

SONOMA  
**Bach**

ROBERT WORTH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

P R E S E N T S

ORGAN RECITAL

*Bach and the  
North Germans*

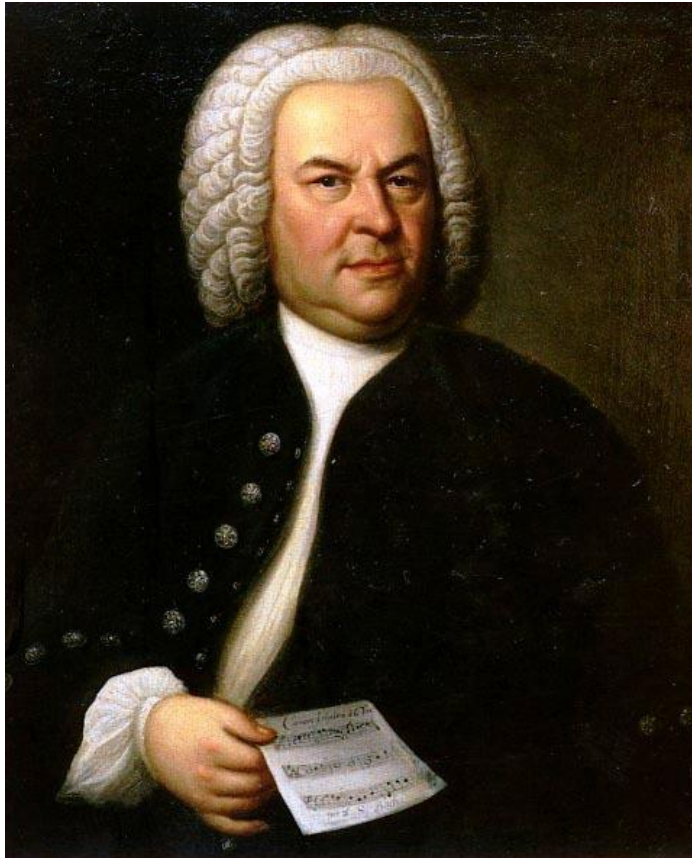
**Rodney Gehrke, organ**

**Saturday, February 25, 8PM**

Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center  
Sonoma State University  
Rohnert Park



Adelheid Dietrich, *Still life with grapes, peaches and flowers, 1867.*



J.S. Bach, Elias Gottlob Haussmann, 1748

*For the spiritual music is as follows.  
For there is the thunder-stop, which is the voice of God direct.  
For the rest of the stops are by their Rhimes.  
For innumerable Angels fly out at every touch,  
and his tune is a work of creation.  
-Christopher Smart (1722-1771)*



*Presented by Sonoma Bach in association with the Green Music Center*

# Organ Recital: Bach & the North Germans

concert generously sponsored by David Hanes

FEATURING

## Rodney Gehrke, organ

February 25, 2017  
Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center  
Sonoma State University  
Rohnert Park

# Organ Recital: Bach & The North Germans

Praeludium in C Major (BuxWV 137).....	Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)
"Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" (BuxWV 223).....	Buxtehude
Magnificat on the Second Tone (4 <i>versus</i> ).....	Matthias Weckmann (1616-1674)
Fantasy: "Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott".....	Franz Tunder (1614-1667)
Praeludium in C Major.....	Vincent Lübeck (1654-1740)



Contrapunctus I from <i>Art of Fugue</i> (BWV 1080.1)....	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
"Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (BWV 720).....	J.S.Bach
"Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott" (BWV 721).....	J.S.Bach
"Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (BWV 645).....	J.S.Bach
"Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot" (BWV 678).....	J.S.Bach
Trio: "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr" (BWV 664).....	J.S.Bach
Prelude and Fugue in D Major (BWV 532).....	J.S.Bach

# Program Notes and Chorale Melodies

*Praeludium in C Major (BuxWV 137)*.....*Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)*

The first half of this evening's concert explores the rich tradition of North German organ composition of the 17th and early 18th centuries. Some of the most celebrated organist-composers were active in Hamburg and Lübeck, two of the powerful city-states of the merchant Hanseatic League, with large churches and very impressive organs. J.S. Bach made several celebrated trips to the region from central Germany, first walking 400 kilometers to visit Dieterich Buxtehude in Lübeck at Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany time of 1705-6, overstaying his leave of absence from his church job in Arnstadt by several months. In 1720 he auditioned for the organist post on the biggest organ in Germany in Hamburg's Jakobikirche, a job he won but turned down when told that he would be expected to make a sizable donation to the church treasury in gratitude. How many more incredible organ works would Bach have left had he taken this job??

