

SONOMA
Bach

ROBERT WORTH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

ARNSTADT AND MÜHLHAUSEN



Circa 1600
Live Oak Baroque Orchestra
Directed by Robert Worth

Friday, May 12, 8 P.M.
Saturday, May 13, 3 P.M.

SCHROEDER HALL
Green Music Center, Rohnert Park



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 mothership 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. 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 9th 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



Presented by Sonoma Bach in association with the Green Music Center

Arnstadt and Mühlhausen

FEATURING

Dianna Morgan, soprano

Christopher Fritzsche, countertenor

Nils Neubert, tenor

Tim Marson, bass

Circa 1600

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Robert Worth, Music Director

Amanda McFadden, Associate Director

Friday, May 12 at 8PM

Schroeder Hall

Green Music Center

Saturday, May 13 at 3PM

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Green Music Center

Arnstadt and Mühlhausen

People tend to think of Bach as a serious older man, as in the famous portrait of him holding a slip of music. 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:

“Bach was reproved for having hitherto made many curious variations on the chorales and mingled with them 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 the proceedings of the Arnstadt Consistory, February 1706

And his music! There seem to have been no limits for the brilliant young cantor from Eisenach. If we look at and listen to his early cantatas, we find a wealth of techniques and approaches. Each piece seems to be created afresh, with no set pattern, in such a way as to reflect its text and allow its meaning to be directly conveyed to the heart and the mind of the listener.

Later on, in his Weimar period in the teens of the 18th-century, and even more during his Leipzig period (from 1723), Bach settled upon a few formal patterns into which most of his cantatas fall. Not to say that these are not great! But the proliferation of ideas and structures in the early works is peculiarly attractive, piquing and holding our interest while the ever-changing music washes over and through us.

In our concert, we'll perform four of these early cantatas, each an exploration of styles, moods and techniques, each *sui generis*: the mercurial *Cantata 150: Nach dir, Herr verlanget mich*; the famous *Cantata 4: Christ lag in Todesbanden*, for Easter Sunday; the delightful wedding *Cantata 196: Der Herr denket an uns*; and finally *Cantata 131: Aus der Tiefe*, a psalmist's tale of fear, and great need, and redemption, based upon Psalm 130.

See 'Notes, Texts and Translations' for details and commentary about each cantata.



Are you curious about Bach's later vocal works and how they fit in with these early cantatas? Don't miss 'Bach Through the Years', our season finale, in early June! The Sonoma Bach Choir and Live Oak Baroque Orchestra (in its grandest format), along with a wonderful line-up of vocal soloists, will be performing great choral-orchestral music from all the phases of Bach's storied career. More details elsewhere in this program.

--Robert Worth, music director

Program

Cantata 150: Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich..... Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

1. Sinfonia
2. Chorus: Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich
3. Aria for soprano: Doch bin und bleibe ich vergnügt
4. Chorus: Leite mich in deiner Wahrheit
5. Trio for alto, tenor, and bass: Zedern müssen von den Winden
6. Chorus: Meine Augen sehen stets zu dem Herrn
7. Chorus: Meine Tage in den Leiden



Cantata 4: Christ lag in Todesbanden..... Johann Sebastian Bach

1. Sinfonia
2. Chorus: Versus 1: Christ lag in Todesbanden
3. Duet for soprano and alto: Versus 2: Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
4. Aria for tenor: Versus 3: Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn
5. Chorus: Versus 4: Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg
6. Aria for bass: Versus 5: Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm
7. Duet for soprano and tenor: Versus 6: So feiern wir das hohe Fest
8. Chorus: Versus 7: Wir essen und leben wohl

INTERMISSION

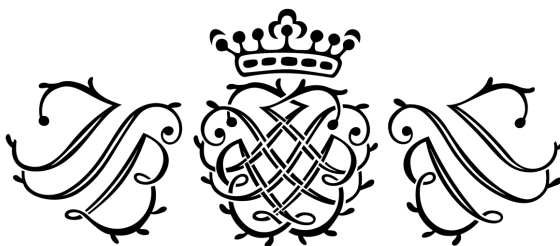
Cantata 196: Der Herr denket an uns.....Johann Sebastian Bach

1. Sinfonia
2. Chorus: Der Herr denket an uns
3. Aria for soprano: Er segnet, die den Herrn fürchten
4. Duet for tenor and bass: Der Herr segne euch je mehr und mehr
5. Chorus: Ihr seid die Gesegneten des Herrn



Cantata 131: Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir..... Johann Sebastian Bach

1. Sinfonia and chorus: Aus der Tiefe
2. Arioso for bass: Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn
With chorale for soprano: Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last
3. Chorus: Ich harre des Herrn
4. Aria for tenor: Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn
With chorale for alto: Und weil ich denn in meinem Sinn
5. Chorus: Israel, hoffe auf den Herrn



Notes, Texts and Translations

Cantata 150: Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich

Cantata 150 is one of Bach's earliest cantatas. It is lightly scored for an instrumental ensemble of two violins, bassoon and basso continuo. In early performances, the choruses may have been sung by the solo quartet called for in the aria and the trio. The libretto is based upon selected verses from Psalm 25, with anonymous poetry added for the aria, the trio and the closing chorus.

