

The
Los Alamos Choral Society
and
Sinfonietta

Present the

CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

by

J. S. BACH

John D. Seagrave, Conductor

Catherine Anderson, Contralto

Robert Sprecher, Tenor

Jean Fick, Mezzo-Soprano

Frederick Reines, Bass

Kathryn Benson, Soprano

Los Alamos
Civic Auditorium

8:00 P. M.
December 14, 1953

BACH'S CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Chorus

Christians, be joyful, and praise your salvation,
Sing, for today your Redeemer is born;
Cease to be fearful, forget lamentation,
Haste with thanksgiving to greet this glad morn!
Come let us worship and fall down before Him,
Let us with voices united adore Him.

Recitative (Tenor)

Now it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. And all went to enroll themselves, everyone to his own city. And there also went up Joseph from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, for he was of the house and family of David, to enroll himself, with Mary his betrothed wife, being great with Child. And while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.

Recitative (Alto)

See, now the Bridegroom, full of grace,
The hero of King David's race,
To save and heal the earth
Doth stoop to mortal birth.
See now the Star of Jacob shining,
Its beams delight our eyes;
Up, Zion, and forget thy sad repining,
For high thy bliss doth rise.

Air (Alto)

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection,
The purest, the fairest, this day to receive.
Thou must meet Him with a heart with love o'erflowing.
Haste, then, with ardour the Bridegroom to welcome.

Choral

How shall I fitly meet Thee,
And give Thee welcome due?
The nations long to greet Thee,
And I would greet Thee, too.
O Fount of Light, shine brightly
Upon my darkened heart,
That I may serve Thee rightly,
And know Thee as Thou art.

Recitative (Tenor)

And she brought forth her first-born Son, and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Choral and Recitative (Bass)

For us to earth he cometh poor,

Who rightly can his love declare,
That fills our tender Savior's breast?

Our redemption to secure.

Yea, who can understand, or share,
His grief for man by sin oppressed?

And rich in heaven to make us stand,

Himself the Son of God will give,
That we may be redeemed, and live.

All numbered with this angel-band.

So now for this as Man
Behold Him born.

(O Lord, have mercy!)

Air (Bass)

Mighty Lord, and King all-glorious,
Savior true, for man victorious,
Earthly state thou dost disdain,
He who all things doth sustain
Who all state and pomp supplieth,
In a lowly manager lieth.

Choral

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled
Within my heart, and there recline,
And keep that chamber ever Thine.

Recitative (Tenor)

And there were shepherds in the same country, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

Choral

Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light
And usher in the morning;
Ye shepherds shrink not with affright,
But hear the angels' warning.
This Child, now weak in infancy,
Our confidence and joy shall be,
The power of Satan breaking,
Our peace eternal making.

Recitative (Tenor) (The Angel)

And the angel said to them: Be not afraid, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people. For today is born to you in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

Recitative (Bass)

What God to Abraham revealed, He to the shepherd doth accord to see fulfilled.
To shepherds, lo! our gracious Lord His purposes unfoldeth. That blessing which, in days of old, He to a shepherd first foretold, a shepherd first beholdeth.

Air (Tenor)

Haste, ye shepherds, haste to meet Him;
Why should ye delay to greet Him?
Haste this gracious Child to see.
Glad and joyful ye should be,
Of His wondrous love partaking
Him your hope and comfort making.

Recitative (Tenor)

And this is the sign to you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Choral

Within yon gloomy manger lies
The Lord who reigns above the skies:
Within the stall where beasts have fed
The Virgin-born doth lay his head.

Recitative (Bass)

O Haste ye, then! ye shepherds, go.
Since you this wonder know,
And seek for God's Almighty Son
Within a manger lying lowly;
And there, beside that Cradle holy,
In sweet harmonious tone,
Sing all with one accord,
To soothe your infant Lord.

Choral

Beside Thy cradle here I stand,
O Thou that ever livest,
And bring Thee with a willing hand,
The very gifts Thou givest.
Accept me; 'tis my mind and heart,
My soul, my strength, my every part,
That Thou from me requirest.

Air (Mezzo-Soprano)

Slumber, beloved, and take thy repose,
Soon wilt thou waken, our joy and salvation.

Recitative (Tenor)

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God and saying:

Chorus

Glory be to God Almighty!
Glory, thanks, and praise be giv'n.

INTERMISSION

Chorus

Hear, King of Angels, though falter our voices;
O! When Thy Zion before Thee rejoices,
Let her endeavor be pleasing to Thee!
Hear us, O Lord, when we offer our praises,
Hear, when Thy Zion glad thanksgiving raises,
Joying Thy mighty salvation to see.

Recitative (Tenor)

And when the angels were gone from them into heav'n, The shepherds said one to another.

Chorus

Let us even now go to Bethlehem
And see, and see this thing which is come to pass,
Which the Lord hath made known to us.

Recitative (Bass)

He bids us comfort take,
And free this Israel doth make;
Relief to Zion hither sendeth,
And all our sorrow endeth.
Ye shepherds, see what He hath done,
Haste, make his glory known.

Choral

The Lord hath all these wonders wrought,
His great love these gifts hath brought;
Then let all Christian men rejoice,
And give Him thanks with cheerful voice.
(Lord, have mercy.)

Recitative (Tenor)

And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. And having seen it, they made known abroad concerning the saying which had been spoken unto them about this Child. And all that heard it wondered at the things which had been spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Air (Mezzo-Soprano)

Keep, O my spirit, this blessing and wonder
Close within thyself contained.
O! By the wonders thy Savior hath shew'd thee,
Of this great mercy, by thy feeble faith sustained.

Recitative (Tenor)

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, even as it was told unto them.

Choral

Rejoice and sing! Your gracious King
As Man is born, and lays aside His glory;
He is adored, as Christ the Lord,
And every tongue repeats the wondrous story.

Choral

Now is our God victorious
O'er all the foes of man,
And Christ, our Leader glorious
To nought hath brought their plan.
Death, Satan, Sin, and Sorrow
All feel His mighty worth.
There dawns a fair tomorrow
In Heaven for sons of earth.

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