

**"The CBS chorus ... carried the evening with cohesion and intensity."**

Niels Swinkels, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, October 2015

**"rarely heard works by forgotten masters"**

*San Francisco Classical Voice*

## **CALIFORNIA BACH SOCIETY**

Paul Flight, Artistic Director

### **Oratorios and Dialogues: A Genre Emerges**

**Friday, February 26, 2016**, 8pm, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
1111 O'Farrell at Franklin, San Francisco 94109

**Saturday, February 27, 2016**, 8pm, at All Saints' Episcopal Church  
555 Waverley Street at Hamilton, Palo Alto 94301

**Sunday, February 28, 2016**, 4pm, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
2300 Bancroft Way at Ellsworth, Berkeley 94704

Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance.

Tickets: \$33 (discounts for advance purchase, seniors, students, and under 30)

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#### **Palo Alto, January 28, 2016**

Artistic Director Paul Flight and the 30-voice California Bach Society present "**Oratorios & Dialogues: A Genre Emerges**" on February 26-28, in San Francisco, Palo Alto, and Berkeley. The program will feature three splendid examples of mid-seventeenth century music-drama. Giacomo Carissimi's *Jonah and the Whale* is a miniature sacred opera whose solo arias and choral commentaries are full of vivid drama. *La Reniement de Saint Pierre*, by Carissimi's pupil Marc-Antoine Charpentier, brings to life the story of Peter's denial of Jesus. The men and women of the chorus assume character roles in Heinrich Schütz's *Weib, was weinst du?* to enact Jesus' appearance at the tomb to comfort Mary Magdalene.

The chorus will be joined by a string ensemble of Bay Area early music specialists, and Hideki Yamada, theorbo and Yuko Tanaka, organ. Vocal soloists include soprano Lindsey McLennan Burdick, countertenor Dan Cromeenes, tenor Kyle Stegall, and baritone Sepp Hammer.

The origins of the oratorio can be found in sacred dialogues in Italy--settings of Biblical texts which were musically quite similar to motets. There was a strong narrative, dramatic emphasis and conversational exchanges between characters in the work. Philip Neri's *Congregazione dell'Oratorio* gives us the origin of the term. These works became more and more popular and were eventually performed in specially built oratories (prayer halls) by professional musicians. Sacred opera provided another impetus for dialogues, and they

greatly expanded in length (although never really beyond 60 minutes long). By the mid-17th century, two types of oratorios had developed, the *oratorio volgare* (in the vulgate i.e. not in Latin) and the *oratorio latino* (in Latin). The most significant composer of *oratorio latino* was Giacomo Carissimi, whose *Jephte* is regarded as the first masterpiece of the genre.

**Giacomo Carissimi** (1605–1674) began his professional career as cantor, organist and then maestro di cappella near Rome. At the end of 1629 he became maestro di cappella at the Jesuit Collegio Germanico Ungarico in Rome, with responsibility for the music of the church of Sant'Apollinare, which belonged to the German Seminary. From this highly prestigious position Carissimi won early fame throughout Europe, becoming one of the leading figures in the music of the seventeenth century. Many musicians of the time came to study with him directly, including the Frenchman Marc-Antoine Charpentier; others, indirectly through the music itself, learned this new style of composition. It is owing to Carissimi that much of this traditional Italian style of composition was maintained throughout continental Europe for the entire seventeenth century.

**Carissimi's** *Jonas* is probably contemporary with his more famous *Jephte*. The traditional Biblical text is largely followed in the narrative with a number of dramatic interpolations. He uses the technique of two separate choirs, effectively reflecting a storm which threatens the ship where Jonah is sleeping. The sailors' interventions are varied, first a duet, then a chorus, and then alternation of solo voices from the choir. The third episode is made up entirely of Jonah's prayer to God from the belly of the whale.

**Marc-Antoine Charpentier** (1643-1704) was born near Paris, received a very good education, and registered for law school in Paris when he was eighteen, but withdrew after one semester. He spent several years in Rome, between 1667 and 1669, and studied with Giacomo Carissimi. For the next 17 years, under the patronage of Mlle. di Guise, Charpentier composed a considerable quantity of vocal works including a succession of Italianate oratorios set to non-liturgical Latin texts. His patron had a great love for Italian music, frequently entertaining Italians passing through Paris, and Charpentier employed the Italianisms he had learned in Rome.

