

Jennifer Booth

Brielle Clapson

Sophie Cole

Georges Lentz

Alexandra Mitchell

Alexander Norton

Anna Skálová

Léone Ziegler

Sercan Danis*

Caroline Hopson*

Andrew Haveron

Concertmaster

Sun Yi

Associate

Concertmaster Emeritus

Claire Herrick

Emily Long

SECOND VIOLINS

Lerida Delbridge

Guest Principal

Emma Jezek

Assistant Principal

Alice Bartsch

Victoria Bihun

Rebecca Gill

Shuti Huang

Monique Irik

Moja Verunica

Rikka Sintonen#

Rebecca Irwin*

Kirsty Hilton

Principal

Marina Marsden

Principal

Marianne Edwards

Associate Principal

Emma Hayes

Wendy Kong

Benjamin Li

Nicole Masters

VIOLAS

Tobias Breider

Principal

Anne-Louise

Comerford

Associate Principal

Justin Williams

Acting Associate

Principal

Rosemary Curtin

Graham Hennings

Stuart Johnson

Leonid Volovelsky

Stephen Wright

Sandro Costantino

Jane Hazelwood

Justine Marsden

Felicity Tsai

Amanda Verner

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Leah Lynn

Acting Associate Principal

Kristy Conrau

Timothy Nankervis

Christopher Pidcock

Adrian Wallis

Fenella Gill

Elizabeth Neville

DOUBLE BASSES

Alex Henery

Principal

Richard Lynn

Jaan Pallandi

Benjamin Ward

Kees Boersma

Principal

David Campbell

Dylan Holly

Steven Larson

FLUTES

Emma Sholl

Associate Principal

Carolyn Harris

Joshua Batty

Principal

OBOES

Shefali Pryor

Associate Principal

Alexandre Oguey

Principal *Cor Anglais*

Diana Doherty

Principal

Callum Hogan

CLARINETS

Francesco Celata

Acting Principal

Alexander Morris

Acting Associate

Principal

Christopher Tingay

BASSOONS

Fiona McNamara

Todd Gibson-Cornish

Principal

Matthew Wilkie

Principal Emeritus

Noriko Shimada

Principal

Contrabassoon

HORNS

Geoffrey O'Reilly

Principal 3rd

Euan Harvey

Acting Principal

Marnie Sebire

Rachel Silver

TRUMPETS

Brent Grapes

Associate Principal

Cécile Glémot

Sophie Spencer†

David Elton

Principal

Anthony Heinrichs

TROMBONES

Ronald Prussing

Principal

Scott Kinmont

Associate Principal

Nick Byrne

Christopher Harris

Principal Bass

Trombone

TUBA

Steve Rossé

Principal

TIMPANI

Benedikt Kurz*

Guest Principal

Mark Robinson

Acting Principal

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Timothy Constable

KEYBOARDS/

EXTRAS

Anthony

Abouhamad*

Guest Principal

Harpsichord

Continuo Organ by

Henk Klop, Garderen

Nederland 2011, courtesy

of MLC Burwood

Prepared by Carey

Beebe Harpsichords

Bold = Principal

Italics = Associate

Principal

* = Guest Musician

= Contract Musician

† = Sydney Symphony

Fellow

Grey = Permanent

Member of the Sydney

Symphony Orchestra

not appearing in

this concert

SYMPHONY HOUR
Thursday 30 March, 7pm

TEA AND SYMPHONY
Friday 31 March, 11am

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

JS BACH'S MAGNIFICAT IN D

EXHILARATING & BEAUTIFUL

STEPHEN LAYTON conductor
SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS
ELIZABETH SCOTT chorus master

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Magnificat in D, BWV243

- i. Chorus: *Magnificat anima mea*
- ii. Aria: *Et exultavit*
- iii. Aria: *Quia respexit*
- iv. Chorus: *Omnes generationes*
- v. Aria: *Quia fecit mihi magna*
- vi. Duetto: *Et misericordia*
- vii. Chorus: *Fecit potentiam*
- viii. Aria: *Deposuit*
- ix. Aria: *Esurientes*
- x. Terzetto: *Suscepit Israel*
- xi. Chorus: *Sicut locutus est*
- xii. Chorus: *Gloria Patri*

