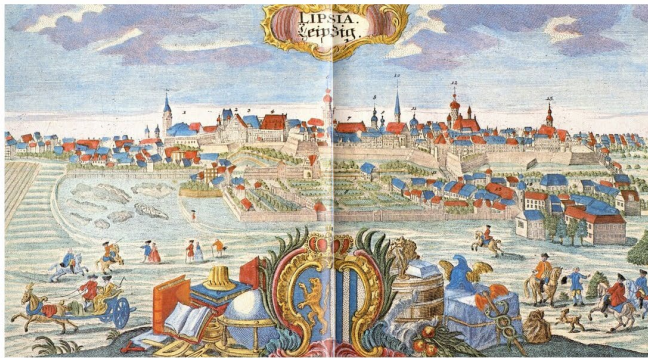


SONOMA
Bach

ROBERT WORTH, MUSIC DIRECTOR

CHRISTMAS WITH BACH



Sonoma Bach Choir
Live Oak Baroque Orchestra
Directed by Robert Worth

Saturday, December 17, 8 P.M.
Sunday, December 18, 3 P.M.

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!



Presented by Sonoma Bach in association with the Green Music Center

Christmas with Bach

FEATURING

Dianna Morgan, soprano

Christopher Fritzsche, countertenor

Brian Thorsett, tenor

Nikolas Nackley, bass

Sonoma Bach Choir

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Robert Worth, Music Director

Amanda McFadden, Associate Music Director

Saturday, December 17, 2022

Schroeder Hall

Green Music Center

Sonoma State University

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Schroeder Hall

Green Music Center

Sonoma State University

Welcome to Christmas with Bach

In 1734, Bach turned his powers to the Christmas story, revising earlier occasional music and adding new arias, choruses, and recitatives to create his magnificent *Christmas Oratorio*. But he had previously written plenty of music for the season. For our Early Music Christmas this year, we carve out one of many possible alternate ways of telling the tale through Bach's music, drawing from the master's works of the mid 1720's, his first few years as director of music at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig.

We've chosen to begin not with the Nativity itself, but rather nine months earlier, with a cantata for the Annunciation, a commemoration of the day the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary bearing great tidings: she is to bear the child Jesus. Our following three cantatas continue the tale through Advent and the Nativity, closing with the Second Day of Christmas (commonly referred to these days as Boxing Day).



What is a cantata, anyway? The word, drawn from the Italian 'cantare', originally referred to a sung piece as opposed to a sonata, an instrumental piece. But by Bach's time and in the places where Bach dwelt and worked, a cantata was generally a musical work which incorporated both instruments and voices, often having several distinct movements. There could be just a single singer; or perhaps many, including both soloists and a chorus. A cantata could tell a tale in narrative style, but it could just as well depict a state of mind, a response to an occasion, an outpouring of grief or joy or acclamation.

Bach wrote quite a number of secular cantatas; but his some 200 extant sacred cantatas represent the largest body of his works; and scholars estimate that as many as 150 additional works have been lost to the ravages of time and circumstance. Bach's engagement with the cantata form began when he was about 20 years old; and he was still cultivating the form in old age. In presenting a concert around a Christmas theme, we have a veritable embarrassment of riches from which to choose!

As mentioned above, we've chosen to present for you a series of four cantatas, four links in a chain leading to and trailing away from Christmas. All of our choices were written and first performed within a period of about a year and a half, from Christmas, 1723, to the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25), 1725. One cantata—BWV 40: *Dazu ist erschienen*—comes from Bach's First Leipzig Jahrgang (an annual cycle of cantatas); the other three are part of Bach's Second Jahrgang, during which he constrained himself to composing within a certain form: the Chorale Cantata. In this form, a Lutheran hymn was used (including text or melody, or both) in each movement throughout the piece. Bach wrote and performed 41 of these cantatas, one per week, before breaking off the pattern.

Typically, in a chorale cantata, the melody of the chorale is heard in the first movement—as the basis of a large-scale chorale fantasia, and in the last movement—as the melody atop a homophonic four-part setting. Middle movements sometime included the chorale melody, but

more commonly the middle verses were paraphrased to produce new aria, duet and recitative texts to be sung by soloists.

This tight structure, in which the essential materials—melodic line, textual meaning—sprang from the chorale, proved to be an ideal vehicle for Bach. Always cuing from both the text and the melody at hand (and also to some extent from the biblical readings spoken from the pulpit on a given day), Bach's chorale cantatas are tight, taut, thrilling and eminently accessible, especially to those who already know the chorale upon which a given piece is based.

To this end, at the head of each of our three chorale cantatas in the 'Notes and Texts' section of this program, we have provided the melody upon which the piece is based. If you're here for our pre-concert Bachgrounder, you'll get a chance to hear (and sing) each of these great tunes, so you have them in your ear as you listen to Bach's settings. We've also provided notes on each cantata and on each movement thereof.



Please join us in the New Year for Annie Laver's Organ Recital: The Little Organ Book, featuring also Circa 1600; and for many more concerts on into the spring. Go to www.sonomabach.org for further information. We extend earnest thanks to you for coming to share this wonderful music with us, and we wish you a warm and most joyful holiday season.

--Robert Worth, music director

Dedication

We dedicate our concerts to the memory of Ken Koppelman (1942-2022), beloved husband of alto Jayne DeLawter, good friend to many of us, loyal supporter of Sonoma Bach for lo! these many years, and most excellent, kind and generous human being. We condole with Jayne on her loss; we miss Ken more than we can say, we remember him with great fondness; and we know that his spirit will be with us forever.



