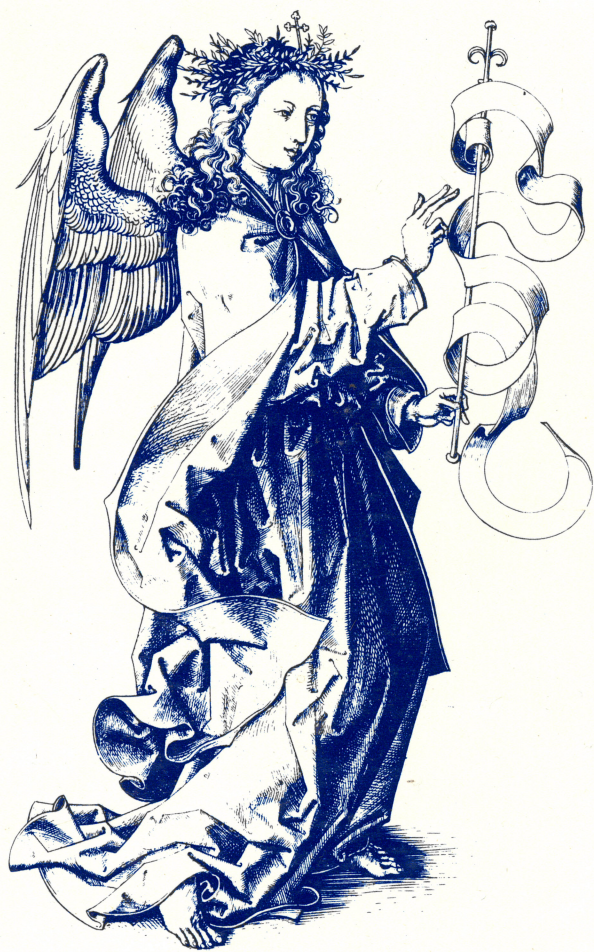


JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Magnificat, BWV 243

Cantata 140-Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme



DIANE HIGGINBOTHAM, soprano
JACQUELINE PIERCE, mezzo-soprano
WILLIAM HAYS, continuo organ

GENE TUCKER, tenor
DANIEL PRATT, baritone
MARK SHUMAN, continuo cello

THE HOLY TRINITY BACH CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

FREDERICK GRIMES, Director • NANCIANNE PARRELLA, Assistant Director

BACH VESPERS AT HOLY TRINITY

Since 1904, when Holy Trinity opened its doors for worship in the present location, the congregation has been interested in good music. For many years, Holy Trinity participated in the fashionable practice of presenting oratorios and other large scale choral works with organ accompaniment. While these oratorios were a great contribution to the musical life of the city, they were not necessarily any more outstanding than those given each week in any one of a dozen or more churches in Manhattan.

By 1968, when Holy Trinity was to celebrate its 100th anniversary as a congregation, there seemed to be a need for a music program that offered something more individual, something specifically Lutheran. The answer was obvious — Bach. The cantatas were an immediate success, attracting large crowds even from the first.

This was the first time in America that Bach cantatas had been presented on a regular basis as part of religious services on the appropriate days of the church year for which they were written. Bach, as cantor of St. Thomas Church (Lutheran) in Leipzig from 1723 to 1750, was responsible for preparing a cantata for each Sunday based on the Gospel lesson of the day. The Bach program has continued to grow each season until now in the Thirteenth Season it is often impossible to find a seat (even on the floor!) for the Sunday afternoon services.

MAGNIFICAT (BWV 243)

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Magnificat* (BWV 243a and BWV 243) exists in two versions. The earliest (BWV 243a), rarely performed today, was probably written for and first performed on Christmas Day 1723, Bach's first Christmas in Leipzig. That version, in E-flat, contained not only the twelve movements into which the *Magnificat* is normally divided, but four additional movements using non-liturgical Christmas texts. The composer later revised the work into the form presented here (BWV 243). The exact date of the new version is not known, but it was almost certainly before 1736. The year 1733, the date of the *Mass in b minor* (BWV 232), has been proposed as a possibility because of the similarity of the treatment of the oboes in the two works.

