


Rogue Valley Chorale

Presents



*Christmas*  
*with the*  
*Chorale*

*Magnificat*  
*by J.S. Bach*

*&*

*Hodie*  
*by Vaughan Williams*

Lynn Sjolund, conductor

Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater  
Medford, Oregon

Saturday, December 12, 8:00 p.m.  
Sunday, December 13, 3:00 p.m.

# Chorale Personnel

Fall 1998

## Sopranos

Pamela Barlow  
Arne Canon  
Janet Dolan  
Connie Fisher  
Karen Foster  
Linda Foster  
Kathy Gordon  
Leslie Hall  
Mary Kay Harmon  
Jennifer Jacobs  
Jane Kight  
Krista Koppinger  
Julia Lester  
Sarah Maple  
Deborah McFadden  
Tina Mickelson  
Ellie Murray  
Kristi Nelson  
Nancy Nelson  
Alice Nykreim  
Marilyn Reppert  
Carolyn Ruck  
Jacque Schmidt  
Phyllis Skinner  
Wanda Snow  
Darlene VanDenBerg

## Alto

Luna Bitzer  
Joani Bristol  
Anita Caster

Jean Conwell  
Donna Daniels  
Kathleen Davis  
Kay Dix  
Charleen Fike  
Judi Harper  
Barbara Hewitt  
Carol Jacobs  
Barbara Johnson  
Nancy Mason  
Bonnie Miller  
Cathy Morrison  
Mary Jane Morrison  
Diane Newland  
Marjorie Overland  
Myrna Pederson  
Nancy Purdy  
Jeanne Saint Germain  
Doris Sjolund  
Marjorie Swanson  
Idris White

## Tenors

John Blackhurst  
Andrew Brock  
Eric Chaffey  
John Conwell  
Ross Davis  
Ken Deveney  
Richard Frisbie  
John Gilsdorf  
Ronald Hollensted

Ed Houck  
Phil Lind  
William Matthews  
Brian Nelson  
Eric Overland  
Milton Snow  
Rex White

## Basses

Keith Campbell  
Jerry Darby  
Fred DeArmond  
Donald Dolan  
John Hunter  
John Leavens  
Gary Lovre  
David McFadden  
Gary Miller  
Jerry Miller  
Gary Nelson  
James Post  
Mark Reppert  
Eric Smith  
Richard Styles  
Richard Swanson  
David Uhreen  
James Verdick  
Charles Watson  
Michael Wing  
Douglas Wisely  
Peter Yeager

## Rogue Valley Children's Chorus Ensemble

Doris Sjolund, *conductor*

Zachery Andrews  
Grace Arthur  
Luci Bedell  
Jenna Blackhurst  
Shayne Flock

Cristine Harder  
Amanda Henrichs  
Raewyn Kelley  
Adam Nelson  
Ariel Nelson

Kyle Nisbet  
Jason Reno  
Noelle Rosenthal  
Brandon Thoms

## Rogue Valley Chorale Board of Directors

Phil Lind, *President*  
John Gilsdorf, *President Elect*  
Barbara Johnson, *Treasurer*

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## Members

Margaret Brown  
Mary Ann Byrne  
Keith Campbell  
Anita Caster  
Lee Childs  
Charleen Fike

Gerry Flock  
Karen Foster  
John Gilsdorf  
Barbara Johnson  
Marvelle Lawrence  
Phil Lind  
Jerrie Lovre

Debra McFadden  
Mary Jane Morrison  
Brian Nelson  
Diane Newland  
Margaret Reedy  
Char Wisely

## Dedication

The piano being used for these concerts is a gift to the theater from the Almus and Dorothy Pruitt estate. Mr. Pruitt was a well-known pianist and entertainer in the valley for many years and this gift will continue to delight our community as it is heard here at the theater. The complete restoration of the piano was done by Tom Lowell of Piano Studios and Showcase.