Our thoughts are also with Mark Setterland, a bass in the Sonoma Bach Choir. He underwent open-heart surgery on the morning of Monday, December 12. We send love and prayers to Mark (and to his family) for a speedy recovery to full health. We have a lot of great music to sing together in the spring, Mark!

Christmas with Bach

Chorale Cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation

BWV 1: Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

First Performance: March 25, 1725, Leipzig

STB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, 2 oboes da caccia, two solo violins, strings, BC

1. Chorale Fantasia: Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern
2. Tenor Recitative: Du wahrer Gottes und Marien Sohn
3. Soprano Aria, Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen
4. Bass Recitative: Ein irdscher Glanz, ein leiblich Licht
5. Tenor Aria: Unser Mund und Ton der Saiten
6. Closing chorale: Wie bin ich doch so herzlich froh



Chorale Cantata for the First Sunday of Advent

BWV 62: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland

First performance: December 3, 1724, Leipzig

SATB soloists, SATB chorus, horn, 2 oboes, strings, basso continuo

Directed by Amanda McFadden

1. Chorale Fantasia: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland
2. Tenor Aria: Bewundert, O Menschen, dies große Geheimnis
3. Bass Recitative: So geht aus Gottes Herrlichkeit und Thron
4. Bass Aria: Streite, siege, starker Held!
5. Soprano Accompanied Recitative: Wie ehren diese Herrlichkeit
6. Closing Chorale: Lob sei Gott, dem Vater, ton

Intermission

Chorale Cantata for Christmas Day
BWV 91: Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ
First Performance: December 25, 1724, Leipzig
SATB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, timpani, 3 oboes, strings, basso continuo

1. Chorale Fantasia: Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ
2. Soprano Recitative and Chorale: Der Glanz der höchsten Herrlichkeit
3. Tenor Aria: Gott, dem Erden Kreis zu klein
4. Bass Accompanied Recitative: O Christenheit!
5. Soprano-Alto Duet: Die Armut, so Gott auf sich nimmt
6. Closing Chorale: Das hat er alles uns getan



Cantata for the Second Day of Christmas
BWV 40: Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes
First performance: December 26, 1723, Leipzig
ATB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, 2 oboes, strings, basso continuo

1. Chorus: Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes
2. Tenor Recitative: Das Wort ward Fleisch
3. Chorale: Die Sünd macht Leid
4. Bass Aria: Höllische Schlange
5. Alto Accompanied Recitative: Die Schlange, so im Paradies
6. Chorale: Schüttele deinen Kopf und sprich
7. Tenor Aria: Christenkinder, freuet euch!
8. Closing Chorale: Jesu, nimm dich deiner Glieder

Notes and Texts

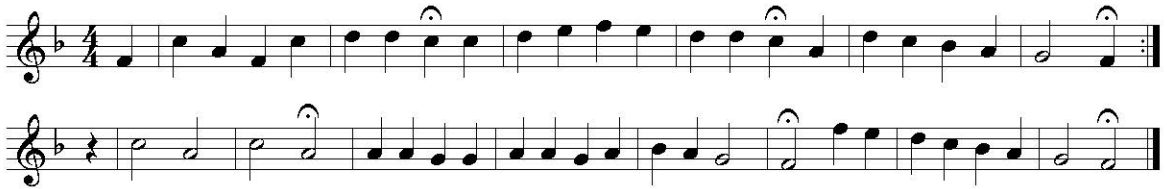
Translations by Pamela Dellal

Chorale Cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation

BWV 1: Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern

First Performance: March 25, 1725, Leipzig

STB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, 2 oboes da caccia, two solo violins, strings, BC



Philip Nicolai's magnificent 1597 hymn—the 'Queen of Chorales'—is typically associated with the Christmas story. But the longing for an incarnate God with whom the believer can be intimate is strong, and of course in Christianity that story really begins on earth with the conception of the child Jesus, announced to Mary by the Angel Gabriel in the famous scene entitled the Annunciation. We hear the chorale melody itself only twice—in the opening and closing movements—but its spirit infuses the entire piece; the texts of the middle verses are paraphrased and expanded upon in the middle movements of the cantata.

1. Chorale Fantasia: Tutti

As is the case with the two chorale cantatas which follow, Cantata 1 opens with a large-scale presentation of the chorale melody, carried (as usual in the second Jahrgang) by the soprano voice in long notes. The lower voices provide faster-moving accompaniment in the lilting 12/8 time, occasionally presenting snatches of the melody in diminution. The horns, low oboes and solo violins join the rest of the orchestra to make a veritable concerto which accompanies the choir and presents introductory and connecting passages.

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern
Voll Gnad und Wahrheit von dem Herrn,
Die süße Wurzel Jesse!
Du Sohn Davids aus Jakobs Stamm,
Mein König und mein Bräutigam,
Hast mir mein Herz besessen,
Lieblich,
Freundlich,
Schön und herrlich, groß und ehrlich,
reich von Gaben,
Hoch und sehr prächtig erhaben.
Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, verse 1

How beautifully the morning star shines,
full of grace and truth from the Lord,
the sweet branch of Jesse!
You, the Son of David from the root of Jacob,
my King and my bridegroom,
have possessed my heart;
loving,
friendly,
beautiful and glorious, great and noble,
rich with gifts,
exalted and most magnificently sublime.

