



2018-2019 SEASON

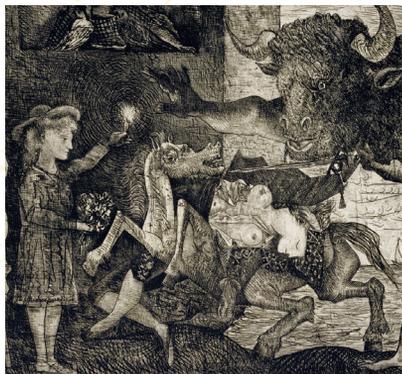
light out of darkness



LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

Darkness: We needn't look far to discover challenges and problems and reasons to despair. Right here in our own Sonoma County, we've had the terrible fires and their repercussions which will continue on into a largely unknown future. Our country is riven by strife and serious challenges both domestic and international. Species and habitat are being lost as our effects upon the planet take their toll. We live in a world of new, easy communication, but it seems more difficult to truly connect. Everyone seems to be pedaling harder and harder just to keep up. Undivided attention—a precious gift which we give to each other—seems harder to come by.

Light: Kindness is a light. Connection is a light. Generosity is a light. Bravery is a light. Eschewing self-interest in favor of family or community is a light. Truth is a light. Working for peace or freedom or justice is a light. We need to recognize such light whenever and wherever and in whomever we see it, and let it shine upon us. As E.M. Forster says, "Choose a place where you won't do very much harm, and stand in it for all you are worth, facing the sunshine."



Above: Pablo Picasso, detail from *Minotaur*, 1935.
Cover: Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk on the Seashore*, 1809.

But not only that — we need to be active, to take positive steps. My mom used to say, "When you have an overwhelming problem, 'chunk it up'. Divide it into workable tasks, and start knocking them out." Easy to say! But we can each identify small, discrete steps and start taking them. Send a check; make a call; extend a hand; smile at a stranger. By small degrees, we can climb out of ourselves and

make connections; and every positive act we make towards the world outside ourselves shines a little light inside as well—it always works both ways.

Music: How can we be light-bringers? Well, our aspiration is to be a sort of conduit. We recognize glimmers in the music and words we rehearse and perform that brighten our gloom, and we want to share these with you. We pour what talents we have, our energies, our time, and, yes, our love into this work, so as to give these glimmers the best chance of reaching you.

Artists of all times and of all types have played this role. Somehow art—perhaps especially music—has the power to reach deep inside and light up the dark places. It doesn't matter if it's sacred or secular, popular or classical, serious or not—when it hits home, we know it, and it's the true gold.

Torches: One could say that our season-ending Brahms Requiem is a sort of torchbearer: it's the most healing piece of music that we know, and it's the inspiration for our entire 2018–19 season. But we hope you find some illumination or warmth or comfort in each and every one of our eight productions, each with its own 'certain slant of light', each an attempt to carry that light across the miles and the centuries to you: Our friends, our families, our beloved Sonoma community.

—ROBERT WORTH, music director

*Lead, kindly light,
amid the encircling gloom,
lead thou me on!*

*The night is dark,
and I am far from home—
lead thou me on!*

—John Henry Newman
(from *The Pillar of the Cloud*)

OPENING RECITAL TOKENS OF PEACE

Christopher Fritzsche, countertenor
Green Mountain Consort
Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Directed by Robert Worth

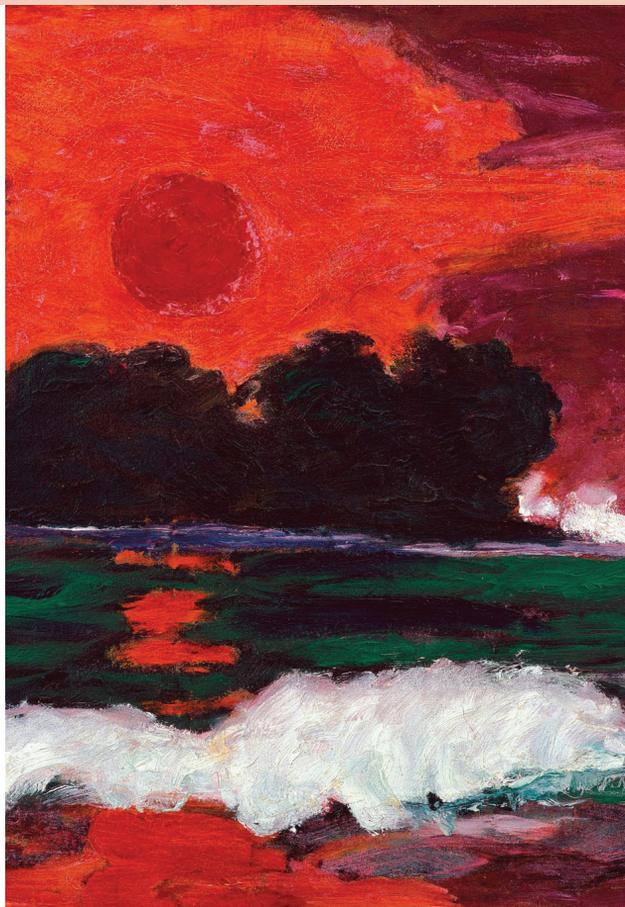
Sunday, September 23, 3 P.M.
Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.
Schroeder Hall

