

Baroque Ensemble to Perform Easter Concert
by Rosemarie Howard
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Often in jest we hear the phrase: "If it's not broke, don't fix it." The Utah Baroque Ensemble seriously adheres to that maxim, believing that if the music of composers such as Bach and Handel still appeals to modern audiences, they must have done something right. The Ensemble focuses on early sacred music and specializes in the works of Johann Sebastian Bach.

The group had its beginnings as the Utah Bach Chorale under the direction of Douglas Bush. However, due to a call as a counselor in a stake presidency in the LDS church (on top of his other duties) he had to drop some extracurricular activities and the Bach Chorale was one of them.

Without a permanent director, the group struggled along until it consisted of only eight singers, each trying to sing a separate part. One of them also doubled as the director. They needed a permanent director and invited Sargeant to take the position.

Sargeant was in the last year of a masters program in choral conducting at BYU. She also had a family, several oboe students, and performed as the principal oboist with the Utah Valley Symphony. She really didn't have a lot of time on her hands, but agreed to take the position if they would work with her schedule.

They agreed and for the past eleven years, Sargeant has directed the choir, now called "The Baroque Ensemble," building it into the present group of 30 singers. During that time, Sargeant also finished her degree, and now holds degrees in music education and conducting from BYU. She continues to teach private oboe lessons (18 students) and perform with the Utah Valley Symphony as principal oboist (something she has done for the past 20 years).

Members of the choir come from several communities in Utah County and presently include: sopranos, Janilyn Anderson, Nancy Barrus, Kathryn Bourgerie, Janet Bradford, Angela Davis, Kara Davis, Andrea Draper, Cristine Kidd, Emilee Knell, Lori Stevens; altos, Susan Abbott, Patty Adams, Jeannie Griffith, Alison Phipps, Bob Tate, Diane Wilde, Yara Wilson; tenors, Richard Adams, Brian colton, Nels Draper, Kendall Hess, Rob Rowberry; and basses, Daron Bradford, Thierry Budge, James Cannon, Gary Gillum, David Griffith, Steve Humphries, and Tom Thurston.

Each year the choir presents two main concerts, each concert featuring a major work with accompaniment by a small instrumental ensemble. Baroque music also requires organ accompaniment and Kevin Walker, who is working toward a Bachelor's of Music in organ performance at BYU, fills that need.

This year's Easter concert, entitled, "This Joyful Eastertide" will be presented Saturday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Cathedral of St. Mark, 231 East 100 South in Salt Lake City, and Sunday, April 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the Timpview 5th Ward Chapel, 865 West 1000 North, Orem.

The featured work on the program will be Johann Sebastian Bach's Cantata 21, "Ich hatte viel Bekummernis." This piece is considered one of the master's greatest works. The cantata paints a picture of deep human suffering, through which Christ brings man comfort and heavenly joy. Most cantatas usually feature only one large polyphonic chorus; this one has four. (An example of a well-known polyphonic chorus is "For Unto Us a Child is Given" from the Messiah by Handel.)

Instrumentalists featured in the "Sinfonia" (an overture-like introduction to the cantata) will be oboist, Chris Wootton, and first violinist, Signe

Gillum. Vocalists featured will be tenors, Nels Draper and David Rice, and soprano, Angela Davis singing a duet with her husband, baritone, Randall Davis.

Also included in the evening's performance will be a variety of shorter works: a renaissance work for double chorus by Ruggiero Giovannelli, "Jubilate Deo," early baroque motets by Antonio Caldara and Heinrich Schutz, contemporary anthems by Rene Clausen, Edward Elgar, and Alice Parker, and Easter hymns by Robert Wetzler and John Purifoy.

The entire performance is not expected to run much over an hour. For those who do not speak German, the program will contain a translation of the text which is sung in that language.

The Utah Baroque ensemble is a non-profit organization sponsored in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Utah Arts Council. Anyone wanting more information or wishing to audition for the choir may contact choir president, Steve Humphreys at 375-1615 or visit their website at: www.utahbaroque.org.

Regular auditions are held in January and May.