From 1668 until his death, Buxtehude was organist and church treasurer at Lübeck's Marienkirche, its brick vault the highest in the world at over 125 feet. He followed the not uncommon practice of marrying the daughter of his predecessor, Franz Tunder (see below). Among Buxtehude's most important influences was his decision to have the organs of his church altered from meantone tuning to well temperament in 1682-3. This change allowed more exotic key areas to be explored, inspiring, among others, the 20-year-old Bach.

Buxtehude's C Major Praeludium is one of his best known examples of a genre of organ works he perfected. These pieces in the "fantasy style" alternate sections of free, toccata-like figurations (including pedal solos) with strictly fugal sections. Many, like the C Major, have five sections -- free, fugal, free, fugal, free -- with brilliant openings and conclusions and often surprising middle sections ranging far afield. The opening free section contains all the hallmarks of the composer's mature style: a marvelous pedal solo, brilliant manual scales on the manuals, a brief fugato, and further motivic ruminations. The following fugue is also typical: one could hear a consort of strings or winds playing such music. After a brief improvisatory interlude, Buxtehude replaces the expected second fugue with an ostinato-bass Ciacona, marked *Presto*. A final brilliant coda is played on full organ.

*"Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" (BuxWV 223)*.....*Buxtehude*

The image shows the musical notation for the chorale "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" by Dieterich Buxtehude. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first line of the melody. The second staff contains the second line, including a repeat sign. The third staff contains the final line of the melody, ending with a double bar line.

“Wie schön leuchtet,” the most important Lutheran hymn for Epiphany, is known as the Queen of Chorales. In Buxtehude’s setting, the long melody is heard twice, first more plainly, then more freely. Scholars tell us that Buxtehude had one or two stop assistants with him whenever he played (in addition of course, to the organ bellows pumper). The work’s changes in texture and mood invite frequent registration changes. Tonight the entire piece, other than echo effects, is played on the stops of the Rückpositive.

*Magnificat on the Second Tone*.....*Matthias Weckmann (1616-1674)*



Matthias Weckmann died eleven years before Bach was born, but the fabulous instrument he played at Jakobikirche, Hamburg, the first four-manual organ in Germany, was every bit as glorious when Bach applied for the position in 1720 (and, in its latest restoration, still delights organ lovers today). Bach's playing there and at nearby Catharinenkirche made quite the splash in Hamburg. The aged Jan Adam Reincken praised Bach as did famous theorist Johann Mattheson.

Weckmann was born in Central Germany and sang under Heinrich Schütz in Dresden. Schütz found his singing voice lacking but recognized his gifts in organ playing and sent him to Hamburg to study with Jacob Praetorius, his predecessor at Jakobikirche. The four-movement collection of pieces on the Second Magnificat Plainchant tone showcases Weckmann's rich harmonic palette and his emphasis on the color of thick textures. The opening organo pleno movement is in five voice parts with double pedal: the upper pedal part gives the chant melody in long notes, doubled by the lower manual voice. In the second movement we hear a florid elaboration of the melody on the Rückpositive Sesquialtera combination. While only in four voice parts, Weckmann gives an extended coda, adding an extra voice in the solo. The third movement, with the solo in the pedal, is in five voice parts, and the final movement, played on a Trumpet chorus with pedal reeds, is in six voice parts. This "monumental style" would have been impressive on the Jakobi instrument in its rich acoustic environment.

*Fantasy: "Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott"*.....*Franz Tunder (1614-1667)*



Nearly all of the few preserved chorale-based works by Franz Tunder, Buxtehude's predecessor at Marienkirche, Lübeck, are in the fascinating genre of the North German chorale fantasy. Tonight's piece is typical: the chorale melody is sometimes heard plainly in manuals or pedal, sometimes highly ornamented. Echo effects are common, and the numerous changes in texture and motion (usually at the ends of chorale phrases) invite registration changes to explore the many sounds of the large organs in resonant acoustics.