## Program - Part I

### *Magnificat*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

I.	Magnificat	<i>The Chorale</i>
II.	Et exultavit spiritus Meus	<i>Ellie Holt-Murray</i>
III.	Quia respexit	<i>Susan Olson</i>
IV.	Omnes generationes	<i>The Chorale</i>
V.	Quia fecit mihi magna	<i>Eric Smith</i>
VI.	Et misericordias	<i>Diane Newland, Phil Lind</i>
VII.	Fecit Potentiam	<i>The Chorale</i>
VIII.	Deposuit potentes	<i>Phil Lind</i>
IX.	Esurientes implevit bonis	<i>Doris Sjolund</i>
X.	Suscepit Israel	<i>Women's Chorus</i>
XI.	Sicut locutus est	<i>The Chorale</i>
XII.	Gloria Patria	<i>The Chorale</i>

## Program Part II

### *Kodie - (This Day)*

I.	Nowell!	<i>The Chorale</i>
II.	Now the Birth...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i> <i>Andrew Brock</i>
III.	It was the winter wild...	<i>Linda Fountain</i>
IV.	And it came to pass...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i>
V.	The blessed son of God...	<i>The Chorale</i>
VI.	And there were...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i>
VII.	Christmas Eve,...	<i>Michael Wing</i>
VIII.	And the shepherds...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i>
IX.	The shepherds sing...	<i>Gerry Flock</i>
X.	But Mary kept...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i>
XI.	Sweet was the song...	<i>Linda Fountain</i>
XII.	Bright portals of the sky...	<i>Andrew Brock</i>
XIII.	Now when Jesus...	<i>The Treble Ensemble</i>
XIV.	From Kingdoms of Wisdom	<i>Men's Chorus,</i> <i>The Chorale, Soloists</i>
XV.	No sad thought his soul affright...	<i>The Chorale</i>
XVI.	Epilogue	<i>Soloists, The Chorale</i>



## *Magnificat in D, Major, BWV 243*

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685 - 1750

"The glory of God and recreation of the mind." This is the way Johann Sebastian Bach defined the aim and purpose of his music. On the top of the first page of each of his sacred compositions he wrote *JJ* (*Jesu Juva*, "Jesus, help") and at the end he inscribed *SDG* (*Soli Deo Gloria*, "To God alone the glory"). In his vocal music Bach realized perfectly and clearly a vision of music as worship.

Bach became cantor of St. Thomas Church in Leipzig in 1723. His major obligation was to provide music for the various Sunday and feast day services and to train and lead the choir and instrumentalists—a truly exacting schedule. At times, he would be required to compose a new work in just a few days, which forced him to work at top speed and to take shortcuts by borrowing from himself or others. In preparation for his first Christmas in Leipzig, though, Bach was excused from his other duties from the middle of November in order to have sufficient time to compose a *Magnificat* for Christmas Vespers.

The *Magnificat*, which received its first performance on Christmas Day 1723, was in the key of E flat and had four interspersed movements to tell the Nativity story. Years later—perhaps in the spring of 1732—Bach revised the work, changing the key to D major (more suitable for jubilant trumpets), changed the scoring somewhat, and eliminated the four Christmas interpolations. The result is a uniformly constructed work that was now usable at Easter or Pentecost as well as Christmas.

The *Magnificat* is a song of praise for the Virgin Mary that dates to the early Christian liturgy. Bach used the traditional text of Mary's hymn (Luke 1:46-55) plus two verses of the Doxology. Although the avowed aim of Protestantism was to strengthen the relationship between the believer and God through the use of the vernacular, this did not exclude Latin from the Lutheran service. At Vespers the *Magnificat* was usually sung to plainchant in Luther's German version (*Meine Seele erhebet den Herrn*), but on major feasts it was frequently performed in Latin by the choir, often with an elaborate instrumental accompaniment. Bach wrote the music as a cantata for a large performing group—five soloists (two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass), five-part mixed choir (two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass), and an orchestra of two flutes, two oboes (one playing oboe d'amore), three trumpets, timpani, strings, and continuo.

The D major *Magnificat* is one of Bach's most compact compositions. The twelve movements are brief and are assembled into three groups, each starting with an aria and ending with a full chorus (2-4, 5-7, 8-11). These individual sections are framed by the opening *Magnificat* chorus and a concluding *Gloria*.

Martin Luther wrote a commentary on the *Magnificat* text in which he uses the metaphor of leaping and dancing to characterize Mary's praise: "The heart overflows with gladness and goes leaping and dancing for the great pleasure it has found in God . . . For she boasts, with heart leaping for joy and praising God, that He regards her despite her low estate . . ." Bach's vivacious, triple-meter first movement with its exuberant and highly ornamented choral sections and instrumental fanfares could well be derived from Luther's metaphor.