AMY MOORE soprano
CHLOE LANKSHEAR soprano
STEPHANIE DILLON mezzo soprano
CHRISTOPHER WATSON tenor
DAVID GRECO baritone/bass

ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS (born 1977)

Passion And Resurrection

- i. *Parce mihi, Domine*
- ii. *My Soul is Very Sorrowful*
- iii. *The Mystic Supper*
- iv. *O dulce lignum*

AMY MOORE soprano
CHLOE LANKSHEAR soprano
STEPHANIE DILLON mezzo soprano
CHRISTOPHER WATSON tenor
DAVID GRECO baritone/bass
ARIANNA RICCI soprano
JOSEPHINE BRERETON soprano

Pre-concert talk by Natalie
Shea in the Northern Foyer
at 6.15pm Thursday.

ESTIMATED DURATIONS

29 minutes, 28 minutes

The concert will conclude at
approximately 8pm (Thursday)
and 12 noon (Friday).

COVER IMAGE

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs
Photo by Jaimi Joy

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

STEPHEN LAYTON conductor

Stephen Layton is one of the most sought-after conductors of his generation. Often described as the finest exponent of choral music in the world today, his ground-breaking approach has had a profound influence on choral music over the last 30 years. Layton is regularly invited to work with the world's leading choirs, orchestras and composers. His interpretations have been heard from the Sydney Opera House to the Concertgebouw, from Tallinn to São Paolo, and his recordings have won or been nominated for every major international recording award. He has two *Gramophone* Awards (and a further ten nominations), five Grammy nominations, the Diapason d'Or de l'Année in France, the Echo Klassik award in Germany, the Spanish CD compact award, and the *Limelight* Recording of the Year in Australia.

Founder and Director of Polyphony, Layton is also Fellow and Director of Music at Trinity College Cambridge and Music Director of Holst Singers. His former posts include Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Chamber Choir, Chief Guest Conductor of the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the City of London Sinfonia, and Director of Music at the Temple Church in London.

Passionate in his exploration of new music, Layton has introduced a vast range of new choral works to the UK and the rest of the world, transforming the music into some of the most widely performed today. The fact that modern American music and the sounds of the Baltic region are "an accepted — even expected — part of today's choral catalogue owes an awful lot to Layton", wrote *Gramophone* Magazine in 2016. Layton's longstanding association with music from the Baltic includes recordings of works by the Latvian composer Eriks Ešņvalds: *Passion and Resurrection* with Polyphony in 2010 and *Northern Lights* with The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, nominated for a 2015 *Gramophone* Award.

Layton continues to innovate, taking bold and original steps and leading the way in the use of new technologies in choral music. Everything sung by The Choir of Trinity College Cambridge is webcast live and available to listen again. Layton was the first in the world to webcast every single note sung in this way, laying bare the music making without any digital editing. This searchable archive of over 4,000 musical tracks recorded live over the last six years forms an invaluable resource for listeners around the world.



Stephen Layton
Photo by Keith Saunders

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

AMY MOORE soprano

Soprano Amy Moore moved to Australia from the UK in 2015 following a successful career encompassing a wide repertoire, with a particular affinity for both Early and Contemporary Music. With a voice praised for its “crystalline clarity”, Amy is an adept soloist and ensemble singer, working with virtually all the leading UK ensembles and featuring on dozens of CD recordings. Solo highlights included radio broadcasts with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Gabrieli Consort and the RTÉ Orchestra and concert appearances with Bochumer Symphoniker, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Hanover Band, and London Contemporary Orchestra.

With EXAUDI Vocal Ensemble Amy premiered countless new works and appeared with many leading contemporary orchestras, including Ensemble Modern, L’instant Donné and Ensemble Intercontemporain. A member of Norway’s Edvard Grieg Kor from 2012-14, Amy performed regularly with Bergen Nasjonale Opera, and sang the role of Iseut in Frank Martin’s remarkable dramatic oratorio, *Le Vin Herbe*.

In Australia, Amy has performed solo concerts with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Bach Akademie Australia, The Choir of St James’ King Street, Victoria Chorale Melbourne, Trinity College Choir Melbourne, The Australian Bach Society, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra, and Sydney University Graduate Choir, with whom she recently premiered Christopher Bowen’s *Redfern Oratorio*. Amy received warm reviews for her performances in Bach’s *St John Passion* and the role of Vikki in Andrew Schultz’s opera, *The Children’s Bach*, in the 2019 Canberra International Music Festival.