1. *Sinfonia*: Each of our four cantatas begin with an instrumental sinfonia, setting the mood for the entire piece—in this case, penitence and a plea for redemption. Here, as in other instances, the sinfonia also provides a preview of the music which will appear in the opening chorus.

2. *Chorus*: An ascending octave leap is followed by a descending chromatic line in all parts, a vivid projection of the opening line, 'My God, I long for you'. Then, in the mercurial fashion typical of this cantata (and also of Cantata 131), the music changes radically at 'I hope in you'; and again at 'Let me not be put to shame'. Finally we hear an extended (and exciting) fugal passage on the final text line.

Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich.

Lord, I long for you.

Mein Gott, ich hoffe auf dich.

My God, I hope in you.

Laß mich nicht zuschanden werden,

Let me not be put to shame,

Daß sich meine Feinde nicht freuen über mich.

So that my enemies will not rejoice over me.

Psalm 25:1-2

3. *Aria for soprano*: Accompanied by a single violin and the basso continuo, the soprano soloist sings a brief, defiant aria filled with martial motifs and jagged leaps, setting a poetic verse in which our protagonist vows to remain firm, even amidst great trials and tribulations.

Doch bin und bleibe ich vergnügt,

Yet I am and remain content,

Obgleich hier zeitlich toben

Although at the moment here may rage

Kreuz, Sturm und andre Proben,

The cross, storm and other trials,

Tod, Höll, und was sich fügt.

Death, Hell, and what is theirs.

Ob Unfall schlägt den treuen Knecht,

Though misfortune strike the true servant,

Recht ist und bleibt ewig Recht.

Right is and remains eternally right.

4. *Chorus*: One of the great things about these early cantatas is the way in which Bach provides musical pictures—word-painting—for many suggestive passages. Here, for 'Lead me', he creates a continuous stepwise ascending line which, traveling from bass to tenor and on up through the choir and violins, paints a vivid picture of climbing up the mountain. Later, for 'Daily, I await you', he reverses the process, descending through the voices to a longheld B in the vocal bass.

Leite mich in deiner Wahrheit und lehre mich;

Lead me in your Truth and teach me;

Denn du bist der Gott, der mir hilft:

For you are the God who helps me:

Täglich harre ich dein.

Daily I await you.

Psalm 25:5

5. *Trio for alto, tenor and bass*: In this thrilling movement, which re-states the idea of ‘standing firm even under duress’ conveyed earlier in the soprano aria, there are two protagonists. The trio of voices represents the Christian believer, remaining blissfully above the fray throughout; while the basso continuo and bassoon tirelessly play the role of the howling winds as they vainly endeavor to scatter and dismay us.

Zedern müssen von den Winden
Oft viel Ungemach empfinden,
Oftmals werden sie verkehrt.
Rat und Tat auf Gott gestellt,
Achtet nicht, was widerbellet,
Denn sein Wort ganz anders lehrt.

Cedars must, before the winds,
Often feel much hardship,
Often they will be destroyed.
Place your words and deeds before God,
Heed not what howls against you,
Since his Word teaches otherwise.

6. *Chorus*: This magnificent chorus is bifurcated, with the opening section memorably evoking the idea of a calm and steady focus upon the divine. The accompanying strings create a sort of timeless ‘music of the spheres’. In the second section, the idea of the net from which ‘He will draw my foot’ is suggested by the tangled, overlapped hemiola (cross-rhythms) and eventually by a thrilling chromaticism.

Meine Augen sehen stets zu dem Herrn;
Denn er wird meinen Fuß
aus dem Netze ziehen.
Psalm 25:15

My eyes gaze continually at the Lord;
For he will draw my foot
out of the net.

7. *Chorus*: The final poem points us towards a final victory over the dangers and turmoil expressed by the psalmist. A sense of timelessness is conveyed by the ground bass, which repeats at different pitch levels an ostinato (a recurrent bass line). Against this, quarter-notes in the choir and 8th notes in the orchestra provide contrast, and, eventually, a vivid expression of our ‘daily fight for victory’ through many trials and tribulations.

