BACH MAGNIFICAT
AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

Sydney and Melbourne February/March 2014

Paul Dyer AO artistic director and conductor
Jane Sheldon soprano
Maximilian Riebl countertenor
Richard Butler tenor
Nick Gilbert bass
Brandenburg Choir
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

PROGRAM
JS Bach Magnificat BWV 243a in E-flat major

INTERVAL
JS Bach Suite No 4 BWV 1069 in D major
Kats-Chernin Prelude and Cube

Sydney City Recital Hall Angel Place
Wednesday 19 February, Friday 21 February, Wednesday 26 February,
Friday 28 February, Saturday 1 March all at 7pm, Saturday 1 March at 2pm

Melbourne Melbourne Recital Centre
Saturday 22 February at 7pm
Sunday 23 February at 5pm

The duration of this concert is approximately 2 hours including interval.
We kindly request that you switch off all electronic devices during the performance.
This concert will be broadcast live on ABC Classic FM on Saturday 1 March at 2pm.
Macquarie Group is again proud to be the principal partner of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

The Brandenburg’s 25th year promises to be a memorable one with a concert series featuring some of the baroque and early classical periods’ most renowned composers, as well as some more modern names. As the Brandenburg has done year after year, well-loved and lesser-known pieces are brought to life through the precision and passion of the Orchestra, the Brandenburg Choir and some of the most exciting names in international concert music.

This is a year of celebrating achievement. From small beginnings, the Brandenburg has become one of Australia’s great treasures. And although the Orchestra has evolved over more than two decades, what has remained constant is its dedication, expertise and an unfailing pursuit of excellence.

Macquarie recognises that these qualities can deliver powerful outcomes. It is a privilege to support the Brandenburg as it shares its love of the music of centuries past with audiences today. Whether it is in the concert hall or in the classrooms visited as part of its education program, the Brandenburg continues to make an enduring contribution to the legacy of baroque music.

We congratulate Paul Dyer, Bruce Applebaum and the Orchestra on their 25th anniversary and for creating a wonderful year of concerts. We hope you enjoy the performance.

Greg Ward
Deputy Managing Director, Macquarie Group Limited
It’s our 25th birthday! When I came to program our first series for 2014, I asked myself, ‘How do I celebrate 25 years of wonderful music-making with some of the most talented musicians performing across the world today?’ The answer was easy: I turned back to Bach, from whose Brandenburg Concertos our Orchestra and Choir take their name.

I wanted to capture and celebrate the exuberance and excitement of this very important milestone with all the flair, colour and recognition such an anniversary deserves. The grand style of Bach’s *Magnificat*, performed in this rarely-heard original version, is a choral masterpiece that will showcase the artistry of the Orchestra and Choir, and ensure there is not a member of the audience left unmoved.

With such an occasion to celebrate, I wanted to mark the event with a new work, specially commissioned from my old friend and celebrated composer Elena Kats-Chernin. Our new commission from Elena, *Prelude and Cube*, premieres in this series and pays homage to Bach, offering a glimpse into the world of the baroque and a triumphant celebration of the Brandenburg.

Co-founder Bruce Applebaum and I are immensely proud of this extraordinary, vital and dynamic orchestra and choir, and of all our achievements over 25 years. We receive no greater joy than performing for you, our wonderful audience and treasured members of the Brandenburg family. Without you we would not be here today, and on behalf of the Orchestra and Choir, we all thank you.

Paul Dyer AO  
Artistic Director and Conductor
AUSTRALIAN BRANDENBURG ORCHESTRA

BACH MAGNIFICAT

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Jane Sheldon soprano
Maximilian Riebl countertenor
Richard Butler tenor
Nick Gilbert bass
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THE MUSICIANS ON PERIOD INSTRUMENTS

Baroque Violin 1
Matt Bruce, Sydney
(Resident Concertmaster)*
Catherine Shugg, Melbourne
Aaron Brown, New York City
Bianca Porcheddu, Canberra¹
Skye McIntosh, Sydney

Baroque Violin 2
Ben Dollman, Adelaide**
Sarah Dunn, Sydney
Lorraine Moxey, Orange
Tim Willis, Melbourne
Stephanie Eldridge, Melbourne

Baroque Viola
Monique O’Dea, Sydney²
Shelley Sörensen, Sydney
Marianne Yeomans, Sydney

Baroque Cello
Jamie Hey, Melbourne**
Anthea Cottee, Sydney
Rosemary Quinn, Sydney