Amy sings regularly with Pinchgut Opera, making her solo operatic debut in their production of *Platée* in 2021. A regular artist with The Song Company, Amy was recently Guest Director for their first program of 2023.

Amy is the Founder and co-Artistic Director of CASTALIA Vocal Consort, and conducts Phoenix Choir in Blackheath, close to her home in the Blue Mountains.



Amy Moore
Photo by Nick Gilbert

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CHLOE LANKSHEAR soprano

Chloe Lankshear is an accomplished Sydney-based soprano who enjoys a varied career of performative mediums from operatic productions to classical contemporary recitals and commission premieres. She has featured as a soloist with some of Australia's finest organisations including South Australia State Opera, Pinchgut Opera and Australia Chamber Orchestra. Early in her career she featured in Pinchgut Opera's recordings and films as well as their touring concert series and opera productions. She has been a featured artist Bendigo Chamber Festival as well as recording with classical guitarist Heathcliff Auchinachie at Phoenix Central Park Studio. Chloe has premiered new works including Paul Stanhope's *Requiem* at City Recital Hall which she recorded in 2022. In July 2021 Chloe was named Pinchgut Opera's inaugural Taryn Fiebig Scholar for 2021-23 and appeared in their production of *Platée* as Clarine.

In 2022 Chloe was a featured artist at Bermagui's Four Winds Festival in the lead role of Galatea for their production of *Acis and Galatea*. She also made her solo debut with Anthony Hunt with Canberra Symphony Orchestra, and Brett Weymark with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs for Mozart's Requiem, as well as collaborations with other Sydney based groups including Muffat Collective and Castalia Vocal Consort. In November Chloe was a finalist at the Bel Canto awards and was awarded the Decca prize by Richard Bonyngue. At the conclusion of 2022 Chloe performed as Nerine in Pinchgut Opera's production of *Medea*.

2023 brings a variety of programs including a return to Canberra Symphony Orchestra for their chamber series in which she premieres a new work by Connor D'Netto alongside Debussy's cycle *Ariettes oubliées*. Chloe will make her Sydney Symphony Orchestra debut performing as a soprano soloist for Bach's Magnificat in D. She will also return to Canberra International Music Festival for their program of Mozart and Haydn Concert arias alongside tenor Andrew Goodwin and the Australian Haydn Ensemble.



Chloe Lankshear
Photo by Nick Gilbert

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

STEPHANIE DILLON mezzo soprano

Mezzo soprano Stephanie Dillon was born and raised in Moree, NSW, and is now based in Sydney. Stephanie is a versatile singer, showcasing her “distinctively edged sound” (*Sydney Morning Herald*) and “full-bodied mezzo warmth” (*Fever Pitch Magazine*) in repertoire ranging from the Baroque to contemporary periods. Stephanie enjoys a varied career, both as a soloist and ensemble singer.

Stephanie has been a member of the Choir of St James’ King Street, Sydney since 2017. Stephanie enjoys regular collaborations with professional organisations in Australia, including Bach Akademie Australia, the Song Company, Pinchgut Opera, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Cantillation, Collegium Musicum Choir at UNSW, and St Mary’s Cathedral Choir. Stephanie was a Principal Artist with The Song Company from 2020-2022 and is the co-Director of new vocal ensemble, CASTALIA Vocal Consort.

Notable 2023 engagements include Bach’s *St John Passion* with Christ Church St Laurence Sydney, Bach’s Magnificat in D with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, *Bach at Easter* with Bach Akademie Australia, and concerts with CASTALIA Vocal Consort for Musica Viva’s ‘Morning Masters’ concert series.

In 2022, Stephanie performed in various projects with Bach Akademie Australia, tours with the Song Company and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and two programs with Pinchgut Opera, including *Monteverdi’s Vespers*. Stephanie also performed in four programs with CASTALIA Vocal Consort in their inaugural year. Other professional highlights include Arvo Pärt’s *Passio* at the Tapestry of Sacred Music Festival in Singapore, *150 Psalms* project at the 2020 Adelaide Festival, Handel’s *Messiah* with various orchestras, plus education work with Gondwana Choirs and Moorambilla Voices.

