Russell A. Hammar, Musical Director and Conductor of the Bach Festival Society, and Chairman of the Kalamazoo College Music Department is well known in the United States and Europe as a vocal clinician, pedagogist and choral editor. His diversified musical life has included concert, radio, television and recording work as well as conductor of numerous vocal and instrumental ensembles.

The popular Young Artists' Auditions and Concerts are examples of the great variety of music presented annually by the Bach Society. It was introduced in 1965 as a means of encouraging young people to become involved in the exploration and performance of music of the Baroque era, especially that of J. S. Bach and the Bach family. Each season has witnessed intensified interest on the part of the participants and festival audiences. This year, the Young Artists' Committee received fifty-one applications for the '75 competition, involving over 120 young performers from throughout the State of Michigan.

After a first screening of the tapes submitted to the Society's Young Artists' Committee, 28 outstanding finalists were selected to compete on January 25th. From 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at Stetson Chapel, three distinguished adjudicators from the Department of Music, Valparaiso University, will hear these young people. The Committee again felt obliged to provide for two concerts in order to serve the objective of recognizing the musical achievements of these young people. The public is cordially invited to attend the adjudications free of charge.

DONNA McRAE, soprano: numerous appearances with such orchestras as the Albuquerque, El Paso and Minnesota Symphonies; has appeared in leading roles with Albuquerque Opera Theater and the University of New Mexico Opera Workshop; is in great demand as oratorio artist, specializing in the works of J. S. Bach. She is interrupting rehearsals with the San Diego Symphony to participate in the Kalamazoo Bach Festival this season.

ELAINE BONAZZI, mezzo-soprano: one of America's most distinguished and acclaimed mezzo-sopranos; a "fantastically gifted actress and singer" (The Washington Post); star of the New York City Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Alva Opera Company of Boston and the Vancouver Opera, she joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera in 1973; has performed as soloist with virtually every major orchestra in the United States. Her recordings include an album of Bach Cantatas on Columbia label.

RICHARD PAIGE, tenor: returns to Kalamazoo after his successful appearance in the 1971 presentation of the MASS IN B-MINOR. In demand as a soloist with major musical organizations of the United States, Mr. Paige has sung in opera, oratorio, concert, musical comedy, radio and television; he has performed under such famous conductors as Krips, Shaw, Foss, Hendi, Dorati, Poole and Antonini. His many performances of Bach and Handel have established him as an interpreter of Baroque music, especially in evangelist roles.

JOHN OSTENDORF, bass-baritone: exciting young artist who has appeared throughout the country in opera and has sung as bass soloist with every New York concert and oratorio organization in Philharmonic, Carnegie and Alice Tully Halls as well as on Broadway in Menotti's HELP! HELP! THE GLOBOLINKS and Martha Graham's revival of her famed CYLTEMENESTRA.


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SATURDAY
MARCH 8
5:00 P.M.

Intermission dinner 6:30 P.M.
8:15 P.M.

The PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW by Johann Sebastian Bach was first performed on Good Friday of 1729 in St. Thomas Church, Leipzig, where he held the office of Cantor from 1729 until his death in 1750. The altered and extended form which we now possess was probably not completed before 1740.

In 1829, Mendelssohn conducted the work in Berlin exactly one hundred years after its first performance. It was introduced to England in 1854 and in the United States in 1874 by the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston. Today, this work is probably the most revered musical expression of the Passion of our Lord.

Festival Chorus and Orchestra
Donna McRae, Soprano
Elaine Bonazzi, Mezzo-soprano
Richard Paige, Tenor
John Ostendorf, Bass-baritone

Passion According to St. Matthew
(BWV 244)
Johann Sebastian Bach


Participating Artists

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