2. Recitative: Tenor, basso continuo

Recitatives in Bach's cantatas come in two basic types: *plain*—a voice accompanied only by the so-called basso continuo: a bass melodic instrument (most commonly the cello) and a chordal instrument (harpsichord, organ or possibly a plucked string instrument); or *accompanied*—a voice accompanied by basso continuo and obligato instruments. Here, we have a plain recitative; but if you listen closely to the highly expressive vocal line expressing heartfelt thanks to Jesus as he joins us here on earth, and to the manner in which the basso continuo supports and reacts to the vocal line, you may agree that there is nothing simple about it.

Du wahrer Gottes und Marien Sohn,
Du König derer Auserwählten,
Wie süß ist uns dies Lebenswort,
Nach dem die ersten Väter schon
So Jahr' als Tage zählten,
Das Gabriel mit Freuden dort
In Bethlehem verheißen!
O Süßigkeit, o Himmelsbrot,
Das weder Grab, Gefahr noch Tod
Aus unsern Herzen reißen.

You, very son of God and Mary,
You, king of the chosen ones,
how sweet is Your living word to us,
by which our forefathers already
counted years as well as days,
that Gabriel joyfully
promised there in Bethlehem!
O sweetness, o bread of heaven,
that neither grave, danger or death
can wrest from our hearts.

3. Aria: Soprano, oboe da caccia, continuo

It's hard to hear this soprano aria as anything but a love song: and that's exactly what it is. The soprano, representing the Christian believer reacting to this magical moment of incarnation, invites the divine to enter her heart, delighting the soul. Bach represents this union in the intertwining of the soprano and the *oboe da caccia*, the curved, highly expressive low member of the oboe family.

Erfüllet, ihr himmlischen göttlichen Flammen,
Die nach euch verlangende gläubige Brust!
Die Seelen empfinden die kräftigsten Triebe
Der brünstigsten Liebe
Und schmecken auf Erden die himmlische Lust.

Fill utterly, you divine celestial flames,
this faithful breast that longs for you!
Our souls feel the most powerful urges
of intensely burning love
and taste on earth heavenly delight.

4. Recitative: Bass, basso continuo

Our second recitative, also plain, features the bass voice. In the text—a paraphrase of verses from the chorale—the protagonist eschews terrestrial radiance in favor of the celestial, 'raised by God for a perfect good'. As he concludes, he exhorts us to lift up thanks and praise.

Ein irdscher Glanz, ein leiblich Licht
Rührt meine Seele nicht;
Ein Freudenschein ist mir von Gott entstanden,
Denn ein vollkommnes Gut,
Des Heilands Leib und Blut,
Ist zur Erquickung da.
So muß uns ja
Der überreiche Segen,

An earthly flash, a corporeal light
does not stir my soul;
a joyful radiance has been raised up by God,
for a perfect Good,
the body and blood of the Savior,
is here for refreshment.
Indeed, we must therefore --
for this overwhelming blessing

Der uns von Ewigkeit bestimmt
Und unser Glaube zu sich nimmt,
Zum Dank und Preis bewegen.

that has been eternally destined for us
and takes our faith to itself --
be moved to thanks and praise.

5. Aria: Tenor, strings, basso continuo

And now, following the suggestion of the previous recitative, the tenor soloist joins with the strings in a veritable outcry of praise. His opening words make clear that both voices and instruments can and should join in, and together the ensemble creates a marvelous musical expression of joy and of gratitude.

Unser Mund und Ton der Saiten
Sollen dir
Für und für
Dank und Opfer zubereiten.
Herz und Sinnen sind erhoben,
Lebenslang
Mit Gesang,
Großer König, dich zu loben.

Our mouths and the tones of strings
shall for You
for ever and ever
be ready in thanks and in offering.
Heart and mind are lifted up,
life-long
in song,
great King, to praise You.

6. Closing chorale: Tutti

As usual in Bach's chorale cantatas, the last verse of the chorale lyrics is presented in a four-part homophonic setting. This joyous and triumphant verse is made even more so by the first horn, doubling the brilliant melody, and by the second horn, playing a stirring obligato which creates a musical crown for the 'Queen of Chorales'.

Wie bin ich doch so herzlich froh,
Daß mein Schatz ist das A und O,
Der Anfänge und das Ende;
Er wird mich doch zu seinem Preis
Aufnehmen in das Paradeis,
Des klopf ich in die Hände.
Amen!
Amen!
Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone,
bleib nicht lange,
Deiner wart ich mit Verlangen.

How happy I am,
that my precious one is the A and O,
the beginning and the end;
He will claim me as his prize
and take me to Paradise,
which I will clasp in my hands.
Amen!
Amen!
Come, you lovely crown of joy,
do not delay,
I await you with longing.

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern, verse 7



Chorale Cantata for the First Sunday of Advent
BWV 62: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland
First performance: December 3, 1724, Leipzig
SATB soloists, SATB chorus, horn, 2 oboes, strings, basso continuo
Directed by Amanda McFadden



As you can see above, ‘Nun komm der Heiden Heiland’ is a very different type of chorale from ‘Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern’. Martin Luther’s 1524 adaptation of the text and melody of the Latin Advent hymn ‘Veni redemptor gentium’ is taut and austere, with a limited melodic range and a tight phrase structure. It seems perfectly suited somehow to the preparatory period of Advent, during which believers are exhorted to ready themselves in a sober darkness for the brilliance of Christmas Day.

