

PROGRAM

ANDOVER CHORAL SOCIETY

Michael Driscoll, director

Erika Vogel, soprano
Emily Marvosh, mezzo-soprano
Stefan Reed, tenor
Joseph Hubbard, baritone

January 31, 2016
North Andover High School Auditorium
North Andover, MA

Dixit Dominus, ZWV 68

Jan Dismas Zelenka
(1679-1745)

Dixit Dominus
Sicut Erat
Amen

Magnificat, RV 610

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

Magnificat
Et exultavit
Et misericordia
Fecit potentiam
Deposuit
Esurientes
Suscepit Israel
Sicut locutus
Gloria

INTERMISSION

Magnificat in D, BWV 243

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Magnificat
Et exultavit
Quia respexit
Omnes generationes
Quia fecit
Et misericordia
Fecit potentiam
Deposuit
Esurientes
Suscepit Israel
Sicut locutus
Gloria

FROM THE DIRECTOR

About Today's Program

This season Andover Choral Society explores the familiar and the unfamiliar, as well as settings of the same text by different composers from similar eras. The inspiration of today's program is Johann Sebastian Bach's festive setting of the Magnificat canticle. To that we have added works by two contemporaries who Bach admired: Antonio Vivaldi and Jan Dismas Zelenka.

While Vivaldi is widely known for his instrumental music and his *Gloria* for chorus and orchestra, his *Magnificat* RV 610 that we will perform for you today is a much less known gem by the Italian master. Bohemian composer Jan Dismas Zelenka was a contemporary of Bach who spent most of his professional life working at the Catholic court church in Dresden, Germany. Zelenka's music fell into obscurity following his death. Although Zelenka's music has received much more well-deserved attention in the past decade, his name remains unknown to much of the concertgoing public. We are delighted to perform one of Zelenka's many excellent Vesper psalm settings, Psalm 109 (110) *Dixit Dominus*, ZWV 68. Bach was not the only person to admire Vivaldi – Zelenka's personal library catalog listed a version of Vivaldi's *Magnificat*!

Thank you for coming to this concert and for supporting the Andover Choral Society. We hope that you enjoy today's performance and that you will return to see and hear us again on May 14, 2016. We again explore the familiar and the unfamiliar, as well as different settings of the same text with a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus's '*Coronation*' *Mass in C*, K 317 and Franz Schubert's *Mass No. 3 in B-flat*, D 324. The concert takes place in the reverberant acoustics of Saint Augustine's Parish church in Andover center and will be accompanied by professional soloists and orchestra.

Michael Driscoll
Music Director

PROGRAM NOTES

By Michael Driscoll

The Vespers Service

All three works on this afternoon's program originate with the Vespers service. Celebrated at dusk, Vespers is the principal Christian evening prayer service. Also known as evensong or evening prayer, Vespers is one of eight daily prayer services that make up the Divine Office. The Vespers service includes both spoken text and chants along with responses from the choir or congregation. The parts of the Vespers service that were most commonly set by composers in the 17th and 18th centuries included five psalms and the Magnificat canticle, each of which concluded with the doxology (*Gloria patri*). The five psalms chosen varied depending on the day and its place in the liturgical year. In some instances, composers wrote stand-alone psalm or Magnificat settings as in the Bach and Vivaldi works on today's program. In other instances composers wrote the five psalms and Magnificat with the intention that they be performed as a complete set. Today we are performing Zelenka's setting of Psalm 109 (110) *Dixit Dominus* (ZWV 68), which was part of one of four cycles of Vesper psalm settings that he composed.

At first glance it may seem odd that Bach, a Lutheran, would have composed a setting of the Magnificat canticle in Latin, a language closely associated with the Roman Catholic Church. However, parts of the Catholic liturgy, including the Magnificat canticle, remain in the Lutheran service to this day. While the Latin texts have been translated into vernacular languages in modern times, some Latin texts were an accepted part of the Lutheran service in Bach's time. The Magnificat text comes from the Gospel of Luke, where it is spoken by the Virgin Mary.



Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745)

Relatively little is known about the life of Jan Dismas Zelenka. Born in the Bohemian village of Louňovice, located southeast of Prague, Zelenka probably first learned music from his father, Jirik, who was cantor and organist at the parish church in Louňovice. Zelenka arrived in Dresden in around 1710-11 where he was employed by the *Hofkapelle* (Catholic court church) as a violone (double bass) player. In 1714 he was promoted to church composer.