Baroque Double Bass
Kirsty McCahon, Sydney*¹

Baroque Flute
Melissa Farrow, Sydney**

Baroque Recorder
Melissa Farrow, Sydney**
Kirsten Barry, Melbourne*

Baroque Oboe
Kirsten Barry, Melbourne**
Adam Masters, Melbourne
Sophie Hoffman, Sydney

Baroque Bassoon
Peter Moore, Perth*

Baroque Trumpet
Leanne Sullivan, Sydney*
Simon Wolnizer, Sydney
Rainer Saville, Sydney
Alexandra Bieri, Sydney

Baroque Horn
Darryl Poulisen, Perth*
Dorée Dixon, Perth

Saxophone
Christina Leonard, Sydney*

Baroque Timpani
Brian Nixon, Sydney*

Theorbo
Tommie Andersson, Sydney**

Harpsichord
Paul Dyer, Sydney*

Organ
Heidi Jones, Sydney*

BRANDENBURG CHOIR

Soprano 1
Belinda Montgomery
Samanta Ellis
Jennifer Rollins
Josie Ryan
Meinir Thomas

Soprano 2
Sarah Ampil
Anna Sandström
Adria Watkin
Veronica Willing
Hester Wright

Altos
Philip Butterworth
Tim Chung
Chris Hopkins
Alison Keene
Mark Nowicki
Natalie Shea
Paul Tenorio
Jenny Ward

Tenor
Spencer Darby
Miguel Iglesias
Brendan McMullan
Edmond Park
Eric Petersen
Richard Sanchez
Paul Sutton

Bass
Craig Everingham
Ashley Giles
Simon Masterton
Sébastien Maury
Philip Murray
Rodney Smith

* Denotes Brandenburg Core Musician
+ Section Leader
1 Bianca Porcheddu appears courtesy of St. Francis Xavier College, Florey ACT (staff)
2 Monique O’Dea appears courtesy of Presbyterian Ladies College, Sydney (staff)
Continuo organ by Henk Klop, Garderen, Netherlands 2004 supplied & prepared by Carey Beebe Harpsichords.
Organ preparation by Ken Faulkner in Melbourne.
“…What stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile, they laugh…there’s a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance.”

Sydney Morning Herald

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, led by charismatic Artistic Director Paul Dyer, celebrates the music of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with excellence, flair and joy. Comprising leading specialists in informed performance practice from all over Australia, the Brandenburg performs using original edition scores and instruments of the period, breathing fresh life and vitality into baroque and classical masterpieces – as though the music has just sprung from the composer’s pen.

The Orchestra’s name pays tribute to the Brandenburg Concertos of J.S. Bach, whose musical genius was central to the baroque era. Celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2014, the Brandenburg continues to deliver exhilarating performances. The Brandenburg has collaborated with such acclaimed and dynamic virtuosi as Andreas Scholl, Fiona Campbell, Philippe Jaroussky, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Emma Kirkby, Andreas Staier, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Genevieve Lacey, Andrew Manze and more.

Through its annual subscription series in Sydney and Melbourne, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra performs before a live audience in excess of 40,000 people, and hundreds of thousands more through national broadcasts on ABC Classic FM. The Brandenburg also has a regular commitment to performing in regional Australia. Since 2003 the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra has been a member of the Major Performing Arts Group, which comprises 28 flagship national arts organisations supported by the Australia Council for the Arts.

Since its beginning, the Brandenburg has been popular with both audiences and critics. In 1998 The Age proclaimed the Brandenburg “had reached the ranks of the world’s best period instrument orchestras”. In 2010 the UK’s Gramophone Magazine declared “the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is Australia’s finest period-instrument ensemble. Under their inspiring musical director Paul Dyer, their vibrant concerts and recordings combine historical integrity with electrifying virtuosity and a passion for beauty.”

The Australian proclaimed that “a concert with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is like stepping back in time, as the sounds of period instruments resurrect baroque and classical works with reverence and authority.”


Discover more at brandenburg.com.au
In January 2013 Paul Dyer was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his ‘distinguished service to the performing arts, particularly orchestral music as a director, conductor and musician, through the promotion of educational programs and support for emerging artists’ in recognition of his achievements as Co-founder and Artistic Director of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Brandenburg Choir.