Meine Tage in den Leiden
Endet Gott dennoch zur Freuden;
Christen auf den Dornenwegen
Führen Himmels Kraft und Segen.
Bleibet Gott mein treuer Schatz,
Achte ich nicht Menschenkreuz;
Christus, der uns steht zur Seiten.
Hilft mir täglich sieghaft streiten.

My days in suffering
God will nevertheless end in joy;
Christians upon the thorny pathways
Are led by Heaven’s power and blessing.
If God remains my dearest treasure,
I need not heed mankind’s cruelty;
Christ, who stands by our side,
Helps me daily fight for victory.



Cantata 4: Christ lag in Todesbanden

Though written quite early—probably in Bach’s Mühlhausen years, when he was 22 or 23 years old—Cantata 4 is one of Bach’s best-known cantatas. Some 17 years later, he re-scored the piece for inclusion in his second Leipzig cantata cycle (1723-1724), suggesting the composer’s high assessment of one of his own early works.

The cantata is structured around Martin Luther’s magnificent 1724 chorale ‘Christ lag in Todesbanden’, based upon the Latin sequence for Easter Sunday, and also upon the earlier chorale ‘Christ ist erstanden’. The melody appears in each movement in a dizzying array of iterations, each perfectly expressing the text of its verse. Over the course of the piece, following the thread of the chorale, a journey is made from death to life, from mourning to victory.

1. *Sinfonia*: As in Cantata 150, the orchestra—four upper strings plus basso continuo—prefigures the melody of the opening chorus. But only barely, for we are not allowed much beyond the opening phrase. For Bach’s congregants, this would have been a sort of teaser, a delay of the eventual arrival in the second movement of the full melody. The cantata’s orchestration encompasses two viola parts, an artifact of the French Baroque style, which was still very much in vogue in Bach’s youth.

2. *Chorus*: In this grand opening movement, the chorale is presented in long-notes in the soprano voice, while the lower voices provide faster-moving imitative accompaniment, sometimes borrowing from the chorale, sometimes not. The upper strings provide a sort of halo of sound, filling out the texture and increasing the excitement level. Phrase by phrase, the piece moves forward, culminating in a grand ‘Hallelujah’, which leads to a most exciting doubling of the tempo, as all voices gleefully proclaim the five-note falling line.

Christ lag in Todesbanden
Für unsre Sünd gegeben,
Er ist wieder erstanden
Und hat uns bracht das Leben;
Des wir sollen fröhlich sein,
Gott loben und ihm dankbar sein
Und singen halleluja.
Halleluja!

Christ lay in death's bonds
Given over for our sins,
He has risen again
And brought us life;
Therefore we should be joyful,
Praise God and be thankful to Him
And sing Hallelujah.
Hallelujah!

3. *Duet for soprano and alto*: The second chorale verse sets the starting point for the upward arc of the piece (and of Holy Week). Single soprano and alto voices adumbrate the chorale melody in a sort of incremental way, drawing incredible expression out of the tune. Accompanied only by basso continuo, in 8th-notes with many octave leaps, the pathos of the passion is perfectly expressed.

Den Tod niemand zwingen kunnt
Bei allen Menschenkindern,
Das macht' alles unsre Sünd,

No one could defeat death
Among all humanity;
This was all because of our sins,

Kein Unschuld war zu finden.
Davon kam der Tod so bald
Und nahm über uns Gewalt,
Hielt uns in seinem Reich gefangen.
Halleluja!

No innocence was to be found.
Therefore death came so soon
And took power over us,
Held us captive in his kingdom.
Hallelujah!

4. Aria for tenor: The tenor here presents—nay, represents—the coming of Christ, an answer to the preceding musical plea of the alto and the tenor. The music springs to vivid life, as the violins vigorously accompany the tenor’s declaration of the coming of Jesus to do battle on our behalf.

Jesus Christus, Gottes Sohn,
An unser Statt ist kommen
Und hat die Sünde weggetan,
Damit dem Tod genommen
All sein Recht und sein Gewalt,
Da bleibet nichts denn Tods Gestalt,
Den Stach'l hat er verloren.
Halleluja!

Jesus Christ, God's son,
Has come in our place,
And has done away with sin,
Thereby taking from death
All his rights and power,
Nothing remains but death's form;
He has lost his sting.
Hallelujah!