1. Chorale Fantasia: Tutti

Bach’s first movement is again a large-scale setting of the first verse of the chorale, again with the melody lined out in the soprano, with accompanying voices below. But the effect could hardly be more different than the opening of our first cantata. The orchestra is smaller, with only one horn and no solo violins; and it’s more tightly wound, around an excited 16th-note motive, a series of throbbing 8th-notes, and recurrent statements of the head motive of the chorale integrated into the orchestral ritornelli. ‘Bracing’, ‘eye-opening’ and ‘antique’ are a few descriptive terms which come to mind.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland,
Der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt.

Now come, Savior of the heathens,
known as the Virgin's child,
over whom the whole world marvels,
that God had ordained such a birth for Him.

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, verse 1

2. Aria: Tenor, oboes, strings, basso continuo

In contrast to the almost minatory opening movement—you’d better be ready!—the tenor aria, in a fast triple-time featuring strings and oboes, is pure wonder, pure joy. The opening orchestra ritornello sets the tone and provides the melodic material for the entire piece, even including the middle section, which often features contrasting material. Here contrast is achieved by moving through several related minor keys, before the opening returns to round off the affair.

Bewundert, o Menschen, dies große Geheimnis:
Der höchste Beherrscher erscheint der Welt.
Hier werden die Schätze des Himmels entdeckt,
Hier wird uns ein göttliches Manna bestellt,
O Wunder! die Keuschheit wird gar nicht
beflecket.

Marvel, o humanity, at this great mystery:
the Supreme Ruler appears to the world.
Here the treasures of heaven are uncovered,
here a divine manna is presented to us,
O miracle! The purity will be entirely
unblemished.

3. Recitative: Bass, basso continuo

The suite of inner movements, whose text derives from paraphrasing the inner verses of the chorale, continues with a brief plain recitative for the bass soloist. It begins with a strong declamatory character, setting the narrative of Jesus' journey to us. Many details are finely crafted into the vocal line, including the exuberant 16th-notes at 'to run His course with joy', the precipitous drop at 'the fallen ones', and the high twinkling motive at 'O brilliant radiance'.

So geht aus Gottes Herrlichkeit und Thron Sein eingeborner Sohn. Der Held aus Juda bricht herein, Den Weg mit Freudigkeit zu laufen Und uns Gefallne zu erkaufen. O heller Glanz, o wunderbarer Segensschein!	Thus from God's glory and throne goes forth His only-begotten Son. The hero out of Judah breaks forth to run His course with joy and to purchase us fallen ones. O brilliant radiance, o wonderful light of blessing!
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4. Aria: Bass, strings, basso continuo

Bach here has invented perfect music to depict the idea of 'striving'. Introduced in its purest form in the opening ritornello, played by the strings in octaves, the bass immediately (with characteristic moxie) elaborates its repeat with roulade after roulade of rising and falling 16th-notes. The piece develops as a rather athletic dialog between the Christian believer and Christ the redeemer, who is urged on to prevail and thus to strengthen us. As was the case with the tenor aria, the middle section uses the same motifs, but provides variety by presenting them in related minor keys.

Streite, siege, starker Held! Sei vor uns im Fleische kräftig! Sei geschäftig, Das Vermögen in uns Schwachen Stark zu machen!	Struggle, conquer, powerful hero! Be mighty for us in the flesh! Be effective, to strengthen the potential in us, the weak!
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5. Accompanied Recitative: Soprano, alto, strings, basso continuo

Our first accompanied recitative—featuring upper strings in addition to the basso continuo—includes both soprano and alto soloists. The strings provide a wash of sound above and around the vocal lines, conveying a halo of illumination in the midst of which the singers declare that the strife is over: As we approach Christmas (and the solstice too), we prepare for the triumph of Light over Darkness.

Wir ehren diese Herrlichkeit Und nahen nun zu deiner Krippen Und preisen mit erfreuten Lippen, Was du uns zubereit'; Die Dunkelheit verstört' uns nicht Und sahen dein unendlich Licht.	We honor this glory and approach Your manger now and praise with joyful lips what You have prepared for us; the darkness does not confuse us and we see Your eternal light.
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6. Closing Chorale: Tutti

The closing chorale is a straightforward 4-part harmonization of our melody, featuring the last verse of the chorale, a poetic translation of the minor doxology.

Lob sei Gott, dem Vater, ton,
Lob sei Gott, sein'm ein'gen Sohn,
Lob sei Gott, dem Heiligen Geist,
Immer und in Ewigkeit!

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, last verse

Praise be to God the Father,
praise be to God, His only Son,
Praise be to God, the Holy Spirit,
for ever and in eternity!



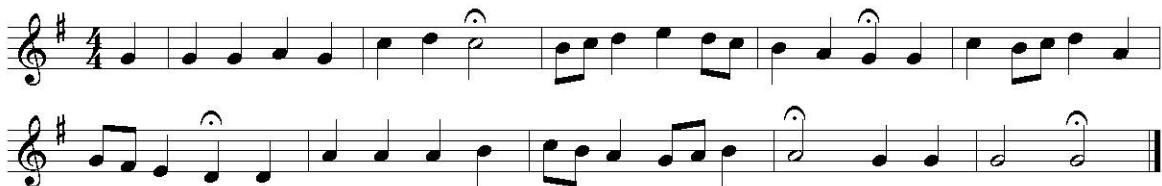
INTERMISSION



**Chorale Cantata for Christmas Day
BWV 91: Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ**

First Performance: December 25, 1724, Leipzig

SATB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, timpani, 3 oboes, strings, basso continuo



Cantata 91 is based upon another Martin Luther chorale (1524), probably adapted from earlier materials; it may have had a first incarnation as a secular tune. ‘Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ’ is a ‘Leise’, which is to say a type of early hymn in which each verse ends with the petition ‘Kyrie eleison’ (Lord have mercy). Often this postscript or final plea is rendered in shortened or contracted form: ‘Kyrie eleis’ (as here); or ‘Kyrieleis; or even ‘Kyrioleis’. Since Cantata 91 was written for Christmas Day, it is not surprising that Bach deploys a rich, full orchestra, featuring two horns, three oboes and timpani (in the outer movements).

