

**SONOMA  
Bach**

ROBERT WORTH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

P R E S E N T S

**MIDWINTER CONCERT**

*Electric Baroque*

**Live Oak Baroque Orchestra**

Directed by Elizabeth Blumenstock  
Aaron Westman, associate director

**Saturday, January 21, 8PM**

Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center  
Sonoma State University  
Rohnert Park



Gherardo Cibo, *Galanthus and Ipheion*, 1564-1584.



Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (engraving), Paulus Seel (1642-95)

*“Yeah. I got very Baroque with people like [Henry] Purcell and I started to be interested in the fact that they used melodic transitions very rarely and there would always be suspensions and tension and it would be another level of tension and it would drop. This was mainly Purcell who was an English composer and I was deeply influenced by him.”*

—Pete Townshend (of The Who)



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

# Midwinter Concert: Electric Baroque

FEATURING

## Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Elizabeth Blumenstock, director  
Aaron Westman, associate director

January 21, 2017  
Schroeder Hall  
Green Music Center

# Midwinter Concert: Electric Baroque

- Sonata à 6, G.24 David Pohle (1624-1695)
- Sonata no. 5 à 6 Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (1620-1680)  
from *Sacro profanus concentus musicus*
- Sonata no.2 à 6 Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber (1644-1704)  
from *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes*
- Toccatà no. 1 Georg Muffat (1653-1704)  
from *Apparatus musico-organisticus*
- Partia no.1 Biber  
from *Harmonia artificioso ariosa: diversi mode accordata*
-   
INTERMISSION  

- Sonata no.4 Biber  
from *Rosary (Mystery) Sonatas*  
"The Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple"
- Sonatina for viola da gamba and organ Augustinus Kertzing (d.1678)
- Sonata no.5 in E minor Biber  
from *Sonatae Violino Solo (1681)*
- Sonata no.4 à 5 in G minor Biber  
from *Fidicinium sacro profanum*
- Sonata no. 3 à 6 Biber  
from *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes*

# Program Notes

Imagine growing up playing and championing “heavy metal,” “hard rock,” and “progressive” classical/rock/jazz, and holding the feeling of playing and hearing that music as the greatest musical rush you have ever experienced. One day, maybe in college, or even later, you are feeling musically well educated, but not fulfilled, and you hear music written by a violinist who flourished in the ‘80s and ‘90s—that is, the 1680s and 1690s—and, it seems to come from that same “place.” Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, was born towards the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1644 and died in 1704, certainly never heard of Metallica, and perhaps none of the Metallica guys know Heinrich Biber from Justin Bieber(?) Yet, the resemblance is uncanny. How did this come about? I have a “fantastical” theory that I’d like to propose. If you’re here for the BachGrounder (BiberGrounder?) you’ll hear a little more of it, but here’s the basic idea... Enjoy the concert and notes, and let us know what you think of this journey into the heavy metal of the baroque a.k.a. “Electric Baroque.”

Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Frank Zappa, Jethro Tull, The Who, The Beatles, Black Sabbath, Emerson Lake and Palmer, and Genesis (just to name a few) were pioneering rock icons (all but one were British) who influenced and shaped the course of music history with their “progressive” melding of classical, folk, religious, and blues/rock styles. They championed long-form, experimental, meandering, dynamically and stylistically contrasting works that sometimes went on for much too long to get radio play. In turn, all of these bands were either directly influenced by baroque music, incorporating baroque or neo-baroque idioms into their music (Jethro Tull, The Who, Zappa, ELP), by English, Irish, or Scottish folk music, which is directly linked to 17th century formal music (Led Zeppelin, The Beatles), or by other forms of classical music (Black Sabbath, Zappa).

Black Sabbath adopted religious and occult themes, blending them with blues/rock and an uncannily baroque technique of experimental guitar tuning (more on that later) to essentially spawn the heavy metal genre. In turn, it would be hard to imagine AC/DC (in Australia), Metallica and Megadeth (in California), Ynwie Malmsteen (in Sweden), or Alice in Chains (in Seattle)—just to name a few younger generation “heavy metal” bands from elsewhere in the world—existing without the environment, model, and stylistic space that Sabbath and those aforementioned pioneers created.

Let’s try another thought experiment and explore this from the other end of the spectrum... Imagine sitting in church listening to very serious music played by an organ or sung by a choir, when suddenly the sound of a country fiddler or wailing bagpipe wafts into the sacred space. For just a moment, your attention is grabbed by this lively ruckus before returning to the more austere church music. Soon, the two are competing for attention, and perhaps the fiddle band from outside even enters the church and joins in with the church music... or, maybe the church organist starts imitating the virtuosic strains wafting in from outside. Eventually, a profound clash of activity or harmony occurs, and they all join up in an epic romp. This fantastical conception, or something like it, was called *stylus fantasticus*.