The Thirty Years' War, one of the most destructive conflicts in history, raged from 1618 to 1648. Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672), organist and choirmaster at the Saxon court of Dresden, was spared direct involvement in the fighting, but faced straitened wartime circumstances. His works during this period reflect these realities, calling for reduced performing forces. But the music itself has a special radiant force, as though Schütz was trying to provide rays of hope wherever and however he could. We perform selections from several of his publications during the war, including *Cantiones sacrae*, *Symphoniae sacrae*, and *Geistliche Chormusik*, as well as instrumental works by Schütz' student and successor Matthias Weckmann.

*We, this people, on this minuscule and kithless globe,
Who reach daily for the bomb, the blade and the dagger:
Yet who petition in the dark for tokens of peace...
In whose mouths abide cankerous words
Which challenge our very existence:
Yet out of those same mouths
Come songs of such exquisite sweetness
That the heart falters in its labor
And the body is quieted into awe.*
—MAYA ANGELOU (from *A Brave and Startling Truth*)



“Thank you for your dedication to finding all of these treasures and bringing them to us.”



Emil Nolde, detail from *Tropical Sun*, 1914.

THANKSGIVING I FEAR NAMORE THE NIGHT

Dianna Morgan, soprano

Christopher Fritzsche, countertenor

Daniel Hutchings, tenor

Paul Murray, bass

Sonoma Bach Choir

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Directed by Robert Worth

Friday, November 16, 8 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.

Saturday, November 17, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.

Schroeder Hall

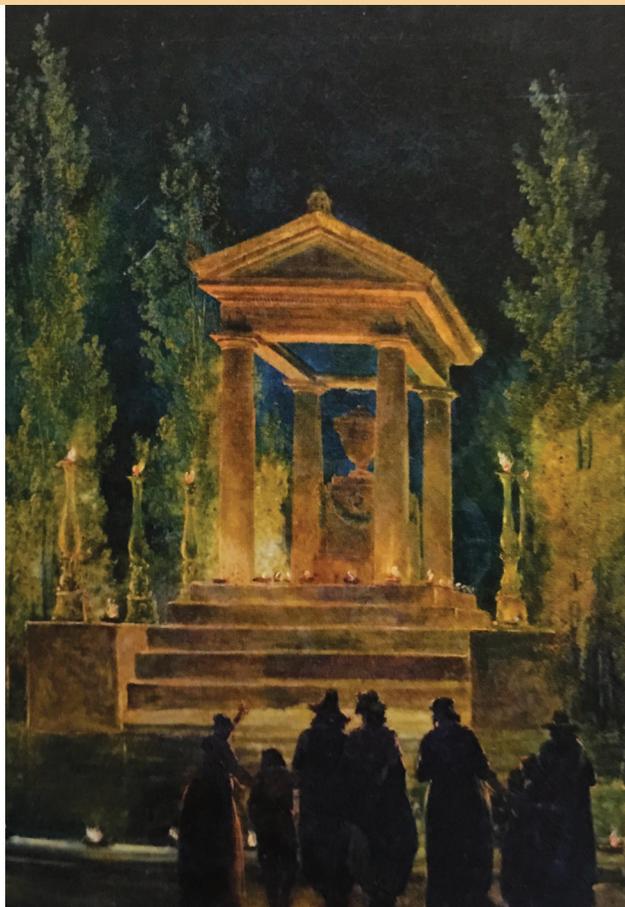
One of J.S. Bach's earliest works, Cantata 106 (*Actus tragicus*), serves as centerpiece for this exploration of Baroque music in memoriam. Scored for an antique ensemble of two recorders, two violas da gamba and basso continuo, the cantata—one of the spiritual predecessors of the Brahms *Requiem*, which closes our season—presents a masterful selection of biblical verses, tracing an arc from sadness in the opening sinfonia to over-the-top joy in the closing chorale. Bach's Leipzig motet, *Jesu meine Freude*, provides comfort in a different way, using the six verses of the eponymous chorale in alternation with biblical verses to paint victory over fears and tribulations. Our program is rounded out with settings of Luther's touching chorale *Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin* and the incomparable finale of Schütz' *Musicalische Exequien*.