Paul Dyer is one of Australia’s leading specialists in period performance styles. He founded the ABO in 1990 and has been the orchestra’s Artistic Director since that time. Paul has devoted his performing life to the harpsichord, fortepiano and chamber organ as well as conducting the Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir.

Paul completed postgraduate studies in solo performance with Bob van Asperen at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, performed with many major European orchestras and undertook ensemble direction and orchestral studies with Sigiswald Kuijken and Frans Brüggen.

Paul appears as a soloist, continuo player and conductor with many major ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Queensland Orchestra, Australia Ensemble, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Opera Australia, Australian Youth Orchestra, Victorian State Opera, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Vancouver, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London.

Paul has performed with many prominent international soloists including Andreas Scholl, Cyndia Sieden, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Andreas Staier, Marc Destributé, Christoph Prégardien, Hidemi Suzuki, Manfredo Kraemer, Andrew Manze, Yvonne Kenny, Emma Kirkby, Philippe Jaroussky and many others. In 1998 he made his debut in Tokyo with countertenor Derek Lee Ragin, leading an ensemble of Brandenburg soloists, and in August 2001 Paul toured the orchestra to Europe with guest soloist Andreas Scholl. As a recitalist, he has toured Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States.

Paul is an inspiring teacher and has been a staff member at various Conservatories throughout the world. In 1995 he received a Churchill Fellowship and he has won numerous international and national awards for his CD recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir, including the 1998, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2010 ARIA Awards for Best Classical album. Paul is Patron of St Gabriel’s School for Hearing Impaired Children. In 2003 Paul was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for his services to Australian society and the advancement of music. In 2010 Paul was awarded the Sydney University Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement and in 2013 was made an Officer of The Order of Australia (AO).
Elena Kats-Chernin was born in Tashkent, former USSR. She moved to Sydney in 1975.

Kats-Chernin studied music in Moscow (Gnessin Academy 1972-75), Sydney (Sydney Conservatorium of Music 1975-80) and Hanover (Musikhochschule 1980-1982) with the support of the DAAD scholarship. While in Germany she wrote and produced numerous scores for drama and dance productions at the Bochumer Schauspielhaus, Berliner Schaubuehne and Vienna Burgtheater, among others. She returned to Australia in 1994 and has been based in Sydney since.

“Deep Sea Dreamimg” featured at the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Olympic Games, choreographed by Meryl Tankard.

Elena wrote "Fire" and "Water" for Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the Opening Ceremony of the 2003 Sydney World Rugby Cup.

The Concert Suite "Wild Swans" for wordless soprano (Jane Sheldon) and orchestra (TSO) was released on a CD of the same name by ABC Classics in 2005. The piece "Eliza Aria" from this CD has been chosen for a series of animated TV commercials for Lloyds TSB in UK between 2007 and 2013. Besides reaching the top spots in the UK I-Tunes Classic Charts, it has also been remixed by several DJ’s, as well as made into a pop song titled "The Journey Continues". It was third most played piece among themes for commercials in 2012 in UK on Radio and TV.

Elena’s "Russian Rag" was used as Max’s theme in the 2009 claymation "Mary and Max" by Oscar winning director Adam Elliot. It was also the theme for "Late Night Live" on ABC Radio National for many years. In 2011 it was replaced by "Eliza Aria".

On 16 September 2012 her adaptation of 3 Monteverdi operas, a collaboration with the Australian director Barrie Kosky, was premiered at the Komische Oper Berlin and broadcast live on 3SAT TV across Europe.

In 2012 Kats-Chernin was featured in “Creative Minds”, a 6 part TV portrait documentary series by Robin Hughes.

Elena has received numerous awards including Green Room and Helpmann Awards for the score for the ballet "Wild Swans" choreographed by Meryl Tankard for the Australian Ballet 2004, two-year Creative Fellowship of the Australia Council 2005-2006, Limelight Award 2011 for best composition of the year for the "Symphonia Eluvium" and a Sydney Theatre Award 2013 for the best score in a mainstream production for music to Ensemble Theatre’s play "Frankenstein".
JANE SHELDON
SOPRANO

Praised by the *New York Times* for singing “sublimely” and described as “superb, with a voice of penetrating beauty, precision and variegated colours” (*Sydney Morning Herald*), New York-based Australian soprano Jane Sheldon has sung under the direction of William Christie, Charles Dutoit, Antony Walker, and Reinbert de Leeuw. Specialising in early music and active in the creation and performance of new works, she has performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Pinchgut Opera, Boston Camerata, Sydney Symphony, Halcyon, and Synergy Percussion. In New York she works with Wet Ink, Talea, and Ekmeles, and appeared in New York City Opera’s 2012 Vox Festival. In 2011 Jane was awarded Performance of the Year at the Australian Art Music Awards for *The Origin Cycle*, with Ensemble Offspring. This was one of a number of projects Jane has co-curated which make connections between art and science. This work has involved collaborations with Harvard University, Stanford University, the Australian National University, and the Australian Museum.

