

*When I finished my master's degree, I decided to go to Germany. I loved everything about it—the brats, the beer, the Bundesliga—but the real reason I went was to study with the conductor Helmuth Rilling. Many of you probably recognize his name. He recently passed away.*

*A few months after I arrived, I experienced Helmuth Rilling's St. Matthew Passion. And I truly mean experienced, not just heard. It wasn't simply a concert—it was life-changing. I couldn't sleep for days afterward. Even now, I can't fully explain what happened in me. But I remember thinking very clearly: Someday, I want to conduct this piece.*

*Fast forward to 2011. CSU hosted a national conference, and the headliners were Helmuth Rilling and Alice Parker. What many people don't know is that about fifteen years earlier, Rilling had come to Colorado to conduct a choir I prepared for him. We spent a week talking about music, about Bach, and about life. When I told him how deeply I wanted to devote myself to performing Bach, he encouraged me to start an organization like the ones he founded in the 1960s—Bach-Collegium Stuttgart and Gächinger Kantorei.*

*So in June 2012, the Colorado Bach Ensemble was born, with the Mass in B minor as our very first concert. The following year, we performed the St. Matthew Passion.*

*Fourteen years later... here we are.*

*Our first season's budget was about \$25,000. Last week's production of the St. John Passion alone cost nearly four times that amount. Over the past fourteen seasons, we've made tremendous strides. This is our first year with an Executive Director and our second season with an Orchestra Manager—important steps in strengthening the organization.*

*I'm proud of what we bring to the stage. But I also know how much more is possible. Right now, we often have just one choral rehearsal before joining the orchestra, and one string sectional. Imagine what we could achieve with just one additional rehearsal for our continuo group and woodwinds.*

*And of course, what you see on stage represents countless hours of work behind the scenes. It truly takes an entire community to bring this music to life.*

*As we look toward the next fourteen years, I invite you to be part of this journey. We have many needs, and I promise you that your support will be used thoughtfully and responsibly.*

*You are not simply supporting an organization—or me as its artistic director. We are merely messengers of a legacy left to us by a humble servant who happens to be one of the greatest composers in the entire history of Western music. This is a legacy worth preserving, so that people here in Colorado can continue to experience it—without traveling to cities like New York, Washington, or Boston, but right here in Colorado.*



James Kim, Artistic Director