

SONOMA  
**Bach**

ROBERT WORTH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

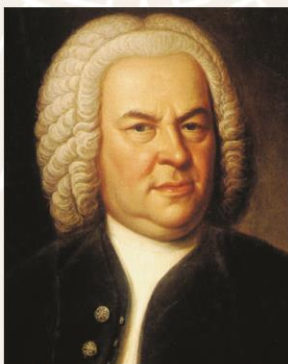
PRESENTS

GUEST CONCERT • GERMANY

*Born Bach*

**Agave Baroque**

Friday, February 28, 8 PM  
SCHROEDER HALL





Leipzig Thomaskirche, Johann Georg Schreiber (1676-1750)

*Johann Sebastian Bach belongs to a family that seems to have received a love and aptitude for music as a gift of Nature to all its members in common. So much is certain, that Veit Bach, the founder of the family, and all his descendants, even to the present seventh generation, have been devoted to music, and all save perhaps a very few have made it their profession. – from J.S. Bach's obituary (C.P.E. Bach & J.F. Agricola, 1750)*



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

*Guest Recital*  
**Born Bach**

FEATURING

**Agave Baroque**

Aaron Westman and Anna Washburn, violin and viola

William Skeen, cello

Kevin Cooper, theorbo and baroque guitar

Henry Lebedinsky, harpsichord and organ

Friday, February 28, 2020

Schroeder Hall

Green Music Center

Sonoma State University

# Agave Baroque

## *Born Bach*

Praeludium and Fugue in E flat.....Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703)

Sonata and Capriccio á 4.....Johann Michael Bach (1648-1694)

Sonata in G Major for violin and continuo, BWV 1021..... Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

*Largo*

*Vivace*

*Largo*

*Presto*

Sonata in A Major for Violin, Viola, & Keyboard...Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach (1732-1795)

*Andante*

Ouverture-Suite no. 1 in G minor.....Johann Bernhard Bach (1676-1749)

*Ouverture*



**Intermission**



Trio Sonata *sopr' il soggetto reale* from *The Musical Offering*, BWV 1079.....J.S. Bach

*Largo*

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Allegro*

Trio Sonata in A minor.....Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1711-1784)

*Allegro*

*[Larghetto]*

*Adagio*

*[Larghetto]*

*Alla breve non troppo presto*

# Notes

The Bach family resided in Thuringia and Saxony, in central Germany, and over the course of roughly 200 years contributed enormously to the life and musical culture of the region. Johann Sebastian Bach, alone, has had arguably the greatest influence on music around the western world, and beyond, of any composer in music history. In fact, the name ‘Bach’ became a local synonym for ‘musician’ in their home region. Sebastian famously fathered 21 children, though only nine lived to adulthood, and five of his sons became professional musicians. Both of Sebastian’s wives, Maria Barbara and Anna Magdalena were sopranos, and Anna Magdalena is believed to have played an active role in composing, copying music, and educating their many children. A grandson, the composer Wilhelm Friedrich Ernst, son of Johann Christoph Friedrich, lived long enough to meet Robert Schumann in 1843.

The Bach family’s many compositional styles reflected the changing times, and drew from a range of regional and inter-European influences. Sebastian himself did not travel much outside of a 300 mile range, surrounding his home, but notably he journeyed on foot over 280 miles to the city of Lübeck to visit and learn from the composer and organist, Dietrich Buxtehude.

Johann Sebastian wasn’t the first great composer in the family. He learned the style from the previous generation of Bachs, who were themselves quite accomplished and profound composers and performers. Sebastian’s father, Johann Ambrosius, was a fine violinist. Ambrosius’s father’s brother’s sons were Johann Michael and Johann Christoph, making them each Sebastian’s first cousin, once removed. Johann Michael was also the father of Sebastian’s first wife, Maria Barbara! Sebastian described his cousin Johann Christoph as “the profound composer.” The music we have of Johann Christoph Bach is indeed profound. You will hear his Praeludium and Fugue for organ at the start of tonight’s program, and you can hear his famous alto Lament, *Ach, dass ich wassers g’nug hätte*, his wedding ciaccona, *Mein freund ist mein*, with a text from the Song of Songs and its virtuoso violin part purportedly performed by Ambrosius at a Bach family wedding, as well as his sublime and heartfelt motet, *Es ist nun aus mit meinem Leben*, on Agave Baroque’s 2018 album, *Peace In Our Time*, featuring countertenor Reginald L. Mobley.