*Le reniement de St Pierre* (The Denial of Peter) is a dramatic account of Peter's denial of Christ, strongly influenced by the style of Carissimi's *oratorio latino*. Charpentier's forces are relatively modest, involving only voices and continuo. Nevertheless, he takes every opportunity to intensify the text. Just before the cock crows, for instance, there is a quartet in which Peter vehemently denies knowing Jesus. Charpentier's agitated music perfectly captures both Peter's adamance and the persistent questions and accusations of the other three characters. Perhaps the most memorable passage in the work, though, is the final section. Over 30 bars long, this is built entirely on a setting of the words 'flevit amare' ('wept bitterly'). Here the vocal lines weave a dense web of counterpoint, full of suspensions and other expressive dissonances. This powerful evocation of Peter's remorse is reminiscent of the final chorus of lament in Carissimi's *Jephte*; Charpentier clearly knew this work very well, since he himself made a copy of his teacher's masterpiece.

**Heinrich Schütz** (1585–1672) is generally regarded as the most important German composer before J. S. Bach and one of the most important composers of the 17th century. In 1628 he went to Venice, where he met and studied with Claudio Monteverdi; he was highly

influenced by the Italian composer’s musical gestures. His writing often includes intense dissonances caused by the contrapuntal motion of voices moving in correct individual linear motion, but resulting in startling harmonic tension. Above all, his music displays extreme sensitivity to the accents and meaning of the text.

*Weib, was weinest du* (Woman, why are you crying?), was composed not later than 1625 and is scored for four voices and continuo. The text is a dialogue based on the episode, narrated in the Gospel of John, of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, one of his female disciples. A review of a recording notes: "A setting of Mary Magdalene's recognition of the risen Jesus, it is notable in its expressive intensity and in its retention of motives and harmonic gestures from the earlier 'Resurrection History.'"

### The Program:

Annuntiate gentes  
Timete Dominum

Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674)

Jonas

Carissimi

### INTERMISSION

Salve Regina

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704)

Le reniement de Saint Pierre

Charpentier

Weib, was weinest du?  
Beschluss from *Die Auferstehungshistorie*

Schütz (1585–1672)

### Biographies:

To download photos, please go to <http://www.calbach.org/press.html>

The **California Bach Society**, a 30-voice chamber chorus, has established a reputation for its interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque choral music and has been specializing in historically informed performances since 1998. The appointment of artistic director Dr. Paul Flight in 2006 has resulted in highly successful concert seasons. He has enthralled audiences and critics with his thoughtful and refreshing programming, and has become well respected for bringing lesser-known Baroque masterworks to Bay Area stages. In February 2013, Leon Chisholm of *San Francisco Classical Voice* wrote: **“In recent years, the California Bach Society has become a prospector of Baroque gold. Its concerts have brought forth exquisite, rarely heard works by forgotten masters from the lost frontier, to the delight of its audiences.”**

Artistic Director **Dr. Paul Flight**—a noted choral conductor, teacher, and singer—is in his tenth season with the California Bach Society. A former member of such distinguished ensembles as the Waverly Consort, Theatre of Voices, Pomerium Musices, and the New York Collegium, he brings a wealth of expertise to CBS. Critics have praised Dr. Flight’s

conducting acumen, stating: **"Flight has made of the choral group a professional ensemble capable of every expressive nuance and glorious ensemble sound."** In addition, he is the artistic director of Schola Cantorum San Francisco, a professional chamber choir, and the founding director of Berkeley-based Chora Nova. For nine years Dr. Flight was principal conductor of the Madison Early Music Festival, where he directed masterworks by Bach, Handel, Telemann, Vivaldi, Purcell, Dufay, and Guerrero. He has twice been a visiting professor of music at the University of California at Berkeley, directing the music department's top choral ensembles. As a visiting professor at Mills College, he has lectured on opera, and music history and form. He conducted an operatic double-bill production of Gustav Holst's *Savitri* and Darius Milhaud's *Les malheurs d'Orphée* for Mills College. Dr. Flight received his doctorate from Indiana University, where he studied conducting with Robert Porco. He has recorded a program featuring the music of Croce for *Harmonia*, a nationally syndicated radio show, and appeared as a guest on KALW radio's performing arts program *My Favorite Things* as well as KALW's *Open Air*.

**Lindsey McLennan Burdick**, soprano, praised for her "pure, pretty tone," is an active performer specializing in Baroque and contemporary music. She has appeared as a soloist and professional chorister with many esteemed Bay Area music organizations, including Philharmonia Baroque, Santa Rosa Symphony, Vajra Voices and Marin Oratorio. Lindsey holds a bachelor's degree in Vocal Arts from the University of Southern California and a master's degree in Early Music Voice Performance from Indiana University. While a student at IU, she studied with professors Paul Elliott and Patricia Havranek and sang as a soloist with the IU New Music Ensemble, IU Classical Orchestra, IU Baroque Orchestra, IU Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, IU Symphonic Choir, and for the world premiere of Don Freund's *Medicine Wheel*, for two voices and Native American flute. Earlier this season, she sang on the premiere professional recording with Vajra Voices, set to be released this spring, in the Vines Symphony Chorus with the Santa Maria Philharmonic, and was a featured soloist for Sonoma Bach's opening gala performance of music by Monteverdi, Cima, and others.

