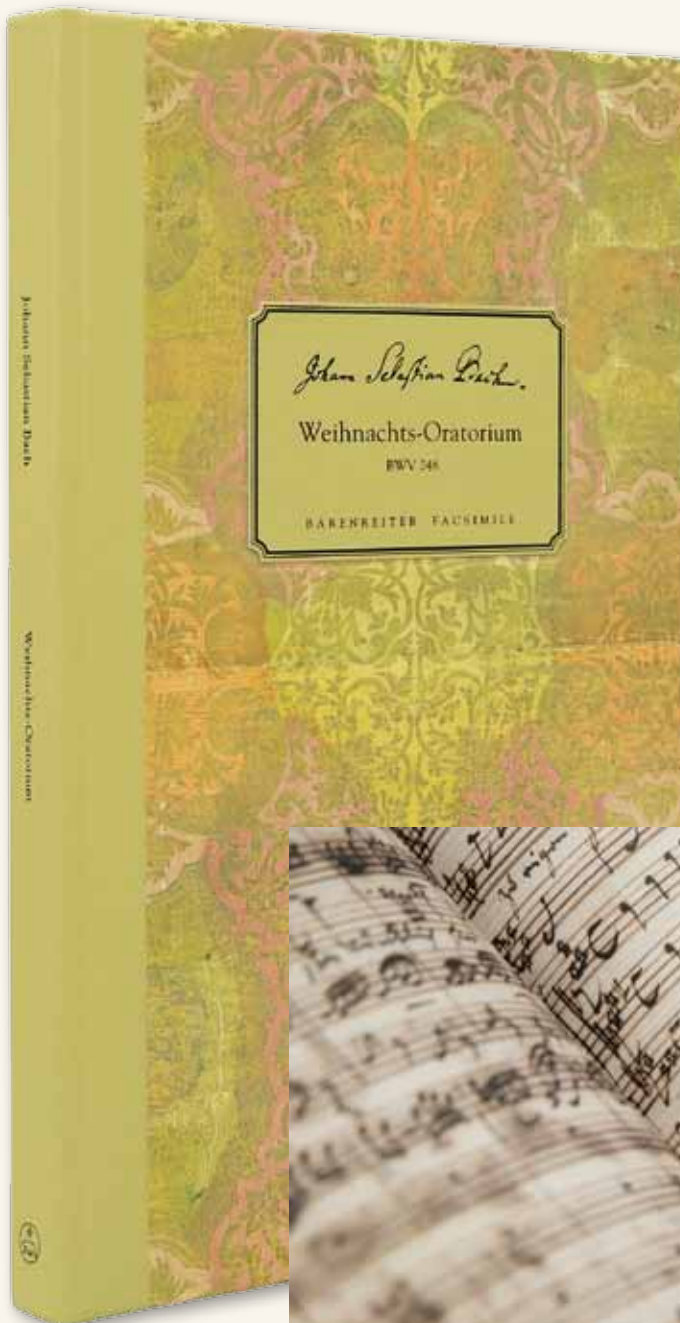


“My father’s music has higher intentions, it should not fill the ear but move the heart.”

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach



Johann Sebastian Bach.

Johann Sebastian Bach

**Christmas
Oratorio BWV 248**

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Johann Sebastian Bach

Christmas Oratorio

BWV 248

Facsimile of the autograph score in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz

Edited by Christoph Wolff and Martina Rebmann

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The *Christmas Oratorio*, with its six parts, has become dear to the hearts of countless music lovers all over the world. What sounds today as if it could never have been otherwise, in reality dates back in part to earlier Bach pieces that he retexted and adapted for the new purpose. The autograph 'betrays' Bach's working methods in the very first chorus: first he underlaid the words of a version from the birthday cantata *Tönet ihr Pauken* only to cross them out and replace them with the famous *Jauchzet, frohlocket*.

Other passages in the autograph likewise reveal traces of self-borrowing. Some corrections allow the reader to look over the composer's shoulder, as it were, and watch him transforming an

aria step by step into its present form or struggling to find a definitive version for a short recitative. In contrast, other pages are written out in an immaculate fair hand. This facsimile edition presents the autograph score of the *Christmas Oratorio* for the first time in a high quality four-colour reproduction.

The appendix contains, amongst other things, a copy of the original text booklet that the audience had in their hands when the work was premiered in Leipzig in 1734.

Bach specialist **Christoph Wolff** has provided an Introduction on the work's genesis and the features of the manuscript. The subsequent history of the autograph is described by **Martina Rebmann** of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