Each of the five soloist has an individual aria, introduced and unified by means of instrumental preludes, interludes, and postludes, and each aria, despite its brevity, has a clearly defined individual character.

After the uninhibited joy that has been projected in the opening chorus, the second movement, sounds equally rapturous, although a little more restrained. The soprano solo *Quia respexit humilitatem* ("For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden") that follows introduces a note of solemnity. In Scriptural usage, "to humble" means "to bring down, or to bring to nothing." In this solo, therefore, Bach consistently sets the word *humilitatem* to a descending scale. This is a typical use of Baroque *Affekt*, or word painting, examples of which are found throughout the *Magnificat*. An overwhelming effect is created at the words *omnes generationes* ("all generations shall call me blessed") when the full chorus suddenly cuts the solo voice short. A fugue subject enters which soon gives the feeling of being in the middle of a multitude. With the exception of one measure, there is no other measure in this chorus when the fugal subject is not present—the repeated eighth-note *omnes, omnes*, is tossed about in the texture on every single beat. Quite literally, in this fugue, there is no time when the generations cease in their exaltation.

The bass solo *Quia fecit mihi magna* ("For He that is mighty") is constructed on a *quasi basso ostinato* (obstinate bass), i.e. a figure repeated in the accompaniment's bass part throughout the composition, while the upper parts change. This reiterated figure seems to give the *aria* an air of confidence and reflection.

At the very heart of the work is the duet for alto and tenor, *Et misericordia* ("And His mercy is on them") in which Bach articulates the idea of mercy with a gentle, rocking motion.



*Fecit potentiam* ("The Lord hath showed strength") begins with an energetic theme that shatters the calm of the preceding movement.



The instrumental accompaniment, divided into two parts, imitates this theme in contrary motion as if to represent the idea that there is no escape from God's judgment. Bach flings the word *dispersit* ("scattered") around the choir in a striking way before a sudden pause and change of tempo. The now slow and widely spread notes, as well as the clearly articulated text, hammer home the false pride expressed in the final words: *mente cordis sui*—"the imagination of their hearts."

*Suscipit Israel* ("He hath holpen his servant Israel") is a chorale arrangement in which the accompaniment intones the old church melody used for the *Magnificat* (*Meine Seele erhebet den Herrn*) while above it the two sopranos and the alto weave a tender and ethereal counterpoint.

Bach gives the the chorus *Sicut locutus est* ("Even as he promised to our forefathers") the character of an archaic vocal fugue. The phrase 'ad patres nostros' perhaps suggested this old-fashioned a *cappella* style. The voices enter like a round, each voice imitating the preceding one and all entering by rule at the same point. This musical device is called canon, and the voices in this canon ascend in order: bass, tenor, alto, soprano II, soprano I. Promise-Law-Canon. As the promise moves from the patriarch to each of his generations in turn, the canon unfolds in the predictable and natural progression of higher in the texture, from bass to first soprano.

Bach concludes the *Magnificat* with the *Gloria Patri*. It begins with grand rolling passages in triplets as the voices ascend two times in musical arcs to glorify first the Father and then the Son. At the words *Gloria et Spiritui sancto*, however, the melodic line is inverted to symbolize the descent of the Holy Ghost. The work ends with a traditional musical pun when Bach returns to the brilliant music of the opening chorus at the words *Sicut erat in principio*—"as it was in the beginning".

## *Hodie, A Christmas Cantata*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Born October 12, 1872, in Down Ampney, England

Died August 26, 1958, in London

Ralph (pronounced "Rayf" in England) Vaughan Williams was the great English composer who created a gloriously self-consistent style of composition, which, though deeply rooted in native folk song and the music of Tudor England, was also unmistakably modern in musical harmony, counterpoint, and instrumentation. His Christmas cantata *This Day*, more generally known by its Latin subtitle *Hodie*, premiered at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, England, on September 8, 1954, and calls for soprano, tenor and baritone soloists; mixed chorus; boys' chorus; organ; and orchestra. It was written at the end of a long and productive life (he was eighty-two), and Vaughan Williams's annotator, Michael Kennedy, calls the sixteen numbers of this work "a kind of symposium of all his choral writing."