Six years older than his cousin Sebastian, Johann Bernhard Bach was a close family friend, and both acted as godparents for the other’s children. Bernhard succeeded Johann Christoph Bach as organist in Eisenach, Sebastian’s home town. Eisenach is also where Bernhard met Georg Philipp Telemann, with whom he would study. Bernhard’s compositions, like Telemann’s, include similar cosmopolitan influences, and are well crafted and idiomatic. His four extant orchestral suites are all of very high quality. His Suite in G minor, which includes a solo violin part, likely inspired Sebastian’s famous Orchestral Suite #2 in B minor.

Carl Philipp Emmanuel, the fifth child of Maria Barbara and Sebastian, rose to fame and outshone his father in popularity during both of their lifetimes. CPE was a champion of a new style of composition, *emfindsamer stil*, that favored extreme and sudden changes of contrast and affect, rhetoric, and an operatic sense of conversation between the musical characters. Johann Christoph Friedrich was the third of the four sons of Bach who went into music, and the second child of Anna Magdalena, whom Bach married just a few months after Maria Barbara’s sudden death. JCF adopted a variant on this *galant* style, popularized by Italian opera, but with his stellar pedigree and education, he created intricate and brilliant instrumental music in a hybrid operatic, Italian galant style executed with German precision and complexity. The movement of his trio on tonight’s program, which is part of a longer sonata, is like a ballad sung by two singers, written for the unusual instrumentation of violin, viola, and obligato keyboard (harpsichord or piano).

Johann Sebastian, in particular, is known for having a brilliant mind both for counterpoint and text setting, with the ability to write sublime melody when the right moment came along. Tonight, you will hear both counterpoint and melody on display from Sebastian, the former in the extraordinary trio sonata from *The Musical Offering*, and the latter in the Violin Sonata in G, which also became a family compositional project that resulted in a trio sonata for two treble instruments playing over the same bass line.

Wilhelm Friedemann was the oldest son of Johann Sebastian and Maria Barbara, and the recipient of a tremendous amount of educational effort on the part of his parents. His father wrote a number of keyboard works to help educate WF, including an entire notebook of works, *Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, which includes compositions by both father and son. WF did turn out to be quite brilliant, with the mind and the training to excel as a composer, a lawyer, or a mathematician, all of which he studied at university. He was also very good at drinking and gambling, and had trouble holding down a job, despite his lofty education, and is infamous for having sold off some of his father's manuscripts to pay off debts. Along with several other children, he was also not able to come to his stepmother, Anna Magdalena's aid after Sebastian's death, and as a result, both of them died penniless. Despite all of that, the trio sonata in A minor that Agave has selected shows a deft composer. Written in the same decade as his father's Trio Sonata from *The Musical Offering*, it bears a striking structural resemblance. The middle movement is a canon sandwich, with the bass instrument playing the same music as the treble instruments, but twice as slowly. Agave Baroque narrates each program, so you will learn a little more about each piece as we go along. Enjoy the program!

## About the Artists

**Agave Baroque** is "an energized, free-spirited group" (*—Early Music America*), based in the San Francisco Bay Area, and specializing in string chamber music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Agave has received numerous awards and accolades and gained local and national attention for its "rapturous music," "powerful presence," and "brilliant... profound playing" (*EMA*), as well as their growing discography. Now in its twelfth season, Agave continues its fruitful affiliations with star countertenor Reginald Mobley, InterMusic SF, and Sonoma Bach, and continues to be a unique and innovative voice in the chamber music community nationally.

During its initial season, Agave was selected by Early Music America to perform in a showcase concert at the APAP Convention in New York. In 2009, The Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles commissioned *Cold Genius: The music of Henry Purcell*, which Agave premiered at the MJT in 2010, and subsequently recorded. In 2011, EMA selected Agave Baroque as one of five finalists in the NAXOS/EMA Recording Competition. In 2012, the San Francisco Early Music Society chose Agave to present a main stage concert on the 2012 Berkeley Early Music Festival, about which Early Music America Magazine said, "Rapturous music and impressive playing kept the audience entranced." Later, EMA selected Agave to compete in New York as one of six finalists at their Baroque Performance Competition. Agave received a generous grant from the San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music to record *Friends of Ferdinand*, which VGo Recordings released in 2013. For the 2014-15 season, Agave became an ensemble in residence at the San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music/Presidio Trust's new concert series Presidio Sessions, collaborated with Los Angeles new music concert series Jacaranda: music at the edge, and embarked on a Southeastern US tour with Reginald Mobley. In 2015, Agave released *Queen of Heaven: music of Isabella Leonarda*, their first recording collaboration with Mr. Mobley, a countertenor noted for his "crystalline diction and pure, evenly produced tone." (*—Miami Herald*)