5. Chorus: For the central verse of the chorale—verse 4 of 7—we find Bach’s amazing musical evocation of the cosmic battle between heaven and hell, between life and death. The altos carry the pure chorale melody in quarter-notes, while the other voices sing much freer statements of the tune, mostly in 8th-notes. Chaos seems to rule for a time as the battle rages, but the center holds, and in the end death itself dies, becoming merely something to be mocked.

Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg,
Da Tod und Leben rungen;
Das Leben behielt den Sieg,
Es hat den Tod verschlungen.
Die Schrift hat verkündigt das,
Wie ein Tod den andern fraß,
Ein Spott aus dem Tod ist worden.
Halleluja!

It was a strange battle,
That death and life waged;
Life claimed the victory,
It devoured death.
The scripture had prophesied this,
How one death gobbled up the other,
A mockery has been made out of death.
Hallelujah!

6. Aria for bass: In this justly famous aria, the chorale melody is shared between the strings, accompanied by a staunch bass line in mainly eighth-notes. The sense of uneasiness carried by the piece signifies a degree of tension remaining after the cosmic war of the 5th movement. But this tension is memorably shattered by one of the most remarkable passages in all of Bach’s cantatas. At the end of the 6th line, the bass plunges down—an octave-plus-a-tritone—to a low E-sharp on the word ‘Tod’ (‘Death’). And then, after a quiet cadence in the orchestra, the bass rises up to a triumphant high D, proclaiming that this very Death has now been shattered, and we are safe from all danger and harm.

Hier ist das rechte Osterlamm,
Davon Gott hat geboten,
Das ist hoch an des Kreuzes Stamm
In heißer Lieb gebraten,
Das Blut zeichnet unsre Tür,
Das hält der Glaub dem Tode für,
Der Würger kann uns nicht mehr schaden.
Halleluja!

Here is the true Easter-lamb,
Offered up by God,
Which was, high on the cross' stalk
Roasted in hot love,
The blood marks our door,
Faith holds it despite death,
The strangler can no longer harm us.
Hallelujah!

7. *Duet for soprano and tenor:* What is left to us but to celebrate? And that's just what the soprano and tenor soloists do, indefatigably declaiming a highly decorative version of the chorale melody in two parts, riding above a bouncy bass-line replete with joyful dotted notes.

So feiern wir das hohe Fest
Mit Herzensfreud und Wonne,
Das uns der Herre scheinen läßt,
Er ist selber die Sonne,
Der durch seiner Gnade Glanz
Erleuchtet unsre Herzen ganz,
Der Sünden Nacht ist verschwunden.
Halleluja!

So we celebrate the high festival
With joy of heart and delight,
Which the Lord radiates upon us,
He himself is the sun,
That through the splendor of his grace
Illuminates our hearts completely,
The night of sin has disappeared.
Hallelujah!

8. *Chorus:* Most of Bach's early cantatas do not end in a four-part chorale setting; that tradition became entrenched much later in Bach's creative life. This closing chorale is about as staunch and joyful as one can find in Bach's works, perfect in its position as it declares victory in solid, staunch homophony.

Wir essen und leben wohl
In rechten Osterfladen,
Der alte Sauerteig nicht soll
Sein bei dem Wort Gnaden;
Christus will die Koste sein
Und speisen die Seel allein.
Der Glaub will keins andern leben.
Halleluja!

We eat and live well
On the right Easter cakes,
The old sour-dough should not
Be with the word grace,
Christ will be our food;
And alone nourish the soul.
Faith will live in no other way.
Hallelujah!



INTERMISSION



Cantata 196: Der Herr denket an uns

Cantata 196 was probably composed during Bach's time in the small town of Arnstadt, when he was in his early 20's. Scholars believe that it may have been written for and premiered at the wedding of pastor Johann Lorenz Stauber (the rector who had performed the marriage ceremony for Bach and his wife) and Regina Wedemann. The text is entirely drawn from Psalm 115, focusing in each movement upon present and future blessings.

1. *Sinfonia*: The orchestra provides a most marvelous mood for Cantata 196 with a brief but joyful instrumental prelude. Musically focused upon a perpetual-motion 8th-note bass line and elegant dotted notes in the upper part, it moves from cadence to cadence with confidence and joy. Anyone getting married soon? This *sinfonia* would make an elegant wedding march!

2. *Chorus*: The voices proclaim in pairs (soprano-tenor and alto-bass) the choral opening, then launch into an excited passage which finally subsides at a cadence. A fugue follows, based upon a 4-bar theme beginning with measured longer notes, followed by excited 16th-notes. Each voice in turn picks up this subject, while the original voices eventually fade out. The process begins again, this time culminating in a tutti homophonic declaration to finish the section. Finally, a fragment of the opening dialog returns, and the movement comes to a vigorous ending.

