

# BACH'S WORLD



SONOMA  
**Bach**

ROBERT WOODS, MUSIC DIRECTOR

OUR 2022-2023 SEASON

# BACH'S WORLD: OUR 2022–2023 SEASON

*In which we explore the remarkable life and works of Johann Sebastian Bach, with special attention to the diverse influences and conditions which shaped his music.*

WHEN THE EMINENT biologist Lewis Thomas was asked which terrestrial sounds he would choose to send into outer space in the Voyager spacecraft, possibly to be encountered by aliens, he replied, 'I would send the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach.' And then he added, 'But that would be boasting.'

Why does Bach attract so much attention? Why do so many musicians from all walks of musical life revere his music? How did he transcend his parochial limitations to become a universal figure, the mother-ship of harmony, the all-time master of counterpoint, at once the most cerebral, the most emotional and the most spiritual of composers?

It's been a while since we've focused upon our namesake. It's not that we've forgotten him! It's just that other projects about which we are also passionate—not to mention the pandemic—have intervened. And so we now joyfully embark upon an entire season devoted to J.S. Bach and his milieu.

We'll perform a broad selection of his works, of course; but we'll also explore the works of those who influenced him, we'll delve into archives of music by others which we know he studied and performed, and we'll seek in various ways to illuminate the world in which he lived and his special place therein.

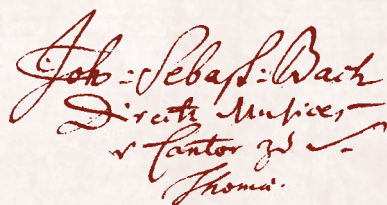
We begin with a look at the international Bach: since he did not travel from Germany to other countries in Europe, how did he stay so up-to-date on styles and developments afar? In our Opening Recital, AGAVE will examine the influence of French and Italian trends upon Bach's music. In November, we turn to the incredible music of Bach's forebears and others who influenced his development. We wrap up 2022 with our 9<sup>th</sup> Early Music Christmas, featuring four festive cantatas from Bach's first years in Leipzig which collectively recount and celebrate the Christmas story.

In the new year, we'll feature a treasure trove of chorale preludes for the organ; a profound profusion of works for the keyboard; a striking selection of *a cappella* music from Bach's personal library and from the Leipzig archives; a set of early cantatas, brash and mercurial and thrilling. And we'll wrap up our season with *Bach Through the Years*, a selection of great works from the epochs of Bach's life, including the *Magnificat* and a late cantata drawing upon movements from the *Mass in B Minor*.

Wrapped in among our eight concert sets, we'll fill in the picture by presenting a number of illuminating Bach Talks, dives into diverse aspects of Bach's life and career and into many of his works which we haven't been able to fit into the overflowing cup of our season.

Come join us in 2022–2023 as we adventure through Bach's World!

—ROBERT WORTH, music director



John Sebastian Bach  
Directs Music  
& Cantata 3d  
Thomas

# TRAVELS WITH SEBASTIAN

Johann Sebastian Bach may have never physically left his native turf in eastern Germany, but his music provided a virtual vehicle to take him around Europe. His music not only captures the essence of French and Italian Baroque styles, but also integrates these with his German love of counterpoint so as to transcend earlier models. Grammy-nominated string ensemble AGAVE and soprano sensation Jennifer Paulino take you on a European tour, with music by French and Italian composers whose works were to be found in Bach's library, as well as works by the master himself, including his only Italian cantata and an exceptional overture in the French style.

*"Bach used themes by Giovanni Legrenzi...knew the music of Arcangelo Corelli, and was familiar with the works of Tomaso Albinoni, Francesco Antonio Bonaporti, and Antonio Vivaldi."*  
—HANS T. DAVID and ARTHUR MENDEL (1945)

*"While a student in Lüneburg, my father had the opportunity to listen to a band kept by the Duke of Celle, consisting for the most part of Frenchmen; thus he acquired a thorough grounding in the French taste, which in those regions was something quite new..."* —from *Bach's Obituary*, C.P.E. BACH and J.F. AGRICOLA (1750)

Saturday October 29, 3 P.M.  
Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before the performance

SCHROEDER HALL

AGAVE

Jennifer Paulino, soprano



*"Brilliant  
and knowing  
performances...a  
strong sense of love  
and presence."*

—LAURENCE VITTES,  
*Gramophone*



# THE OLD BACH ARCHIVE

Friday November 18, 8 P.M.

Saturday November 19, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before each performance

SCHROEDER HALL

Circa 1600

The Whole Noyse

Barefoot All-Stars

Phebe Craig, organ

Directed by Robert Worth



Anonymous. Woodcut of Hans Bach.