*Hodie* is an "anthology" work with interesting textual juxtapositions from both sacred and secular sources. For almost half the work, the composer uses narrative from the Gospels, including the familiar Christmas texts from the opening chapters of Luke and Matthew interwoven with a few words from the *Book of Common Prayer*. The scriptural passages play an important role in moving the narrative forward.

The remainder of the cantata sets texts by Miles Coverdale (1488—1568), William Drummond (1585—1649), George Herbert (1593—1633), John Milton (1608—74), and William Ballet (17th c.). The naive vitality and delight in praising God expressed by these Renaissance and Baroque poets is one of the work's most attractive features. There are also poems by Thomas Hardy (1874—1928) and the composer's second wife, Ursula (Wood) Vaughan Williams. Each poem elicits from the composer the type of music it requires, and the general effect is that of a happy and lyrical flow of melody. The poems are linked by a modal narrative for unison children's voices. The use of trebles is not only a symbol of the innocence and purity of the Christ-child, but it also alludes to the sound of college and cathedral choirs heard in England at Christmas.

The poetry and narratives selected by Vaughan Williams are introduced by a **jubilant** setting from the *Vespers for Christmas Day*, "Hodie, Christus natus est." This "Prologue" begins with audacious and precipitous Nowells:



# Translations and Texts



## Magnificat

Johann Sebastian Bach (1723)

- I. Chorus: Magnificat  
Magnificat anima mea Dominum.  
*My soul doth magnify the Lord.*
- II. Aria for Mezzo-Soprano  
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.  
*And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my savior.*
- III. Aria for Soprano  
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. Behold,  
from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
*Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent.*
- IV. Chorus  
Omnes generationes.  
*All generations.*
- V. Aria for Bass  
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus.  
*For He that is might hath done great things; and holy is His name.*
- VI. Duet for Alto and Tenor  
Et misericordia a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.  
*And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation.*
- VII. Chorus  
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mete cordis sui.  
*He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the  
imagination of their hearts.*
- VIII. Aria for Tenor  
Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles.  
*He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted them of low degree.*
- IX. Aria for Alto  
Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.  
*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty  
away.*
- X. Trio for Women's Voices  
Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.  
*He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy.*
- XI. Chorus  
Sicut locutus est ad nostros. Abraham et semini ejus in secula.  
*As He spake to our fathers, to Abraham and His seed forever.*
- XII. Chorus  
Gloria, Patri, gloria Filio, gloria Spiritui sancto. Sicut erat in principio  
et nunc, et semper in saeculo saeculorum. Amen  
*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the  
beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.*



*Hodie*  
*(This Day)*  
*A Cantata For Christmas*

I. PROLOGUE - - *The Chorale*

Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!

Hodie Christus natus est: hodie salvator apparuit:

Hodie in terra canunt angeli, laetantur archangeli:

Hodie exultant justi, dicentes: gloria in excelsis Deo: Alleluia

English version

Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!

Christmas Day, Christ was born on Christmas Day.

Christmas Day, Our Saviour was born on Christmas Day!

Christmas Day, on earth there are angels singing, archangels rejoicing. Christmas Day, rejoice ye just men, saying,

Glory to God in the highest: Alleluia.

II. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus: whenas his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream.

Angel: - - *Tenor Solo*

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: Emmanuel, God with us."

*From Matt. i. 18-21 and Luke i. 32.*

III. SONG - - *Soprano solo with Women's Chorus*

It was the winter wild,  
While the Heaven-born child,  
All meanly wrapt, in the rude manger lies;  
Nature in awe to him  
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize

And waving wide her myrtle wand,  
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.  
No war, or battle's sound,  
Was heard the world around:  
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood;  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;  
And kings sate still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.  
But peaceful was the night,  
Wherein the Prince of light  
His reign of peace upon the east began:  
The winds, with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kiss'd  
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

*From Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity. Milton*

IV. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

*From Luke ii, 1-7.*

V. CHORAL - - *The Chorale*

The blessed son of God only  
In a crib full poor did lie;  
With our poor flesh and our poor blood  
Was clothed that everlasting good.  
Kyrieleison.

The Lord Christ Jesu, God's dear son  
Was a guest and a stranger here;  
Us for to bring from misery,  
That we might live eternally.  
Kyrieleison.