Der Herr denket an uns und segnet uns.

Er segnet das Haus Israel,

Er segnet das Haus Aaron.

Psalm 115:12

The Lord is mindful of us and blesses us.

He blesses the house of Israel,

He blesses the house of Aaron.

3. *Aria for soprano*: The soprano, accompanied by violins in unison and basso continuo, sings a brief aria in the contrasting key of A minor. Her lines are florid, but there is a contemplative character in her music which contrasts with and complements the preceding movement.

Er segnet, die den Herrn fürchten,

Beide Kleine und Große.

Psalm 115:13

He blesses those who are in awe of the Lord,

Both small and great.

4. *Duet for tenor and bass*: *Tenor* and bass soloists sing a robust—even jolly—duet to evoke (once again) the idea of blessedness, but which also, as the lines tumble over each other in the middle section, seems to suggest the idea of happy children playing about the house.

Der Herr segne euch je mehr und mehr,

Euch und eure Kinder.

Psalm 115:14

May the Lord bless you more and more,

You and your children.

5. *Chorus*: Once again the theme of being favored or blessed is embodied in the psalm text. This is one of my favorite choruses in all of Bach's works (and that's saying something). Nothing beats it for joy, also for a certain headlong character which seems to me to be specifically youthful, but also specifically the product of a kind and fun-loving spirit. I especially love when

all the notes fly to the sky for ‘der Himmel!’ (‘Heaven’), and then fall into the basement for ‘und Erde’ (‘Earth’). Simply irresistible!

Ihr seid die Gesegneten des Herrn,
Der Himmel und Erde gemacht hat. Amen.

You are the blessed of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth. Amen.

Psalm 115:15



Cantata 131: Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir

Cantata 131 was composed in Mühlhausen in 1707 or 1708. It happens to be the very first Bach cantata I conducted—as a graduate student at U.C. Berkeley, in 1983—so I naturally have a special fondness for the piece. But it also just IS special!

First of all, it has a venerable and powerful core text: Psalm 130, also known by its first Latin words, ‘De Profundis’ (‘Out of the depths’). This is one of the penitential psalms, brief, coherent and quite moving, as the psalmist comes through darkness to a vision of hope. The ancient text is complemented by two verses from a much later chorale, Bartholomäus Ringwaldt’s 1588, ‘Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut’. These verses are presented in the two solo movements, with the chorale melody overlaid upon both the bass and the tenor arias.

The overall form is symmetrical: Chorus; Aria with chorale; Chorus; Aria with chorale; Chorus. Each of the three Chorus movements is preceded by a sort of prelude. Within this form, the young Bach creates an unforgettable musical world, beginning deep in despair and incrementally building hope and faith and confidence to a magnificent closing statement.

1. Sinfonia and Chorus: Again, as in our opening Cantata 150, Bach opens with a sinfonia which previews moods and motifs of the ensuing chorus. Here we have music of the utmost gravity, slow, solemn, searching, seemingly having trouble making headway. The choir enters in pairs on the opening line of the psalm, alternating with the orchestra building through dissonance, and finally culminating in a powerful outcry which leads to a second section labeled ‘Vivace’. A wholly different music enters, penitential no more, demanding that the Lord hear our words.

Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir.
Herr, höre meine Stimme,
Laß deine Ohren merken
Auf die Stimme meines Flehens!
Psalm 130:1-2

Out of the depths I call, Lord, to You.
Lord, hear my voice,
Let Your ears take note
Of the sound of my pleas!

2. Arioso for bass, with chorale for soprano: Unusually, the aria follows the chorus directly without a stop, adding to the sense of urgency already palpable. The voice of the psalmist is now that of an individual supplicant, focusing our attention and personalizing the message. His urgent outcries become longer and more compelling as he develops his theme in dialog with the obligato oboe. In addition, the sopranos enter seven bars in with their chorale verse, adding a further imploring voice—this one in long, steady tones—to the already-compelling mix.

So du willst, Herr,
Sünde zurechnen,
Herr, wer wird bestehen?
Denn bei dir ist die Vergebung,
Daß man dich fürchte.
Psalm 130:3-4

If thus You choose, Lord,
To account for sins,
Lord, who could remain?
For forgiveness is with You,
So that You might be held in awe.

Erbarm dich mein in solcher Last,
Nimm sie aus meinem Herzen,
Die weil du sie gebüßet hast
Am Holz mit Todesschmerzen,
Auf daß ich nicht mit großem Weh
In meinen Sünden untergeh,
Noch ewiglich verzage.