In addition to her work as a performer, Stephanie has worked in arts administration and arts education in some of Australia’s leading arts organisations. In 2022, Stephanie attained a Master of Teaching (primary) and works as a primary school teacher when not on the concert platform.



Stephanie Dillon

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CHRISTOPHER WATSON tenor

Christopher Watson has been Director of Music at Trinity College, Melbourne, since January 2017. Before moving to Australia he spent 20 years working as a freelance singer and conductor, based in the UK.

He made his debut with The Tallis Scholars in 1998 and went on to make over 500 appearances with them. In 2007 he made his debut at Carnegie Hall with Theatre of Voices, giving the world premiere of David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Little Match Girl Passion*, their recording of which won a Grammy Award in 2009. He returned to Carnegie Hall with Theatre of Voices in February 2015 to perform Stockhausen's *Stimmung*.

Christopher also sang regularly with Tenebrae, Gallicantus, Alamire and Collegium Vocale Gent and was active as a soloist in Europe, particularly in the Passions of JS Bach. He has made over 100 recordings of repertoire by, among others, Dufay, Josquin, Tallis, Byrd, Lassus, Bach, Berio and Pärt.



Christopher Watson
Photo by Eric Richmond

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DAVID GRECO baritone

Internationally regarded for his interpretations of Schubert lieder and solo works of JS Bach, ARIA Award-nominated baritone David Greco has sung on some of the finest stages across Europe and appeared in celebrated opera festivals including Festival d'Aix-en-Provence and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

In 2014 he became the first Australian appointed a position with the Sistine Chapel Choir in the Vatican, Rome.

An acclaimed interpreter of oratorio and concert work, he appears regularly with Australia's finest orchestras such as the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra, and Sydney Symphony. Most recently he made his debut with West Australia Symphony Orchestra in Britten's *War Requiem*, and in 2023 will also debut with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the same work.

Equally experienced on the operatic stage, he has been a principal artist with Opera Australia in *The Eighth Wonder* and *The Love of Three Oranges*. He is a frequent artist with the celebrated Pinchgut Opera, his performance of Seneca in their production of *The Coronation of Poppea* receiving critical acclaim.

As a recording artist David has an impressive catalogue of international recordings including Jack Body's *Poems of Love & War* on the Naxos label and Solo bass cantatas of JS Bach with the Netherlands-based Luthers Bach Ensemble on the Brilliant Classics label.

David is an active researcher into historical performance of 19th-century voice and recently received his doctorate from the University of Melbourne. His PhD led to the first Australian recordings of the historically informed performance of Schubert's songs cycles *Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin* with duo partner Erin Helyard on ABC Classic, the latter disc receiving an ARIA Award nomination for Best Classical Album in 2020. In 2023 Erin and David will collaborate on the Australian premier historical recording of Schubert's *Schwanengesang* with ABC Classic.

David is a Lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.



David Greco
Photo by Amelia Dowd

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

ARTISTIC & MUSIC DIRECTOR BRETT WEYMARK OAM

BRETT WEYMARK OAM Artistic and Music Director

DR ELIZABETH SCOTT Associate Music Director

TIM CUNNIFFE Assistant Chorus Master and Principal Rehearsal Pianist

STEPHEN WALTER Rehearsal Pianist

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs presents the art of choral singing at the highest standard, and develops the talents of those with a passion for singing in Sydney and beyond. Founded in 1920, it has become Australia's finest choral organisation and is a Resident Company of the Sydney Opera House. Led by Artistic and Music Director Brett Weymark OAM and Associate Music Director Dr Elizabeth Scott, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs comprises three auditioned and three community choirs that perform repertoire from choral classics to musical theatre and commissions by Australian composers. It presents its own season of concerts as well as collaborating with leading conductors, soloists and orchestras.

In 2002, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs was the first Australian choir to sing at the BBC Proms (Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Sir Simon Rattle), returning again in 2010 to celebrate the Choirs' 90th anniversary. The Choirs also perform in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concert season every year, as they have done for over 80 years.