From 1716-1719 he studied composition in Vienna under the tutelage of Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741). Zelenka returned to Dresden in 1719 resuming his previous dual titles of court composer and violone player. In the same year, the converted Catholic Electoral Prince Augustus II married the Catholic Maria Josepha and they arrived in Dresden. While most of Dresden was Lutheran, Augustus II allowed Lutheran worship to continue alongside the public Catholic services at the *Hofkapelle*. Because the Catholic court church was relatively new and surrounded both physically and historically by the Lutheran Church, the *Hofkapelle* required an entire body of works that were suitable for performance at the court church services. The work of collecting settings of works from other composers and composing new settings fell to Kapellmeister Johann David Heinichen, Giovanni Alberto Ristori and Zelenka.

Upon Heinichen's death in 1729, Zelenka took up the duties of Heinichen's position without being granted the title of Kapellmeister or additional compensation. Zelenka petitioned the Electoral Prince to allow him to assume the position of Kapellmeister, but was denied; the Prince wanted to reestablish opera in Dresden and in 1733 he hired Johann Adolph Hasse (1699-1783) for the position. From 1735 until his death in 1745, Zelenka's title was 'Kirchen Compositeur' ('Church Composer'). During this period he composed five masses, a serenata and a second *Miserere* setting. Zelenka, who never married, died of edema on December 23, 1745.

Zelenka's most prolific period was in the 1720s. While his total compositional output was not large by comparison to his contemporaries, he did compose nearly 150 sacred works. His compositions

were admired by many contemporary composers including Bach, Telemann, Pisendel, Mattheson, and Mizler. In a 1775 letter, C. P. E. Bach wrote that his father, J. S. Bach, personally knew and highly esteemed Zelenka.¹

Dixit Dominus, ZWV 68

Until the late 20th century, the Roman Catholic Vespers service included five psalm settings. Although the psalm changed depending on the day of the week and the particular feast, Psalm 109 (110) *Dixit Dominus* began every Sunday Vespers service. As a result, it was not uncommon for composers to set this Psalm text music multiple times. Zelenka was no exception: between approximately 1725 and late 1728, Zelenka set the *Dixit Dominus* text four times. One setting (ZWV 69) listed in Zelenka's inventory of works in his library has since been lost. Two others (ZWV 66 and 67) remain unpublished.² The fourth (ZWV 68) is published by the German publishing firm Carus Verlag and is the setting that we will perform for you this afternoon.

ZWV 68 is scored for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass (SATB) soloists, SATB chorus, two oboes, two violins, viola, and a continuo group consisting of cello, contrabass, bassoon, and organ. Zelenka later added parts for two trumpets and timpani. According to the entry at the end of Zelenka's autograph score, he completed the work on March 23, 1726, likely for the March 25 feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Dresden *Hofkapelle*.

Zelenka divides ZWV 68 into three movements. The first movement sets all seven verses of Psalm 109 (110) plus the beginning line of the doxology, *Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto* (Glory be the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit), which concluded each psalm in the Vespers service. The first movement is further divided into several sections with nearly every line of the text musically illustrated with contrasting tempi, keys, texture, and vocal and instrumental forces. The structural boundaries of these sections are further defined by short instrumental interludes. Reflecting the message of the latter half of the doxology text, *sicut erat in principio...* (as it was in the beginning...), the music from the beginning of the first movement is repeated in the second movement. Although the doxology text is split between two movements, the return of the opening musical material provides a compositional arch that unifies the work. Zelenka concludes the word with a spirited 'Amen' fugue.

¹Janice B. Stockigt, *Jan Dismas Zelenka: A Bohemian Musician at the Court of Dresden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 271.

² Modern performing editions of ZWV 66 and 67 are being edited by Michael Driscoll as part of his doctoral dissertation project. Driscoll's edition of ZWV 66 has been performed in the Greater Boston area three times including a December 2014 performance by Andover's New England Classical Singers directed by David Hodgkins.



Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

Born in Venice, Antonio Vivaldi was the eldest of nine children of Giovanni and Camilla Vivaldi. His father was a violinist at St. Mark's Basilica and likely taught Antonio to play the violin. He began studying for the priesthood at age fifteen and was ordained when he was twenty-five. His earliest known composition may have dated from around this same time. Despite his 1703 ordination, by 1706 Vivaldi ceased celebrating Mass because of what he described as '*strettezza di petto*' ('tightness of the chest'), which likely was bronchial asthma. How much his health factored into the decision versus his desire to be a full-time musician is a matter of debate. What is known is that training for the priesthood was often the only way for poor people to obtain free schooling.

Nicknamed 'il prete rosso' (the red priest) because of his red hair, he was appointed *maestro di violono* (violin teacher) at the Ospedale della Pietà in September 1703. One of four Venetian orphanages for girls, the Pietà functioned as a music school, producing highly celebrated sacred service concerts for the public. Approximately forty of the most talented girls at the school comprised the chorus and orchestra that performed at the public concerts. These performances were an important part of the social calendar of Venetian nobility and foreign visitors, and the concerts provided an important source of revenue for the orphanage. The Pietà, along with the other three Venetian orphanages, maintained a staff of musicians to train the students and to compose works for their performances.

Over the course of the next thirty-five years, Vivaldi worked on and off at the Pietà, eventually becoming *maestro di cappella* (master of the chapel). It was for the Pietà that Vivaldi wrote the majority of his sacred works. Although known today primarily for his instrumental works (he wrote more than five hundred sonatas and concertos), Vivaldi also composed forty operas, approximately forty cantatas and motets for solo voices, three oratorios, one complete mass,

several mass movements, approximately thirty Psalm settings, and one Magnificat (RV 610). Of his choral works, his *Gloria* RV 589 is Vivaldi's most well-known choral work today.

During his lifetime Vivaldi's influence as a composer was felt widely throughout Europe, particularly in Germany. This was due in large part to the 1711 publication of twelve of Vivaldi's concertos by the Amsterdam publisher Etienne Roger. Vivaldi scholar Michael Talbot describes this publication as "the most influential music publication of the first half of the 18th century."³ Bach transcribed several of Vivaldi's concertos for keyboard, including five from the 1711 publication. In addition, several composers based at the court church in Dresden, Germany had close ties with Vivaldi including Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755), who reportedly took lessons from Vivaldi and who brought several of Vivaldi's works with him to Dresden. Zelenka, another Dresden composer, spent time in Venice from 1716-1717. Whether Zelenka met Vivaldi is unclear, but Vivaldi's influence on Zelenka's compositional style is undoubted. Among other works by Vivaldi, Zelenka's personal library included a copy of Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, which we will perform for you today.

Magnificat, RV 610

Vivaldi's *Magnificat* exists in several versions. The earliest was composed for the Pietà and dates from around 1715. This version, which forms the basis of our performance today, was scored for two sopranos, alto, and tenor (SAT) soloists, SATB choir, two violins, viola, and a continuo group consisting of cello, contrabass, optional bassoon, and keyboard instrument. In the 1720s, Vivaldi revised the work for performance with a chorus of male voices. (Male voice choirs of the era would have included *castrati* singing the alto and soprano parts.) He also added a pair of oboes, which are incorporated in today's performance. Vivaldi prepared a final version for a 1739 performance at the Pietà. For the 1739 performance, he replaced the original three solo movements with five new arias, each composed to highlight the individual talents of the five finest singers at the Pietà.

Vivaldi follows the convention of his time by dividing the *Magnificat* into separate movements. The traditional division of the Magnificat text, as set by composers long before Vivaldi's time, was in twelve movements consisting of the ten verses of the canticle plus the doxology, which was split into two movements. Vivaldi's *Magnificat* mostly follows this traditional division with the main exception being the second movement ('Et exultavit'), which includes the text of three different verses. The doxology is also set as a single movement, though there is a clear musical delineation between the two halves of the verse. In his 1739 revision for the Pietà, Vivaldi did split the three verses of the original second movement into three separate movements.

