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rich and diverse tradition of choral singing among nations that share the German language has existed for close to one thousand years. Choir schools, singing academies, municipal *Kantorei*, parish choirs, and professional choral ensembles in Europe and beyond have inspired over five hundred years of choral literature created especially for performance within worship. Indeed, most of Europe's greatest composers since 1500 have contributed to this ever-expanding repertoire.

Many English-speaking countries, however, have had limited exposure to this music. Often the music is simply unavailable except in expensive, imported editions. A lack of high quality, singable English translations has also inhibited the music's potential use in worship. And finally, poorly prepared editions based on dated scholarship have discouraged conductors and choirs from adding this literature to their repertoire.

The goal of this *Chantry Choirbook*, then, is twofold: to provide present-day choirs with a compendium of the very best and most useful contributions of German choral music in singable English translations, and to encourage its performance within the context of the worshiping assembly. To that end, sixty selections extending over five centuries have been assembled in this volume.

The beginnings of the German choral school can be traced to the monastic foundations of the Middle Ages when monasteries supported choral foundations for the singing of the liturgy. These earliest choirs concentrated on singing plainsong (*Choral* in German) within the contexts of daily prayer and the Mass. By 1017, for example, Leipzig had a Kapelle at the Jacobskirche, and by 1212 the Thomaskirche (where Johann Sebastian Bach would become cantor in 1723) was established as a monastic institution, including a choir school. Up to the mid-fourteen hundreds, however, the bulk of repertoire for German choirs was unison *Choral*, with only minimal interest in the beginnings of polyphony. In addition, the vernacular religious folksong as well as the *Minnesang* and *Meistergesang* focused vocal music on the unison song. For centuries prior to the Reformation, therefore, unison Latin *Choral* and German folksong formed the basis of German vocal music; polyphony only began to enter common usage in the late fourteen hundreds.

By 1500, however, multi-voiced music in both Latin and German came into widespread use. This resulted partly from the invention of the movable type printing press, thus allowing broad distribution of part books. An equally important influence, however, was the musical consolidation around the year 1500 of the church, town, and royal court. Each town or royal court created musical establishments for the performance of both sacred and secular music.

Since 1500, there have been hundreds of composers who have expanded the German choral tradition with various motets, chorales, cantatas, oratorios, and passions. There are five composers, however, who stand out among the tradition's most influential shapers: Heinrich Schütz, Johann Sebastian Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Distler. It is from these composers that this choirbook draws the greatest share of its repertoire.

Far more than any other composer, it was Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) who refined the art of musical declamation for biblical text. *Kapellmeister* in Dresden (1617–1672) and twice a student of Giovanni Gabrieli in Venice, Schütz adapted Italian musical styles to the German language, and was especially influential in forming a new musical style in which the stresses of the spoken word drive the musical form. Even today his works form the basis of the repertoire of German choirs. His choral compositions range from massive polychoral motets to simple four-voice psalms to a cappella settings of the biblical

GERMAN CHORAL TRADITION

COMPOSERS

passions. The materials by him in this volume span close to forty years of his life and represent the variety of musical forms in which he wrote.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) was the most celebrated musician of his day, famous throughout Europe as well as North America. He was a renowned symphonic composer, conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra, and the choral conductor at the Berlin *Dom* and Singakademie. At age twenty, he revived Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Berlin. Later in life he organized the Leipzig conservatory with its famous school of church music. Mendelssohn's choral music is deeply influenced by his study of Bach and other early composers. The result is a rich melodic line combined with an older style counterpoint. Mendelssohn uplifts that chorale cantus firmus and uses it as a basis for various cantatas, motets, and oratorios.

A German by birth (in Hamburg in the Lutheran North) but Austrian by choice, Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) was a prodigious composer of symphonies, solo songs, and keyboard music. His sacred choral music represents a recovery of the conservative musical forms of the Renaissance and Baroque as well as a renewed interest in the chorale. Interestingly enough, his return to more orthodox textual and musical sources for his choral music parallels the German liturgical renewal of the mid-nineteenth century. For Roman Catholics, this recovery was centered at the Abbey of Maria Laach and its renewal of chant; for evangelical congregations it was focused in the school of Wilhelm Löhe at Neuendettelsau.

Hugo Distler (1908–1942) was a twentieth century composer, organist, and choral conductor active in Lübeck, Stuttgart, and Berlin. Distler is principally remembered by church musicians for his inventive combination of traditional chorale melodies, fluid Renaissance-style counterpoint, and stark, hollow harmonies. Distler tragically ended his life during the height of the Second World War.