All this did he for us freely,  
For to declare his great mercy;  
All Christendom be merry therefore,  
And give him thanks for evermore.  
Kyrieleison.

*Miles Coverdale, after Martin Luther.*

IV. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour which is Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory; O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us." And the shepherds came with haste, and found Mary, Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

*Adapted from Luke ii. 8-17 and the Book of Common Prayer.*

VII. THE OXEN - - *Baritone Solo*

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.  
"Now they are all on their knees,"  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearth side ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.



So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years! yet, I feel  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,"  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

*Thomas Hardy.*

VIII. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

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

*Luke ii. 20.*

IX. PASTORAL - - *Baritone Solo*

The shepherds sing: and shall I silent be?  
My God, no hymn for thee?  
My soul's a shepherd too: a flock it feeds  
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.  
The pasture is Thy Word: the streams, Thy Grace  
Enriching all the place.  
Shepherds and flock shall sing, and all my powers  
Out-sing the daylight hours.  
Then we will chide the sun for letting night  
Take up his place and right:  
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should  
Himself the candle hold.

I will go searching, till I find a sun  
Shall stay till we have done:  
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly  
As frost-nipt suns look sadly.  
Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,  
And one another pay;  
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine  
Till even his beams sing, and my music shine.

*George Herbert.*

X. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

*Luke ii. 19.*

XI. LULLABY - - *Soprano Solo with Women's Chorus*

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,  
When she to Bethlem Juda came  
And was delivered of a son,  
That blessed Jesus hath to name.  
"Lulla, lulla, lulla-bye,  
"Sweet babe," sang she,  
And rocked him sweetly on her knee.  
"Sweet babe," sang she, "my son,"  
and eke a saviour born,  
Who hast vouchsafed from on high  
To visit us that were forlorn:  
Lalula, lalula, lalula-bye,  
"Sweet babe," sang she,  
And rocked him sweetly on her knee.

*W. Ballet*

XII. HYMN - - *Tenor Solo*

Bright portals of the sky,

Emboss'd with sparkling stars,  
Doors of eternity,  
With diamantine bars,  
Your arras rich uphold,  
Loose all you bolts and springs,  
Ope wide your leaves of gold,  
That in you r roots may come the King of Kings.

O well-spring of this All!  
Thy fathers image vive;  
Word, that from naught did call  
What is, doth reason, live;  
The soul's eternal food  
Earth's joy, delight of heaven;  
All truth, love, beauty, good:  
To thee, to thee be praises ever given!

O glory of the heaven!  
O sole delight of earth  
To thee all power be given,  
God's uncreated birth!  
Of mankind lover true,  
Indearer of his wrong,  
Who dost the world renew  
Still be thou our salvation and our song!

*William Drummond.*

XIII. NARRATION - - *The Treble Ensemble*

Now when Jesus was born, behold, there came wise men from the east saying, "Where is he that is born King? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." And they said unto them, "In Bethlehem." When they had heard that they departed; and, lo! the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasurers, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

*adapted from Matthew ii. 1, 2, and 11.*

XIV. THE MARCH OF THE THREE KINGS - - *The Chorale*

From kingdoms of wisdom secret and far  
come Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar;  
they ride through time, they ride through night  
led by the star's foretelling light.

Crowning the skies  
the star of morning, star of dayspring calls,  
lighting the stable and the broken walls  
where the prince lies.

Gold from the veins of earth he brings,  
red gold to crown the King of Kings.  
Power and glory here behold  
shut in a talisman of gold.

Frankincense from those dark hands  
was gathered in eastern, sunrise lands,  
incense to burn both night and day  
to bear the prayers a priest will say.

Myrrh is a bitter gift for the dead.  
Birth but begins the path you tread;  
your way is short, your days foretold  
by myrrh and frankincense and gold.



Return to kingdoms, secret and far,  
Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar,  
ride through the desert, retrace the night  
leaving the star's imperial light.  
Crowning the skies  
the star of morning, star of dayspring, calls:  
clear on the hilltop its sharp radiance fall  
lighting the stable and the broken walls  
where the prince lies.

*Ursula Vaughan Williams.*

XV. CHORAL

No sad thought his soul affright;  
Sleep it is that maketh night;  
Let no murmur nor rude wind  
To his slumbers prove unkind;  
But a quire of angels make  
His dreams of heaven, and let him wake  
To as many joys as can  
In this world befall a man.