During the century before Mozart, Vienna (seat of the Holy Roman Empire) and Salzburg (then an independent state in the Tyrolian Alps)—sitting at opposite ends of what is now Austria—were hotbeds of culture imported from all directions; Italy to the south, the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the

east, France and Switzerland to the west, and Bavaria, Moravia, and Bohemia to the north. The latter is from whence came our star violin virtuoso, Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber.

Perhaps the greatest, most well-rounded violin virtuoso of the 17th century (along with Johann Jakob Walther, Johann Paul von Westhoff, and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer), the Bohemian fiddler Biber crafted his compositions in a style that might best be described as a dinner party of disparate sound worlds. Indeed, Biber and his biggest influence, Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (who worked in both Vienna and Prague, and is often described as Biber's "teacher") both had a particular fascination with the meeting of sacred and "profane" or secular music, as well as clever, and quite long Latin titles. Central to many of their works is a unique brand of the so-called *stylus fantasticus* which is, in the words of the theorist Athanasius Kircher, "the most free and unrestrained method of composing, it is bound to nothing, neither to any words nor to a melodic subject, it was instituted to display genius and to teach the hidden design of harmony and the ingenious composition of harmonic phrases and fugues." The effect is often like that of stream-of-consciousness prose, not only in its often free-form, flowing structure, but also in its adaptation and synthesis of many disparate styles and elements drawn from a wide range of inspirations, cultural origins, and abstractions. And, of paramount importance was the necessity to stir the emotions with immediacy and confidence.

Schmelzer called his collection dedicated to the style *Sacro profanus concentus musicus: fidium aliorumque instrumentorum*, which means "a musical meeting of sacred and profane: for strings or other instruments." Biber called his similar collection *Fidicinium sacro profanum: tam choro, quam foro pluribus fidibus concinnatum et concini aptum* (1683) ("Sacred and profane string music: suitably prepared for the pleasing of the courts and for the church"). The similarities are significant, but where Schmelzer's style is refined, elegant, and texturally and harmonically rich, Biber's is raw, edgy, and rich in contrast.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) was the largest and most destructive of many violent episodes during the seventeenth century. It decimated entire regions of Europe, exposing its inhabitants to famine and outbreaks of the plague, and in some regions even stripping them of much of their cultural and artistic connections and lineage. Following the war, Biber and the other musicians working at the court at Kroměříž (in Moravia) had the opportunity—or, rather, necessity—to draw upon regional flavors and idiosyncrasies in developing their own brand of music. Many of their compositions were intended to distract from the harsh realities of continuous outbreaks of the plague (much like the setting for Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*), and drew upon elements of regional folk-life (Schmelzer's *Polnische Sackpfeiffen*—"Polish" Bagpipes"), and life in times of war (Biber's *Battalia* and Schmelzer's *Die Fechtschule*). These composers experienced the horrors and the fallout of war first-hand, and their music was in part a means of coping.

In 1670, Biber left Kroměříž to visit the world's most renowned violin maker, Jakob Stainer, who was a hermit of a character who lived in the small Tyrolian village of Absam, near Innsbruck. Biber never returned to his job in Moravia, and (illegally) entered the employment of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Maximilian Gandolph von Kuenberg. Biber remained in Salzburg for the rest of his life, but he never abandoned the rustic, Eastern European fiddle-influenced sound that he heard growing up.

As his style developed, Biber created a very sophisticated, characterful version of the free-form *stylus fantasticus* that is at its most free in his solo violin works, such as the sublime and monumental Rosary (Mystery) Sonatas, which depict the stations of the cross, as well as his collection of 1681. In many of these works, Biber employs *scordatura*, a deliberate mistuning of the violin. Indeed, each station of the cross in the Rosary Sonatas has its own unique tuning.

Nearly three-hundred years later, Black Sabbath's lead guitarist, Tony Iommi, popularized the use of alternate guitar tunings in the metal genre. Iommi sustained a severe injury to two of his fingers at a factory job he had as a teenager, which made it painful and difficult to play guitar. Instead of quitting, he (along with other adaptations) significantly lowered the strings on his guitar, which not only made it easier and less painful for him to play and to bend the pitch, but also created a new sonority for the instrument. Metal bands have been copying his *scordatura* sound ever since!