The fifth composer is Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Throughout his life, Bach mastered both instrumental and choral music, as he worked for the royal court as well as several town governments. The breadth and substance of his work are so great, however, that a complete volume dedicated to his music has been prepared, separate from this collection, by Augsburg Fortress. Over forty selections from Bach's masses, passions, cantatas, and chorales are collected in *Bach for All Seasons*. Together, then, these two volumes provide a comprehensive sampling of the sacred choral works of five great composers.

From among the hundreds of other composers, several are represented in this collection and bear special mention. Josquin Desprez (c. 1440–1521) was a Franco-Flemish Renaissance composer who combined intricate Netherlandish counterpoint with the expressive art forms that formed a union of word and note. Martin Luther once stated that "Josquin is a master of the notes, which must express what he desires; on the other hand, other choral composers must do what the notes dictate." Josquin highly influenced the compositional techniques of German church music in the sixteenth century, thus resulting in a basic conservatism that set it apart from the more daring developments in Italy and France. Among the first leaders in German choral music was Johann Walter (1496–1570). As a close friend of Martin Luther, Walter assisted him in the evangelical reform of the Mass at Wittenberg in 1524. Walter also edited the Geistliche Gesangbüchlein (1524), the first published Lutheran hymnbook. He also served as Kantor (music director) in Torgau and Kapellmeister to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden.

Claude Goudimel (1510–1572) was a French Huguenot and a master of both French chanson and vernacular French psalmody. Serving in Metz, Besançon, and Lyons, Goudimel was a victim of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacres of 1572 that decimated the Huguenot population of Lyons. While not from a German principality, Goudimel and

his psalm settings highlight French Protestant musical development that was happening at the time of Johann Walter. Gallus Dressler (1533–c. 1584) is principally remembered for his dramatic refinement of the German language biblical motet. Characteristically, Dressler's motets included highly developed musical text painting in which musical lines mirror the words of the text. Johannes Eccard (1553–1611) was a student of Lassus in Munich and served as *Kantor* in Augsburg, Königsberg, and Berlin. He is principally remembered for a large corpus of concerted chorale settings and motets. Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621), a Dutch musician, was the most famous organist of his day, serving at the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. His intricate keyboard counterpoint led to the development of the fugue. It was as a teacher, however, that he had the greatest influence on German choral music since among his students were Jakob Praetorius, Samuel Scheidt, and Heinrich Scheidemann.

Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) was a student of Andrea Gabrieli in Venice, and served as an organist and Kantor in Augsburg, Nürnberg, and Dresden. He is principally remembered for a fusion of the northern imitative style with the new Italian styles being developed in Venice. Melchior Vulpius (c. 1570–1615) was an influential hymn tune composer, serving as Kantor in Weimar. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) was Kantor in Wolfenbüttel and Dresden, and created more than twelve hundred hymn settings for choirs, instruments, and congregations. Johann Crüger (1598–1662) was a Berlin composer and Kantor at Nicolaikirche, famous for his hymn tunes set with the texts of Paul Gerhardt. Dieterich Buxtehude (c. 1637–1707) was Kantor at the Marienkirche in Lübeck and was famous for his Abendmusik concerts. Composer of countless cantatas and organ works, Buxtehude's work had a direct influence on the young Johann Sebastian Bach. Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach (1732–1795) was the eldest surviving son of Johann Sebastian Bach and Anna Magdelena. While primarily a chamber musician in Bückburg, Johann Christoph's choral music tended to show characteristics of both his father's baroque traditionalism as well as the Sturm und Drang and classical form of the late eighteenth century.

Several editorial principles guided the preparation of this volume. The historical significance of various composers' choral music is reflected by the diverse selections that have been included. Biblical motets, chorale harmonizations, choral fugues, *stile antico* counterpoint, oratorio choruses, free-standing anthems, and contemporary motets represent the breadth of the repertoire's musical forms.

A concern for the pastoral usefulness suggested the inclusion of material that is congruent with current theological, homiletical, and sacramental emphases. Because the Lutheran tradition for which the majority of this repertoire was created understands music to be the *viva vox evangelii* (the living voice of the gospel), this collection was designed to support the church's ministry of proclamation through word and sacrament.

Selections were also chosen to support liturgical usage throughout the entire year within the context of the service of Holy Communion. A comprehensive set of lectionary, biblical, and topical indexes is included at the conclusion of the volume. These will assist choirs in singing from this volume throughout the changing seasons of the church year, as well as at the services of baptism, marriage, and burial.