Promise fills the sky with light,  
Stars and angels dance in flight;  
Joy of heaven shall now unbind  
Chains of evil from mankind,  
Love and joy their power shall break,  
And for a new born prince's sake;  
Never since the world began  
Such a light such dark did span.

*Verse 1. Anon.*

*Verse 2. Ursula Vaughan Williams.*

XVI. EPILOGUE - - *Soloists and Chorus*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Emmanuel, God with us.

*Adapted from John i, 1-14.*

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,  
Once bless our human ears,  
If ye have power to touch our senses so;  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time,  
And let the bass of heav'ns deep organ blow;  
And, with our ninefold harmony,  
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

Such music (as 'tis said),  
Before was never made,  
But when of old the sons of morning sung,  
While the Creator great  
His constellations set,  
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;  
And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Yea, truth and justice then  
Will down return to men,  
Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,  
Mercy will sit between,  
Throned in celestial sheen,  
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down-steering;  
And heaven, as at some festival,  
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

*From Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity. Milton*

The opening movement is greatly varied and important in setting the tone of the whole cantata. Vaughan Williams has written music that is appropriate to the constantly changing significance and rhythm of the text—a raucous “Nowell!”, a jaunty and swinging “Christus natus est”, and a dance-like “alleluia.” In three—and—a-half—minutes the composer employs nine different tempos and time signatures. The exclamations of “Gloria” heard in this movement will return at various points in the cantata to underline the central theme of wonder and worship. Kennedy says of the “Prologue” that “although it is youthful in spirit, perhaps only an old man would have had the courage to write it.”

“To this day the Beethoven idiom repels me,” wrote Vaughan Williams as an old man, adding, “but I hope I have at last learnt to see the greatness that lies behind the idiom that I dislike, and at the same time to see an occasional weakness behind the Bach idiom which I love.” Both of these composers are alluded to in *Hodie*. In the second movement, a narrative in which the Angel, sung by tenor, tells Joseph that Mary is to bear a son by the Holy Ghost, a theme from the “Et incarnatus est” section of Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Missa solennis* is heard. This theme returns to dominate the beginning of the final number of the cantata, a setting of the famous opening words of St. John’s Gospel.

Johann Sebastian Bach is evoked through the emulation of devices used in his Passions. Most obvious are the narrative sections juxtaposed with movements devoted to poetic reflection. In the orchestral version, Vaughan Williams illuminates the words of the Angel with a halo of strings. This echoes the similar treatment of Christ’s words in the Passions. A device used by Bach in his *Magnificat* is also found here—in and around the Angel’s words is an ecstatic descending figure to represent the Holy Ghost.

The Passions are also evoked by the use of chorales to represent communal responses. Set off tonally from their surrounding movements, these two settings are hauntingly refreshing and beautiful in their apparent simplicity. They rarely rise in volume above a *pianissimo*.

The end of the cantata actually seems to begin with a foreboding “March of the Three Kings.” This march, however, is followed by one of the above—mentioned chorales, “No Sad Thought,” and then by a Biblical and Miltonian “Epilogue.” The “Epilogue” begins with tonally-ambiguous chords which link it to the preceding chorale. The baritone soloist, singing in his upper register, proclaims the opening words of John’s gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Soon this sweeps into a choral entrance declaring “Emmanuel, God with us,” interrupted in turn by a concluding exuberant, triple-meter setting of “Ring out, ye crystal spheres” from Milton’s *Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*.

The text of *Hodie* tells, with one exception, the familiar Christmas story in elegant but conventional terms. The exception is a deeply felt setting for baritone soloist of Thomas Hardy’s “The Oxen,” which casts a gently skeptical and regretful shadow upon the surrounding texts. Here, in the middle of the joyous celebration of Christmas, is a cry for the innocent faith of childhood from a speaker who has lost it, and experienced all the attendant pain and uncertainty that comes in the wake of that loss. Nominally a Protestant, a member of the Church of England, Vaughan Williams did not actually practice any religion. One can imagine that in setting this lyric, the elderly composer addresses the listener directly to sing of his nostalgia for a kind of faith irrevocably lost.