Have you ever wondered how Bach came by his remarkable musical talents? He gave credit to his musical heritage: his family had been making music for nigh on 100 years before J.S. came upon the scene. In this concert we delve into the *Altbachisches Archiv*, a rich collection of music by Bach's forebears, including his father's cousins Johann Michael Bach and Johann Christoph Bach. We'll also take a look at two important influences from outside the family: Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706), a friend of Bach's parents and teacher of his brother; and Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707), who the young Bach admired so much that he undertook a 500-mile journey—on foot—to meet and hear and work with the older composer.

*"My heart was overwhelmed with gratitude and hope during that encore. Thank you for a beautiful experience."*



*"Of all these men [Bach's forebears] we still have works at hand, bearing witness to their strength in vocal and instrumental composition. The aforesaid Johann Christoph, particularly, was strong in the invention of beautiful ideas as well as in the expression of the meaning of the words. His writing was...galant and singing as well as remarkably polyphonous."* —from *Bach's Obituary*, C.P.E. BACH and J.F. AGRICOLA (1750)

# CHRISTMAS WITH BACH

In 1734, Bach turned his powers in earnest to the Christmas story, revising earlier occasional music and adding new arias, choruses and recitatives to create the *Weihnachtsoratorium*. For *Christmas with Bach*, we carve out one of many possible alternatives, drawing from the master's works of the mid 1720s, especially from his second annual cantata cycle. We've chosen to begin not with the Nativity but with the luminous Cantata 1: *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, celebrating the Angel Gabriel and the startling news which he brings to the young Mary. We proceed with three additional cantatas—each featuring horns and oboes—which follow the tale through Advent, the Nativity, and a festive New Year.

*"The Lutheran chorale, notably its melodies, held a lifelong fascination for Bach. Yet his idea of building a cantata cycle on these chorales...represented a notable inflection point within his constantly evolving musical universe. Bach's successors, without exception and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, would continue to perform selected cantatas from his most ambitious of all cyclical projects: A living memorial to the composer."* —CHRISTOPH WOLFF, 2020

Saturday December 17, 8 P.M.

Sunday December 18, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before each performance

SCHROEDER HALL

**Sonoma Bach Choir**  
**Live Oak Baroque Orchestra**

Directed by Robert Worth

*"Your programs are  
not merely concerts but  
soulful rituals that feed  
the depth of my being."*



Johann Georg Ringlin, View of Leipzig, ca. 1720.

# THE LITTLE ORGAN BOOK

Saturday January 21, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before the performance

SCHROEDER HALL

Anne Laver, organ  
Circa 1600



Christian Richter: Weimar-Schloßkapelle, c.1600.

During Bach's years in Weimar (1708-1717) he conceived and began work upon the *Orgelbüchlein*, an enormous collection of 164 brief organ preludes on Lutheran chorales for the entire church year. These would have been used to introduce congregational singing of the chorales, or perhaps as occasional music to accompany various sections of the liturgy. In the event, 46 of the settings were completed. Together they form a magical compendium of techniques and creative solutions which bring to vivid life these beloved melodies. Anne Laver will play many of the preludes, adding several from the modern 'Orgelbüchlein Project', which aims to complete the set; Circa 1600 will introduce the chorale melodies.

*"Last night's concert was wonderful for the soul. Thanks so much for persevering in the face of inclement weather."*



*"Here Bach has realised the ideal of the chorale prelude. The method is the most simple imaginable and at the same time the most perfect. Nowhere is the Dürer-like character of his musical style so evident as in these small pieces. Simply by the precision and the characteristic quality of each line of the contrapuntal motive he expresses all that has to be said, and so makes clear the relationship of the music to the text whose title it bears."*

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER, 1905

# BACH AT THE KEYBOARD



Everyone knows that Bach played the organ and the harpsichord; but did you know that he also had a chance to play early versions of the *fortepiano*, the instrument which eventually evolved into the modern piano? In *Bach at the Keyboard* you'll be able to hear Bach on all three of these instruments, played by some of their finest proponents: a Steinway concert grand piano, a John Philips harpsichord, and the Brombaugh Opus 9 tracker organ in the loft of Schroeder Hall, each tuned to a different temperament. The repertoire will be a fascinating cross-section of Bach's works for solo keyboard, including inventions, variations, preludes and fugues, dance movements and chorale settings. Don't miss this chance to compare and contrast!

