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The Cantata Singers take pleasure in presenting their concerts without admission charge. The continuation of this practice is dependent largely upon your contributions at each concert.

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We thank the Corning Glass Works Foundation and the Westinghouse Electric Co. Foundation for matching their employees' contributions.

Elmira College presents
The Cantata Singers
William O. Payne, III,
Musical Director

The Last Seven Words of Christ Joseph Haydn



sung in English

8 p.m.
Sunday,
February 27, 1983
Grace Episcopal Church
free will offering

VII. "Father, into Thy hands, I commend My spirit."
 6:50 Into Thy hands, O Lord, my spirit I commend. No further can His anguish rise, now He has drained the cup. "O Father take my spirit. I commend it to Thy hands." And then He bows His head and dies. From everlasting torment, His precious blood has saved us. Because my Jesus loved us, He died a sinner's death. You gave us life anew. What, O Lord, can we give you? We lie in deep humility, O Jesus, at Thy feet; our grateful hearts we offer Thee.

23:20 He is no more. The very earth is loudly grieving! He is no more. Now tremble, Golgotha. He died upon thy hill. 1:50 Sun, hide thy face and light not this accursed day. Break open, O land, be torn whereon the killers tarry. Ye graves, give up your dead. Arise, ye buried saints. The earth where ye have lain with sacred blood is stained, with sacred blood is stained!

25:15

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Haydn says that "it was no easy matter to compose seven adagios to last ten minutes each, and succeed one another without fatiguing the listeners." It should be noted that the original commission and the resulting composition were scored for strings and winds only. Obviously, the composer overcame the difficulties of writing a succession of seven instrumental slow movements, for the work gained immediate popularity and enjoyed universal praise from the critics.

It wasn't until 1794, while Haydn was on a guest conducting tour in England, that he happened upon the idea of scoring his "Seven Words" for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists and a full, mixed chorus. The libretto was supplied by his friend and collaborator, Baron van Swieten. The result of this collaboration is a work of strong emotional beauty which truly conveys the sufferings of Jesus Christ and the ultimate redemption of mankind. As Karl Geiringer notes, "The composer thought very highly of this oratorio and it is noteworthy that it was the last work he conducted in public before his death."

The Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross

by

Franz Joseph Haydn

William O. Payne III, Conductor

Janice Strain, Soprano
Susan Amisano, Soprano
Kay Wack, Mezzo-Soprano

Edmund Dana, Tenor
Thomas Strain, Bass
James Sanderson, Organist

PART ONE

5:00 Organ Introduction

I. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."
9:10 Father in heaven! Oh see us kneeling. Look down from Thy throne. Father forgive us! Thy son entreats Thee, Oh hear Him pleading and interceding, that mercy be shown. Ah, we are grievous sinners and great is our guilt. Forgiveness and grace to win us our Savior's blood was spilled. Our Savior's blood asks no revenge, it flows to cleanse us. Father eternal! Let Thy grace attend us. Let mercy be shown.

14:15
6:50 II. "Verily I say unto thee: this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."
Thou art mercy, love and pity, our Redeemer, Lamb of God! Yonder thief appealed for help to Thee: "When you come into Thy kingdom, Master, think of me." And You promised him so mildly: "Thou shalt be today in Paradise with Me." Thou art mercy, love and pity, our Redeemer, Lamb of God! Lord, our God, look on us. By the cross where Thou hast suffered, see our true repentance offered. Let us hear, when death shall call us, from Thy lips eternal solace; Thy gentle words restore and comfort us: "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."
21:10

III. "Woman, behold thy son; Son, behold thy mother."

10:00 Blessed mother, you stood sadly, crying, sighing by the cross where thy dear Jesus died; and you felt his death-wounds smarting in the bitter hour of parting, sorrowfully felt thy loss. You stood weeping, sighing there beside the cross. Tho by sorrow bent and shaken, thou hast serenely taken for thy son, beloved John, the true disciple. And we, too, thy children are. Blessed mother! O thou comfort of the fallen, hear thy children calling. Save our souls in desperate plight. Oh lead us to the light. When in death's embrace we languish and you hear our anxious crying, and you see our mortal anguish, let not. mother, then the foe defeat us. Send thy loving strength to meet us. Prove thyself our mother and commend us to thy Son.

3:11.5
7:30 IV. "Eli, Eli, lama asabthani!"

Why, O Father, did You forsake Me? Where is now the hand of God? Who can fathom this deep mystery, O God of power and might, O God of power all-seeing. Thou hast called us into being, and by Thy love, O Lord, we have been saved. O Lord, we worship Thee. We adore Thee truly. For our sake You suffered cruelly, mockery, loneliness and pain, fear and pain. Where's the man who would desert Thee, by his sins would want to hurt Thee? Thou art gracious, though we grieve Thee! No we shall not ever leave Thee, in life and all eternity.

38:14
OFFERTORY

PART TWO

4:15 Organ Introduction

V. "I thirst"
6:20 Jesus calleth; "I thirst." Curb now your fury, stay your revenge. Mankind, now let pity move your spirit. Mercy enter all your hearts. They offer Him a bitter drink of vinegar and gall to quench His thirst. Is there to cruelty no end, O mankind? He can withstand no longer the pain, the pain that overpowers Him, whose life itself was gentleness.

10:40
6:00 VI. "It is finished."
It is finished. Nailed upon the tree of torture, hangs my Jesus in the night; and He calls aloud: "It is finished!" Now the cross has lost its terror, now has lost its might. O, you sinners, blindly living, woe betide you who from sin to graver sins are driven. Men, consider now! Can you hope to be forgiven when He comes in all His glory and in all His might? Save us, Jesus, from damnation. Do not let us cry in vain. Let Thy death be our salvation. Spare our souls eternal torment, spare our souls eternal pain. May we rise to live forever in Thy heavenly domain.
16:40

THE CANTATA SINGERS

William O. Payne III, Musical Director

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Ruth Bruning
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*Edmund Dana
Paul Holland
Wilmer M. Hurst

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Richard F. Bauer
Marvin E. Bunch
David R. Hauser

Marc B. Lovell
Sidney Reed
Richard C. Schockner, Jr.

*Thomas Strain

Judith Feitner, rehearsal accompanist

*Soloists

PROGRAM NOTES

In the year 1785, Joseph Haydn, enjoying wide-spread fame, received a commission from the Canon of the Cathedral of Cadiz in Spain. The request was for an oratorio based on the Seven Last Words of the Savior on the Cross. Haydn tells us that "after a short service the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced the first of the Seven Words, and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and prostrated himself before the altar. The pause was filled with music."