Have mercy on me, with such a burden,
Take it from my heart,
Since you have atoned for it
On the cross with deathly agonies,
So that, in great woe
I might not perish in my sins,
Nor eternally despair.

Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut, verse 2

3. *Chorus*: What could follow all this? The psalm now turns to our need for patience, and for hope. And Bach being Bach, ever exquisitely responsive to his text (even at an age when most of us were just stumbling through the dark), steps right into the breach. He gives us three broad iterations of ‘I await the Lord’: The first rather matter of fact; the second strong and demanding; and the third, moving to a D-flat major seventh chord, filled with pathos.

Then he launches into cosmic Largo featuring a stratified contrapuntal concatenation in which each component has its own role and its own distinct character: An oboe/violin duet playing an expressive 16th-note theme; violas joining to create an interlocking harmonic grid; the voices on a longing fugal subject, punctuated by countersubjects; and an anchoring basso continuo, mostly in quarter-notes. We hang in this matrix seemingly forever, until Bach winds up with an adagio plagal cadence featuring the bassoon wending its way down to a low C.

Ich harre des Herrn,
Meine Seele harret,
Und ich hoffe auf sein Wort.
Psalm 130:5

I await the Lord,
My soul waits, ‘
And I hope in His word.

4. *Aria for tenor, with chorale for alto*: Again, we have a soloist overlaid with a chorale verse. This time it is the tenor, singing a psalm verse which focuses upon waiting. His melody, while encompassing a wide range of motion, also seems peculiarly static, since he constantly re-forms and re-states the same material. The chorale cantus firmus, here a third lower than before, is sung by the altos, whose low tones occupy nearly the same tonal space as the tenor. Again, as in the bass aria, the cantus firmus acts to calm and anchor the anxious psalm-singer.

Meine Seele wartet auf den Herrn
Von einer Morgenwache bis zu der andern.
Psalm 130:6

My soul waits for the Lord
From one morning watch to the next.

Und weil ich denn in meinem Sinn,
Wie ich zuvor geklaget,
Auch ein betrübter Sünder bin,
Den sein Gewissen naget,
Und wollte gern im Blute dein
Von Sünden abgewaschen sein
Wie David und Manasse.

Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut, verse 5

And though in my mind,
As I have lamented before,
I too am a troubled sinner,
Whose conscience gnaws him,
I would gladly, in Your blood
Be washed clean of sin,
Like David and Manassah.

5. *Chorus*: The closing chorus—of Cantata 131 and of our concert—begins with another three-fold adagio outburst: Israel. Israel! Israel!! The ensuing faster section renders the psalmist's advice: 'Wait for the Lord' in a sort of closed-in manner, breaking out twice into imitative flourishes. A second adagio section follows, based upon the second line of the psalm verse. Here the idea of 'mercy' is quite literally baked into the music, thanks to the super-expressive harmonies and the longing oboe line. Suddenly the third psalm line breaks in, featuring yet another layered texture featuring excited voices and an off-the-charts bassoon line.

And now we enter the last phase—redemption—here laid out as an extended double fugue, with a muscular diatonic melody for 'And He will redeem Israel' and a complementary chromatic ascending line for 'from all its sins'. At last, Bach closes with a brilliant Phrygian cadence marked adagio, a web of interlocking 16th-note flourishes absorbing the intense energy which has built up, and finally we are carried home.

Israel hoffe auf den Herrn:
Denn bei dem Herrn ist die Gnade
Und viel Erlösung bei ihm.
Und er wird Israel erlösen
Aus allen seinen Sünden.
Psalm 130:7-8

Israel, hope in the Lord:
For with the Lord is mercy,
And much redemption with Him.
And He will redeem Israel
From all its sins.



Interested in singing with Sonoma Bach?

Sonoma Bach's choirs begin rehearsing for the season in early September. We begin with an open rehearsal in which all interested singers, new and returning, attend and sing through the repertoire. Audition sign-ups happen that evening and auditions take place over the following weekend.

More information? Contact Dianna Morgan at dianna@sonomabach.org

Circa 1600

Robert Worth, music director
Amanda McFadden, associate director

Peg Golitzin	Harriet Buckwalter	Anthony Aboumrad	L Peter Deutsch
Rebecca Matlick	Erica Dori	Michael Fontaine	David Kittelstrom
Dianna Morgan	Cinzia Forasiepi	Kristofer Haugen	Alex Margitich
Esther Rayo	Amanda McFadden	Ole Kern	Tim Marson
	Stephanie Nowak	Will Meyer	Steve Osborn

Circa 1600 is a chamber choir, focused upon the nexus between the Renaissance and the Baroque. The group's primary repertoire is drawn from the 16th and 17th centuries, with occasional forays backward to the 15th century and forward up to and including the music of JS Bach. Guiding lights include Josquin Desprez, Claudio Monteverdi, and Heinrich Schütz.



Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Aaron Westman violin	Kati Kyme viola	Stephen Bard oboe
Anna Washborn violin	William Skeen cello	Daniel Deitch bassoon
Maria Caswell viola	Kristin Zoernig bass	Henry Lebedinsky organ

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra is Sonoma Bach's resident instrumental ensemble. Led by Baroque violin sensation Elizabeth Blumenstock, LOBO brings sumptuous tone and breathtaking flair to the one-on-a-part string-band repertoire of the 17th Century. Experience Baroque music at its finest—passionately performed by some of the country's finest and most charismatic period instrumentalists, right here in Sonoma County.



Christopher Fritzsche enjoys performing in a wide variety of styles and genres. As a countertenor soloist he has performed with many SF Bay Area, mostly baroque instrumental ensembles. He can be heard on well over 20 recordings – mostly on Warner Classics' Teldec label as a member of the world-renowned, Grammy award winning a cappella vocal ensemble, Chanticleer. He has also appeared with the Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra in Chicago as

soloist in Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms. He also sang for 12 seasons with the premier Bay Area vocal ensemble, Clerestory. His singing has been described as "crystalline artistry", Cleveland Plain Dealer, "crystalline rich soprano", Los Alamos Monitor, and as having "extraordinary range and purity", New York Times. He can be heard singing on most Sunday mornings, in a large range of pop and contemporary music styles in his position as the Music Director for the Center for Spiritual Living in Santa Rosa. As a teacher he has served on the vocal faculty for his alma mater, Sonoma State University and continues to enjoy teaching a group singing class which has developed, called Ready Set Sing.

Tim Marson has performed in choral groups since the age of 9, and while as a treble became head chorister of his preparatory school chapel choir. Developing as a bass, he sang in the chapel and chamber choirs of The King's School, Canterbury (U.K.), and later with the chapel choir of Oriel College, Oxford University where he was an undergraduate student reading Literae Humaniores (Classics). While residing in London, he performed with a number of vocal chamber groups including Vox Cordis, The Purcell Singers, London Bach Players, Pegasus, and The Syred Consort. Since relocating from his native England to northern California in 2011, Tim has sung with Circa 1600, Sonoma Bach Choir, the Napa Valley Chorale, North Star Vocal Artists, and Valley of the Moon Chamber Ensemble – of which he was also Associate Conductor. From 2015 he has been a member of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus; current season highlights include Handel's Messiah with Masaaki Suzuki, Mahler's Second Symphony with Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Britten's War Requiem with acclaimed British tenor Ian Bostridge. Tim's repertoire encompasses a wide range of music from Renaissance to contemporary with a particular focus on sacred a cappella works. He has performed in churches and concert venues in several countries, including St. John's Smith Square, the Royal Albert Hall, and even 10 Downing Street (the British Prime Minister's official residence), and has been recorded by Classic FM, the BBC and SFS Media.

Amanda McFadden joined Sonoma Bach as a singer in 2019 and is thrilled to be working with the groups this season as the Assistant Conductor. Amanda has been teaching music in the classroom since 2012, teaching a variety of courses including Instrumental and Choral Music as well as Musicianship for students ranging from fourth grade through high school. She currently directs the Strawberry Elementary School Choir and collaborates with the choirs at Montgomery High School under Dana Alexander. She was the Instrumental Music Director at Woodside Priory School in Portola Valley, CA from 2012-2016 and the Music Director at Sonoma Academy in Santa Rosa, CA from 2018-2021. Amanda graduated from the University of Delaware with a Masters of Music in Choral Conducting in 2018, where she also conducted the Neuro Notes, a choir for people with Parkinson's disease, and was the Assistant Director of the Rainbow Chorale of Delaware. Previously, she graduated from San José State University with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education and Single Subject Teaching credential in 2011, where she was the Student Assistant Conductor under Charlene Archibeque.