1. Chorale Fantasia: Tutti

The opening movement is one of the most exciting in the entirety of Bach’s cantatas. (This is saying a lot.) The horns hold long notes; the timpani punctuate the downbeats; and wave after wave of ascending scales arise, welcoming in the festive day. The structure of the instrumental parts is modular. A number of one-bar riffs (at least seven of them by my count) are successively introduced, and then are traded around giddily between the instrumentarium. Finally the soprano enters with her long-note statement of the melody. The lower voices draw their material from the modular units, occasionally innovating with new twists such as the lively syncopated rhythm thrown into the mix near the end. The playout which follows is a repeat of the opening passage but is laid over the closing bars of the ‘Kyrie eleis’. The lower voices, not wanting to miss any of the fun, sustain their last chord for three full bars as the band plays on.

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ,
Daß du Mensch geboren bist

Praise be to You, Jesus Christ,
since You were born a man

Von einer Jungfrau, das ist wahr,
Des freuet sich der Engel Schar.
Kyrie eleis!

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, verse 1

from a virgin, this is true,
the host of angels rejoices over this.
Kyrie eleison!

2. Recitative & Chorale: Sopranos and basso continuo

This recitative looks ‘plain’ at first sight; but there’s a lot more going on than what immediately strikes the eye. It is indeed scored for a single voice and basso continuo; but at intervals the soprano interrupts herself by introducing the lines of the second chorale verse (see italicized lines below). We support this bivalent structure by having the choir’s soprano section join on the chorale lines. In addition, the instrumental line incorporates twelve statements of the opening chorale line in its brief course. If you read the text below carefully, you can get an idea of the subtlety employed by Bach’s librettist, as free poetry and chorale verse interact with each other.

Der Glanz der höchsten Herrlichkeit,
Das Ebenbild von Gottes Wesen,
Hat in bestimmter Zeit
Sich einen Wohnplatz auserlesen.

Des ewgen Vaters einigs Kind,

Das ewge Licht von Licht geboren,
Itzt man in der Krippe findt.

O Menschen, schauet an,
Was hier der Liebe Kraft getan!

In unser armes Fleisch und Blut,

(Und war denn dieses nicht verflucht,
verdammt, verloren?)

Verkleidet sich das ewge Gut.

So wird es ja zum Segen auserkoren.

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, verse 2

The radiance of the highest glory,
the image of God's being,
has in an appointed time
selected a dwelling place for itself.

The eternal Father's only Child,

The eternal light, born of light,
now is found in a manger.

O mankind, behold,
what the power of love has done here!

In our poor flesh and blood,

(and wasn't this cursed,
damned, lost?)

the eternal Good is clothed.

Thus it is indeed elected to blessedness.

3. Aria: Tenor, oboes, basso continuo

Here we have a most unusual aria, scored for tenor soloist, three oboes and basso continuo. The theme—that God would choose to squeeze himself into a manger for our salvation—is carried upon wave after wave of dotted notes, rising and falling sometimes together, sometimes in opposition. The many large leaps in both instrumental and vocal lines convey the impression of effort, even of athleticism. As in several of our arias, the middle section is characterized by motion to alternate keys rather than by the introduction of new themes.

Gott, dem der Erden Kreis zu klein,
Den weder Welt noch Himmel fassen,
Will in der engen Krippe sein.

Erscheinet uns dies ewge Licht,

So wird hinfüro Gott uns nicht

Als dieses Lichtes Kinder hassen.

God, for whom the orb of the earth is too small,
whom neither the world nor heaven can compass,
wishes to be in a narrow manger.

The eternal light illuminates us,

for from now on God will not hate us,

as children of this light.

4. Accompanied Recitative: Bass, strings, basso continuo

In this call to preparation, the bass asks us to return the love shown to us. The upper strings provide a shimmer of harmony above, punctuated at certain cadences. But then, for the last two lines, Bach pulls us through an extraordinary stretch of chromaticism, painting with voices and instruments the vale of tears through which we (along with Christ) must pass to reach heaven.

O Christenheit! Wohlan, so mache die bereit,
Bei dir den Schöpfer zu empfangen.
Der grosse Gottessohn
Kömmt als ein Gast zu dir gegangen.
Ach, laß dein Herz durch diese Liebe rühren;
Er kömmt zu dir, um dich vor seinen Thron
Durch dieses Jammertal zu führen.

O Christianity! Now then, make yourself ready
to take the Creator to yourself.
The mighty Son of God
has come to you as a guest.
Ah, let your heart be stirred through this love;
He comes to you, in order to lead you
through this vale of sorrow to His throne.