*Praeludium in C Major*.....*Vincent Lübeck (1654-1740)*

We do not know for certain whether Bach met Vincent Lübeck on his famous audition trip to Hamburg in 1720, but Lübeck and his fabulous Schnitger organ at Nicolaikirche, where he played from 1702 until his death, must have been known to Bach. Considering his long life, we have very few preserved organ works by Lübeck, since (much to our amazement today) organ compositions by him and others in that era were often prized as highly as visual art works. All of these organists were brilliant improvisers, their written-down works simply the tip of a giant iceberg of music making. The C Major Praeludium is typical of his (and Buxtehude's) style: free, brilliant passagework alternates with stricter polyphonic sections. While Buxtehude most often followed a five-section pattern of free-fugal-free-fugal-free, Lübeck more frequently strung several fugues together, as in this piece, which opens with a pedal solo and extended free section. Three contrasting fugues follow: a carefully constructed formal fugue, a playful brief fugato in quicker motion, and a final plenum fugue in 18th-century homophonic style, without a concluding toccata coda.



*Contrapunctus I from Art of Fugue (BWV 1080.1)*.....*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

One of the great works of musical art ever composed is Bach's Art of Fugue, compiled in the last decade of his life, preserved in two primary sources emanating from Bach himself — an early manuscript version and a posthumous print. Much controversy and confusion has accompanied the work over the centuries, mainly due to two issues: the printed form of the work is in "open score" (individual staves for each voice part), without a clear indication as to what instrument(s) should play the work. Also, a massive Fuga à 3 soggetti (fugue with three subjects, none of which is the main theme of the set) was left incomplete. Scholar Davitt Moroney has published a definitive edition, asserting that the harpsichord is the ideal instrument, and he includes a compelling conclusion of the great final fugue (others have offered conclusions as well) incorporating the main subject of the collection. Today's movement, the first in the collection, displays Bach's characteristic didactic intensity, is also extremely beautiful and includes two unexpected, dramatic silences before the end. A final pedal point makes clear that the organ is at least an acceptable instrument if not the very best instrument. The Praestant of the Great (main case) is the perfect stop for this perfect work.

*"Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (BWV 720).....J.S.Bach*

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott" (BWV 720) by J.S. Bach. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second staff includes first and second endings. The third and fourth staves continue the melodic line with various note values and rests.

Bach's setting of the great Luther hymn (played in honor of the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation on October 31) was probably composed in 1708 for the rededication of the organ at Mühlhausen's St. Blasiuskirche, whose rebuilding was overseen by Bach though he had left the post for the court chapel of Weimar. Manual and stop indications, extremely rare in Bach's music, fit the stoplist of the rebuilt organ, in particular the opening left-hand 16' Fagott and right-hand Sesquialtera as well as the Pedal Posaune first heard halfway through the piece. The fragmentary structure of the piece gives the effect of youthful improvisation so typical of the brilliant Bach as he assimilated the style of his North German forbears.

*"Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott" (BWV 721) .....J.S.Bach*

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott" (BWV 721) by J.S. Bach. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff includes first and second endings. The second and third staves continue the melodic line with various note values and rests.



While there is some doubt that Bach composed this setting of a penitential chorale, it is attributed to him by his cousin Johann Gottfried Walther in an early manuscript. I include the work because its highly unusual texture (for Bach) and insistent repeated-chord motion is very similar to two musically identical movements in a cantata attributed to Buxtehude (now known to be by Buxtehude's student Ludwig Busbetzky). In both the Bach and Busbetzky works, the soprano melody is presented in simple notes above the throbbing accompanimental texture.

"Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (BWV 645) .....J.S.Bach

The musical score for "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme" (BWV 645) by J.S. Bach is presented in four staves. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is simple and the accompaniment features a throbbing repeated-chord motion.

In 1748, Bach transcribed six vocal pieces from his cantatas for organ. Published by Johann Georg Schübler (and thus commonly referred to as the *Schübler Chorales*), Bach clearly knew these pieces were winners. Tonight's piece, from Cantata 140, is the first of the set and arguably the most popular. In the original, the chorale melody (tonight played on the trumpet stop) was sung by the tenor voice to the text of the chorale's second stanza: "Zion hears the watchmen singing." The very catchy ritornello accompaniment was played by violins and violas in unison.

"Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot" (BWV 678) .....J.S.Bach

The musical score for "Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot" (BWV 678) by J.S. Bach is presented in two staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is simple and the accompaniment features a catchy ritornello accompaniment.

This extremely unusual chorale prelude is included in the most important collection of organ music Bach (or anyone else, in my opinion) compiled, *The Third Part of the Clavierübung*. While Bach did not specifically dedicate the collection to the Trinity, many details infer such. References to the number three abound. The collection (the third Clavierübung set, published in 1739 – 3 X 3 = 9) has 27 pieces = 3 X 3 X 3. The great Prelude and Fugue in E-flat (3 flats in the key signature with three themes in each piece) are the first and last pieces of the collection. In between are settings of the Lutheran mass chorales, Kyrie and Gloria (3 each....), then larger and smaller settings of the six chorales based on sections of the Lutheran catechism, plus four highly interesting duettos. “Dies sind die heiligen zehn Gebot” (These Are the Holy Ten Commandments) begins the section of catechism chorale settings. In this 10<sup>th</sup> chorale setting of the collection, Bach sets the fascinating melody, which begins with six repeated notes, in canon (a word synonymous with law). While the range of the melody is rather narrow, Bach accompanies the chorale with very wide-ranging motives in a fluid harmonic patina informed by the mixolydian mode.

*Trio: "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr" (BWV 664) .....J.S.Bach*



Bach spent a good portion of the last decade of his life gathering earlier works into cohesive collections, usually expanding them (such as the Mass in B Minor and the second book of the Well-Tempered Clavier), and improving them. This trio is the 14th work in the so-called Leipzig Collection of organ chorales (also known as the "18 Great Chorales"). Since we have copies of early versions of these pieces, we are offered an unusual peek into Bach's compositional workshop. "Allein Gott" is one of two chorale settings in the collection in which Bach only uses the hint of the chorale melody to form a brilliant trio setting (similar to the fast movements of his six trio sonatas). Toward the end, Bach presents the first two phrases of the chorale melody in longer notes in the pedal to conclude the work.

*Prelude and Fugue in D Major (BWV 532) .....J.S.Bach*

While Bach wrote a few praeludia early on in forms similar to his North German forbears (none reaching the heights of his models), he soon developed and eventually perfected the two-movement prelude and fugue complex we are so familiar with from, e.g., the Well-Tempered Clavier. Numerous of his later, mature examples include fugal sections in the "prelude" movements, and one of the fugues (E Minor, BWV 548) admits concerto sections. It was difficult to decide which of the Bach prelude/fugue pairs should conclude tonight's recital. The G Minor Fantasy and Fugue would have

been an excellent choice, since the fantasy might be a written-down version of the improvisation Bach played at his audition for the Hamburg Jakobikirche job in 1720 and the fugue, whose subject is a variant of a Dutch folk melody, was likely played for the Dutch organist Johann Adam Reincken who presided at Hamburg's Catherinenkirche. In response to Bach improvising on the chorale "An Wasserflüssen Babylon," Reincken, whose longest organ fantasy is based on the same chorale, remarked that he had thought the organ art of the 17th and early 18th century had died out but that it obviously lived on in Bach. I chose the D Major work (likely composed around the same time as the G Minor) because its opening and concluding pedal solos are most similar in gesture to the Buxtehude and Lübeck preludia of tonight's first half. The prelude's opening pedal scales are unique in the Baroque organ literature. The silences and quick key shifts of the opening section are as strong an answer to the challenge of Bach's forbears as he ever wrote. Bach then switches gears with a happy, Italianate section, mimicking the string music of Corelli and Vivaldi. A sudden silence, however, leads to a wrenching conclusion with double pedal. The following fugue is one of the happiest organ pieces by Bach and even includes a gesture which I like to think of as a musical "ha ha." The opening presentation of the fugue subject is the only time it is heard in its bare form, of course, here including two beats of silence. Every other time, those two silent beats are given a simple back-and-forth gesture that I hear as a humorous titter..... The episodic passages are usually in just two parts and bring the music into numerous key areas, which the Brombaugh organ gives wonderful character with its Werckmeister temperament. Eventually, the fugal texture breaks down, unleashing a final-page battle between the manuals and the pedal, with the pedal finally on the winning end with an extended solo. Final snickers and octave leaps conclude the work.