BWV 243 contains few, but significant, changes from BWV 243a. The key was lowered a half-step to D major, probably to allow the use of D trumpets, then more common than E-flat instruments; two flutes were added to the instrumentation; the four non-liturgical movements were removed, possibly because the composer did not wish to restrict the work to Christmas and because he wished it to be available for performance in Roman Catholic services as well as Protestant; and changes were made in the orchestration of certain movements.

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THE HOLY TRINITY BACH CHOIR

Soprano:	Alto:	Tenor:	Bass:
Pamela Coburn	Rose Anderson	Scott Breiner	Daniel N. Colburn
Cynthia Richards Hewes	Carol Baker	David Britton	James Neal
Diane Higginbotham*	Evelyn A. Flory	Robert Collett	Daniel Pratt*
Joyce McDonald	Jacqueline Pierce*	Stephen Endress	Neil Raber
Suzan Pratt		Gene Tucker*	
Martha Scoppa*			

*Soloists

THE HOLY TRINITY BACH ORCHESTRA

Trumpet:	Flute:	English Horn:	Cello:
Norman Smith	Marianne Weaver	Marc Schachman	Mark Shuman
Paul Randall	Susan Hyman	Violin:	Double Bass:
Lee Soper	Oboe and Oboe d'amore:	Suzanne Ornstein	Andrée Brière
Timpani:	Mark Hill	Eriko Sato	Organ:
Fred Hauptmann	Stephen Taylor	Viola:	William Hays
		Margaret Middleton	Nancianne Parrella

SIDE 1

Magnificat, BWV 243

1. Chorus 2. Aria 3. Aria 4. Chorus
5. Aria 6. Duet 7. Chorus 8. Aria
9. Aria 10. Trio (Martha Scoppa, second soprano)
11. Chorus 12. Chorus

SIDE 2

Cantata 140 — Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

1. Chorus 2. Recitative 3. Duet
4. Chorale 5. Recitative
6. Duet 7. Chorale

The text of the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), unlike that of much of Bach's church music, does not lend itself to a setting similar to an operatic scene. Bach, nonetheless, took his usual care to compose music reflecting the meaning of the individual words and phrases. The music of the first two movements, *Magnificat* and *Et exultavit*, demonstrates the joy and exuberance inherent in the text. The third movement accordingly becomes introspective. Note that *humilitatem* ("lowliness") is always set to a descending melodic scale. The choir reenters suddenly with the fourth movement, *Omnes generationes*, because many voices are needed for "all generations" to call the Virgin blessed. The

fifth movement, *Quia fecit*, is no doubt set as a solo with little accompaniment to display the power of the one true God who needs no assistance. *Et misericordia* is set as a pastorale accompanied by flutes to illustrate the mercy and concern of God, The Good Shepherd. The chorus and the trumpets appear again in *Fecit potentiam* to represent the power of God's arm. The sudden break and its ensuing silence near the end of the movement "scatters the proud," while the grandiose final eight measures very likely show the pomposity in the hearts of the proud and haughty. The eighth movement, *Deposuit*, with its rapid descending scale passages, depicts the mighty being thrown down.

Notes by William Hays

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The positive organ used in this recording is a one manual instrument of four stops (8' Oak Gedeckt, 4' Rohrflöte, 2' Prinzipal, IIIr Scharf) built by Petty-Madden Organbuilders, 239 Madison Ave., Warminster, Pa.

The valuable professional advice of Frauke Haasemann, Joachim Parrella, and William Trego in auditing tapes in preparation for editing is gratefully acknowledged.

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Also recorded by The Holy Trinity Bach Choir and Orchestra: Lutheran Vespers and Reformation Cantata 80 — *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, HTL 1979.

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Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New York City, The Rev. A. James Laughlin, Jr., Pastor

Stereo

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