Jane’s most recent album, *North + South*, was nominated for a 2013 ARIA Award for Best Classical Album. Throughout 2013 Jane toured extensively for composer John Zorn’s 60th birthday celebrations, appearing at Lincoln Center Festival, New York’s Metropolitan Museum, London’s Barbican, the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and at the Jerusalem Sacred Music Festival. In March of this year, the tour comes to a close at the Adelaide Festival. Other upcoming engagements include an Australian tour with Seraphim Trio, presenting *Last Words*, a song cycle Jane commissioned from composer Andrew Ford, Morton Feldman’s *Three Voices* for New York City’s Spectrum, and Stockhausen’s *Stimmung* for Ekmeles’ Just Intonation Festival, also in New York.

MAXIMILIAN RIEBL
COUNTERTENOR

Born in Melbourne, Max began his career as a boy soprano in Vienna. Max has performed a variety of roles, including Cupid in the Vienna Chamber Opera’s production of Blow’s Venus and Adonis and was engaged in principal solo roles with the Wiener Kammeroper and the Hoffkapelle Ensemble, performing frequently in the Hoffburg and the Musikverein. Max studied at the Musikgymnasium Wien, under Sylvia Purcar, teacher of famous counter-tenors Terrence Wey and Max Emanuel Cencic.

Max has performed solo roles in Bach’s *Weinachtsoratorium*, Mozart’s *Gloria* and Organ Solo Mass as well as Handel’s *Messiah* with the K&K Philharmonic of Vienna, and Vivaldi’s *Gloria* with the Victorian Chamber Orchestra. On top of his Oratorio work, he has appeared at a number of private concerts including Dame Elizabeth Murdoch’s *Opera in the Roses*. Max also played a prominent role in Simon Stone’s production of *Hamlet*, singing Baroque arias throughout the production alongside Toby Schmitz and Robyn Nevin.

Max joined the Brandenburg Choir in 2009 and made his debut as soloist with the Brandenburg Choir in *Noël!* *Noël!* in 2013.
A Gramophone Award winner in 2013 in the early music category with the Gabrieli Consort (A New Venetian Coronation 1595), English tenor Richard Butler now lives in Sydney’s Inner West. While in Europe, Richard’s many performances included evangelist in JS Bach’s Passions, singing the works of Handel, Purcell and other notable composers as soloist with groups including The English Concert, the Parley of Instruments, the Early Opera Company and the Gabrieli Consort. Richard was also a choral scholar at King’s College Cambridge and a lay-clerk at Westminster Cathedral.

Since coming to Australia, recent highlights include Pastore in Monteverdi’s l’Orfèo and soloist in Mozart’s C minor mass for the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Paul Dyer AO. Richard was principal soloist in performances of Monteverdi’s Vespers for St George’s Cathedral, Perth, and St Mary’s Cathedral Sydney. He was also Ruggiero in Ondine Production’s La Liberazione di Ruggiero by Francesca Caccini. Other highlights include, Evangelist in the St John Passion by JS Bach for Christopher Bowen and the Sydney Graduate Choir, Acis in Handel’s Acis and Galatea for St James, King St, Handel’s Messiah for St Mary’s and St Andrew’s Sydney, Sailor in Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas for the Sydney Philharmonia, and CPE Bach’s Magnificat for the University of New South Wales.

This year future projects include Bach Passions in Perth and Melbourne in April, the Autumn Bowral Festival in which Richard will be singing three concerts as guest soloist for the Australian Historical Performance Initiative singing, Bach and Buxtehude cantatas, Monteverdi, Handel and lesser known French baroque songs. He will also be performing in the Australian Chamber Orchestra’s ‘Timeline’ concert series as part of a one-per-part small ensemble.

Nick is a versatile Baritone who performs in theatrical, cabaret and concert productions across a broad range of styles and genres.

Performing regularly in musical theatre, Nick’s recent credits include productions of Company, A Little Night Music, Jekyll and Hyde, Les Misérables as well as numerous small theatre and cabaret productions.

