

# Bach Beat

The Newsletter of the Bach Cantata Choir



January 2015

www.bachcantatachoir.org

Vol.8, No.3

## Artistic Director

Ralph Nelson

## Accompanist

John Vergin

## Board of Directors

### President

Ralph Nelson

### Secretary

Kristin Sterling

### Treasurer

Julie Beck

## Members at Large

Don Coates

Paula Holm Jensen

Jim Hook

Barbara Lance

Pat Messick

Sue Nelson

Woody Richen

The Bach Cantata Choir's mission is to sing the entire set of cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach over a period of 30 years.

The BCC is a legally organized non-profit corporation under Oregon law, and a registered 501(c)(3) corporation with the IRS. Donations to the choir are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law and regulation.

The *BachBeat* newsletter is published cyclically by the BCC.

## The Glorious Baroque

By John Chilgren—Bass

On this first Sunday of February 2015, known among Bach Cantata Choir singers and audience members as SuperBach Sunday, will be presented two components of two separate masses, the *Gloria* from Antonio Lotti's *Missa Sapientiae* and the *Gloria* from J.S. Bach's B-Minor Mass.

The history of Bach's *Gloria* was detailed in *BachBeat*, Vol.8, No.1. The *Gloria* represents the second half of Bach's *Missa Brevis*, submitted to the Dresden Court in his aspirations to secure the position of Kapellmeister there. This *Missa Brevis* (*Kyrie*, performed last October, and *Gloria*) eventually evolved into the complete B Minor Mass as we know it today.

**Antonio Pasqualin Lotti** was born in Venice on January 5, 1667 into a musical family. His father working as a *Kapellmeister* in Hanover in Saxony, which is more than 700 miles from Venice. Lotti's younger siblings were born in Hanover leading some to believe that Lotti himself may have been born in Germany. At the age of 16 he studied with the famed opera composer and organist Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690) at San Marco (St. Mark's Basilica), and at age 20 became a paid alto singer at the *Capella Ducale di San Marco*. Shortly thereafter he was elected as assistant to second organist at San Marco and in 1704 was promoted to first organist, a prestigious position. Over the next 30 years he would write 27 operas, many performed in Venice, as well as

motets, cantatas, masses, arias, and instrumental works. His music is considered to be a bridge between the Baroque and emerging Classical period that began about 1730, Haydn and Mozart being among the most famous and therefore representatives of the Classic Era.

Also at age 20 he enrolled in the *Sovvegno dei musicisti di Santa Cecilia*, a kind of trade union for musicians and composers, one of the founders being the father of Antonio Vivaldi, Lotti's more famous Venetian contemporary. The collective's president was none other than Lotti's teacher Legrenzi, who influenced Vivaldi as well. Both Lotti and Vivaldi taught music in local hospitals (*Ospedales*) that provided food, shelter, and education for orphans or abandoned children, most of which were female.



Antonio Lotti

Before his marriage in 1714 to his soprano wife, Santa Stella, he published a collection of madrigals in 1705 dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I. His popularity and reputation as an opera composer caught the attention of the Elector of Saxony, Friedrich Augustus I, who offered him employment in Dresden. Lotti accepted the offer and in 1717 traveled to Dresden with his wife, other musicians from San Marco, and librettist Antonio Maria Luchini, whose texts were set to music by G. F. Handel and Vivaldi as well Lotti. Lotti wrote several more operas and sacred music for the Dresden Catholic court in the two years he was employed there with his diva wife singing major operatic roles.

While in Dresden, he would have met Jan Zelenka (1679-1745) (see *BachBeat* Vol.8, No.1)

who was an employed musician at the Dresden Court. Zelenka had copied several of Lotti's works, including the *Missa Sapientiae*, a copy of which was also found in J.S. Bach's personal library. As Bach and Zelenka were colleagues, it is likely that Bach acquired a copy of this mass from Zelenka.

Returning to his position at San Marco in Venice, Lotti continued to compose mainly church and chamber music and in 1736 successfully competed for the coveted *maestro di capella* position at San Marco, which he held until his death in 1740. He was buried in the church of San Geminiano, completed in 1552, which faced San Marco in the Piazza. This church was destroyed by Napoleon in 1807 so Lotti's final resting place is unknown.



Church of San Geminiano

The *Missa Sapientiae* (Wise Mass), the nickname given by Zelenka to Lotti's *Mass in G-Minor*, consists of a *Kyrie* and *Gloria*. It was performed using Zelenka's version for a Dresden performance ca. 1730. Lotti was a conservative composer, often to the point of foregoing any instrumental accompaniment and thus it is no surprise that Zelenka would add instrumentation to a few of Lotti's works. It's possible that J.S. Bach also performed this arrangement for a Leipzig performance between 1732-1735. Did the *Missa Sapientiae* influence Bach's *Kyrie* and *Gloria*? Some experts have identified similarities between Bach's *B-minor Mass* and the *Missa Sapientiae*. Even G. F. Handel is known to have borrowed parts of it as well as other works of Lotti for his own oratorios.

J.S. Bach: "Gloria" from Mass in B minor  
 Handel: Trio Sonata HWV 381  
 Lotti: "Gloria" from Missa Sapientiae  
 Rose City Park Presbyterian Church  
 Sunday, February 1, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.

## SuperBach Sunday!

BACH CANTATA CHOIR  
 3570 NE MATHISON PLACE  
 PORTLAND OR 97212



## BachGround

### Meet the Author—John Chilgren

John Chilgren began singing at age 3 and is a member of the BCC and Portland Symphonic Choir and clarinetist in The Beat Goes On Marching Band in Portland. Previously, he sang with the Portland Choral Arts Ensemble, the Corvallis Madrigal Society, the Pullman-Moscow Choral Society, WSU Men's Glee Club, and the Gonzaga Concert Choir, among others and for 20 years was pianist and choral director for three United Methodist churches in SW Portland. He has been a science writer for more than 40 years and currently reviews a wide variety of educational material for AAAS Science Books & Films.

## Thank You!

### B Minor Mass Sponsorships Exceed Goal

Our tenth anniversary season is shaping up to be one of our best yet thanks to your generous support of our season-long performance of the B Minor Mass. A complete list of season sponsors may be found on the Support page of our website.

Sponsors enjoyed their first special event of the season on December 26th at the home of Ralph and Susan Nelson, singing holiday songs for BachSing Day! We are planning the next events, a tour of Bond Organ Builders, an All Classical Thursdays @ Three performance, and a birthday party for Bach in the coming months. Sponsors... watch your email for more details!