

Press Release

February 15, 2010

J.S. Bach *St. John Passion*

Knox Presbyterian Church

www.knox.org

Michigan and Observatory Avenues, Hyde Park

Good Friday, April 2, 2010 7:30 p.m.

The Knox Music Series of Knox Presbyterian Church presents J.S. Bach's *St. John Passion* on Good Friday, April 2, 7:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church, Michigan & Observatory Avenues in Hyde Park. A donation will be collected at the door. Visit www.knox.org or call 321-2573 for additional information.

Earl Rivers, Knox Director of Music, conducts the 50-voice Knox Choir, Chamber Orchestra, and Knox Aria Soloists - **Debra Van Engen** and **Alison Scherzer**, sopranos, **Ivy Buterbaugh** and **Theresa Merrill**, mezzo-sopranos, **Will Compton** and **Daniel O'Dea**, tenors, and David **Swain** and **Sean Taylor**, baritones. Featured character soloists include **Cameo Humes**, tenor and CCM Doctoral student, as the Evangelist, **William McGraw**, baritone and CCM Faculty Artist, as Jesus, and **Noel Bouley**, bass-baritone and CCM Artist Diploma student, as Pilate. **Christina Haan**, Knox Organist, plays harpsichord and continuo organ. This April 2, 2010 Knox Music Series presentation marks Cincinnati's only performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* this season.

First performed on April 7, 1724, Good Friday at the Nikolaikirche (Nicholas Church) in Leipzig, Bach's *St. John Passion* features a Baroque orchestra of pairs of flutes and oboes, and strings and continuo. The text is a compilation biblical texts from Chapters 18 and 19 of St. John's Gospel with additions from St. Matthew 26 and 27, interspersed with well-known chorale texts and freely composed poetic texts for the arias and opening and closing choruses by the two Hamburg poets, Brockes and Postel.

In Bach's *St. John Passion* the Gospel account of Christ's arrest, trial, crucifixion and entombment is presented on four related levels: narrative, contemplative devotional and monumental. The Narrative element is expressed by the recitatives of the Evangelist (the words of St. John himself), Jesus, Peter, Pilate, the minor characters and the short crowd (*turba*) choruses.

The Contemplative element occurs in the solo arias that present a personal response to the events related in the Gospel story. Devotional or Congregational elements include the use of well-known hymn tunes and texts (chorales) that draw the congregation into the Passion as a corporate act of worship. The Monumental aspects include the imposing monolithic choruses that frame the *St. John Passion* serve to convey to the listener the profound gravity of the Passion story.

The Knox Music Series is an Outreach Program of Knox Presbyterian Church, recognized for its outstanding contributions to the quality of life in Cincinnati. *Cincinnati Magazine* has cited the Knox Music Program as the "*Best Church Music*" in Cincinnati.

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