Recently, Mr. Mobley and Agave collaborated on a second album, *Peace in Our Time*, whose 2018 release marked the 400th anniversary of the start of the Thirty Years' War, when conflict and The Plague ravaged much of Europe. The album features sublime, heartfelt music, which brought people above the conflict and provided much needed comfort and expression of sorrow. A review of their recent run of performances of the same program for the San Francisco Early Music Society said, "the interaction between Agave and Reginald Mobley... created the real magic" (*—San Francisco Classical Voice*), calling Mr. Mobley "one of the best in the business" and Paul James Dwyer, writing in *Early Music America* proclaimed, "Grammy, are you listening?"

The 2018-19 season featured Agave and Mobley in the first ever baroque program and the first to feature a singer on UCLA's *Chamber Music at the Clark Library* series in Los Angeles. In 2020, they returned to Arizona Early Music Society in a new program with Mr. Mobley, which will also be recorded in 2021. *American Originals* features composers from the Americas, including several important Black American composers: Justin Holland, Scott Joplin, and Florence Price. In the Fall of 2020, Agave will perform and record videos from a new program called *Unchained Harmony*, featuring Austrian and Bohemian composers, Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber, Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, and Pavel Josef Vejvanovsky, with baroque trumpeter Kris Kwapis. The Spring of 2021 will see Agave return to the San Francisco Early Music Society's concert series with Mr. Mobley. Agave Baroque has performed to sold-out crowds throughout the Bay Area, including Barefoot Chamber Concerts, SF Music Day, Chattanooga Chamber Music, Old First Concerts, Sonoma Bach, MSRI, and Trinity Chamber Concerts, as well as at Fresno City College, Fresno Pacific University, the Museum of Jurassic Technology, Jacaranda, The Arizona Early Music Society, UCLA's Chamber Music at the Clark Library, Seattle Early Music Guild, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Appalachian State University, and the Berkeley Early Music Festival, as both a mainstage artist and on the Fringe. On-air appearances include KPFK Pacifica Radio in Los Angeles, KALW San Francisco, WDAV (North Carolina), New Mexico Public Radio, as well as several features on NPR's Harmonia early music radio program, and KDFC's *Baroque by the Bay*. Agave Baroque has also presented two programs to groups of K-12 educators as part of the San Francisco Symphony's "Keeping Score" program. Agave Baroque's core lineup features phenomenal countertenor soloist Reginald Mobley on several programs and two albums (a third upcoming), along with Aaron Westman and Anna Washburn, baroque violins; William Skeen, baroque cello and viola da gamba; Kevin Cooper, baroque guitar and theorbo; and Henry Lebedinsky, harpsichord and organ. They are joined regularly by Natalie Carducci and Katherine Kyme on baroque violin and viola, and Mikala Schmitz on baroque cello.

**Kevin Cooper** is a guitarist and educator from central California with an affinity for the extremes of modern and early music. He performs and records regularly with Agave Baroque and Ensemble Mirable. He has also appeared with Tesseræe, Orpheus, Musica Pacifica, Les Suprises Baroque, and the Live Oak Baroque Orchestra. *Early Music America* and the *San Francisco Classical Voice* have praised his playing as "shining," "stylish," and "a blast!" Kevin's publications range from original guitar compositions like *Precious Stones* and *Sting of the Blood Orange* (Doberman-Yppan) to arrangements like the folk song collection *Snakes, Snails, and C Major Scales* (Heritage Music Press). His recordings include numerous early music projects like Agave Baroque's *Friends of Ferdinand* (VGo Recordings) as well as *Night of Four Moons*, a CD of modern music for voice and guitar with mezzo-soprano Catherine Cooper (Doberman-Yppan). In 2006, he was honored as the Outstanding Doctoral Graduate in Music from the University of Southern California where he studied with William Kanengiser and James Tyler. Currently, he leads the guitar program at Fresno City College. He produces major concerts each semester featuring student soloists and ensembles and special guests such as Scott Tennant, Martha Masters, and Grisha Goryachev. His students

have gone on to academic and career success transferring to schools like CSU Northridge and the Eastman School of Music and working as high school and university guitar instructors.