5. Duet: Soprano, Alto, Violins, basso continuo

All the violins join together on a spooky opening ritornello, accompanied by a walking bass line. The soprano and alto begin with contrasting material—long lines which begin in imitation and finally join together at cadences. They seem to be painting the idea inherent in the last two lines of the previous recitative: That Jesus will lead you heavenward. The chromatic lines and the contrary-motion counterpoint suggest that the process will not always be easy.

Die Armut, so Gott auf sich nimmt,
Hat uns ein ewig Heil bestimmt,
Den Überfluß an Himmelsschätzen.
Sein menschlich Wesen machet euch
Den Engelsherrlichkeiten gleich,
Euch zu der Engel Chor zu setzen.

The poverty that God takes upon Himself,
has destined an eternal salvation for us,
an abundance of heavenly treasures.
His mortal being makes you
like the glory of the angels,
placing you among the angel choirs.

6. Closing Chorale: Tutti

As was the case with Cantata 1, the closing chorale here features horns elaborating the four-part setting in the choir, strings and oboes. The second horn is independent throughout, and the first horn ends by going rogue, all the way up to high G.

Das hat er alles uns getan,
Sein groß Lieb zu zeigen an;
Des freu sich alle Christenheit
Und dank ihm des in Ewigkeit.
Kyrie eleis!

He has done all this for us,
to show His great love,
All Christianity rejoices over this
and thanks Him in eternity.
Kyrie eleison!

Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ, verse 7



Cantata for the Second Day of Christmas
BWV 40: Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes
ATB soloists, SATB chorus, 2 horns, 2 oboes, strings, basso continuo
First performance: December 26, 1723, Leipzig

Our closing cantata was actually the first in order of composition. It is part of Bach's first annual cantata cycle (Jahrgang) for Leipzig. In the first Jahrgang, he was pressed for time. He assumed the position of cantor at the Thomaskirche in the spring of 1723, and already in June he began work on his series of cantatas. Many of the cantatas were recycled from cantatas he had written for Weimar in the mid-teens of the 18th-century. But not this one, which was composed afresh for performance on the Second Day of Christmas. This is our only cantata which is not a chorale cantata, though it incorporates no fewer than three different chorales in its brief course.

1. Chorus: Tutti

The theme of the first movement is summed up most succinctly in its very brief, dualistic text. On the one hand, we have the appearance of the Son of God; on the other, his destruction of the devil's works. Bach makes hay while the sun shines with these two contrasting ideas. He opens with an exciting, bustling introduction. Then comes the opening choral section, telling of the appearance of Christ: sunny, joyful, even breezy. One thinks, 'Hey, this is going to be fun!' But then the other shoe drops, as a mischievous, undermining motive enters, focused on the word 'destroy'. And that is the story of the piece: Over and over, the image of the arrival of Jesus is overtaken by the forcefulness of his actions. Over and over, you'll hear that 'hammering 'Daß er die Werke des Teufels zerstöre' motive, with its repeated 8th-notes and long melisma, overtake and crowd out the calmer material. It's an amazing musical rout, which Bach maintains, pedal to the metal, to the last note.

Dazu ist erschienen der Sohn Gottes, daß er die
Werke des Teufels zerstöre.

John 3:8

For this the Son of God appeared, that he might
destroy the works of the Devil.

2. Recitative: Tenor, basso continuo

How to follow up the overwhelming opening movement? With a recitative which is, in its way, just as impressive. The text, a poem of irregular line-lengths, focuses upon opposites: Son of God/Child; King/Subject; Lord/Servant. The tenor line, accompanied by basso continuo, follows each thread of these links, rising to dizzying heights and falling to the depths, sometimes pushing ahead with fast notes, other times pulling back and ruminating. The instrumental bass line tracks and assists in these efforts, interjecting here and pushing to a different key there. This is truly a form of 'heightened speech'.

Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnet in der Welt,
Das Licht der Welt bestrahlt
den Kreis der Erden,
Der große Gottessohn
Verläßt des Himmels Thron,
Und seiner Majestät gefällt,
Ein kleines Menschenkind zu werden.
Bedenkt doch diesen Tausch,

The word became flesh and lived in the world,
the light of the world illumines
the orb of the earth;
the great Son of God
left the throne of heaven,
and it pleased His majesty
to become a little human child.
Only consider this exchange,

wer nur gedenken kann;
Der König wird ein Untertan,
Der Herr erscheint als ein Knecht
Und wird dem menschlichen Geschlecht
--O süßes Wort in aller Ohren!--
Zu Trost und Heil geboren

You who are capable of thought:
the King becomes a subject,
the Lord appears as a servant
and for the race of humanity,
--o sweet word in all ears!--
is born as Comforter and Savior.

3. Chorale: Tutti

This simple four-part chorale is directly linked to the previous recitative, echoing the ideas of the presence of Christ in the flesh and of the relief and comfort he brings.

Die Sünd macht Leid;
Christus bringt Freud,
Weil er zu Trost in diese Welt ist kommen.
Mit uns ist Gott nun in der Not:
Wer ist, der uns als Christen kann verdammen?

Sin creates suffering;
Christ brings joy,
He has come into this world to comfort.
God is with us now in our need:
who could condemn us as Christians?

Wir Christenleut, verse 3; Melody: Anonymous; Text: Kaspar Füger (1592)

4. Aria: Bass, oboes, strings, basso continuo

We now enter the second section of the cantata, concerned with none other than *the snake*. Here in a spectacular aria, the bass soloist and his instrumental colleagues have a fabulous time with serpentine melodic lines, crunchy chromaticism and forceful interjections. It's a battle for sure; fortunately we know in advance how it is destined to end.