Vivaldi demonstrates the magnificence and power of the Lord with imposing blocks of chords in the opening movement for chorus and orchestra. A sense of boundless joy is evident in 'Et exultavit' ('And my spirit has rejoiced') for soprano, alto, and tenor soloists, each separated by an instrumental *ritornello* (returning interlude) featuring the violins. Vivaldi includes a musical pun by inserting the full chorus when the alto soloist sings the word 'omnes' (all). This is followed by the most extended movement of the work, the anguished 'Et misericordia' ('And his mercy'), which features a pulsing bass line and expressive melodic intervals of the minor sixth and the major seventh. Daring harmonies are featured throughout, with the most tortured harmonies reserved

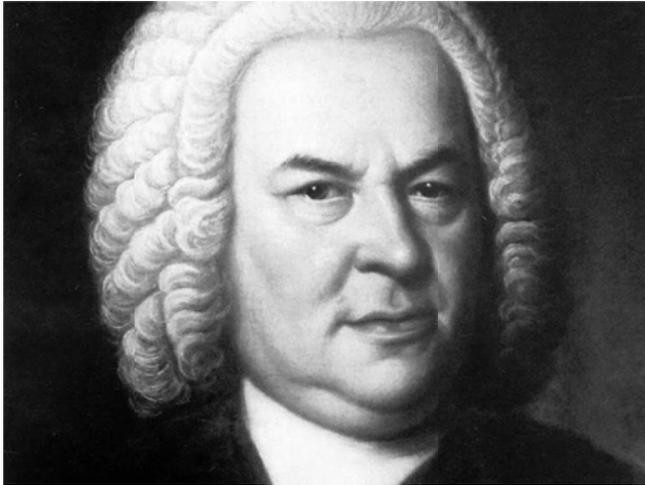
³ Michael Talbot. "Vivaldi, Antonio." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Web. 16 Jul. 2015.

<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40120pg2>>.

for the word 'timentibus' ('for those fearing'). Over an exceptionally active bass line, the block chords of the chorus in 'Fecit potentiam' ('He has shown strength') demonstrate the Lord's strength. At the word 'dispersit' ('he has dispersed') the sopranos fall 'out of sync' with the rest of the chorus, creating a 'dispersing' effect. The mighty are deposed in 'Deposuit' with all voices and instruments in octaves throughout. In 'Esurientes' ('The hungry') Vivaldi illustrates the feeding of the poor via the gentle hand of the Lord with a delightful soprano duet. The brief 'Suscepit Israel' ('He has helped Israel') leads to a cheerful terzet for two obbligato oboes, along with soprano, alto, and bass voices. In the final movement, Vivaldi sets the doxology text with a condensed version of the opening movement, concluding with an energetic double fugue.

Andrew O'Connor writes, "Vivaldi was perhaps not the most natural contrapuntalist of the Baroque. However, he brought to his sacred works an almost limitless melodic inspiration, absolute mastery of orchestral colours and structures and, above all, the instincts of a true musical dramatist. The G minor Magnificat has these qualities in abundance."⁴

⁴ Andrew O'Connor, liner notes to, "*KIRKBY, Emma Magnificat*," William Hayes, Antony Walker, and Emma Kirkby, Naxos Music Library, Hong Kong: Naxos Digital Services Ltd, 2007.



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Johann Sebastian Bach was a German composer and organist of the Baroque period. Noted Bach authority Christoph Wolff writes that Bach “combined outstanding performing musicianship with supreme creative powers in which forceful and original inventiveness, technical mastery and intellectual control are perfectly balanced.”⁵ During his lifetime Bach achieved fame as a keyboard virtuoso, but it is through his compositions that he is known and revered today. Wolff notes that Bach’s “musical language was distinctive and extraordinarily varied, drawing together and surmounting the techniques, the styles and the general achievements of his own and earlier generations and leading on to new perspectives which later ages have received and understood in a great variety of ways.”

Bach was born in 1685 in the central German town of Eisenach to a family that included generations of musicians. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was director of the town musicians and all of his uncles were professional musicians. Bach probably learned the violin and perhaps also the harpsichord from his father. His mother died in May 1694 when he was just nine years old and his father died eight months later. Upon the death of his father, Bach moved in with his older brother, Johann Christoph Bach, who worked as an organist in the nearby town of Ohrdruf. Johann Christoph likely instructed the young Johann Sebastian Bach on playing the clavichord and other keyboard instruments. He also exposed Bach to works of the great composers of his day. At age 14, Bach was awarded a choral scholarship to study at the prestigious St. Michael’s School in Lüneburg, where he remained for two years.