In 2012, Nick performed in the Brandenburg’s production of Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo (Spiriti/Ninfi) and as a soloist in the Brandenburg’s 2012 series, Noël! Noël! He is a regular member of the Australian Brandenburg Choir and various small choral and a cappella ensembles around Sydney and has featured as a Bass soloist in a number of recordings and concerts with the Sydney-based Parsons Affayre, most recently in their 2013 recording of Buxtehude’s Membra Jesu Nostri.
The Brandenburg Choir is renowned for its astonishing vocal blend and technical virtuosity. Established by Artistic Director Paul Dyer in 1999 to perform in the first-ever Noël! Noël! Brandenburg Christmas concert, the Choir has become a regular part of the Brandenburg year. The first Noël! Noël! concert combined medieval chant and polyphony as well as carols from around the world in their original settings and languages.

"Music from earlier centuries often requires the sound of the human voice. I wanted to put a group of excellent singers together adding a rich complement to our period instruments. Our Choir is a ravishing blend of radiant Sydney singers", says Paul Dyer.

Originally 13 voices, the Choir joined our Orchestra and wowed audiences with truly beautiful renditions of both familiar Christmas favourites and rarely-heard sacred works, performing music from the eleventh century to the baroque. It was an instant success, combining musical, literary and scholarly performances that thrilled audiences and critics alike.

"There was vigour and passion in this performance just as there was great subtlety and finely shaded nuances of feeling and colour.” Sydney Morning Herald

So popular was the Brandenburg's Noël! Noël! concert series, that in 2001 a CD was recorded live at City Recital Hall Angel Place. This beautiful collection of festive music is available in leading music stores. In addition to the annual Noël! Noël! concerts, the Choir now regularly performs as part of the Brandenburg’s annual subscription season. Bach Cantatas, Handel Coronation Anthems, and Mozart’s great Requiem and Coronation Mass are among the best loved performances of the Choir. Their performance of Handel’s Ode for St Cecilia’s Day received critical acclaim, with the Sydney Morning Herald declaring: “[The Brandenburg Choir is] one of the finest choruses one could put together in this town.”

The current members of the Brandenburg Choir are all professional singers, many of whom also hold music degrees, but they do not all sing full time. From music teachers to lawyers, business managers to medical doctors and nurses, each member looks forward to the opportunity to perform with the Brandenburg throughout the year.

"The Brandenburg Choir was polished and responsive, powerfully conveying the work's celebratory magnificence in their full-voiced climaxes sung in unison." The Australian
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

If Johann Sebastian Bach and his admirable son, Emmanuel, ... had been fortunately employed to compose for the stage and public of great capitals, such as Naples, Paris, or London, and for performers of the first class, doubtless they would have simplified their style; [Sebastian] would have sacrificed all unmeaning art and contrivance, ... and both, by writing in a style more popular, and generally intelligible and pleasing, would have extended their fame, and been indisputably the greatest musicians of the present century.

This was the view of Charles Burney, English musicologist, in 1789, summing up the eighteenth century’s opinion of JS Bach. In his own time Bach was famous as a virtuoso keyboard player, but he was not thought of as the unique musical genius who is now recognised as one of the most influential composers in the Western classical tradition.

At least part of the reason for this was that unlike his better travelled contemporaries Handel and Telemann, Bach lived almost his whole life confined to a small area of about 100 km square in central Germany. He made only rare visits to the nearest major cities of Berlin and Dresden, and one visit to Hamburg, about 300 kilometres away. In the first half of his career he worked as a musician in the households of minor nobility where he composed to order, as required by his employer. Opera composition, the height of success for an eighteenth century composer, would have brought fame and wealth but because Bach never lived in a major city or worked for a prince with his own opera company, he wrote precisely none.

Bach’s last and most important position was as civic music director in Leipzig, but a lucrative opera career eluded him there as well. The post was one of the most prestigious musical appointments in Germany but although Leipzig was an important commercial centre which attracted international visitors to its trade fairs, it was not a royal seat and its opera theatre had been closed before Bach’s arrival.