*When that the moneth of May
Comes and the day
In beames gives light,
I fear namore the fight.*

*When that the sonne.
His daily course y-ronne,
Is no more bright,
I fear namore the night.*

—T.H. WHITE (from *The Once and Future King*)

“The Bach performance was incredibly moving, masterfully performed, very passionate and magical. Absolutely gorgeous music!”



Hubert Robert, detail from *The Cenotaph of Jean-Baptiste Rousseau* 1712-78 in the Tuileries, Paris, 1794.

EARLY MUSIC CHRISTMAS LET THERE BE LIGHT

Jenni Samuelson, soprano

Phebe Craig, organ

Circa 1600

Directed by Robert Worth

Friday, December 7, 8 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.

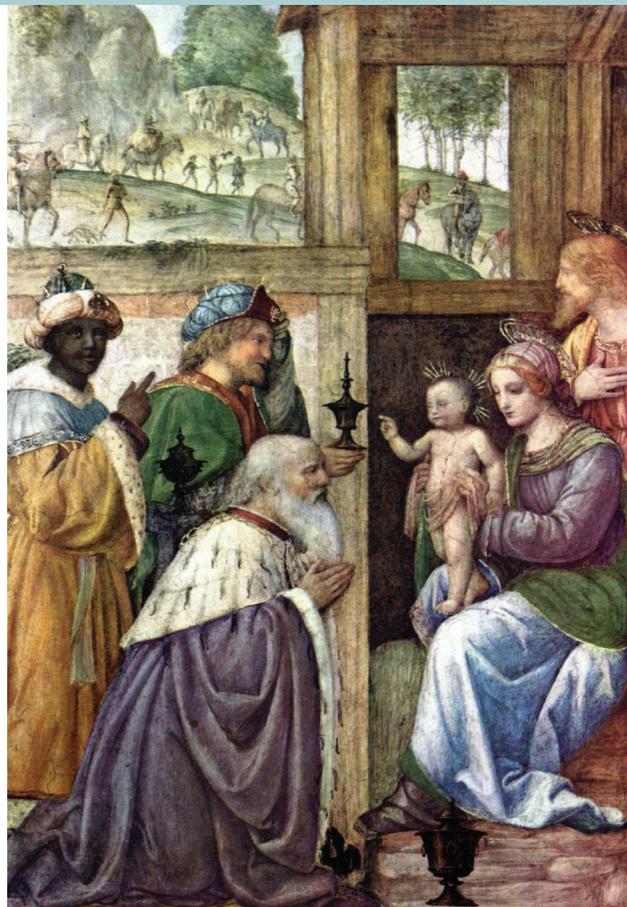
Saturday, December 8, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.

Schroeder Hall

Our seventh annual Early Music Christmas takes up the tale at the Visitation, as Mary shares her joy with her cousin Elizabeth in the countryside. As we proceed through the Nativity, Epiphany and Candlemas, we are guided by our narrator, soprano Jenni Samuelson, relating the story from Luke and Matthew as set by Heinrich Schütz (from *Historia der Geburth Jesu Christi*) and others. The narration is interwoven with canticles, crowd scenes, and responses by Michael Praetorius, J.S. Bach and the early-music aficionado Hugo Distler (1908—1942). Come join us for this joyous celebration of ‘the return of the invincible sun’!