In January 1703 Bach was appointed court musician in the chapel of Duke Johann Ernst III in Weimar. During this time his reputation as a keyboard player spread, and in August of the same year he was asked to test out a newly built organ at the Neue Kirche (New Church) in Arnstadt. Bach clearly impressed the church authorities at the Neue Kirche: he was offered the organist position even though Andreas Börner had already been given the position 18 months earlier. Shortly after arriving in Arnstadt, Bach asked for four weeks’ leave so that he could visit the great organist and composer Dieterich Buxtehude in the northern German city of Lübeck – a 250-mile

⁵ Christoph Wolff, et al. "Bach." *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40023pg10>.

journey that Bach completed on foot. Without getting approval from his employer, Bach extended his trip from four weeks to nearly three and a half months. Bach was unsatisfied with the standard of singers available to him in Arnstadt, and his employer was unhappy about his unauthorized leave of absence. His employer also complained that Bach's organ accompaniments to chorales (hymns) were too elaborate for congregational singing.

Upon the death of J. G. Ahle in December 1705, the position of organist at the Church of St. Blasius in Mühlhausen became available. Bach was given the job, which offered him improved working conditions and a better choir, in June 1706. Although Bach got along well with the Mühlhausen city council, members of his congregation complained about his choice of music and he likely had an uneasy relationship with the church pastor. Two years after arriving in Arnstadt, the Duke of Weimar, Wilhelm Ernst, offered Bach the post of court organist. Bach's nine years in Weimar mark the beginning of his period of orchestral compositions and compositions for keyboard instruments; most of his organ works were composed during this period. During this time he also extensively studied works of contemporary Italian composers, including Vivaldi, Corelli, and Torelli.

After a falling-out with Duke Wilhelm in the fall of 1717, Bach accepted a position in Köthen as Kapellmeister (director of music) at Prince Leopold's court chapel. The court in Köthen had a relatively large orchestra of eighteen players. While the prince loved and understood music, he was a Calvinist, so no elaborate music was performed at the court chapel. As a result, most of Bach's compositions from this period were secular, including the orchestral suites, the cello suites, the sonatas and partitas for solo violin, the Brandenburg Concertos, and book one of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. Bach also composed secular cantatas for the court.

Upon the death of Johann Kuhnau in 1722, the prestigious position of Kantor at the Thomasschule (St. Thomas School) at the Thomaskirche (St. Thomas Church) in Leipzig became available. The position was one of the most prestigious positions in German musical life. Bach applied along with five other candidates. The city council, which was in charge of hiring the Kantor, first offered the position to Georg Philipp Telemann, who used the offer to get more money from his employer in Hamburg. The council then offered the position to Christoph Graupner who also used the offer to obtain more money from his employer. The council's third choice was Bach.

As Kantor, Bach was responsible for music at the four principal Leipzig churches as well as for any other aspects of the city's musical life controlled by the city council. Bach was also responsible for the musical training of the 50 to 60 boys in residence at the Thomasschule, the boarding school attached to the Thomaskirche. His church duties centered on the principal Sunday services and church feasts, but he could also be asked to provide music for weddings and funerals. In addition, Bach continued the tradition – inherited from previous Kantors – of composing a cantata on a text related to the Gospel reading for the day. In all, Bach composed roughly 300 cantatas; approximately 100 of these are now lost.

Bach remained Kantor in Leipzig from 1723 until his death in 1750 at age 65. After his death, Bach's music fell out of favor and was largely forgotten, although prominent composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, and Mendelssohn admired his compositions. Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 Berlin performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* marked the beginning of a revival of Bach's music.

In addition to the cantatas, Bach's other surviving extended choral-orchestral works include three Oratorios (Christmas, Easter, and Ascension), two Passion settings (St. John and St. Matthew), four Latin Missa Brevis settings, and the Latin *Magnificat in D* that we will perform for you today.

Bach's last large work was the *Mass in B minor*, consisting mainly of re-worked movements from earlier cantatas that he wrote over a 35 year period. The *Mass in B minor* is considered by many to be among the greatest choral works of all time.