Dianna Morgan graduated Summa Cum Laude from Southern Oregon University with a BA in Music focusing on Vocal Performance and Music Education. She is the recipient of the Bev Sellers Memorial Scholarship from The Young Singers Foundation and was recognized as

Performing Arts Woman Student of the Year by the American Association of University Women. Dianna made her Carnegie Hall debut after winning First Place, Judges Distinction Award and Best Performance Award in the 2012 American Protégé Vocal Competition. She has toured the world as a soprano soloist in Puerto Rico, Austria, and Hungary and has appeared in several operas with Rogue Opera and Cinnabar Theater. Dianna is an active member of Sonoma Bach's musical community, singing with the Bach Choir, Circa 1600, and the Green Mountain Consort and is enjoying her seventh season as Sonoma Bach's Executive Director. Dianna is regularly featured in Sonoma Bach's seasons as a soloist, performing the music of J.S. Bach, Mozart, Praetorius and many others. In her free time, she spends as much time in Yosemite as she can, enjoying high country adventure, snowshoeing, backpacking, and hiking with her husband.

Tenor **Nils Neubert** was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany, and is active as a performer, coach, and educator in the United States and abroad. He teaches German diction at the Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music and served as German coach at the Music Academy of the West for seven summers (2016–2022). He joined the Glimmerglass Festival and the Wolf Trap Opera Company in that same capacity during 2020 and 2022, respectively, and the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera in 2022. Previously, he also taught at the Mannes College of Music, William Paterson University, Kaufman Music Center, and the Music Conservatory of Westchester, as well as the Summit Music Festival and Potomac Vocal Institute (USA), the International Academy of Music (Italy), and the Puigcerdà and Burgos International Music Festivals (Spain). He has led residencies, workshops, and master classes with organizations and opera companies in North America and Europe and has published original writings, translations, reviews, and educational sound materials in the fields of musicology, music education, language diction, voice pedagogy, musical performance/interpretation/analysis, and exile studies. Nils Neubert holds degrees from the Juilliard School (BM), Teachers College, Columbia University (MA), and the CUNY Graduate Center (DMA). He also trained at the Internationale Sommerakademie Mozarteum, Bel Canto at Caramoor, the Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, the UMass Amherst Arts Extension Service, the Fern Universität Hagen, and the Harvard Extension School and is an alumnus of the Walnut Hill School for the Arts and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

Aaron Westman was a “metal-head” growing up in California. He now plays the electric guitar of the 17th-century. Described as “expressive and virtuosic” (SF Classical Voice) and a “brilliant virtuoso 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 chamber, principal player, or soloist with most of the major baroque ensembles in California and toured extensively throughout the world. As a principal player, Aaron works with American Bach Soloists, Ars Minerva, Bach Collegium San Diego, California Bach Society, El Mundo, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Musica Angelica, Magnificat, New Hampshire Music Festival, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (since 2006), and has toured extensively with Orchester Wiener Akademie. Aaron co-directs the chamber ensemble AGAVE, which regularly performs and records with several star singers including countertenor Reginald Mobley, with whom they have three albums. Gramophone Magazine calls their latest album,

American Originals, "brilliant and knowing," and it features "a stunning playlist of neglected works by composers of color" (EMAg). He is also Associate Director of the Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, and violist in the Sylvestris Quartet, Aaron holds degrees from Indiana University and Wesleyan University. His principal teachers were Stanley Ritchie, Elizabeth Blumenstock, Geraldine Walther, and Alan de Veritch. Aaron has been on the performance faculty at Mills College, and in 2021, he joined the faculty of Sonoma State University. He directs the Santa Rosa Symphony's Young People's Chamber Orchestra, teaches in Italy each summer at the Music Adventure program, and has guest taught at Appalachian State, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and for three years at California Institute of the Arts. In his spare time, he is an audio engineer and producer. Aaron and his wife, violinist Anna Washburn, welcomed their daughter Olive in December of 2020.

Robert Worth is the founding music director of Sonoma Bach. In 2010, he retired as Professor of Music at Sonoma State University, where he taught choral music, early music and many other subjects for 29 years. Bob has a specialty in musicianship training, and for ten years ran the ear-training program at SSU. He was deeply involved in the Green Music Center project in its early years, working with staff and architects on such issues as acoustics, choral performance facilities and the John Brombaugh Opus 9 pipe organ in Schroeder Hall. Bob received his BA in music at SSU in 1980, and his MA in musicology at UC Berkeley in 1982. He and his wife Margaret live on Sonoma Mountain with two Labrador Retrievers.



Bach Through the Years
Sonoma Bach Choir & Live Oak Baroque Orchestra
Saturday, June 3 at 8 P.M. & Sunday, June 4 at 3 P.M.
Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center

Bachgrounder lecture 35 minutes before each performance

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 the the Advent Cantata 61: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, written in the teens of the 18th century, when Bach was working in Weimar. After intermission, we present the famous Magnificat in D Major, 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.

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