*But stay: what light is that doth stream,
And drop here in a gilded beam?
It is Thy star runs page, and brings
Thy tributary Eastern kings.
Lord! grant some light to us, that we
May with them find the way to Thee.
Behold what mists eclipse the day:
How dark it is! shed down one ray
To guide us out of this sad night,
And say once more, “Let there be light.”*
—HENRY VAUGHAN (from *The Nativity*)



Bernardino Luni, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1520–25.

ORGAN RECITAL THE CANDLE IN THE WIND

Anne Laver, organ
Sonoma Bach Choir
Directed by Robert Worth

Friday, January 11, 8 P.M.
Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.
Schroeder Hall

Organist Anne Laver, who played Schroeder Hall's Brombaugh Opus 9 organ for several years during its sojourn in Rochester, New York, returns to join the Sonoma Bach Choir in a recital centering upon Martin Luther's chorales. The concert proceeds around the circle of the year, beginning with Advent and ending with Pentecost; each occasion is marked by a chorale, first heard in bare unison, then in an organ setting, and finally in a hymn-arrangement sung by the choir with organ. As the year turns, a pattern of dark-to-light is revealed, with each stage defined by Luther's inimitable melodies. Composers include Johann Walter, J.H. Schein, Dieterich Buxtehude and (of course!) J.S. Bach.

*She was carrying the lamp:
'Let it never go out!' she said,
and she hugged it to her breast,
and the lamp grew brighter still...
The wind stubbornly rebuked her,
and the light of the lamp burnt her eyes,
but she was glad and laughing:
'Let it never go out!' she said.*
—RAFAEL MENDEZ DORICH
(trans. Donald Devenish Walsh)



Godfried Schalcken, *Young Girl with a Candle*, 1670–1675.

"I drove home a very happy woman, having heard such beautiful performances in an exquisite concert hall."

GUEST CONCERT THE BRIGHT FIELD

*“You do wonderful work in the world,
and I’m grateful.”*

Clerestory

Saturday, February 16, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.

Schroeder Hall

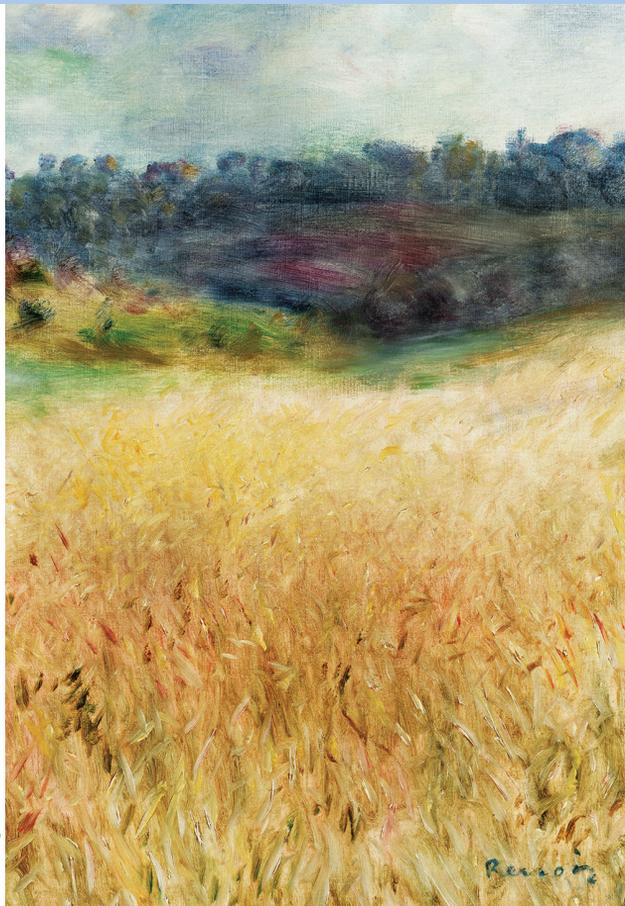
The a cappella ensemble Clerestory takes its name from the high windows through which light pours into a church. We are delighted to present this wonderful Bay Area group in a concert featuring early and modern works inspired, through a process known as *ekphrasis*, by works of art. Clerestory’s “distinctive voices blending in a gorgeous sound” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) perform compositions—by such composers as John Sheppard, Arvo Pärt and Eric Whitacre—which respond through poetry and music to artworks by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Gerhard Richter and many others. These ancient and modern ‘commentaries’ shine a special light upon art both familiar and brand-new.

*I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it...*

—R.S. THOMAS (from *The Bright Field*)



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, detail from *Wheatfield*, 1879.