Magnificat in E flat major BWV 243a

Bach’s last years as a court musician, when he worked for Prince Leopold of Anhalt–Cöthen, were among the most productive and artistically satisfying of his career, but they were also marked by tragedy for Bach and his family with the death of his fifth child in 1719. High rates of infant mortality were a part of everyday life in the eighteenth century, and only ten of Bach’s twenty children survived past childhood. Worse however was to come just eight months later, when he returned home from a short trip with the Prince to learn that his wife of twelve years, Maria Barbara, had died suddenly while he had been away. Almost immediately, spurred on by the Prince’s decision to downgrade his musical establishment, Bach began to look for a new and better position, but it took nearly three years until he was able to move his family and new wife Anna Magdalena to Leipzig where he had been hired by the town council as city music director. Bach was the council’s third choice: “since the best could not be obtained, a mediocre candidate would have to be accepted”. He was to remain in Leipzig until his death in 1750.
The position was a prestigious one, but it involved a punishing workload. Bach was responsible for overseeing the music at all four main city churches and for the musical training of the students at the St Thomas’s school, as well as directing the choir and the orchestra for the concerted works which were performed every Sunday at the two principal churches. In his first five years in Leipzig he set himself the task of composing a new cantata for each Sunday and feast day, about sixty cantatas a year. In this period he also composed the *St Matthew* and *St John Passions*, and the first two sections of the gigantic *Mass in B minor*.

By the time Bach arrived in Leipzig, in May 1723, Easter had passed, and the first major opportunity to impress upon his new employers that they had made the right decision was the next major religious festival, Christmas. They would surely have been left in no doubt: for a period of sixteen days of religious celebration Bach composed nine new pieces including six cantatas and the *Magnificat*, which was for Christmas Day itself and is one of his most technically challenging choral works.

The *Magnificat* is an ancient element of Christian worship and still forms part of the evening liturgy in Catholic and Protestant services. Its text comes from the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament of the Bible, where it is sung by Mary in praise of God when she first feels the baby Jesus move in her womb. The *Magnificat* was set by many composers.

Almost all of Bach’s sacred choral music is in German, because that was the language used in the Lutheran churches in Leipzig. The *Magnificat* was an exception, because although it was sung in German on ordinary Sundays, traditionally it was performed in Latin on major church festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Bach also followed another local tradition by adding four additional movements, with texts in German and Latin, which encapsulate the Christmas story. These movements are labelled A to D in the text and translation.

**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR**

Bach chose to divide the text into twelve short movements, spread between four soloists and five part choir, accompanied by probably all the instruments he had available in order to make the biggest, most extravagant sound: three trumpets, timpani, oboes and flutes, bassoons, strings, and organ. He had promised the town council that his compositions would not be “too theatrical”, however all instruments and choir are heard in the flamboyant opening movement whose exuberance emphasises the joyful nature of the occasion.

Throughout the *Magnificat* Bach makes masterful use of the music to depict the text. The first Soprano II aria “Et exultavit” contains a joyful leaping figure which demonstrates
Mary’s exultation, while the following aria for Soprano I, “Quia respexit humilitatem”, uses falling phrases in the vocal and solo oboe lines to represent Mary’s humility. Bach emphasises the importance of the lasting nature of the blessing given to Mary by God through setting the words “omnes generationes” (all generations) as a separate movement for choir. The voices continually overlap to represent many succeeding generations, who come together in an expression of unity at the end of the movement.

The second interpolated text, “Freut euch”, is the imagined response of the shepherds to the angels’ news of Christ’s birth. The following duet, “Et misericordia”, has a lilting rhythm which Bach’s audience would immediately have recognised as pastoral, associated with the countryside and shepherds. However on “timentibus” (fear) repeated notes in the vocal parts make the voices appear to falter, and to make sure the audience get the message, Bach has the tenor sing a long trill on the word to end the movement.

There is a return to the opening mood and full orchestra in the central movement of the work, “Fecit potentiam” (he has shown might), where the parts are largely together until they each go their own way on the word “dispersit” (scattered). Dotted rhythms, trumpets, and long runs which usually signified the power of the king here demonstrate instead the power of God. On the word “superbos” (the proud) the trumpet plays the highest note then available to it while the sopranos sing their highest note as well. The final stern Adagio is one of most powerful moments in all Bach.

The following aria for tenor, “Deposuit potentes”, is a wonderful example of word painting. Those who had been so high in the previous movement are now brought low, musically speaking, by falling scales on the word “deposuit” (he has put down the mighty), while rising scales on “exaltavit” (he will exalt the lowly) end on the tenor’s top B flat.