-notes by Rodney Gehrke

**Rodney Gehrke** is Director of Music at All Saints' Episcopal Church, Palo Alto, Organist and Choir Director at San Francisco's Temple Emanu-El, and Professor of Organ at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Mr. Gehrke has recently played recitals in Germany and Japan in addition to accompanying numerous Bay Area choral groups.

# Disposition of the Organ

Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center, Sonoma State University

John Brombaugh & Associates Opus 9, 1972

Built for Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Toledo, Ohio

Manual compass: 56 notes

Pedal compass: 30 notes

Mechanical action

88 mm wind pressure

20 Stops

29 Ranks

1248 Pipes

Tremulant to the entire instrument

Temperament: Kellner at A440

## GREAT ORGAN I

16' Bourdon

8' Praestant I-II

8' Holpijp

4' Octave

4' Spielflote

2' Octave

III-X Mixture

8' Trumpet

## RÜCKPOSITIVE ORGAN II

8' Gedackt

4' Praestant

4' Rohrflöte

2' Octave

1 1/3' Quinte

II Sesquialtera

8' Musette

## PEDAL ORGAN

16' Subbass

8' Octave

16' Fagot

8' Trumpet (Gt.)

## COUPLERS

Rückpositive to Great

Rückpositive to Pedal

Great to Pedal

John Brombaugh's Opus 9, successfully brought to the American organ scene a number of "firsts", which were to have a lasting impact not only upon American organ building, but also upon the music making of countless organists who have been shaped by its distinctive qualities over the past decades. Some of those "firsts" are:

- the sound of hammered lead (82 percent) pipes, voiced in the manner similar to that of the Dutch Renaissance, giving the sound a very strong "vocal quality, rich in fundamental tone, and intense with "a certain airiness," even a "sandy" quality
- the warm brilliance of the plenum, or principal ensemble of the organ, designed according to the tonal concept of the Renaissance *Blockwerk*, sounding both forceful and sweetm and not overladen with high pitches
- the successful realization of the smooth, quick-sounding, and somewhat dark quality of the north-European red stops, allowing increased understanding of older registration practices using reeds in combination with other stops
- the use of suspended action in a full-sized instrument, for both the Great and the Rückpositive
- the particular approach to design of the case, stressing classical proportions, the use of high-quality solid woods, and the use of a decorative scheme – especially the moldings, pipe shades, and embossed pipes – all of which aspects draw heavily upon Renaissance traditions, but seek to further, rather than reproduce them

Brombaugh's methods of construction revolutionized American organ building in the twentieth century, and his instruments were installed internationally, as far away as Sweden and Japan. Brombaugh organs have been influential to both organ builders and organists, defining many aspects of the historically informed American organ in the late twentieth century.

Further distinctive, and even daring features of this instrument are:

- one of the first uses of unequal temperament (originally Werckmeister III, now altered to Kellner) in a new instrument anywhere in the world
- mechanical key action
- mechanical stop action with hand-forged iron
- freestanding organ case built on historic principles (based on the now-lost Renaissance organ case in Rhenen, Netherlands) and made of hand planed red oak (no plywood)
- employment of wedge bellows
- cone tuning for small metal pipes
- embossed façade pipes
- Great 8' Principal with a double-ranked treble in façade
- façade pipes and moldings gilded with 23-carat goldleaf
- Rückpositive drawknobs on the back side of the Rückpositive case, behind the player
- naturals of the manual keyboards plated with cow shinbones
- manual sharps, stop knobs and keytable molding made from African ebony
- keycheeks are zebrawood; pedal sharps from Brazilian rosewood; pedal naturals from maple
- stop rods of beech; keyboards and trackers from sugar pine
- windchests and bellows are white oak, western red-cedar, sugar pine and sheep and cow leather

This organ provides a vital centerpiece for North German Baroque music: built in historic Netherlandish-North German style, it is a landmark instrument in this country, both as a profoundly convincing medium for a great repertory, and for the breadth and depth of its sheer beauty and musicality.

# Thank you to all of our Supporters!

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Brombaugh Opus 9 Keys and Stops



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