Saturday February 18, 3 P.M.  
Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before the performance

SCHROEDER HALL

**Marilyn Thompson**, piano  
**Rodney Gehrke**, organ  
**Katherine Heater**, harpsichord



*"If you could only see Bach...either playing the clavier with all the fingers of both hands, or running over the keys of the instrument of instruments [the organ], whose innumerable pipes are brought to life by bellows, with both hands and, at the utmost speed, with his feet, producing by himself the most various and at the same time mutually agreeable combinations of sounds in orderly procession."*

—JOHANN MATTHIAS GESNER (1738)



Hildebrandt organ, St Wenceslas, Naumburg, Germany.

*"The programming, as usual, was thoughtful to the max, just the right and rare balance of scholarship, depth and heart."*



# BACHAPPELLA

Saturday March 11, 8 P.M.

Sunday March 12, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before each performance

ST. SERAPHIM  
ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Green Mountain Consort**  
Directed by Robert Worth

Bach had access throughout his life—especially in Leipzig, where he moved in 1723—to many works of music by other composers, in both manuscript and print form. There is no question that he made use of this treasure trove, performing and arranging many pieces and studying and playing others to glean musical ideas. The Green Mountain Consort will explore this repertoire, known to us from lists, catalogs and surviving scores. We'll perform pieces for up to eight voices from the *Florilegium Portense* (1618 and 1621), a compendium of polyphonic music; we'll feature motets from Schütz' *Geistliche Chormusik*; and we'll include pieces by Bach's predecessors as Thomascantor, such as Sethus Calvisius and J.H. Schein.

*"Throughout his life Bach showed an insatiable interest in all kind of music, old and new, and of all nations... He assimilated all the achievements to which his time was heir as completely as if he had consciously set out to do so."*—HANS T. DAVID AND ARTHUR MENDEL (1945)

*"I'm really blown away  
by the musicianship and  
dedication of this group!"*



Interior of St. Thomas Church, Leipzig, Germany.



# ARNSTADT AND MÜHLHAUSEN



Bernd Göbel, Bach as a Young Man, 1985.

Friday May 12, 8 P.M.  
Saturday May 13, 3 P.M.  
Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before each performance

SCHROEDER HALL

Circa 1600  
Live Oak Baroque Orchestra  
Directed by Robert Worth

People tend to think of Bach as a serious older man, as in the famous portrait of him on the cover of our brochure. But of course he wasn't always older! At the dawn of his career, when he lived in Arnstadt and Mühlhausen, he was dashing, full of beans, constantly discovering, questing, pushing limits and even getting into trouble. And his music! There seem to have been no limits for the brilliant young cantor from Eisenach. We'll perform four of his early cantatas, in which he experimented with styles and moods and orchestrations: the famous *Cantata 4: Christ lag in Todesbanden*; *Cantata 131: Aus der Tiefe*, based upon Psalm 130; *Cantata 150: Nach dir, Herr*, and the delightful *Cantata 196: Der Herr denket an uns*.

*"[Bach was] reproved for having hitherto made many curious variations on the chorales, and mingled with it many strange tones, and for the fact that the congregation has been much confused thereby. [Also was] reproved for going into the wine cellar on the preceding Sunday during the sermon, [and for] inviting an unfamiliar maiden into the choir loft and allowing her to make music there."*

—From proceedings of the Arnstadt Consistory, February 1706

*"LOBO played so well, tight and lyrical. What a joy!"*



# BACH THROUGH THE YEARS

Saturday June 3, 8 P.M.

Sunday June 4, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder lecture 35 minutes  
before each performance

SCHROEDER HALL

**Sonoma Bach Choir**

**Live Oak Baroque Orchestra**

Directed by Robert Worth

We wrap up ‘Bach’s World’ with a tour of the various epochs of Bach’s creative life, via a set of exciting works featuring trumpets and timpani. We open with *Cantata 71: Gott ist mein König*, premiered in Mühlhausen in 1708 at the inauguration of a new town council. We then offer a suite of ensemble movements from the stunning *Cantata 21: Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*, written in the teens of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Bach was working in Weimar. After intermission, we present the famous *Magnificat*, written in 1723 in Leipzig and revised a few years later. And we close with the thrilling *Cantata 191: Gloria in excelsis Deo*, a 1742 re-working of several movements from the 1733 *Missa* which eventually was expanded into the *Mass in B Minor*.

*“...Bach’s works do not merely please and delight...but irresistibly carry us away with them. They do not merely surprise us for a moment, but produce effects that become stronger the oftener we hear them. The boundless treasure of ideas heaped up in them, even when a thousand times considered, still leaves us something new to admire and to astonish us; and even he who is no connoisseur...can hardly refrain from admiration when they are well played and when he opens his ear and heart to them.”*—J.N. FORKEL, 1802

*“The concert was exquisite.  
I so admire the depth of  
thought and heart you bring  
to this marvelous work.  
Your encore bought tears  
to my eyes.”*



Anonymous. View of West Side of Thomasschule, Leipzig, 1732.

