

# EMMANUEL MUSE



*Bach: A Signature Season*  
*Johann Sebastian Bach.*

## THE NEWSLETTER OF EMMANUEL MUSIC

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### *Emmanuel Music Features Bach's Unaccompanied Violin Works and Palestrina Masses*

Emmanuel Music, celebrated ensemble-in-residence at Boston's Emmanuel Church for nearly four decades, announces a rich and unusual concert program on consecutive Thursdays and Sundays for the months of February and March. Not only will these programs feature Bach's sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin, but also six choral masses by Renaissance music giant Palestrina. Everyone is welcome to attend these free performances.

Beginning on February 7, six celebrated violinists will play the sonatas and partitas on six Thursdays at 12 noon in historic Lindsey Chapel at Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston. The Chapel will be open following the performances until 2 PM for quiet reflection. Then, for six weeks starting on Sunday, February 10, the Chorus of Emmanuel Music will perform the Palestrina masses during the 10 a.m. liturgy at Emmanuel Church.

#### **Bach: Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas and Partitas**

Soloist Rose Mary Harbison, who begins the Bach violin series on Thursday, February 7, describes the excitement of playing Bach's unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas. She calls these pieces "that extraordinary body of music that propels the instrument into the musical stratosphere... defining the outer limits of musical and technical reach that remain the standard to this day."

She continues, "These works are both magnificent and terrifying in their reach towards the impossible. They are also the force that can return us to the center of our hopes as artists, because Bach understood so well what the instrument could do."

The fabled Chaconne – the final movement of *Partita No. 2 in D minor* – to be played by Harbison, is described vividly by Brahms, the ultimate Bach scholar. "For me, the Chaconne is one of the most incredible pieces of music -- for a little instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest and most powerful expression. When I ask myself if I had written this piece -- been

able to conceive it -- I know for certain that the emotions would have driven me mad.”

Why did Bach create such complicated works for unaccompanied violinists to play? The answer may be because of his association with violinist and composer Johann Georg Pisendel. A student of Vivaldi, Pisendel was later concertmaster at the Dresden Court. Around 1709, when Pisendel was traveling through Weimar, he and Bach performed Telemann’s *Concerto in G major for Two Violins and Orchestra*. John Harbison, Acting Artistic Director of Emmanuel Music, provides further insight on their collaboration.

“It seems that every time Pisendel came through Bach’s life, Bach’s violin music grew three times more complex than it had been before. His unaccompanied violin works occupied the outer edge of what musicians could then perform, and remain so today.”

The performers and programs for the Noon Lindsey Chapel Series is as follows:

2/7 Rose Mary Harbison  
*Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004*

2/28 Heidi Braun-Hill  
*Partita No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1002*

2/14 Rose Drucker  
*Sonata No. 1 in G minor, BWV 1001*

3/6 Danielle Maddon  
*Partita No. 3 in E major, BWV 1006*

2/21 Nicholas Kitchen  
*Sonata No. 2 in a minor, BWV 1003*

3/13 Daniel Stepper  
*Sonata No. 3 in C major, BWV 1005*

## **Palestrina Masses**

In its 37-year performance history, Emmanuel Music has performed the works of many composers -- Purcell, Schütz, Buxtehude, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and Harbison come quickly to mind. But this year, Palestrina will be added to this pantheon of artists whose works are sung by the Emmanuel Music Chorus.

For each Sunday morning service February 10 through March 16, the unaccompanied Palestrina masses will be integrated into the worship service. As with the Bach cantatas, these masses are intended to be sung in a church setting, with a full choir. Emmanuel Music’s 2007-08 Bach Cantata Series will resume on March 23.

Says John Harbison, Acting Artistic Director of Emmanuel Music, “Palestrina is a very important composer. In his profession, he had an even greater sphere of influence—the Vatican—than did Bach in his German posts. Palestrina’s masses are like string quartets: very beautifully crafted and transparent, with pinpoint clarity and ecstatic sonority. The chorus must think constantly about their chords. Our musicians are very excited about including these Palestrina masses as part of the 2007-08 season.”

Giovanni Pierluigi Da Palestrina (1526-1594) earned great fame in Rome, where he served close to 60 years as a church composer under Popes Julius III and Paul IV. Most of the time, he was chapelmaster of the Cappella Giulia at St. Peter’s, where he published a book of masses that became the first to be dedicated to a pope by an Italian composer. His extraordinary output consisted of no less than 105 masses, plus 250 motets, specific liturgical works, and secular and

spiritual madrigals, many of them performed by the Papal Choir.

The schedule of upcoming Palestrina masses at Emmanuel Church on Sundays at 10 am is:

*2/10 Missa Iste Confessor*  
Michael Beattie, conductor

*2/17 Missa Lauda Sion*  
Ryan Turner, conductor

*2/24 Missa Benedicta es*  
Scott Metcalfe, conductor

*3/2 Missa Tu es Petrus*  
Scott Metcalfe, conductor

*3/9 Missa Aeterna Munera Christi*  
James Olesen, conductor

*3/16 Missa Assumpta est Maria*  
David Hodgkins, conductor

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For a complete listing of upcoming Emmanuel Music performances, previous newsletter articles, and other information, please visit our website at [www.emmanuelmusic.org](http://www.emmanuelmusic.org).

*Emmanuel Music is the Ensemble-in-Residence at Emmanuel Church.*

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EMMANUEL MUSIC ♦ 15 NEWBURY STREET ♦ BOSTON, MA 02116 ♦ 617.536.3356 ♦ WWW.EMMANUELMUSIC.ORG