Biber's Rosary Sonatas are literally loaded with cross imagery—the notes of many of the themes draw a cross on the page, and each has a copper engraving depicting the corresponding station. Back to Iommi and Black Sabbath, who early on became interested in peoples' fascination with the occult and horror movies after seeing people lined up to see a horror movie called "Black Sabbath." They adopted the name and created a correspondingly dark, fantastical, witchcraft inspired sound world to match. Their song "Black Sabbath" begins with church bells and then launches into a series of tritone guitar riffs, which was apparently inspired by a passage from Gustav Holst's *Mars*, and is also regarded as the "Devil's Interval." Biber, who was a devout christian and an employee of the Church, wouldn't have gone this far—his style meditates on abstract and programmatic Christian themes, but not witchcraft—yet, the resulting effect is similar. Both were dealing with the horrors of reality, real or imagined, and created a magical, fantasy sound world that juxtaposes the sacred and the profane and exists beyond the perceived world.

Biber's last published work, *Harmonia artificioso-ariosa: diversimodè accordata et in septem partes vel partitas distributa à 3 instrumentis* (1696) came thirteen years after *Fidicinium*, which was his previous publication of instrumental music. *Harmonia* employs an extroverted pastoral style, and demands scordatura and extended techniques that push the limits of violin technique—even by modern standards. Partia I requires both of the violins to tune the G and D strings each up a whole step, to A and E, and their E string to a D, giving them a special sonority. It also demands a range of fancy bow techniques, including a unique and profoundly awkward "thrown" bowstroke that appears throughout the gigue. There is a raw, unbridled energy to this music that creates a dark and captivating mood, and a feeling of pushing the instruments, the players, and the listener's experience to the edges. It also incorporates a favorite technique of Biber's that must have developed from playing in large churches—listening to his echo and writing down the resulting counterpoint. The massive Salzburg Cathedral, which was Biber's "office," has four distinct acoustical chambers, and seconds of echo. Biber and his band would have played from up above in one of the organ galleries... much like you are experiencing today.

—Aaron Westman

# Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Elizabeth Blumenstock  
*director*  
*violin & scordatura violin*

Aaron Westman  
*associate director*  
*scordatura violin & viola*

Tyler Lewis  
*violin*

Maria Caswell  
*viola*

Anna Washburn  
*violin & viola*

Mary Springfels  
*viola da gamba*

Henry Lebedinsky  
*Brombaugh tracker organ*

Widely admired as a Baroque violinist of expressive eloquence and technical sparkle, **Elizabeth Blumenstock** is a long-time concertmaster, soloist, and leader with the San Francisco Bay Area's American Bach Soloists and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and is concertmaster of the International Handel Festival in Goettingen, Germany. In Southern California, Ms. Blumenstock is Music Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles including Musica Pacifica, Galax Quartet, Ensemble Mirable, Live Oak Baroque, the Arcadian Academy, Sarasa, and Trio Galanterie. An enthusiastic teacher, Ms. Blumenstock teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists summer Festival and Academy, and the International Baroque Institute at Longy. Ms. Blumenstock plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.

**Maria Caswell** studied violin & Historically Informed Performance at New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. She is a founding member of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. In addition to Philharmonia, Maria has performed with American Bach Soloists, Jubilate, Santa Rosa Symphony, & Magnificat, among others. She is a member of VOT (Very Old Time) Music, a quintet based in Sebastopol, California. In addition she is an active violin & viola teacher. She lives near the tiny hamlet of Occidental in Sonoma County with her family, two cats, a goat with a Facebook page, & her beloved teapot.

Hailed by *The Miami Herald* for his “superb continuo... brilliantly improvised and ornamented,” **Henry Lebedinsky** performs as a historical keyboardist and Irish traditional guitarist across the United States and the United Kingdom, as a soloist and with Agave Baroque, Pacific MusicWorks, and The Vivaldi Project. He has also performed with The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Charlotte Symphony, Seraphic Fire, and Boston Revels, among others. He has been featured on American Public Media's *Performance Today*, and he has performed live on APM's *Pipedreams*. With his Celtic band The Beggar Boys, he was featured in the nationally-syndicated NPR holiday special *A Carolina Christmas from Biltmore Estate with Kathy Mattea*. An avid composer of music for choir and organ, his sacred music is published by Paraclete Press and Carus-Verlag Stuttgart. He is the founder and director of the guerrilla performance organization Early Music Underground ([www.emuseattle.com](http://www.emuseattle.com)) which brings Early Music to new, often younger audiences in unconventional (and fun) venues across the Pacific Northwest. Mr. Lebedinsky holds degrees from Bowdoin College and the Longy School of Music, where he studied with Peter Sykes. He lives in the Seattle area with his wife and dog, and serves as Organist and Choirmaster at Seattle's historic Christ Episcopal Church.