Hailed by *The Miami Herald* for his “superb continuo... brilliantly improvised and ornamented,” **Henry Lebedinsky** has performed on historical keyboards with the Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, Seraphic Fire, The Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, and the Cantata Collective, among others, and served as guest conductor of the Seattle Baroque Orchestra last season. With Stephen Stubbs, he is the co-Artistic Director of Seattle’s Pacific MusicWorks, and the founder and director of PMW's Underground concert series, dedicated to educating and entertaining new audiences about the world of Baroque and Classical music in unconventional, fun, and boozy venues. Mr. Lebedinsky is also the co-director of the San Francisco Bay Area-based Agave Baroque, with which he has recently released two albums with countertenor Reginald L. Mobley on the VGo Recordings label. He and Mr. Mobley have spent the past decade introducing listeners near and far to music by Black composers from the past 250 years, including recent appearances at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and *Festival Printemps Musical des Alizés* in Morocco. Mr. Lebedinsky has lectured and led master classes on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century repertoire and performance practice at the University of Edinburgh’s Dashkova Centre for Russian Studies, Bowdoin College, and UNC School of the Arts, among others, and is a former music critic for *Fanfare* Magazine. An active composer, poet, and editor, his sacred music for choir and organ is published by Paraclete Press, Carus-Verlag Stuttgart, and CanticaNOVA, and his editions of historical works by female composers can be found in Multitude of Voices’ *Sacred Music by Women Composers* series. A church musician for the past 26 years, he currently serves as Organist and Choirmaster at Seattle’s historic Christ Episcopal Church and sits on the Committee for Liturgy and Music for the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.

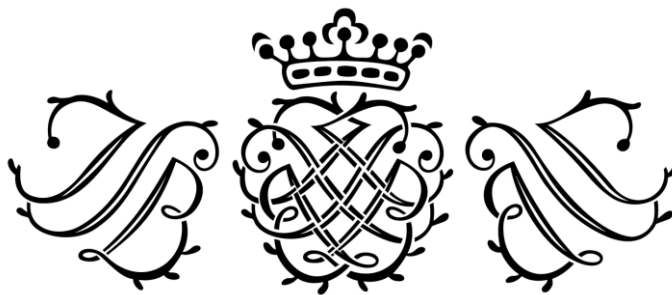
Grammy-nominated cellist **William Skeen** is co-Principal Cellist and a member of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists. He has served as Principal Cellist with Musica Angelica (Los Angeles), Portland Baroque Orchestra, Pacific MusicWorks, and Bach Collegium San Diego. William has also appeared as continuo cellist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Opera, and the Los Angeles Master Chorale. In addition, William has soloed on the viola da gamba with the Dallas Symphony, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Carmel Bach Festival, Oregon Bach Festival, Musica Angelica, Orquestra Nacional de Mexico, and the American Bach Soloists. He is co-founder of the New Esterházy Quartet, whose repertoire includes over 150 string quartets performed exclusively on gut strings. With NEQ, William co-founded the San Francisco Early Music Society's Classical Workshop in 2012. He has served on the faculty on the University of Southern California since 2000. Skeen also has taught baroque cello and viola da gamba at the American Bach Soloists Academy, SFEMS Baroque Workshop, SF Conservatory of Music, and University of California, Berkeley. William currently tours and records with Musica Pacifica, El Mundo, and Agave Baroque, and plays frequently with the Smithsonian Chamber Players. He is represented on over 80 audio recordings and 30 video recordings, many produced by Voices of Music. Mr. Skeen is co-founder of the Cantata Collective, and one-to-a-part ensemble devoted to presenting all of J.S. Bach's cantatas to the Bay Area Community free of charge.