Höllische Schlange,
Wird dir nicht bange?
Der dir den Kopf als ein Sieger zerknickt,
Ist nun geboren,
Und die verloren,
Werden mit ewigem Frieden beglückt

Hellish serpent,
are you not afraid?
He who will crush your head as victor
is now born,
and the lost ones
will be delighted with eternal peace.

5. Accompanied Recitative: Alto, strings, basso continuo

Accompanied by strings, the alto sings an almost sleepy recitative about deliverance, turning to the dark/chromatic side only occasionally to paint dim memories of distress and suffering. At the end, the sun seems to have come out for good.

Die Schlange, so im Paradies
Auf alle Adamskinder
Das Gift der Seelen fallen ließ,
Bringt uns nicht mehr Gefahr;
Des Weibes Samen stellt sich dar,
Der Heiland ist ins Fleisch gekommen
Und hat ihr allen Gift benommen.
Drum sei getrost! betrübter Sünder.

The serpent that in Paradise
upon all Adam's children
dripped venom, poisonous to souls,
brings no more danger to us;
the seed of woman presents Himself,
the Savior has come in the flesh
and has taken away all the venom.
Therefore be comforted! troubled sinner.

6. Chorale: Tutti

The ensuing chorale is pitched unusually high, probably to accentuate its forceful and victorious text. Some rich chromaticism is employed to highlight certain pungent texts, such as the passage 'your sting, making me anxious and fearful.'

Schüttle deinen Kopf und sprich:
Fleuch, du alte Schlange!
Was erneurst du deinen Stich,
Machst mir angst und bange?
Ist dir doch der Kopf zerknickt,
Und ich bin durchs Leiden
Meines Heilands dir entrückt
In den Saal der Freuden.

Shake your head and say:
flee, ancient serpent!
Why renew your sting,
making me anxious and fearful?
Nevertheless your head is crushed,
and I, through the passion
of my Savior, am borne away from you
into the hall of rejoicing.

Schwing dich auf zu deinem Gott, verse 2; Melody: Anonymous; Text: Paul Gerhardt

7. Aria: Tenor, horns, oboes, basso continuo

Oh, Lordy! You've never heard such joy! To say that this tenor is elated is a gross understatement. An unusual and delightful ensemble of horns, oboes and basso continuo go along for the ride. The only clouds that blot the horizon come with the third and fourth lines of the text, for which Bach provides suitable chromaticism and broken lines. But these are a passing phase, a prelude to the amazing image of all of us chicks being sheltered by those capacious wings.

Christenkinder, freuet euch!
Wütet schon das Höllenreich,
Will euch Satans Grimm erschrecken:
Jesus, der erretten kann,
Nimmt sich seiner Küchlein an
Und will sie mit Flügeln decken.

Christian children, rejoice!
Though the kingdom of Hell rages,
and Satan's fury would terrify you:
Jesus, who can save,
takes to Himself His little chicks
and will cover them with His wings.

8. Closing Chorale: Tutti

Out of many hundreds of Lutheran hymns, each with many verses, Bach (or his librettist) has selected the most perfect chorale and verse to close his cantata (and our concert). Along with our closing chorale, we wish you 'peace and a blessed year, and joy, joy beyond joy'!

Jesu, nimm dich deiner Glieder
Ferner in Genaden an;
Schenke, was man bitten kann,
Zu erquicken deine Brüder:
Gib der ganzen Christenschar
Frieden und ein sel'ges Jahr!
Freude, Freude über Freude!
Christus wehret allem Leide.
Wonne, Wonne über Wonne!
Er ist die Genadensonne.

Jesu, take to Yourself Your companions
henceforth in grace;
grant that which can be requested,
to refresh Your brethren:
give to the whole throng of Christians
peace and a blessed year
Joy, joy beyond joy!
Christ wards off all sorrow.
Rapture, rapture beyond rapture!
He is the sun of grace.

Freuet euch, ihr Christen alle, verse 4; Melody: A. Hammerschmidt (1646); Text: C Keymann

Soloists

Dianna Morgan, soprano
Christopher Fritzsche, countertenor

Brian Thorsett, tenor
Nikolas Nackley, bass



Sonoma Bach Choir

Robert Worth, music director
Amanda McFadden, associate director
Yvonne Wormer, rehearsal accompanist

Bonnie Alexander	Mike Hall	Vicki Osten
Jacki Amos	David Hanes	Lucinda Ray
Brian Andersen	Kristofer Haugen	Andy Robart
Lindsey Beaven	Faye Heath	Bruce Robinson
Lauré Campbell	Andrea Herold	Laura Sawyer
Barbara Carlisle	Kathy Jones	Anne Schaefer
Linda Clader	Martie Leys	Vinca Schaefer
Anne Cook	Charles Little	Marty Schwebel
Nedra Crowe Evers	Robert Matteucci	Mark Setterland
Jayne DeLawter	Matthew McClure	Pat Solter
Carolyn Dingwall	Amanda McFadden	Dan Solter
Margaret Field	David McQuate	Ron Stevens
Ben Ford	Erin Walsworth Moore	David Stohlmann
Gary Foster	Dianna Morgan	Mary Tenwinkel
Jim Gibboney	Amy Nykamp	Beth Thomlinson
Janet Greene	John Nykamp	Dale Trowbridge

The **Sonoma Bach Choir** is a group of about 50 gifted singers drawn from throughout Sonoma County. The Sonoma Bach Choir specializes in the music of the Baroque period, with special emphasis on Johann Sebastian Bach; members and audiences alike thrill to the constant inventiveness and incredible degree of feeling in Bach's music.