2020 was Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' centenary and saw the realisation of an inspiring commissioning project — *100 Minutes of New Australian Music* — featuring works from composers including Elena Kats-Chernin, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon and Brett Dean. In 2022 the Choirs took part in the reopening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, performing Mahler's *Resurrection* Symphony with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. In 2023, Brett Weymark celebrates his 20th anniversary as Artistic Director with an exciting season including Handel's *Samson*, Verdi's Requiem and the return of ChorusOz to sing Mahler's Eighth Symphony.

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

SOPRANOS

Nikki Bogard
Josephine Brereton
Nicollette Burr
Mélanie David
Isabelle Epps
Annabel Jeffery
Miriam Jeffery
Jasmin Jungo
Maria Lopes
Lucy Lush
Clare Macpherson
Stephanie Mooney
Charlotte Moore
Jane Nieminska
Jayne Oishi
Isabella Rahme
Maya Schwenke
Eva Tarbox
Katherine Thompson
Lily Tindale
Dorothy Wu

ALTOS

Meaghan Backhouse
Amelia Bussing
Gillian Downes-Morgan
Claire Duffy
Alison Goldingay
Georgia Luikens
Laura McKay
Madi Moore
Kathleen Morris
Ines Obermair
Anna Peter
Judith Pickering
Beverly Price
Lara Rogerson-Wood
Debbie Scholem
Ruby Scott-Wishart
Megan Solomon
Jaimie Wolbers
Priscilla Yuen

TENORS

Matthew Flood
Michael Gray
Steven Hankey
Bennett Haskew
Tom Hazell
Boghos Keleshian
Emanuel Kunick
Hamish Lane
Caleb Mayo
Rajah Selvarajah
Tristan Spiteri
Robert Thomson
Alex Walter

BASSES

Dominic Blake
Edwin Carter
Andy Clare
Phillip Cullen
Ian Davies
Harry Gordon
Simon Harris
Scott Hekking
Jonathon Kelley
Selwyn Lemos
Aedan MacNamara
Chris Masson
Robert Mitchell
Michael Nolan
Edward Phillips
Daniel Rae
Bruce Watson
Lachlan Wrenford
Stephen Young



Photo by Keith Saunders

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ELIZABETH SCOTT chorus master

Elizabeth Scott is a highly skilful choral conductor who has led Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' young adult choir VOX since 2008. A former SPC Assistant Chorus Master (2006–2008) and Acting Music Director (2013), she was appointed Associate Music Director in 2022. She is a Lecturer in Choral Conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (University of Sydney) and has been the Choral Director of the NSW Schools Spectacular (NSW Department of Education) since 2009.

After graduating from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1995, she completed postgraduate studies in choral conducting, vocal performance and aural training in Hungary and Germany. Through Symphony Australia's Conductor Development Program she has worked with the Queensland, Adelaide and Melbourne symphony orchestras and Orchestra Victoria, among others. Elizabeth holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting.

Elizabeth is a regular chorus master for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and has previously prepared choirs for Simone Young, David Robertson and Gianluigi Gelmetti. She also regularly works with Gondwana Choirs and Cantillation.

Recent performance highlights include 2022's Mozart: *Requiem & Revelations* and *Bach Mass in B Minor*, *Berliner Messe* and *St John's Passion Reimagined* (2021), *Considering Matthew Shepherd* (2020) and *Music at the Movies* (2019).



Elizabeth Scott
Photo by Keith Saunders



Philippe de Champaigne - The Visitation (1643)

ABOUT THE MUSIC

THE ORIGIN OF THE MAGNIFICAT

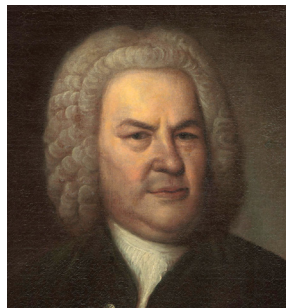
The prayer for mercy with which many Christian rituals begin stems from the pervasive sense of humanity as imperfect. In Western Christianity in particular, this was developed in to the notion of Original Sin — that when Adam and Even disobeyed God in the book of *Genesis*, all subsequent humans were guilty. The punishment was our mortality; the cure could only be effected by an unearned act of God’s grace. That cure was the incarnation of God in Jesus, who then offered up his life for sinful humanity.