## OUR ENSEMBLES

**The Sonoma Bach Choir** specializes in the music of the High Baroque. Founded in 1991, the group has performed many of Bach's masterworks, including the Mass in B Minor, the Christmas Oratorio, and the St. John and St. Matthew Passions, as well as works by Handel, Mozart, Monteverdi, Schütz, Gabrieli and many others.



**Circa 1600** is our chamber choir, focused upon the nexus between the Renaissance and the Baroque. The group's primary repertoire is drawn from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, with occasional forays backward to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and forward up to and including J.S. Bach. Guiding lights include Josquin Desprez, Claudio Monteverdi, and Heinrich Schütz.



**The Green Mountain Consort** is a vocal chamber ensemble specializing in Renaissance and Early Baroque music. The group features thematic programs, with repertoire chosen to make the most of the intimacy and flexibility of the one-on-a-part format.



**Live Oak Baroque Orchestra** is Sonoma Bach's period-instrument ensemble. Led by Baroque violin sensation Elizabeth Blumenstock, LOBO brings sumptuous tone and breathtaking flair to the repertoire of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Experience Baroque music at its finest—passionately performed by some of the country's finest period instrumentalists.



**Guest Ensembles:** One of the country's leading early music brass ensembles, **The Whole Noyse** performs on a wide range of historical wind band instruments. Ever since their 2012 debut, the **Barefoot All-Stars** have been entertaining audiences on a regular basis, whenever a fabulous viol consort is called for.

## OUR VENUES

### **Schroeder Hall Green Music Center Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park**

Schroeder Hall is our primary venue. Six to seven of our eight annual productions take place in this wonderful 240-seat hall at the Green Music Center. Designed with chapel-like acoustics, Schroeder is perfect for early music. There is no bad seat in the house—sightlines are excellent from anywhere, and the sound projects evenly to all seats. Schroeder's pipe organ, designed and constructed by the iconic American builder John Brombaugh, is one of the finest instruments of its type.



### **St. Seraphim Orthodox Church 90 Mountain View Avenue Santa Rosa**

Each season we produce at least one concert set in this remarkable church. The hall offers a combination of outstanding acoustics, an intimate audience experience, and an interior almost entirely covered in magnificent frescos. The beautiful gardens, the friendly people and a feeling of deep peace about the place are just some of the reasons we love rehearsing and performing at St. Seraphim.



# LEARNING AND EXPLORATION

Exploration of a wealth of early-music topics has always been at the core of our mission. We offer an array of classes, activities and presentations designed to enrich and expand our community's knowledge and skills pertaining to this wonderful music of past centuries. During the pandemic we redesigned many of our offerings for remote learning, and invented new ones as well.

**BachTalks:** Fascinating talks on upcoming repertoire. In-person events occur in a private home and include a reception.

*Season Introduction* with Bob Worth – Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M.

*A Well Tempered Heart* with Kayleen Asbo – Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M.

*A Walk in Bach's Shoes* with Anne Laver – Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M.

*Bach the Borrower* with Bob Worth – Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 P.M.

*Bach Through the Years* with Dan Solter – Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M.

**Ready, Set, Sing!** A voice class for those aspiring to sing with greater ease and joy. The instructor, Christopher Fritzsche, is an alumnus of Chanticleer and a frequent soloist with Sonoma Bach.

Tuesdays: January 10, 17, 24, 31, 2023.

**Saturday Sings:** Join Sonoma Bach's assistant conductor Amanda McFadden to explore the works of women through the ages.

*Timeless Women* – Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 3–5 P.M.

Join us to sing S.A.T.B. music by women composers.

*Ladies' Night* – Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 3–5 P.M. S.S.A. music for women's voices. All voice parts are welcome to participate!

**Backgrounders:** Each of our concerts is preceded by a lively half-hour presentation by our music director or by a special guest. These cover highlights of the repertoire, tips for listening, background material, and stories from the early music trenches. Many Backgrounders include the participation of the full performing forces.

**The Choir Loft:** A podcast featuring wonderful vocal and instrumental music and illuminating commentary. New shows are added regularly and many previous shows are available at [www.sonomabach.org](http://www.sonomabach.org).

**Repertoire Exploration Projects:** In May of 2020, our music director, Robert Worth, began sending out projects three times a week to our community. Each project focuses upon a musical work (or several related works). A narrative about the piece, a recording, a score and other relevant materials are included. Over 300 of these projects are available on our website.

