



AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS
BACH AT ST. BART'S ON JANUARY 24

All-C.P.E. Bach Program Features U.S. Premiere of Oratorio
Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu and Rare Performance of Choral Work *Heilig*



New York, NY, December 16, 2024 — Music Director Leon Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) with the Bard Festival Chorale in an all-C.P.E. Bach concert at St. Bartholomew's Church, a National Historic Landmark, on Friday, January 24 at 8 PM. The *Bach at St. Bart's* program offers the **U.S. premiere** of one of the composer's only three oratorios, *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu*.

Appearing as soloist in C.P.E. Bach's choral work, *Heilig* is mezzo-soprano **Leah Wool**, a Santa Fe Opera Judith Raskin Memorial Award-winner who recently joined the San Francisco, Indianapolis, and Jacksonville Symphonies for Handel's *Messiah*. Featured soloists in the **U.S. premiere** of *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* are soprano **Mei Gui Zhang**, who returns to the Metropolitan Opera as Barbarina in *Le nozze di Figaro* in spring 2025; tenor **Terrence Chin-Loy**, who makes his European debut this season singing Gualtiero in Vivaldi's *Griselda* with the Danish National Opera; and baritone **Troy Cook**, who created the role of Father Palmer in the world premiere of the Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Silent Night* with Minnesota Opera.

Established in 1835, [St. Bartholomew's Church](#) and the ASO share a deep historical connection. ASO founder Leopold Stokowski began his American career in 1905 as organist and choirmaster of St. Bartholomew's before creating the Orchestra in 1962.

The ASO's next concert is [Tapping into the Twenties](#), featuring works by John Alden Carpenter, Erwin Schulhoff, William Grant Still, and Edgard Varèse with pianist Orion Weiss at Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall on March 23, 2025.

[Bach at St. Bart's](#)

Friday, January 24, 2025, at 8 pm, St. Bartholomew's Church, 325 Park Avenue

Pre-concert Talk at 7 pm

American Symphony Orchestra

Leon Botstein, conductor

Leah Wool, mezzo-soprano

Mei Gui Zhang, soprano
Terrence Chin-Loy, tenor
Troy Cook, baritone

Bard Festival Chorale

James Bagwell, music director of the Bard Festival Chorale

C.P.E. Bach: *Heilig*, H.775 (1776)

C.P.E. Bach: *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu*, H.777 (1774-78) (**U.S. premiere**)

Long associated with the instrumental genre, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's keyboard sonatas, trio sonatas, concertos, and symphonies earned him a leading position in the period bridging the Baroque and Classical eras. His vocal compositions are lesser-known and his oratorios are rarely, if ever, presented. Marking a **U.S. premiere**, the ASO presents his oratorio *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu* (The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus). First performed during Easter in 1774, the score illustrates some of the unique features of the Rococo period, such as abrupt changes in mood, fluid dynamics, and highly chromatic harmonic writing, that point to the more passionate flavor of the Romantic period. The program also includes C.P.E. Bach's 1776 choral work *Heilig mit zwei Chören und einer Arie zur Einleitung* (Heilig with Two Choirs and an Arie as an Introduction), a work of which he thought highly, writing that the composition may ensure that he would not be too quickly forgotten after his death.

Carl Philipp Emanuel was born in Weimar, Germany, in 1714, the second son of Johann Sebastian Bach and Maria Barbara Bach. After training in Leipzig and Frankfurt, he joined the music establishment of Frederick II of Prussia around 1740 and succeeded his godfather Georg Philipp Telemann as music director in Hamburg in 1768. Haydn, Mozart (who led three performances of *Die Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu*), and Beethoven (who performed *Heilig* at one of his concerts) all admired C.P.E. Bach.

Presented in collaboration with the Mid-Manhattan Performing Arts Foundation.

Tickets, priced at \$25-\$45, are available at americansymphony.org.

American Symphony Orchestra

The American Symphony Orchestra (ASO) was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with the mission of providing great music for everyone. Leon Botstein expanded that focus when he joined the ASO as Music Director in 1992 by creating concerts that explore music through the lens of the visual arts, literature, religion, and history, as well as by reviving rarely performed works that audiences would otherwise never hear performed live.

The ASO's signature programming includes its *Vanguard Series*, which features concerts of seldom-performed orchestral repertoire presented at Carnegie Hall, Bryant Park, and other historic venues, and its *Chamber Series*—curated by ASO's musicians—offering concert programs dedicated to reflecting the diverse perspectives of American culture. During the summer, the ASO is the orchestra-in-residence at Bard's SummerScape and performs at the Bard Music Festival. All of the ASO presentations comprise a year-round series of vital and innovative programming for audiences of all backgrounds.

As part of its commitment to expanding the standard orchestral repertoire and ensuring accessibility to musical masterpieces, the ASO offers free streaming of exclusive live recordings on its digital platform, *ASO Online*. Content includes SummerScape operas, chamber performances, and short films. In many cases,

these are the only existing recordings of some of the forgotten works that have been restored through ASO performances.

For more information, please visit americansymphony.org.

Leon Botstein

Leon Botstein has been music director and principal conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra since 1992. He is also music director of The Orchestra Now, an innovative training orchestra composed of top musicians from around the world. He is co-artistic director of Bard SummerScape and the Bard Music Festival, which take place at the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, where he has been president since 1975. He is also conductor laureate and principal guest conductor of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, where he served as music director from 2003–11. In 2018, he assumed artistic directorship of Campus Grafenegg and the Grafenegg Academy in Austria. Mr. Botstein also has an active career as a guest conductor with orchestras around the globe and has made numerous recordings. He is a prolific author and music historian and the recipient of numerous honors for his contributions to the music industry. In 2019, *The New York Times* named Leon Botstein a “champion of overlooked works...who has tirelessly worked to bring to light worthy scores by neglected composers.” More info online at LeonBotstein.com.

The ASO's Vanguard Series is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

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Images: (left to right): Leah Wool ©Dario Acosta, Mei Gui Zhang ©Dario Acosta, Terrence Chin-Loy ©Jiyang Chen, Troy Cook ©Eric Joannes.

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