Christian scholars saw Jesus’ incarnation as the fulfilment of prophecies in the Hebrew scriptures of the appearance of a king, liberator, hero, Messiah. In the Gospel of Luke, the archangel Gabriel appears to a young woman called Mary, to inform her that she will bear the son of God. Shortly after, Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth who has also — to everyone’s surprise — become pregnant with the future John the Baptist. Mary’s response to these two miracles takes the form of the canticle known as the Magnificat, which praises God for showing such favour, and lists various divine attributes such as support for the poor and downtrodden. The text draws heavily on a parallel moment in the Hebrew book of *1 Samuel*, where the barren and ageing Hannah miraculously conceives and bears Samuel, who will be the great prophet and judge. In Catholic liturgy, the Magnificat is said or sung at the daily evening service of Vespers, and this was taken over into Lutheran practice where it was most often sung to simple chant, in the German of Martin Luther’s translation. By Bach’s time, it was, as Malcolm Boyd notes, ‘customary to perform a more elaborate setting in Latin’ on feast days such as Christmas.

BACH AND THE MAGNIFICAT

The first version of Bach’s setting may have been composed in mid-1723, shortly after he arrived in Leipzig as Kantor to St Thomas’ School (rather than the church of the same name) and performed then at the feast of the Visitation which commemorates Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. We do know that it was performed on Christmas Day of that year, with four interpolations based on chorales appropriate to the season. When Bach revised the piece between 1728 and 1731, he created the work we hear today by removing the specifically Christmas-related movements, modernising the orchestra (substituting flutes for recorders, for instance) and transposing the work down from E flat to D. As Boyd explains, D major was ‘the normal key for trumpet parts in Bach’s time, and is also a brighter key for the string instruments, whether modern or “authentic”’.

It is a liturgical piece, so Bach doesn’t waste any time, creating a sense of the work’s inner drama through twelve short movements. Each responds directly and dramatically to the text, with strong contrasts of style, mood and scoring.



Johann Sebastian Bach

ABOUT THE MUSIC

CHORUS

Magnificat anima mea Dominum. My soul magnifies the Lord

This is a powerful, fully-scored chorus in 3/4 time (a musical symbol such as Bach was wont to use). Introduced by heraldic trumpets, it sets the words in long ecstatic melismas (many notes to one syllable).

ARIA (SOPRANO II)

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Also in triple time, but now accompanied only by strings, this movement has the character of a courtly dance, although the soprano's lines spin into melisma as well.

ARIA (SOPRANO I)

Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae. For He has regarded the lowliness of His
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent handmaiden.
Behold, from henceforth, I will be called
blessed

Mary's humility is expressed in a slow aria with a beautiful oboe d'amore obbligato. Its introspective moods is interrupted by

CHORUS

Omnes generationes by all generations.

This is a busy crowd scene such as Bach was master of, as humanity affirms Mary's blessed nature.

ARIA (BASS)

Quia fecit mihi magna, For the Mighty One has done
qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius great things for me, and holy is His name.

In complete contrast, this section is almost stark, the bass voice (an everyman figure, perhaps) accompanied only by the continuo instruments.

DUET (ALTO AND TENOR)

Et misericordia a progenie in progenies, His mercy is for those who fear Him
timentibus eum. from generation to generation.

The starkness of the bass aria provides a foil for the gentle pastoral sounds of paired flutes accompanying the two voices.

CHORUS

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, He has shown strength with His arm,
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts
of their hearts.

Having lulled us, Bach dramatically evokes God's power here at the mid-point of the work. Fully scored, with trumpets and drums and angular choral motifs, it ends with a quiet coda once the proud have been humbled.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ARIA (TENOR)

Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.

This urgent tenor aria is full of trio textures created by violins in unison, voice and continuo.

ARIA (ALTO)

Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

In another sharp contrast, this movement has a genial sensuality — the hungry have, after all, been filled — provided by the paired flutes and gentle syncopations of the vocal line.

TRIO (SOPRANO I, SOPRANO II, ALTO)

Suscepit Israel puerum suum recordatus misericordiae suae.

He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy.

The image of mercy perhaps lies behind the gently insistent counterpoint of this trio, as part of the plainchant associated with the Magnificat sails above in long notes on the oboe.

CHORUS

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.

According to the promise He made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to His descendants forever.

Mary's text ends with God's promise to Abraham, whose infallibility Bach represents in strict fugal writing, lightly accompanied to maintain clarity.