Finally, the desire for the music's accessibility by parish choirs required that choices provide both a sense of achievement and challenge. Choirs with very limited resources can sing many of the smaller selections with confidence. More complex movements are included in order to provide choirs the opportunity to sing more ambitious excerpts.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

## Rise Up! Rise Up!

Wohlauf, wohlauf, mit hellem Ton



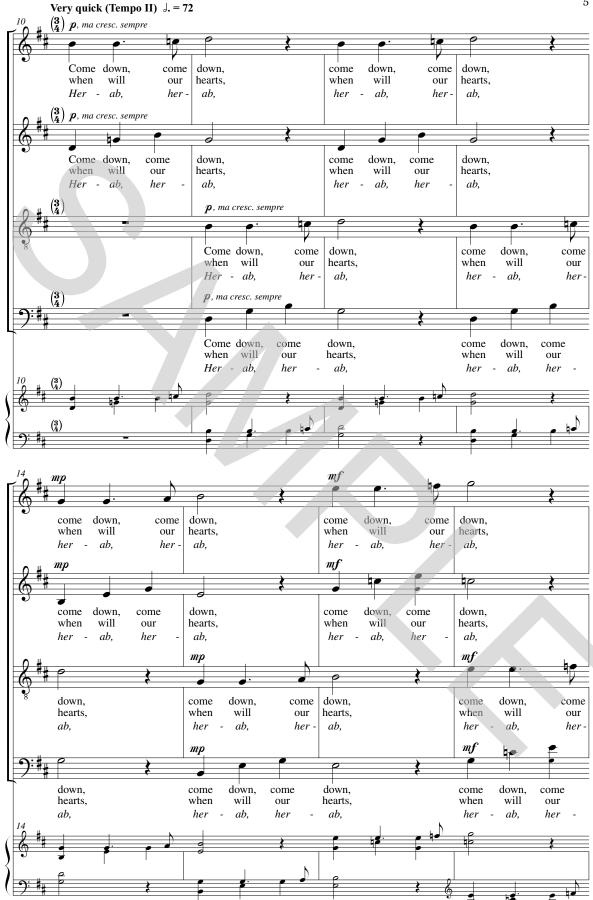
### O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide

O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf



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### Maria Walks Amid the Thorn

Maria durch ein' Dornwald ging



<sup>\*</sup>All stanzas of this motet should be sung.

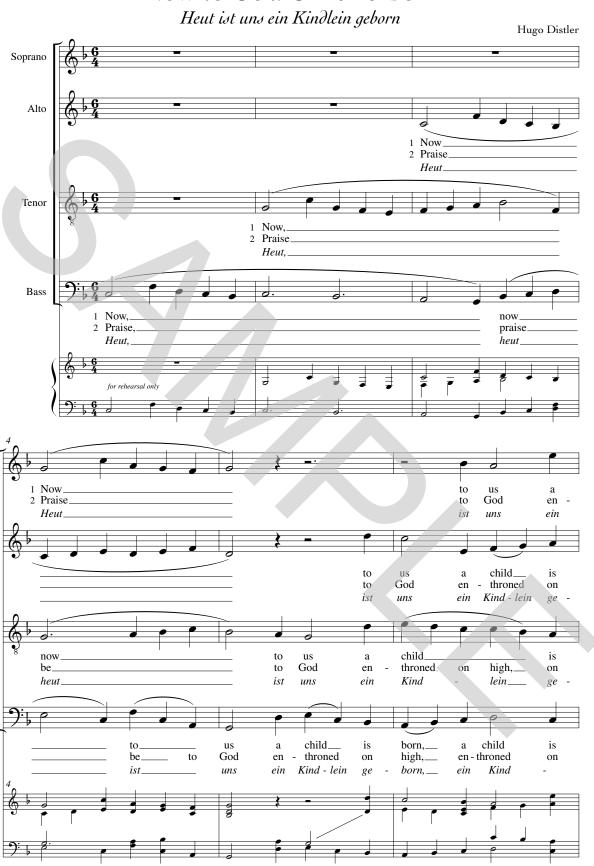
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# Then Mary Said to the Angel Dixit Maria ad angelum



### Now to Us a Child Is Born



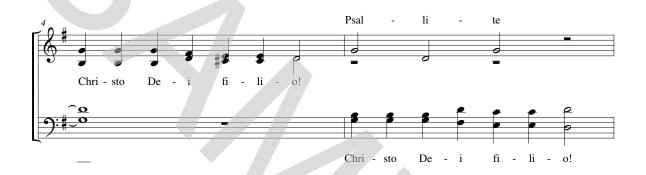
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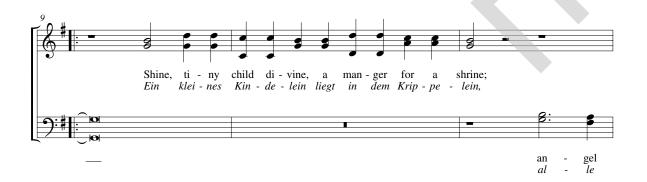
### Psallite

Michael Praetorius











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### Raise a Song, Let Praise Abound