Live Oak Baroque Orchestra

Laura Jeannin
violin

Andrew Waid
viola

Nathanael Udell
horn

Rachel Hurwitz
violin

Rocio Lopez-Sanchez
cello

Burke Anderson
horn

Amy Wang
violin

Kristin Zoernig
bass

Pablo Moreno
oboe

Pauline Kempf
violin

Yuko Tanaka
organ

Aki Nishiguchi
oboe

Andrew Blanke
oboe

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.



Biographies

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.

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.

Baritone, **Nikolas Nackley**, is in demand for his work on both the concert and operatic stage in California, the East Coast, and abroad. He has been heralded by the San Francisco Chronicle as "sonorous and heroic" and praised by the Boston Globe for his ability to "continually impress with his beautiful voice and acting." Recently featured in the title role of West Edge Opera's critically acclaimed "Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria", Nikolas returned to West Edge in 2018 to sing the role of Captain Bouchardon in the West Coast premiere Matt Mark's opera, "Mata Hari". Other recent credits include the role of Joe Pitt in the West Coast premiere of Peter Eötvös's opera, "Angels in America", with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Adonis in Blow's "Venus and Adonis" with Marin Baroque, Bach's "St John Passion" and Mozart "Requiem" with the SF Bach Choir, Santa Clara Chorale, and Bay Choral Guild, Figaro in Paisiello's "Barber of Seville" with WEO's Opera Medium Rare, the West Coast premiere of Kaija Saariaho's "The Tempest Songbook" with Cal Performances, numerous appearances with the Cantata Collective, a series of recitals in New Castle, England, and appearances singing the National Anthem for the Oakland Athletics and Golden State Warriors. Highly sought after as master vocal teacher, vocal adjudicator, choral conductor, clinician, and stage director, Nikolas is on the faculty at the School

of Music at San Francisco State University as well as UC Berkeley where he is the director of vocal studies for the Department of Music.

Hailed as “a strikingly gifted tenor, with a deeply moving, unblemished voice” (sfmusicjournal.com), **Brian Thorsett** is excelling in opera, oratorio and recital across the world. Since taking to the operatic stage, he has been seen and heard in over 100 diverse operatic roles, ranging from Monteverdi to Britten, back to Rameau and ahead again to works composed specifically for his talents. As a concert singer Brian fosters a stylistically diversified repertoire of over 250 works, which has taken him to concert halls across the US and Europe. Future engagements include Evangelist and soloist in Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, *Mass in B minor*, *Mass in G minor* and several cantatas, Orff’s *Carmina Burana*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Britten’s *War Requiem* and *Cantata Misericordium*, the *Requiem*s of Mozart and Verdi, Haydn’s *Creation*, Bruckner’s *Te Deum*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, a rare performance of Blitzstein’s *Airborne Symphony* and the world premiere of Stacey Garrop’s *Terra Nostra*. Closely associated with expanding the vocal-chamber genre, he has been involved in premieres and commissions of Ian Venables, Peter Josheff, David Conte, Shinji Eshima, Scott Gendel, Gordon Getty, Michel Bosc, Noah Luna, Laurence Lowe, Brian Holmes, Eric Choate, Eric Davis, Michael Scherperel, Robert Conrad and Nicholas Carlozzi. His voice has been featured in film and commercials, being the artist for Soundiron studio’s *Voice of Rapture: The Tenor*. He also makes many concert appearances with SF Opera & Ballet Principal horn Kevin Rivard. Their interpretations of Britten’s *Serenade* and *Canticle III* have been called “impressive, captivating, transporting” (repeatperformances.org), “lifted to greatness” (sfvc.org), “arresting, fervent and eerie” (nffo.org), “so striking it managed to efface the original recording... a great rendition, sad and poetic” (sfciviccenter.blogspot.org). The duo will be seen in future concerts premiering *Bourne to Shelley* (Eshima), *The Jolly Hunter* (Holmes), *Perceval* (Bosc) and unearthing forgotten works for this combination of instruments. Other projects include working with Theatre Comique, which specializes in historically informed performances of early Broadway music. Brian’s first solo album will be released spring 2016, featuring works of Frank Tours, Idabelle Firestone, Guy d’Hardelot and their contemporaries arranged for salon orchestra. He is a graduate of San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program, Glimmerglass Opera’s Young American Artist program, American Bach Soloists’ Academy, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme at Aldeburgh, England and spent two summers at the Music Academy of the West. Brian is currently Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech and previously served on faculty at Santa Clara University and University of California at Berkeley.

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.



**BachTalk: A Walk in Bach's Shoes with Anne Laver
Thursday, January 12 at 7 P.M.**



**The Little Organ Book
Anne Laver, organ · Circa 1600
Saturday, January 21 at 3 P.M.**

Backgrounder lecture 35minutes before performance

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



Interested in joining the Sonoma Bach Choir?

The Sonoma Bach Choir rehearses Wednesday evenings in Santa Rosa beginning February 1st, 2023. This is an open rehearsal in which all interested singers, new and returning, attend and sing through the repertoire. Audition sign-ups happen that evening and will take place over the following weekend.

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

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