The Bach Festival Society, Inc.

Bachsfer
Dr. Jean O. Phillips, Editor
The '71-'72 Season of the Bach Festival Chorus and Orchestra closed with the
singing of the Magnificats by Johann
Sebastian and his son Carl Philipp Emanuel
Bach. Organist for the final program was
Kathryn Loew. Soloists for the concert
were Glenda Kirkland, soprano; Carolyn
Stanford, alto; Robert Johnson, tenor;
and Bruce Abel, bass.

REFLECTIONS OF A Chorus MEMBER

By Bryna Graff

There is hardly anything more soul- and
ego-satisfying than the creation of some-
thing beautiful, and I have often thought
that part of man's continuing enchantment
with music is his delight and wonder in
his act of creating. In music there is an
opportunity for those of less capacity to
join with those whose talents are so much
greater, or even beyond comprehending, and
produce something grand, even awe-inspir-
ing. That, it seems to me, is what drives
performers, from the greatest to the least
among us, to commit ourselves to study, to
rehearse, to perform. This impression is
confirmed by my personal experience in
Bach. One joins a group like the chorus
for pleasure, but sometimes a rehearsal is
not pleasurable—it is tiring or dis-
couraging or inconvenient—yet I continue
to go. Where is the satisfaction? I often
ask myself. Now, in hindsight, the
answer is clear: in the sense of self-mas-
tery that comes with learning the music;
in the pride in the rest of the group that is
doing the same thing; in the awareness of
the changing sound of the group; in the
performance when we sound like
the music should sound, as we hear it in our
minds' ear. But the greatest return of all
comes when I think to myself that I, alone

incapable of something grand, have parti-
cipated in a creation others found beau-
tiful, that I, indeed, have been an inte-
gral part of the creation itself. That
makes me a creator. The marvel of it
seems a minor miracle which makes choral
singing an endless fascination, and in-
sures my return to Bach next year.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Russell A. Hammar

Another inspiring season of concerts is
now history for us, but the memory
lingers on. My deepest appreciation is here-
by expressed to all those who contributed
time, effort and money to the cause. I am
convinced that the extended season with
its spacing of concerts definitely im-
proved the quality of our performances,
for it afforded us the opportunity to con-
centrate upon one program at a time—ra-
ther than spreading our efforts to learn
two or more programs simultaneously.

However, in our poll of chorus members
and various other persons from the audi-
cence we found a definite feeling that the
longer season begins to conflict with
home and family outdoor spring activities.

After careful study there seems to be
sufficient reason to return to the pre-
vious format which ended in March. The
dates are as follows:

DEC. 12 - Annual Christmas Program
JAN. 26 - Chamber Music Concert (by
judges of the Young Artists' Competition)
JAN. 27 - Young Artists' Competition
MARCH 3 - Young Artists' Concert
MARCH 4 - Chamber Music Concert (music
of the Bach Family)
MARCH 7 - Lecture Program (to be an-
nounced)
MARCH 10 - MAJOR WORK (to be announced)

This format should serve our need to
alleviate the congestion of preparing
for programs and still maintain the
"Festival Week" atmosphere which we
lost this past year. I am anticipating
a truly festive season for next year.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT J. S. BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach regarded his art
a form of service. His impersonal and
measured style of playing was an expres-
sion of the power of mind over feeling.

The fame Bach acquired among his con-
temporaries was as an organist and harp-
sichordist, as a dreaded technical ex-
pert and adviser on the organ, as an un-
canny master of the art of counterpoint,
as a teacher, but not as the composer of
the Cantatas and Passions, of the Mass
in B minor, and the Organ Chorale Pre-
ludes, nor even as the composer of the
concertos, sonatas, and suites. No one really penetrated to the heart of Bach's work and personality and the substance of his art remained shrouded in impenetrable darkness. Bach was fundamentally concerned with the uncompromising directness of an openly professed faith, with the awful certitude of original sin, with the horrible reality of death and judgment, and with the radiant vision of grace and mercy.

The history of Bach has become the history of music itself.

CONGRATS TO DIRECTOR HAMMAR

Dr. Russell A. Hammar has been quite involved in the music profession in addition to directing the Bach Chorus, and we might congratulate him here: (1) He conducted a special performance of J. S. Bach's "The St. Matthew Passion" at Memphis State University in March; (2) He arranged a new edition of "Methinks I Hear the Full Celestial Choir"; and (3) He has been elected president of the Central Michigan chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).