

Online Bible Study
December 14th, 2008

Dear Friends,

This Sunday, December 14th, during our regular service of worship at 10:00 a.m., our Chancel Choir and soloists will be accompanied by a chamber orchestra in presenting Vivaldi's magnificent "Gloria." Director of Music John Finney will conduct. Featured soloists will be Laurie Stewart Otten, soprano, and Shannon Lebron, mezzo-soprano.

John Finney has provided this note about the Vivaldi Gloria:

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741), one of the most prolific composers of the Italian Baroque, was employed for much of his career by the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, one of several state-supported institutions in that city devoted to the care of young women. The level of musical training at the Pietà was remarkably high, and, thus, Vivaldi had at his disposal a large number of well-trained singers and players. The solo movements in Vivaldi's Gloria were surely written to be sung by young women of the Pietà.

The Gloria is one of Vivaldi's most beloved works. The words are taken from the Mass, and each phrase of the text is set as a separate movement. The opening movement sets a festive tone with the string orchestra enlivened by the addition of trumpet and oboe. The second movement, *Et in terra pax* ("and on earth peace") is quieter, accompanied by the strings alone, and features long-breathed, slowly ascending melodic figures. *Laudamus te* is set as a delightful duet for two sopranos. This is followed by a short, dramatic choral statement *Gratias agimus tibi* ("we give thanks to You") and a dashing brief fugue, *Propter magnam gloriam tuam* ("for Your great glory").

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis is a duet between the soprano soloist and the oboe, supported by a gently moving bass line. The next choral movement, *Domine Fili*, is one of the liveliest, with its irresistibly rhythmic accompaniment. *Domine Deus, Agnus Dei* features a beautiful melody for alto solo, accompanied by solo cello. The full chorus punctuates each phrase with "*Miserere nobis*" ("Have mercy upon us"), and continues the same mood in the following movement, *Qui tollis peccata mundi*. The alto aria *Qui sedes* is of a markedly different character, quick and buoyant.

Quoniam tu solus sanctus is set to the same music as the opening chorus, with the trumpet again adding a touch of brilliance to the orchestration. For the closing movement, *Cum sancto spiritu*, Vivaldi borrows a theme from another Italian composer, Ruggieri, and develops it into a joyous and exhilarating fugue.