**Sonoma Bach Choir Open Rehearsal and Auditions:** Sonoma Bach is looking for singers in all voice parts to add to our musical community for our 2022–2023 season, *Bach's World*. Join us for an open rehearsal at Sts. Peter and Paul on Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M. Come say hello, sing through the repertoire with us, get a feel for the group, and sign up for an audition. For more information, contact Dianna Morgan at [dianna@sonomabach.org](mailto:dianna@sonomabach.org).

## WHAT WE DO—AND WHY

Sonoma Bach brings together and nurtures a community of music-lovers in our beloved Sonoma region to share in the magnificent experience of early music. We know that this music from the distant past—sacred and worldly, vocal and instrumental, solemn and joyful—can speak powerfully to today’s audiences, and we reach out not only to those already familiar with its pleasures and beauties and traditions, but also to those for whom the music is brand-new.

Our ensembles—three vocal groups and our period-instrument orchestra—prepare and perform an annual series of eight concert sets, featuring exciting repertoire presented in imaginative programs designed to bring to life the magic of the music and to connect compellingly with our audiences.

Most of our concerts take place in the Green Music Center’s 240-seat Schroeder Hall, with its live acoustics and wonderful Brombaugh pipe organ. In addition, we offer site-specific concerts designed for special places in Sonoma County, such as our annual concerts in the domed and frescoed St. Seraphim Orthodox Church. Sonoma Bach offers a variety of opportunities for singers, instrumentalists and listeners to learn and explore.

Our classes, workshops and lectures focus upon four broad areas: individual skills, including vocal technique and sight-reading; ensemble skills; knowledge of repertoire; and ‘the big picture’—what does it all mean, and how can I connect? Hard-pressed by the restrictions of the pandemic, we have learned how to present many of these events virtually, and will continue to reach out and connect in these new ways going forward.

We believe passionately in the power of music to bring people together, to help us work through life’s challenges, and to serve as a catalyst for positive change. When people make music with and for each other—with skill, with style, with love—we believe that our world becomes better. Sonoma Bach is proud to have been serving our community for more than three decades through this essential activity of music-making, and we look forward eagerly to continuing our efforts for many years to come.



# TICKETS

- **Season Pass to all 8 concerts:** 15% discount on individual tickets! General: \$190 Student: \$102
- **Build-Your-Own Ticket Package:** 10% discount on 3 or more concerts!
- **Single Tickets:** General: \$28 Student: \$15

## Order Tickets 3 ways:

- **Online** — www.sonomabach.org
- **By Phone** — (707) 347-9491
- **By Mail** — Select your tickets and fill out the form below. Return to:  
Sonoma Bach, 911 Lakeville Street #193, Petaluma, CA 94952

	<u>GENERAL</u>	<u>STUDENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>Travels with Sebastian</b>			
Sat, Oct 29, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>The Old Bach Archive</b>			
Fri, Nov 18, 8 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
Sat, Nov 19, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>Christmas with Bach</b>			
Sat, Dec 17, 8 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
Sun, Dec 18, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>The Little Organ Book</b>			
Sat, Jan 21, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>Bach at the Keyboard</b>			
Sat, Feb 18, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>Bachappella</b>			
Sat, Mar 11, 8 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
Sun, Mar 12, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>Arnstadt and Mühlhassen</b>			
Fri, May 12, 8 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
Sat, May 13, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>Bach Through the Years</b>			
Sat, June 3, 8 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
Sun, June 4, 3 PM	_____ x \$28	_____ x \$15	= _____
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>			= _____

To order a package, please choose ONE of the following options, and indicate above which concert dates you wish to attend:

- Season Pass to all 8 concerts:** Less 15% = \_\_\_\_\_
- Build-Your-Own Package to 3 or more concerts:** Less 10% = \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Sonoma Bach: \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL = \_\_\_\_\_**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your tickets will be sent to you at the above address. Select delivery via:  Mail  Email

### Payment Method (select one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Check made out to Sonoma Bach    \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card:  VISA  MC  AMEX

Name on credit card \_\_\_\_\_

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ CID# \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



911 Lakeville Street #193  
Petaluma, CA 94952  
707-347-9491  
[www.sonomabach.org](http://www.sonomabach.org)

## *Bach's World: Our 2022-2023 Season*



Elias Gottlob Hausmann, detail Portrait of Bach, 1746.

*Congratulations on your wonderful and inspiring concert last week. The choir and instrumentalists were outstanding. The soloists were spectacular—what fantastic choices—bring them back!*