

**“WHAT TO DO WHEN WORDS HURT” – CCM PRESENTS A DISCUSSION AND  
PERFORMANCE OF BACH’S ST JOHN PASSION**

*Forum on religious intolerance in the Passions given by distinguished scholars*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music’s Philharmonia Orchestra and Chamber Choir will present **J. S. Bach’s *St. John Passion*** on Sunday, November 14 at 3 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral. With the support of the Tangeman Sacred Music Center, CCM takes this opportunity to engage the community in an important dialogue on religious intolerance. In collaboration with this free performance, a pre concert discussion will take place on Saturday, November 13 at 7 p.m. at the Knox Presbyterian Church. The discussion, **“What To Do When Words Hurt: Religious Intolerance in the Passions of J.S. Bach,”** features musical, theological and historical experts **Tom Hall**, Baltimore Choral Arts Society; **Dr. Christopher Leighton**, Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies; and **Michael Marissen**, Swarthmore College.

The performance will feature CCM student soloists including Eric Schmidt, tenor as the Evangelist; Corey Crider, baritone as Pilate; and Aaron Wardell, baritone as Jesus. Tamara Wilson, soprano; Christy Pritchard, mezzo-soprano; Terence Goff, tenor; and Jacob Lassetter, bass-baritone will also be featured as Aria soloists.

“Performances of Bach’s Passions, particularly in light of the attention that Mel Gibson’s film *The Passion of the Christ* has received, present an opportunity for Christians and Jews to confront issues of religious intolerance, and the role of the arts and how the arts might, advertently or inadvertently, promote intolerance,” said **Earl Rivers**, conductor and director of Choral Studies at CCM. “By exploring these issues, we will know the music better and we will know each other better.”

One of the most highly regarded performers in choral music today, **Tom Hall** was appointed Music Director of the Baltimore Choral Arts Society in 1982. While his thorough scholarship and “historically informed” approach have shed new light on many familiar works of the Baroque and Classical periods, he has also introduced many premieres of works by contemporary composers, choreographers and poets. Well known as a teacher, lecturer and writer, he is frequently invited to speak to professional and community organizations, including the American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, the College Endowment Association and the Ewald Symposium of Sweetbriar College.

“To perform sacred music without understanding the religious tradition from whence it comes constitutes dereliction of duty,” wrote Hall. “(Bach’s *St. John Passion*) has achieved iconic status in the history of art and humankind because it remains as moving, vital and convincing as it was more than 250 years ago. This piece exemplifies all that is good and possible about the arts: it explores the universal themes of redemption and salvation in a more imaginative and riveting way than countless attempts by others to do the same thing.”

**Dr. Christopher M. Leighton** is an ordained Presbyterian minister who has served as the Executive Director of the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland since its inception in 1987. He graduated from the Princeton Theological Seminary and received a doctorate in Philosophy and Education from Columbia University. He has studied at the Baltimore Hebrew University, the Jewish Theological Seminary and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. After co-editing *Talking About Genesis: A Resource Guide* for the Bill Moyers series, he conducted a variety of educational programs which explored the challenges of reading and interpreting Genesis.

The Daniel Underhill Professor of Music at Swarthmore College, **Dr. Michael Marissen** holds a BA from Calvin College and a PhD from Brandeis University. He joined the Swarthmore faculty in 1989 and since then has also been a visiting professor at Princeton and Oberlin. His publications include *The Social and Religious Designs of J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos; Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion; An Introduction to Bach Studies* and articles in *Early Music, Harvard Theological Review, Musical Quarterly* and *The New York Times*. As a Bach specialist, he has also worked with many organizations promoting interreligious understanding among Jews and Christians.

Funded by a generous gift from the Margaret Core Tangeman Charitable Trust, the **Tangeman Sacred Music Center** supports the advancement of the professional development of musicians and scholars in areas related to sacred music and the liturgical arts through performance, composition, technical training and research. The primary goals of the center are: commissioning and performing significant works from major composers; support of master classes, residencies and concerts by leading musicians and scholars; support for faculty and student research and travel; and support of additional projects in sacred music which might not otherwise find funding.

The CCM Choral Department has long been considered one of the nation's leading programs for choral training. The **Chamber Choir** and **Chorale** are two of five choral ensembles at CCM, which also includes the 50-voice Chamber Singers and 120-voice University Men's and Women's Choruses. Comprised of graduate and advanced undergraduate voice and choral majors, the Chamber Choir is conducted by Earl Rivers, who, with his colleague Stephen Coker, oversees one of America's premier graduate programs in choral conducting. Under the direction of Earl Rivers, the Chamber Choir has presented J.S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Haydn's *The Creation* in the new Oxford Edition. The Chorale joined Chamber Choir for Dvorák's *Stabat Mater* and the regional premiere of Philip Glass' Symphony No. 5 "Requiem, Bardo, Nirmanakaya."

CCM's **Philharmonia Orchestra** is recognized as one of the world's elite conservatory orchestras. The Philharmonia has risen to world prominence through the quality of its performances and recordings, its national and international tours and particularly with its commitment to the performance of neglected repertoire and new works. The Philharmonia's discography includes critically praised recordings of Hans Rott's *Symphony*, Ives' *Universe Symphony* and Schubert's opera *Der Graf von Gleichen*. Other accomplishments of the Philharmonia Orchestra include a premiere of a new version of Mozart's unfinished opera,

*Zaide*, at Lincoln Center's Mozart Bicentennial, appearing as the only American orchestra to perform at the International Mahler Festival and a debut at Carnegie Hall with the NYC premiere of the complete orchestral songs of Alexander Zemlinsky.

**Earl Rivers** is professor of music, head of the ensembles and conducting division and director of choral studies at CCM where he has been a faculty member since 1973. He oversees one of the country's outstanding graduate programs in choral conducting. Rivers is serving in his seventeenth season as music director of the Vocal Arts Ensemble of Cincinnati (VAE), a 24-voice professional chamber choir acclaimed for its attention to the performance of music of contemporary American composers. Rivers conducts the VAE on its newest CD, *An American Christmas*, and with the VAE he has twice been awarded an ASCAP Award for "Adventuresome Programming of Contemporary Music." Since 1974 he has served as director of music at Cincinnati's Knox Presbyterian Church. He is a member of the national board of directors of Chorus America, a national service organization for professional and volunteer choirs. Rivers was presented a special award for service in the arts at the Post-Corbett Awards in Cincinnati.

Both the forum on November 13 and the performance on November 14 are FREE and open to the public. "What To Do When Words Hurt: Religious Intolerance in the Passions of J.S. Bach" begins at 7 p.m. in Knox Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Michigan and Observatory Avenues in Hyde Park. The Philharmonia Orchestra and Chamber Choir's performance of St. John Passion, conducted by Earl Rivers, begins at 3 p.m. at the Christ Church Cathedral on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Sycamore Streets downtown.

For more information visit the Web site at [www.ccm.uc.edu](http://www.ccm.uc.edu) or call the Box Office at 513-556-4183.

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With Tom Hall, Baltimore Choral Arts Society; Christopher Leighton, Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies; and Michael Marissen, Swarthmore College

Saturday, November 13, 7 pm

Knox Presbyterian Church, Michigan & Observatory Avenues, Hyde Park

*A project of the Tangeman Sacred Music Center*

FREE

**Philharmonia Orchestra & Chamber Choir**

Earl Rivers, conductor

With student soloists

J. S. Bach: *St. John Passion*

Sunday, November 14, 3 pm

Christ Church Cathedral, 4th and Sycamore Streets, downtown

FREE