Bach set the last of the interpolated text settings (“Virga Jesse floruit”) as a duet, which he reused in a later cantata. Only a small section of the original duet survives and has been reconstructed from the cantata. The text refers to the prophecy in the Old Testament Book of Isaiah that a messiah who will save the people of Israel will come from the family of Jesse, which is metaphorically likened to the branch of a tree. Bach continues the idea of the metaphor with flowery runs which seem to grow from each part in turn.

For the Gloria, Bach uses triplets to signify the Holy Trinity (God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit), while the final chorus echoes the opening, giving symmetry to the work as a whole.

This is the first version of the Magnificat. Bach revised it in the early 1730s, changing it to the more conventional key of D major and removing the interpolated additional movements. It is that second version which is more commonly performed.
BACH
MAGNIFICAT

1. Magnificat anima mea Dominum

2. Et exsultavit spiritus meus
   in Deo, salutari meo.

A. Von Himmel hoch, da komm ich her,
   Ich bring euch gute neue Mär;
   Der guten Mär bring ich so viel,
   Davon ich singen und sagen will.

3. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae:
   ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent

4. Omnes generationes,

5. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est:
   et sanctum nomen ejus.

B. Freut euch und jubiliert;
   Zu Bethlehem gefunden wird
   Das herzliebe Jesulein,
   das soll euer Freud und Wonne sein.

6. Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies
   timentibus eum.

7. Fecit potentiam in bracchio suo:
   dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

C. Gloria in excelsis Deo!
   Et in terra pax hominibus, bonae voluntatis!

8. Deposuit potentes de sede,
   et exaltavit humiles.

9. Esurientes implevit bonis:
   et divites dimisit inanes.

D. Virga Jesse floruit,
   Emanuel noster apparuit;
   Induit carnem hominis,
   Fit puer delectabilis;
   Alleluia.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord

2. And my spirit rejoices
   in God my Saviour.

A. From highest heaven I come,
   I bring you good news;
   I bring so much good news
   That I must sing and tell of it.

3. For he has regarded the lowliness of his
   handmaid; behold, henceforth shall call me blessed

4. All generations,

5. Because he who is mighty has done great
   things for me, and holy is his name.

B. Rejoice and be glad;
   In Bethlehem was found
   Dear little Jesus,
   who shall be our joy and comfort.

6. And his mercy continues from generation to
   generation, for those who fear him.

7. He has shown might with his arm:
   he has scattered the proud who have conceit
   in their hearts.

C. Glory to God on high!
   And on earth peace and goodwill to all people.

8. He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
   and has exalted the lowly.

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

D. The branch of Jesse has flowered,
   Our saviour has appeared;
   He has taken human form,
   as a charming boy.
   Alleluia!
10. Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.

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


10. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy,

11. the mercy promised to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his children, for ever.

12. 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.

INTERVAL

Orchestral Suite No. 4 in D major, BWV 1069

Ouverture
Bourrée I & Bourrée II
Gavotte
Menuet I & Menuet II
Réjouissance

It is thought that Bach composed a large number of orchestral works but only thirty survive, including this and three other orchestral suites. The history of their composition and early performances is a mystery. Nothing is known about the occasions for which they were written, and they exist only in manuscript copies that date from Bach’s time in Leipzig. Recent scholarship, however, speculates that Bach wrote all four suites while he was working as Kapellmeister (music director) to Prince Leopold of Anhalt–Cöthen between 1717 and 1723, a period when he also composed the Brandenburg Concertos, solo violin partitas and sonatas, and the solo cello suites. Prince Leopold was a keen amateur musician who had employed some of the finest players in Europe when the royal Berlin orchestra was dissolved by King Friedrich–Wilhelm I of Prussia, no music lover, in 1713. Bach composed some of his most famous instrumental music for these virtuoso musicians.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

The instrumentation of this suite, with strings, three trumpets, three oboes, bassoon and drums, certainly suggests that it was written for a significant state event at a prince’s court. The orchestral suite was originally entitled “Ouverture”, which signified a long first movement in the form of a French overture followed by a number of dance movements. The overture (meaning “opening” or “entrance”) was developed by Jean–Baptist Lully in the 1650s to announce the entrance of the French king Louis XIV before an opera or ballet. Its majestic, exaggerated opening emphasised the grandeur of the court and the importance of the king, while the faster fugal second section provided a lively counterbalance to the formality of the opening.
ELENA KATS–CHERNIN

(1957 – )

Prelude and Cube

Paul Dyer has known celebrated Russian–Australian composer Elena Kats–Chernin since they were students together at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, so it was a natural choice for him to commission her to compose a new work to celebrate the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra’s 25th anniversary. According to Kats–Chernin, “it was a fantastic honour but also a huge responsibility to compose a work for such an occasion. For an anniversary piece it was important to involve everyone in the orchestra. For me it was intriguing to work with period instruments. A lot of pieces I write start with a particular trigger. In this case it was the Bach Magnificat.”

