

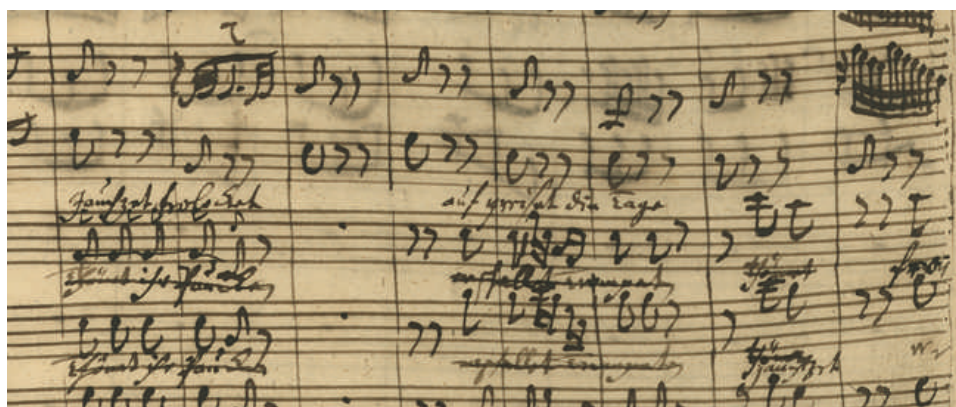
*Johann Sebastian Bach.*

## **Weihnachts-Oratorium / Christmas Oratorio BWV 248**

Facsimile of the Autograph Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Commentary by / Kommentar von Christoph Wolff, Martina Rebmann

Documenta Musicologica, II/54. Kassel, 2018. 23 x 38 cm, 148, xl pp. Deluxe 4-color facsimile of the autograph score. This is the most authoritative facsimile of the Christmas Oratorio to date, based on the restored manuscript and new high-quality digital photography. The 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 re-texted and adapted for the new purpose. The autograph “betrays” Bach’s working methods in the very first chorus: 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. With this publication Bärenreiter’s trilogy of Bach choral masterpieces—*Mass in B Minor*, *St. Matthew Passion* and *Christmas Oratorio*—is now complete and modern, combining advanced 21st-century photolithography with the latest editorial contributions of Christoph Wolff. Limited bibliophile edition, binding with leather spine, boards in decorative paper and pasted title etikette. Due June, 2018, price: c.\$399

A note on the MS and its facsimiles : Previous facsimile editions (1960; 1984) are based on a seriously deteriorating MS, much of it due to the corrosive quality of the ink. To finally solve this problem curators turned to a method called “paper splitting”, where front and reverse side of each leaf is split, and an alkali-buffered paper laid in between; during the process imperfections in the leaves are repaired with the finest cellulose fibers. The leaf is also treated with a chemical to stop the process of corrosion. The restoration of the Christmas Oratorio was completed in 2002, followed by digital photography in 2009. This new facsimile edition presents the MS—for the first time—in its post-restoration state, significantly improving the vividness of Bach’s handwriting, a true joy for Bach lovers. ([view other volumes from this series](#)).



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