**Caroline Jou Armitage**, soprano, who has been praised for her "absolutely beautiful rendering" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) of a Dutch carol in a performance with the California Bach Society, has performed the role of Papagena in *The Magic Flute* in Paris, the roles of Laetitia in Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* and Lucy in Britten's *Beggar's Opera* in the Bay Area, and the roles of Historicus in Carissimi's *Jephte* and Livia in Caldara's *Il Gioco del Quadriglio* with the Amherst Early Music Festival. As a chorister, she sings with the California Bach Society, and has sung with the University of California, Berkeley, Chamber Chorus, San Francisco Bach Choir, Vox Populi, and Volti. Caroline has taught K-8 music at St. Theresa's School in Oakland, taught voice and piano at the Piedmont Adult School, has worked as a conductor for the Piedmont Children's Choirs and the Golden Gate Boys Choir, and is starting a new children's choir at the Berkeley campus of the German International School of the Silicon Valley. Caroline has a degree in economics from University of California, Berkeley, and has done graduate work in voice, choral conducting, and music education at Holy Names University and California State University, East Bay. She is also the proud mother of two wonderful children, Maylin and Stefan.

**Dan Cromeenes**, countertenor, is a versatile musician, performing professionally as countertenor soloist, choral singer, and piano accompanist. Originally from southern California, he studied piano and voice at Biola University and received a Master's degree in accompanying from East Carolina University. He joined Chanticleer for its 2005-06 season,

singing concerts across Europe, Japan, and the United States. Other ensembles include American Bach Soloists, Philharmonia Baroque Chorale, Clerestory, and Bach Collegium San Diego. As a soloist he has performed multiple times with the Santa Clara Chorale, including Handel’s *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, and Mozart’s *Vesperae solennes de confessore*. With Marin Baroque he has performed Handel’s *Dixit Dominus*, *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*, and *Utrecht Jubilate*; Blow’s *Venus & Adonis* (Shepherd/Huntsman); and Purcell’s *Dido & Aeneas* (Sorcerer). Other solo performances include Handel’s *Te Deum in A Major*, Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, Bach’s *Johannes-Passion*, new editions of Alessandro Scarlatti’s works, and recitals on SCU’s Faculty Recital Series and at St. Dominic’s Catholic Church. Dan participated in the 2014 American Bach Academy as a countertenor soloist. When not onstage or behind a piano, Dan can usually be found either on a hike in the mountains or at home baking gourmet goodies.

Tenor **Kyle Stegall** has garnered praise worldwide for his “lovely tone and ardent expression” (*NY Times*), as well as his “blemish-free production” (*Sydney Morning Herald*). Already at this early stage of his career, Kyle has performed as soloist under the direction of some of the world’s most celebrated conductors. A versatile artist with a reputation for intimate and genuine vocalism, Kyle’s repertoire spans the early Baroque to the most contemporary of works with many world-premiere performances to his credit. A specialist in music of the Baroque, Kyle’s interpretations of the Bach evangelists and the leading roles of Handel and Charpentier are characterized by an unflinching attention to style and detail.

Kyle is often heard in the Passions and cantatas of J.S. Bach, the oratorios of Handel, and the great masses of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. Kyle made his Lincoln Center debut as the evangelist in Bach’s *St. John Passion*, under Maestro Masaaki Suzuki. Kyle is featured as soloist on the American Bach Soloists recording of Handel’s *Messiah* being released this spring. Upcoming performances include appearances with St. Louis Bach Society and Seraphic Fire. When not performing, Kyle commits his time to voice instruction, maintaining a private voice studio year-round.

**Sepp Hammer’s** voice has been described as “powerful” (*BostonEdge*) and as showing “warm baritone gravity” (*The Boston Globe*). As a soloist with the California Bach Society, he has appeared in Zelenka’s *Missa Votiva*, Charpentier’s *Messe des Morts*, Du Mont’s *Magnificat*, Bach’s cantata *Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir*, and Schütz’s *Symphoniac Sacrae*. His other concert engagements include Bach’s *B Minor Mass* with the UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus, Vaughan Williams’ *Five Mystical Songs* with the Contra Costa Chorale, Zelenka’s *Gloria* with Chora Nova, Rutter’s *Mass of the Children* with the Solano Symphony, and Fauré’s *Requiem*, Brahms’ *Requiem*, Schubert’s *Mass in G Major*, and Bach’s *Magnificat*.

On the opera stage, Sepp has appeared in recent seasons as Pistol in Verdi’s *Falstaff* with Cinnabar Theater, Malatesta in Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* with North Bay Opera, and in the role of Wagner in Gounod’s *Faust* with Opera San Jose. Sepp holds a master’s degree in vocal performance from the New England Conservatory.

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To download photos, please go to <http://www.calbach.org/press.html>

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