Although this is her first piece for the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra it is not Kats–Chernin’s first work using period instruments. She has previously composed pieces for theorbo, viola da gamba and natural trumpet, and created the instrumentation and adaptation of three Monteverdi operas for the Komische Oper Berlin, directed by Barrie Kosky, in 2012.

Kats–Chernin’s orchestration for Prelude and Cube is almost the same as Bach’s for the Magnificat. “My biggest challenge in writing this work was to feature every instrument!”, says Kats–Chernin, a challenge one would think was made even bigger with the addition of a saxophone at the request of Paul Dyer, however she found that this very colourful combination of instruments works well. The sound of the soprano saxophone soars over the top of the core period instruments in the piece, the strings, organ, choir and winds.

BACH
MAGNIFICAT

A suite was meant to entertain, to please the ear, and the dances which followed the overture were light–hearted and joyful ones of a kind that the audience would have known well. A Bourée was a humourous, rustic dance from the Auvergne region in France. The Gavotte was particularly lively, danced with many small leaps and crossings of the legs. The Menuet (minuet), the favourite aristocratic dance of the eighteenth century, was also danced “with extremely quick and small steps”, and was meant to be graceful and lively.

The virtuosic writing for brass and woodwinds throughout the work reveals the standard of the players that Bach had at his disposal. Particularly notable is a long exposed passage for winds in the fast second section of the Ouverture, relentless fast passagework in Bourée II for the bassoon, and the first trumpet’s high Ds and Es. The final movement is a Réjouissance (rejoicing), a term used in the eighteenth century to refer to a public celebration of an important state event such as a royal birth. It also described the last movement in a suite in the French style such as this one, with the lively and joyous mood enhanced by trumpets and drums.

ELENA KATS–CHERNIN (1957 – )

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Kats–Chernin did not aim to write in the baroque style, but imagines the work instead as a glimpse into the period. She names Bach as her favourite composer: through her training as a pianist she is very familiar with Bach’s keyboard works but wanted to avoid either quoting or copying Bach. Rather, she describes her composition as her response to the Magnificat and to Bach’s creations.

Kats–Chernin has used some elements of baroque style which are also musical devices used by Bach, for example the moving bass and particular chord sequences which we associate with Bach’s music. Asked about the title of the piece, Kats–Chernin said, “Originally I had thought of writing a Prelude and Fugue in tribute to Bach, but I don’t write fugues. A cube is three dimensional, so I had in mind something like a Rubik’s cube, where the parts are moving but still fit together. Some of Bach’s chord sequences which I have used to me are like a cube within a cube.”

Prelude and Cube took Kats–Chernin about four months to write. She composed it first as a piano score, which is her usual practice, then added vocal texts and finally orchestration. Composing for her is an intense process, as she feels that there are always many directions in which a piece could go. She drew the texts from the Magnificat (a translation into German of the first section) and from a hymn by Martin Luther. The last text in Cube is particularly significant to Kats–Chernin as her intention is that her work praises Bach himself and his creations. Although she decided on the text after she had composed the choral parts she feels that the words fell almost naturally into place in the score.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Kats–Chernin describes the first movement as expansive and opulent, “I wanted to combine both pomp and passion for this majestic orchestra, leaving plenty of room for individual colour and large-scale emotion.” The second movement is more zesty with a robust rhythmic drive and vigorous feeling. Kats–Chernin uses layers of sound to create musical texture, sometimes delicate, sometimes dense. Here she plays with text and has the choir in some places sing nonsense syllables, a common feature of her vocal writing which adds to the layering effect.

Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn,  
und mein Geist freut sich Gottes,  
meines Heilandes.  

Von Himmel hoch, da komm ich her,  
Ich bring euch gute neue Mär;  
Der guten Mär bring ich so viel,  
Davon ich singen und sagen will.  

Wie wunderbar sind deine Werke alle morgen.  

My soul glorifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God,  
my saviour.  

From highest heaven I come,  
I bring you good news;  
I bring so much good news  
That I must sing and tell of it.  

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