*\*Michael Kennedy. The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams (Oxford University Press).*

## *The Artists*

**Andrea Brock**, pianist for the Chorale is the Director of Choral Activities at South Medford High School. She has directed the musicals *Joseph and His Many Colored Dreamcoat* and *My Fair Lady*.

Ms. Brock studied at the University of Colorado before earning academic degrees from the University of Oregon. She also attended a symposium on accompanying in Lyon, France. While at the University she accompanied the University Singers and has been a regular organist and accompanist since coming to the Rogue Valley. She has accompanied the All-State and All-Northwest Choirs on four occasions. Presently she and her husband, Andrew, share direction of the Christian Church Choir.

**Linda Borecki**, organist for the Chorale, has appeared with the group many times and was the regular accompanist for several years. Ms. Borecki is a graduate of Concordia College, Portland, Oregon, where she majored in church music. She later studied organ and choral conducting at the Westfallen Church Music School in Herford, Germany. She is the minister of music at Grace Lutheran Church in



Ashland, and she does presentations to groups about church music history and liturgy. Most recently Ms. Borecki has appeared with the Chorale as organist for the Bloch Sacred Service, the Bach St. John Passion and Mendelssohn's Elijah.

*(Soloists in order of appearance)*

**Ellie Holt-Murray**, a Metropolitan regional finalist and a San Francisco Merola finalist, lives in Ashland. Miss Holt-Murray at the Ware House of Pianos. She has been invited to return to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as their Musician Vocal Coach for the 1999 season. She debuted with the Rogue Music Theater as Mrs. Lovett in Sweeney Todd followed by a return engagement in the new musical The Snow Queen. Last Fall she sang the role of Despina in Rogue Opera's production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Besides numerous operatic roles, she has also sung with many symphony orchestras on the West Coast, including our own Rouge Valley Symphony.

**Susan Olson** is a regular soloist with the Chorale and is well-known to valley audiences. In addition to her Chorale appearances she has been featured by the Rogue Opera and Rogue Valley Symphony in major roles. Presently she is preparing the role of Mimi for the Rogue Opera production of *La Bohème* to be presented here on New Year's eve. Other roles she has performed for Rogue Opera include Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Micaela in *Carmen* and Gilda in *Rigoletto*. She has also sung with the opera's programs for youth. Recent performances with the Chorale include solos while on tour in Northern Italy and as the soprano in Bach's *St. John Passion*. Ms. Olson is a Northwest Region Metropolitan Opera finalist and coaches with Dr. Myra Brand and Brian Swingle of Salem.

**Eric Smith**, bass soloist, is a 12 year veteran in the Chorale and been a regular soloist with the group. He has toured with the Chorale on each of its three European tours and has acted as bass section leader for the group. Mr. Smith earned his B. A. in Music Education at Portland State University, and has a Master of Music Education Degree from Lewis and Clark College. He is an elementary music teacher in the Medford school district and directs the CANCEL Choir at First Presbyterian Church of Medford.

**Diane Newland**, alto, is a graduate of the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Ms. Newland studied voice there and has been a regular soloist for church and civic choirs since that time. She is the alto section leader for the Chorale. Ms. Newland has taught classroom music in North Dakota, Ohio and Oregon. She has sung in the Rogue Opera Program for Youth and is an adult assistant for the Rogue Valley Children's Chorus. She is a past-president of the Board of Directors and currently serves on the Board.

**Philip Lind**, tenor, has been a member of the Chorale for several years and has served as tenor section leader and on the Board of Directors. Presently he is president of the board. Mr. Lind is a graduate of Oregon State University where he sang in the Chorale and was featured in several stage productions. Mr. Lind was a featured soloist with the Chorale last summer in Italy and has been a regular member of ensembles formed from the group. He is a computer expert with the City of Ashland.

**Doris Sjolund** has sung with the Chorale since its founding in 1973. Ms. Sjolund is well-known for her work in music education and is a leader in the movement to promote choral music for children. Ms. Sjolund is the founding director of the Rogue Valley Children's Chorus and has served on state and regional committees for children's choruses. Ms. Sjolund taught in the Medford Schools for many years and now serves as a resource teacher for Medford elementary and vocal teachers. Ms. Sjolund taught high school music in Iowa and both secondary school music and college music education courses in New Orleans. Ms. Sjolund has served as a clinician and conductor for festivals in the Northwest and Southwest parts of the country. Her academic degrees are from the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Oregon.