

Bach by Candlelight at Trinity (November 21)

by J.D. Goddard



On Friday, November 21, Trinity Cathedral's Choir, Chamber Singers and instrumentalists, directed by Todd Wilson, presented a "Bach by Candlelight" concert in their home church with violinist Jinjoo Cho, oboist Danna Sundet and organist Parker Ramsay. It was a glorious setting in the magnificent Trinity Cathedral nave with its ornate organ case the center of attention.

The program opened with J.S. Bach's *Concerto for Oboe and Violin*, BWV 1060 featuring Cho and Sundet accompanied by a superb assemblage of musicians in the chamber orchestra. The soloists played off each other's skills and their dynamic contrasts, acute attention to running sixteenths and close imitation made for an exceptional performance. A highlight was the Adagio movement with its plaintive solo line over a pizzicato accompaniment.

Second on the program was the difficult and rhythmically challenging *Motet VI: Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden*, BWV 230 performed by the Trinity Chamber Singers. After a tenuous beginning, the singers and organ came together nicely in the motet's constantly crisscrossing and intermingling lines. The singers were presented with very challenging tempos, but the performance and interpretation was exciting, filled with Bach's never-ending contrapuntal energy.

The Trinity Cathedral Choir followed with the cantata *Liebster Gott, wen werd' ich sterben*, BWV 8 (1724). Its opening pizzicato motif undergirded a beautiful flute and oboe duet featuring Sundet and flutist Sean Gabriel, leading to a glorious choral entrance. Tenor Matthew Jones's aria was nicely sung. Countertenor John McElliot's exquisitely performed recitative led into an aria sung by baritone Jonathon Cooper, who deftly

articulated his running sixteenths while maintaining a brilliant resonance. His voice was a highlight of the evening. Soprano Malina Rauschenfels's recitative was nicely executed and her enunciation impeccable. The final chorale was a fitting conclusion to this exceptional work.

Parker Ramsay then climbed the winding staircase to the Flentrop organ to perform Bach's dramatic *Prelude and Fugue in b*, BWV 544, known for its prominent use of the pedals. Ramsay found the tension and excitement in the work and brought it to its fugal resolution with sure-footed authority.

Violinist Jinjoo Cho stepped out inconspicuously from behind a pillar to play Bach's *Chaconne in D-minor* from the second violin partita. Her virtuosity, fierce determination and deep respect for the music were the absolute highlight of the evening. The audience held their breath through her entire performance. Cho received a spontaneous standing ovation and curtain calls.

The Trinity Cathedral Choir concluded the evening with the cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, BWV 4, a work arranged according to the seven verses of the Lutheran Easter hymn. Verse II was beautifully sung in straight tone by the sopranos, whose overtones rang throughout the expanse of the Cathedral. Verse V again brought forth the resonant voice of Jonathan Cooper. Todd Wilson gave clear leadership from the podium and the chorus and orchestra responded well. Standouts in the orchestra were Sean Gabriel, flute, Dana Sundet, oboe, Sue Yelanjian, bass, Alexandra Vago, viola and an excellent continuo line from cellist Linda Atherton.

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