**Tyler Lewis** received his B.A. from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music while under the instruction of Bettina Mussumeli. Specializing in baroque music, Tyler has appeared in groups such as Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, LOBO, Santa Rosa Symphony, Marin Symphony, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and has performed at Festival Del Sole in the Napa Valley and St. Paul International Chamber Music Festival. Tyler Lewis has appeared in master classes with Robert Mann, James Greening-Valenzuela,



ZavenMelikian and has had solo appearances with Contra Costa Wind Symphony. During the spring, Tyler is an evaluator for the Music Teachers Association of California's merit program and runs a year round private violin studio located in Santa Rosa, California. With his spare time he enjoys nights under the stars with a telescope, practicing the art of Lapidary, cooking, and racing motorcycles.

**Mary Springfels** is former Musician-in-Residence at the Newberry Library where she founded and directed the Newberry Consort. A veteran of the early music movement, she has performed and recorded with such ensembles as the NY Pro Musica, the Waverly Consort, Concert Royal, Sequentia, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, Musica Sacra, the Marlborough Festival, the NYC Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater where she also serves as an artistic advisor. She served as a Senior Lecturer at both the University of Chicago and Northwestern University and is much in demand as a teacher and player in summer festivals throughout the US, among them the San Francisco, Madison, and Amherst Early Music Festivals, and the Conclave of the Viola da Gamba Society of America. In 2004 she delivered the keynote address to the Berkeley Festival and Exhibition for Early Music America. She can be heard on over two dozen recordings, ten of which are critically acclaimed Newberry Consort projects.

**Anna Washburn** grew up fiddling in the beautiful state of Maine and now calls the Bay Area home. She performs and records on period violin and viola with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Musica Angelica, and Agave Baroque, and at home in the Bay Area with Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, MUSA, California Bach Society, and Marin Baroque. She is also a founding member of the Sylvestris String Quartet. In addition to her devotion to period performance, Anna also appears on stage with a variety of ensembles, from performing and recording with the pop orchestra Magik\*Magik Orchestra with artists like Sting, Chicago, Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr. of the Fifth Dimension, Gerald Alston of The Manhattaners, John Vanderslice, Third Eye Blind, The Dodos, Dustin O'Halloran, Tin Hat, and Two Foot Yard... to hip hop/opera group Ensemble Mik Nawooj... to the Commonwealth Club's series "Music Matters," where she performed as part of a multi-part lecture series on Mozart's chamber music. Anna can be heard on German pianist Hauschka's album *Foreign Landscapes* and Belgian composer Christina Vantzou's album *No.1*. Anna performs regularly with Symphony Silicon Valley, San Jose Chamber Orchestra and Monterey Symphony and is committed to music education through her active private teaching studio and by coaching and working with young musicians throughout the Bay Area.

**Aaron Westman** was a "metal-head" growing up in California. He now plays the electric guitar of the 17th-century. A "brilliantly virtuosic violinist" (*Early Music America*) and violist, Aaron has made a career for himself as "one of the most popular period instrumentalists on the west coast" (*Press Democrat*). Since 2005, he has performed as a soloist and chamber musician with Agave Baroque, American Bach Soloists, Archetti, Early Music Underground, El Mundo, Ensemble Mirabile, Folger Consort, Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, MUSA, Philharmonia Chamber Players, Seraphic Fire, Sylvestris Quartet, Tesseræ, and The Vivaldi Project. As a principal player, Aaron works with ABS, Berkeley West Edge Opera, Bach Collegium San Diego, California Bach Society, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Marin Baroque, Musica Angelica, Musikanten Montana, Magnificat, and New Hampshire Music Festival, and he plays regularly with Orchester Wiener Akademie and, since 2006, with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Aaron co-directs the award winning Agave Baroque, LOBO, and Sylvestris Quartet. In 2017, VGo Recordings will release Agave's fourth album, *Peace in Our Time*, featuring star countertenor and Agave regular Reginald Mobley. Aaron holds degrees from the Indiana University School of Music and Wesleyan University. His principal teachers were Stanley Ritchie, Elizabeth Blumenstock, Geraldine Walther, Alan de Veritch, and Theodore Arm. He is currently Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony's Young People's Chamber Orchestra, and in the summers teaches chamber music in Tuscany. He has guest taught at SSU, Appalachian State, and University of North Carolina School of the Arts, as well as for three years at CalArts.

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The Merry Fiddler, Gerrit van Honthorst (1592-1656)

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