**What we did, what we’re doing, what we hope to do—and why**

As it becomes clear that our mutual life will remain virtual for some time to come, it’s important for our musical community to come together to plan out our future. Tonight, Dianna and I will explore what Sonoma Bach was before the pandemic, including some of our strengths and challenges; what we’re doing during this difficult time, with consideration of additional possible activities and directions; and what we hope to be when our in-person activities are once again practical. A central question will be posed for us all to ponder and discuss together over the next few weeks and months: How can we not simply survive through this difficult time, but rather learn and grow and thrive as individuals and as a community?

A musical introduction:

Bach Magnificat: Opening movement (Sonoma Bach Choir and Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, Spring 2017)

Intro: Welcome

Structure of tonight’s discussion

Lay the ground for my concern: how to do more than just survive—can we thrive and grow?

We want and need your ideas! We need our community to really stick together to make this work!

Some bywords for this presentation:

Community—its character, how to expand, diversify; interdependence

Individual skills

The big picture skills

Taking advantage of this period to produce some good

Fearless evaluation of what, who we are

Kids, young people

Organizational strength

What we do—and why

Sonoma Bach brings together and nurtures a community of music-loversin ourbeloved

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 concertsdesigned 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.

*What we did:*

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| *Already strong:*  Repertoire—Early Music  Creative programming  Learning and exploration  MNS  Ready Set Sing  Bach Talks  Bachgrounders  Program notes  Audience has been growing  Stable financial situation  Art contest  Good community spirit | *Five things that need work:*  1. Audience development—expand and also diversify as much as possible  2. Further develop learning and exploration, esp:  Sightsinging  Vocal training  3. More auditionees  Better audition process, encourage continung development  4. Outreach to kids, schools  5. Build up financial reserves |

*What we’re doing:* Pandemic activities; what are the underlying motives in all we are doing? What is the core of what we’re trying to accomplish? What things can be done well and what things not?

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| *Already doing:*  Pandemic Recording Projects  Repertoire projects  Monday Madrigals  Wednesday Chorales  Friday Motets  Virtual Bach Talks  Choir Loft  Vocal Warmups  Language classes  Choir Hangouts (biweekly) | *Seven new ideas:*  1. Organize existing recordings and use as much as possible  2. Make and use new recordings—not just live but sessions; also listen to recordings to learn and get better  3. Social justice, help the struggling, collaborations such as RE Food Bank  4. Individual skill development—practice methods and routine; each of us develop our ‘personal chops’  5. The Big Picture  6. Work to reach a broader community with these offerings  7. Quasi-2020-21 season (Dianna) |

*What we hope to do:* How will we be different—better—after the pandemic? How will we apply what we’ve learned in the interim? Which of our Pandemic activities could/should be continued as is? Can some of them be modified to be useful going forward?

Some thoughts thereunto pertaining

I think we can develop some individual skills pretty effectively on our own

Remote is good or at least possible for some things

Develop a broader mission on ‘the big picture’. Remote can be good for a lot of these things.

We can develop reach, awareness, a wider community both near and far through more and more effective use of technology.

An invitation to be part of an ongoing dialog on all this!

A musical closing:

B Minor Mass: Dona nobis pacem (Sonoma Bach Choir and Live Oak Baroque Orchestra, Spring 2017)