SACRED REALMS AGNUS DEI

Green Mountain Consort

Directed by Robert Worth

Saturday, March 30, 8 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.

Sunday, March 31, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.

St. Seraphim Orthodox Church

We return to St. Seraphim for our fifth annual concert in its inspiring space and acoustics. Our repertoire is built around the *Missa Paschalis* of Ludwig Senfl. Set for five voices, the piece invokes a special world of its own—particularly in the atmospheric *Gloria*, consisting of many small ‘tone paintings’ which bring to life the successive sections of the text. A Credo by Senfl’s teacher and colleague Heinrich Isaac and motets from the monumental collection *Choralis Constantinus* complete the music for Easter Mass, while Senfl’s joyful (and rarely performed) *Quinque salutationes Domini nostri Jesu Christi* punctuates the program with its many exuberant terms of endearment.

*Given that lambs are infant sheep,
that sheep are afraid and foolish, and lack
the means of self-protection, having
neither rage nor claws, venom nor cunning,
what then is this ‘Lamb of God’?*

*Is it implied that we
must protect this per-versely weak
animal, whose muzzle’s nudgings
suppose there is milk to be found in us?*

*So be it. Come, dim star.
Let’s try if something human
still can shield you,
spark of remote light.*

—DENISE LEVERTOV
(from *Mass for the Day
of St. Thomas Didymus*)

*“The intimate interweaving of the voices of the
Green Mountain Consort is utterly absorbing. We’re so
fortunate to have you right here in Sonoma County!”*



Henri Fantin-Latour, *White Lilies*, 1883.

SPRING RETURNS AN AFFIRMING FLAME

David Parsons, organ
Circa 1600

Directed by Robert Worth

Saturday, April 27, 8 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.

Sunday, April 28, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M.

Schroeder Hall

Our concert design begins with two collections of miniatures—Leonhard Lechner’s *Deutsche Sprüche von Leben und Tod* (1606) and Hugo Distler’s *Totentanz* (c.1935)—separated by centuries, but complementary in their efforts to describe how the world works, and how to have hope. Each consists of tiny, koan-like pieces on a single thought or intuition. We weave these pieces together with larger motets from J.H. Schein’s magnificent *Fontana d’Israel* (1623) and organ meditations from Yale’s Neumeister manuscript by J.S. Bach and his cousin Johann Michael Bach. Over and again we are offered lessons of how to find light in the midst of gloom, and how to shine such light out to the world.

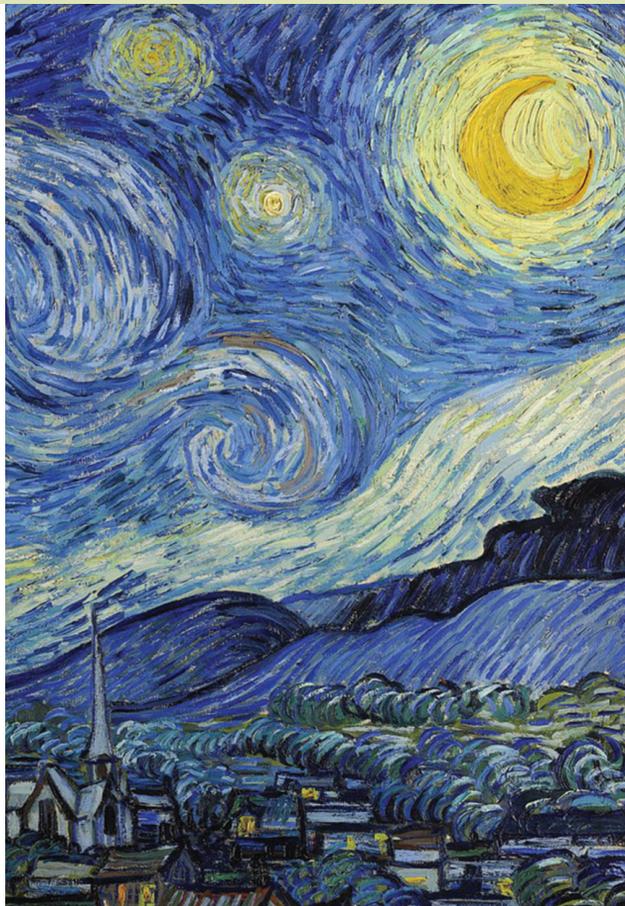
*Defenseless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:*

*May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.*

—W.H. AUDEN
(from *September 1, 1939*)



“In the music you bring us, I feel a deeply comforting companionship that strengthens me in my own life journey.”