**Anna Washburn** grew up fiddling in the beautiful state of Maine and now calls the San Francisco Bay Area home. She performs and records on period violin and viola with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Agave Baroque, Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, and Tesserae, and is a founding member of the Sylvestris String Quartet. Recently Sylvestris Quartet has been on two tours of the Pacific Northwest, performing at Portland State University, University of Oregon, and on the Pacific Music Works Underground series in Seattle, and will return for a third year as the Quartet in Residence at the Hawai’i Performing Arts Festival in the summer of 2020. Anna can be heard on a number of recently released



albums, including *The Good Song: Gabriel Fauré in the 1890s*, featuring Sylvestris Quartet, Baritone Harry Baechtel and Pianist Michael Seregow, *Peace in Our Time* featuring Agave Baroque and countertenor Reginald Mobley, and Handel's *Joseph and his Brethren* with Philharmonia Baroque. In April of 2020 she will be part of a production of Leclair's *Scylla et Glaucus* at the Royal Opera House at the Palace of Versailles with Nic McGegin directing Philharmonia Baroque. In addition to her devotion to period performance, Anna also appears on stage with a variety of other ensembles, from recording and performing with pop-orchestra Magik\*Magik Orchestra with artists like Sting, Chicago, John Vanderslice, Third Eye Blind, Hauschka and Gregory Porter... to hip hop/opera group Ensemble Mik Nawooj... to the Commonwealth Club's series "Music Matters," in a multi-part lecture series on Mozart...to regular performances with Symphony Silicon Valley, San Jose Chamber Orchestra, and the Santa Rosa Symphony. She also recently appeared as a soloist with the Sonoma State University Orchestra. Anna has studied with Bettina Mussumeli, Elizabeth Blumenstock, and Peter Zazofky, and has degrees in violin performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Boston University.

**Aaron Westman** was a metal-head, growing up in Santa Rosa. He now plays the electric guitar of the 17th century, and has been described as a "brilliant virtuoso" (*Early Music America*), "expressive and virtuosic" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*), and a "very impressive" (*American Record Guide*) violinist and violist. As a principal player, Aaron works with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, American Bach Soloists, Ars Minerva, California Bach Society, Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Musica Angelica, New Hampshire Music Festival, PMW Underground, Seraphic Fire, and Tesseræ. He has also played with San Francisco Opera, as well as Orchester Wiener Akademie, with whom he toured North and South America over four seasons. During the 2019-2020 season, Aaron will be a soloist in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no. 6 in both San Diego and San Francisco, a concertino soloist for a production with Opera Omaha, and tour a fully staged Leclair opera with Philharmonia Baroque to the Palace of Versailles in Paris. He'll also be a soloist in a Bach concerto with Sonoma State University Orchestra, as well as Beethoven and Hindemith concertos with the Santa Rosa Symphony Youth Orchestra. Aaron co-directs the chamber ensemble Agave Baroque, now in its twelfth season, and the Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, and is violist in the Sylvestris Quartet, which will be in residence at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival for the third year in a row in 2020. Aaron is currently Music Director of the Santa Rosa Symphony's Young People's Chamber Orchestra, is on the Performance Faculty at Mills College, and in the summers teaches chamber music in Tuscany. He has guest directed the Sonoma State University Orchestra twice, and for three years taught baroque strings at California Institute of the Arts. Aaron holds a Master of Music degree from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he studied with Stanley Ritchie.



# Thank you for supporting Sonoma Bach!

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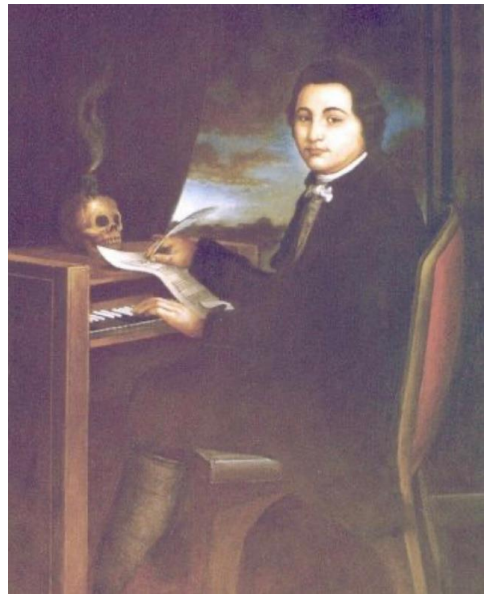
Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach



Johann Christoph Bach



Wilhelm Friedemann Bach



Johann Bernard Bach

## *Upcoming Events*

### **Sacred Realms: Lux Perpetua**

March 28 & 29, 2020



### **Spring Returns: Pierre Attaignant & The City of Light**

April 24 & 25, 2020



### **BachTalk: Young Handel in Old Rome**

May 17, 2020



### **Season Finale: Young Handel in Old Rome**

May 30 & 31, 2020