Magnificat in D, BWV 243

In Lutheran Germany the Magnificat canticle would have been performed during Vespers services. Typically it would have been sung to the ninth psalmtone, but on high feast-days, it would have been sung polyphonically and accompanied by instruments such as with Bach's *Magnificat in D*.

As with Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, Bach divides the text into several movements, but deviates slightly from the more traditional division, splitting the third verse into two movements: a soprano solo ('Quia respexit') followed by the full chorus ('Omnes generationes'). Like Vivaldi, he sets the doxology as a single movement, but with two clear musical divisions. Also like Vivaldi, Bach set the 'Sicut erat' ('As it was in the beginning') to a condensed version of the music from the opening movement.

Like Vivaldi, Bach created different versions of his *Magnificat*. Bach's first version, composed in 1723, was set in the key of E-flat major. Recent research suggests that the E-flat version of Bach's *Magnificat* was first performed on July 2, 1723 for the Marian feast of the Visitation, the first major feast day service following Bach's May 30, 1723 start date as Thomaskantor. Bach performed the E-flat version again for Christmas 1723 and interspersed the work with four additional movements set to Christmas texts. In 1732 Bach revised the work, transposing it to D major. He also changed some harmonies and rhythms and also altered some instrumental parts, including changes of octave necessitated by the key change.

Bach conceived of the *Magnificat* on a grand scale, scoring the original version for vocal soloists of two sopranos, alto, tenor, and bass (SSATB), SSATB chorus, and an orchestra consisting of two oboes, three trumpets, timpani, violins, viola, and a continuo group consisting of cello, contrabass, bassoon, and organ. For his 1732 revision he replaced a pair of recorders (played by the oboists) with a pair of the more modern transverse flutes, including them in additional movements. He also dispensed with the Christmas interpolations, making the work suitable for a wide variety of feast days. Like the first performance of the E-flat version, the D major revision of 1732 also was performed on July 2 for the Marian feast of the Visitation.

The *Magnificat in D* opens with a grand, extended introduction by the full orchestra followed by a burst of joyful activity by the full chorus. Two soprano arias follow. The exuberant 'Et exultavit' is performed by second soprano and strings. The more meditative 'Quia respexit' for first soprano and oboe d'amore follows. Bach highlights the sense of humility described in the text with the plaintive tone of the oboe d'amore. Before the soprano can finish the last two words of the verse ('omnes generationes'), the full chorus interrupts her with a vigorous polyphonic choral movement. Bach's penchant for word painting here is obvious: the words 'omnes generationes' ('all generations') are sung by the full chorus, whose members represent all of humanity.

Again, Bach follows the choral movement with two solo movements. The sturdy 'Quia fecit' for bass and continuo instruments is followed by a duet for alto and tenor. Accompanied by flutes and strings, the lilting 'Et misericordia' is an exquisite depiction of the Lord's mercy. The musical arch of the *Magnificat in D* peaks at the seventh movement, 'Fecit potentiam' ('He has shown strength'), a massive chorus for the full chorus and orchestra. Two more solo arias follow. The

tenor soloist battles with unison violins in the tempestuous 'Deposuit potentes' ('He has the deposed the mighty'). The sweet alto solo 'Esurientes implevit bonis' ('He has filled the hungry with good things'), accompanied by two flutes and strings sets a charming pastoral scene. 'Suscepit Israel' ('He has helped Israel') is set for two soprano voices and alto and will be sung by the women of the chorus in today's performance. Here the *tonus peregrinus*, the psalmtone to which the Magnificat would be sung during typical Lutheran services, is played by the oboes in counterpoint with the voices. Bach concludes the work with another grand choral movement featuring the full chorus and orchestra. As with the other two composers on today's program, Bach uses material from the opening movement at the line 'sicut erat in principio' ('as it was in the beginning'). However, unlike the other two composers, Bach quickly launches into new musical material.

Though Bach's *Magnificat in D* is a relatively short work and features just six choral movements, it presents special challenges for the performers, particularly the singers. First, the chorus is divided into five voice parts rather than the usual four. But even more challenging are the many melismas (multiple notes on a single syllable of a word), which often must be performed at a very rapid pace. Furthermore, Bach's vocal lines are often instrumental in conception, featuring wide leaps and awkward intervals. Despite the technical challenges, the work is a remarkable gem among Bach's many outstanding works and is well worth the effort required to prepare it.