CHORUS

Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio et nunc et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and for ever and ever, Amen.

The piece ends with the customary Doxology in praise of the Trinity. Bach amasses the full forces at his disposal, with upwelling contrapuntal lines praising the three persons. From the word 'as it was in the beginning' Bach, with his usual feel for symbolism, restates the music from the beginning of the piece.



The first page of Bach's Magnificat BWV 243, in his own handwriting.
Courtesy Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Duitsland.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION

Mary's joy at the favour shown her by God is in stark contrast to the image of her standing at the foot of the cross as her son is brutally executed by an occupying army. But for mainstream Christians, the undeserved, freely-accepted suffering and death of Jesus (his 'passion') is the gracious act of God that atones for humanity's sins, and as such wipes the debt with which all must pay with their lives. Jesus' resurrection is his victory over death, and humanity's promise of eternal life. The events described in the Gospels form the basis for the most important time of Christian worship, and have been dramatized in music by many composers, including, of course, Bach.

Latvian composer Ēriks Ešņvalds composed his *Passion and Resurrection* in 2005 and was premiered by conductor Māris Sirmāis and the State Choir Latvija. Ešņvalds has formally studied theology and music in his native country, and much of his work is explicitly religious in origin — he has also composed a full-scale *St Luke Passion* — though much that is not is still informed by a sense of awe at the wonders of creation. Such works include *Lakes Awake at Dawn*, *The Pleiades*, *Whispers on the Prairie Wind*, *Visions of Arctic: Sea*, and multimedia symphonies *Nordic Light* and *Volcano Symphony*.

Passion and Resurrection does not set a narrative from one or other Gospel as do Bach's, but acts more as a meditation on the events by bringing together texts that examine and illuminate the Gospel accounts. For that reason, too, the piece doesn't assign specific characters to specific voices. Ešņvalds frames the work with allusions to the woman in *Luke 7:36-50* 'who had led a sinful life' and who approaches Jesus at dinner, washing his feet with her tears, drying them and anointing them with perfume. This woman has traditionally, though for no compelling reason, been identified with Mary Magdalene, whose encounter with the risen Christ brings this piece to its conclusion.

Passion and Resurrection falls into four parts, each headed in the score by a sentence or two for context.

Part One, headed by the story of the 'sinful woman', begins with a text from the Hebrew Bible's *Book of Job*, sung here in Latin:

Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.

Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum?

Aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum?

Visitas eum diluculo, et subito probas illum.

Usque quo non parcis mihi, nec dimittis me, ut glutiam salivam meam?

Cur non tollis peccatum meum, et quare non auferis iniquitatem meam?

Ecce, nunc in pulvere dormiam, et si mane me quaesieris, non subsistam.

(Leave me alone, Lord. My life makes no sense.

Why is man so important to you?

Why pay attention to what he does?

You inspect him every morning and test him every minute.

Won't you look away long enough for me to swallow my spittle?

Can't you ever forgive my sin? Can't you pardon the wrong I do?

Soon I will be in my grave, and I'll be gone when you look for me.)

(*Job 7:16-21*)



Ēriks Ešņvalds with Stephen Layton

ABOUT THE MUSIC

This choral setting is based on one by Spanish composer Cristobal de Morales (1500–1553) punctuated by isolated string chords.

A solo soprano sings a prayer from the Byzantine (Orthodox) liturgy, which also references the woman with the jar:

Woe is me, for my foolish love of debauchery and my cleaving to iniquity have become a deep night unto me in which no light shines.

Accept thou the wellsprings of my tears, thou who drawest the waters of the sea up into the clouds.

Turn thy countenance upon the sobbing of my heart, thou who hast come from Heaven in thy inexpressible sacrifice.

I shall kiss thy immaculate feet; I shall dry them with the tresses of my hair.

In Paradise, Eve seeing them approaching, hid herself in fear.

Who will examine the multitude of my sins, and thy judgements?

O my Saviour, Redeemer of my soul, do not turn away from me: I am thy handmaiden, thou who art infinitely merciful.

Here the music dissolves into a choral setting led by the second soprano:

Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.
(Luke 7:48-50)

Part Two is headed with the words ‘Judas worst of the traffickers, approached the Lord with a kiss: he like an innocent lamb refused not the kiss of Judas; for a few pence he delivered Christ into the hands of sinners.’