Vincent Van Gogh, detail from *The Starry Night*, 1889.

MAJOR WORKS

A HUMAN REQUIEM

Danielle Sampson, soprano

Paul Murray, bass

Sonoma Bach Choir

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Directed by Robert Worth

Saturday, June 1, 8 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 7:25 P.M.

Sunday, June 2, 3 P.M.

Backgrounder pre-concert talk, 2:25 P.M..

Schroeder Hall

We present Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Joachim Linckelmann's wonderful new version for reduced orchestra, allowing us to perform the piece at a scale appropriate to our beloved Schroeder Hall, an ideal venue in which to experience the direct emotional and spiritual appeal of this amazing work. Rather than setting to music the traditional Mass for the Dead, Brahms made his own selection of biblical texts, with special emphasis upon comfort and hope for those who survive. In a letter, he said that he would have been glad to call the piece 'A Human Requiem'—and this seems a comment upon his music's power to provide light and hope and solace to all of us even in the midst of deepest sorrow.

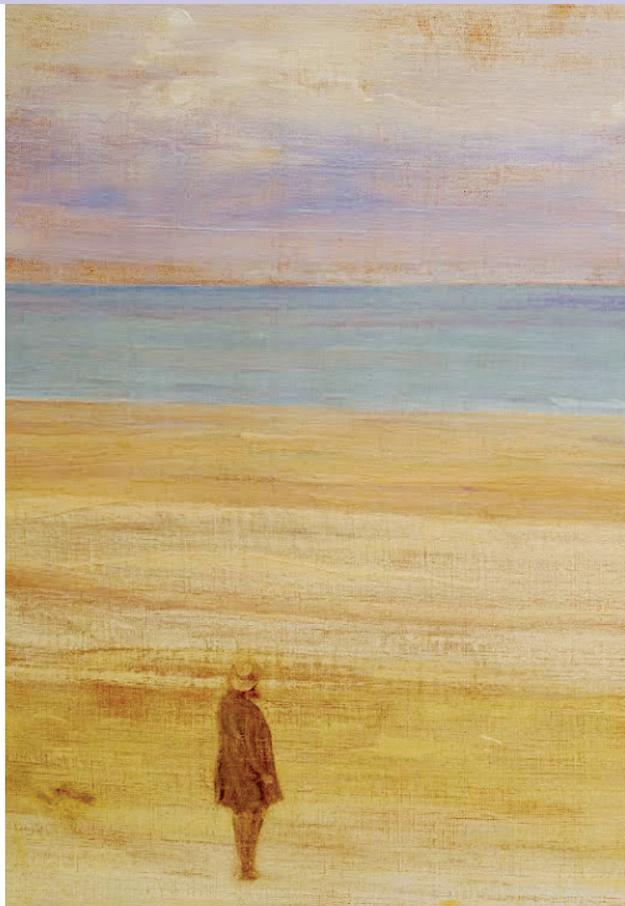
*Earth now is your mother, as you were mine, my earth,
my sustenance and my strength,
and now without you I turn to your mother
and seek from her that I may meet you again
in rock and stone. Whisper to the stone,
I love you. Whisper to the sea, I found you.
Whisper to the earth, Mother, I have found her,
and I am safe and always have been.*

—DAVID IGNATOW (from *Kaddish*)



**"My friend said it was like molten gold
pouring down, listening to you all."**

James Abbott McNeill Whistler, detail from *Harmony in Blue and Silver*, Trouville, 1865.



LEARNING AND EXPLORATION

☀ **Midsummer Night Sings 2018:**

Wednesdays: July 11, 18, 25 and
August 1, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.

Elim Lutheran Church, Petaluma

☀ **Ready, Set, Sing!**

Tuesdays: January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2019

7:00–9:30 P.M.

Class taught by Christopher Fritzsche
Center for Spiritual Living, Santa Rosa

☀ **BachTalks:**

I Fear Namore the Night

Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.

A Human Requiem

Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

Events held at a private residence

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?

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 a quarter-century through this essential activity of music-making, and we look forward eagerly to continuing our efforts for many years to come.