The chorus sings Christ’s words given from his final night praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then relates the Roman soldiers’ mockery of Jesus, and his response:

My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
(Matthew 26:38-42)

They stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

When they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they have bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews.

And they spit upon him.

And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.
(Matthew 27:28-31)

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
(Luke 23:34)

This passes imperceptibly into two superimposed passages for soprano and a distant quartet of singers respectively, from the Byzantine rite:

My friend betrayed me by the token of a kiss: whom I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast.

That was the wicked token which he gave, who by a kiss accomplished murder.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

*Unhappy man, he relinquished the price of blood, and in the end
hanged himself.*

How great is thy love for mankind, O Lord!

*Thou bend down and wash Judas' feet, although he denied and
betrayed thee.*

Part Three's superscript is Isaiah's image of the 'suffering servant' who prefigures Jesus: Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

The music rings at first with the open fifths of the violas under the soprano's ornamental cantillation.

At thy mystic Supper, admit me to thy communion, O Son of God.

*For I shall not betray the secret to thy enemies, nor give thee the
kiss of Judas.*

*But, like the thief, I beseech thee: Lord, remember me when thou
comest into thy kingdom.*

(from Byzantine liturgy)

The chorus joins in with Jesus' reassuring words to the thief beside on the cross:

Verily I say unto thee: today thou shall be with me in paradise.
(Luke 23:43)

The cantillation-style music returns with verses from the Stabat Mater, which depicts Jesus' mother:

*The grieving Mother stood beside the cross weeping where her Son
was hanging.*

*Through her weeping soul, compassionate and grieving, a sword
passed.*

*Who is the man who would not weep if seeing the Mother of Christ
in such agony?*

The chorus sings more of Jesus' last words:

Woman, behold thy son!

Behold thy mother!
(John 19:26)

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?
(My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)
(Matthew 27:46)

The music has reached its most febrile and violent, and from this point superimposes a number of strands from the Psalms and Gospels until the moment at which Jesus dies:

*They have pierced my hands and my feet, they have counted all my
bones.*

*They divided my garments among them, and upon my garments
they have cast lots.*
(Psalm 22:17-19)

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The enemy hath persecuted my soul, they have smitten my life down to the ground, they have made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

(Psalm 143:3)

By his stripes are we healed.

(Isaiah 53:5)

I thirst!

(John 19:28)

It is finished!

(John 19:30)

Father, into thy hands — I commend my spirit.

(Luke 23:46)

Part Four evokes the holy women, who, ‘bearing myrrh, come early in the morning to pour spices upon the tomb’, and begins with a tender setting of the medieval hymn to the wood of the Cross:

*O dulce lignum, dulces clavos,
dulcia ferens pondera, quae
sola fuisti digna sustinere
Regem coelorum et Dominum.*

(O, sweetest wood whose
sweet nails held the burden of
[Christ’s] sweetness. You were
the only one worthy to hold the
Ruler of Heaven and Lord.)

The strings’ music intensifies as the choir sings:

Why seek ye among the dead, as a mortal, the One who abides in everlasting light? Behold the linens of burial, the Lord is risen!

(Luke 24:5-6)

This is the musical and dramatic climax of the work, which leads to an exhausted dialogue between choir and soloist:

Woman, why weepest thou? Woman, whom seekest thou?

Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

(John 20:15)

The piece ends in a hushed ecstatic dialogue as Mary recognises, and is acknowledged by, her teacher, Jesus (Rabboni).

Mariam.

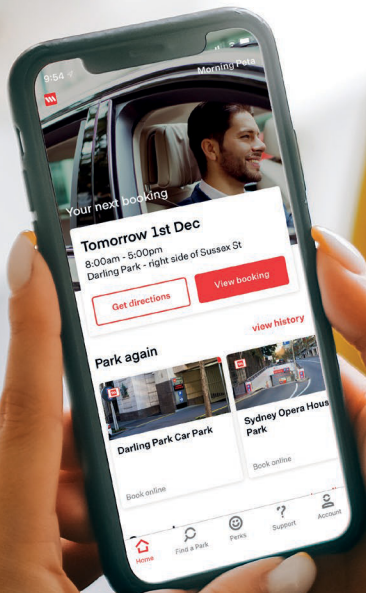
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