

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

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

"This is where the California Bach Society is at their best—delightfully breathing new life into works from the centuries in which their namesake lived and worked."

Margaret Jones, *San Francisco Classical Voice*, May 2014

CALIFORNIA BACH SOCIETY

Paul Flight, Artistic Director

J. S. Bach St. Matthew Passion

Friday, October 7, 2016, 7:30pm, at First Universalist Unitarian Church
1187 Franklin at Geary, San Francisco 94109

Saturday, October 8, 2016, 7:30pm, at First Methodist Church
625 Hamilton at Webster, Palo Alto 94301

Sunday, October 9, 2016, 3:30pm, at First Congregational Church
2345 Channing (enter at Dana), Berkeley 94704

Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance.

Tickets: \$40 (discounts for advance purchase, seniors, students, and under 30)

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Palo Alto, September 7, 2016 Artistic Director Paul Flight leads an all-star cast of singers and players in J.S. Bach's stunning *St. Matthew Passion*. For this masterwork, hailed as the greatest setting of the Passion story in Western music, the 40-voice chorus will be joined by the treble voices of Berkeley's Kairos Youth Choir, an orchestra of early music specialists, and stellar vocal soloists. One of America's foremost Baroque violinists, Carla Moore, is concertmaster of the period orchestra.

Tenor Brian Thorsett, his voice "clear, ringing, and luminous," will sing the role of Evangelist. Baritone Sepp Hammer, beloved by the California Bach Society audience, will portray Jesus. Other soloists include soprano Jennifer Paulino, known for her "graceful yet powerful" singing, mezzo-soprano Danielle Sampson, acclaimed for "stealing the show" and her "brilliance" as Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina*, and rising star tenor Mark Bonney, an alumnus of the American Bach Soloist Academy, who currently studies at the Guildhall School in London and is performing all over Europe. Mark recently sang the arias in Bach's *St. John Passion* for a capacity audience in the Netherlands. From that country, where the Bach Passions are performed more often than in Germany, we welcome bass-baritone Marc Pantus, a sensitive interpreter of Bach's arias and Passion roles, who sang Bach's *Magnificat* with the renowned ensemble Vox Luminis earlier this year.

These special performances will be held on Friday in San Francisco at First Unitarian Universalist Church, Saturday in Palo Alto at First United Methodist Church, and Sunday in Berkeley at First Congregational Church. Performances on Friday and Saturday begin at 7:30, and on Sunday at 3:30.

The *St. Matthew Passion* was first performed on Good Friday in 1727, as part of the church service, which was common for all Bach's sacred music at the time. Thanks to a revival by Mendelssohn in the 19th century, this work is now firmly established in the concert repertoire. Many consider it the greatest of all of Bach's compositions, and certainly the most impressive setting of the Passion story in the history of Western music.

The piece starts with an incredible opening chorus for two choirs, children's choir, and orchestra, of which Leonard Bernstein has said: "There is nothing like it in all music." John Eliot Gardiner compares it to a huge 17th-century altar painting, depicting everything that is to come in the rest of the story. Bach starts the Passion story and lets it unfold, but gives the listener plenty of time between the bits of action to reflect on what just has happened. He does this through masterful four-part settings of chorale melodies and beautiful arias such as the well-known "Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben" (Out of love my savior is willing to die) for soprano and flutes, "Erbarme dich" (Have Mercy) for alto and solo violin, or "Mache dich, mein Herze rein" (Make thyself clean, my heart) for bass and orchestra.

A deeper inspection of the music reveals what a marvelous word painter Bach could be. Coins rolling on the floor get "rolling" fast notes in the violin part. The words "Verrat" (betrayal) or "Verräter" (betrayed) are always on chords and intervals that were considered "ugly" in Bach's time. At the part of the story where Jesus tells his 12 disciples that one of them will betray him, Bach subtly hints that Judas stays quiet by letting the "Herr, bin ich's?" (Lord, is it I?) question sound only 11 times in the chorus instead of 12 times.

Apart from portraying the 12 disciples, the choir appears in a variety of roles in the Passion story, as the 70 members of the Jewish council, a mad crowd in the street, and gossiping citizens. And the singers also place themselves in the shoes of the believers in Bach's time, as they reflect on the actions of the Passion story in Bach's poignantly beautiful chorales.

Biographies:

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

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 eleventh 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*.

Tenor **Brian Thorsett**, his voice "clear, ringing, and luminous," excels in opera, oratorio, and recital across the world and has been seen and heard in over 100 roles. Upcoming opera highlights include the title characters in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* and in the premiere of Josheff's *The Dream Mechanic*. Future concert highlights include Evangelist and soloist in both Bach Passions, Handel's *Messiah* and *Alexander's Feast*, Pilate in Pärt's *Passio*, Britten's *War Requiem*, as well as the *Requiems* of Mozart and Verdi. An avid recitalist, Brian is closely associated with expanding the vocal-chamber genre. Premieres and commissions of over 100 works include those of Ian Venables, David Conte, Shinji Eshima, Scott Gendel, Michael Scherperel, Peter Josheff, Gordon Getty, Michel Bosc, Noah Luna, Brian Holmes, Eric Davis, Robert Conrad, Eric Choate, and Nicholas Carlozzi. Brian has also been heard in recordings, commercials, and movies, and as the voice for SoundIron's library *Voice of Rapture: Tenor*. He is a graduate of San Francisco Opera's Merola Program, Glimmerglass Opera's Young Artists Program, the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, and Music Academy of the West. Brian is currently Assistant Professor of Voice and Opera at Virginia Tech's School of Performing Arts.

Sepp Hammer's voice has been described as showing "warm baritone gravity" (*The Boston Globe*). Recently with the California Bach Society, he has appeared as soloist in Charpentier's *Le reniement de Saint Pierre*, Zelenka's *Missa Votiva*, and Bach's cantata *Aus der Tiefe*. Other concert engagements include Rutter's *Mass of the Children* with Solano Symphony, Zelenka's *Gloria* with Chora Nova, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* with Contra Costa Chorale, and, with various ensembles, Charpentier *Messe des Morts*, Schütz *Symphoniae Sacrae*, Bach *Magnificat*, Bach *B Minor Mass*, Haydn *Lord Nelson Mass*, Schubert *Mass in G Major*, Brahms *Requiem*, Fauré *Requiem*, and Duruflé *Requiem*. Starting in the 2016-2017 season, Sepp will be joining the Philharmonia Baroque Chorale. In recent seasons on the opera stage, Sepp has appeared as Pistol in Verdi's *Falstaff* with Cinnabar Theater, the Speaker in *The Magic Flute* with Pocket Opera, Malatesta in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* with North Bay Opera, and in the role of Wagner in Gounod's *Faust* with Opera San Jose. His opera roles also include Escamillo in *Carmen*, Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas*, the title role in *Don Giovanni*, John Proctor in *The Crucible* and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Soprano **Jennifer Paulino** is celebrated for her "graceful yet powerful" and "sensitive and clear" voice (*San Francisco Classical Voice*). Specializing in Baroque, chamber, and new music, Ms. Paulino is in demand as an oratorio and concert soloist across the U.S. She has appeared with Magnificat Baroque Ensemble, Bach Collegium San Diego, San Francisco Choral Society, Seraphic Fire, Southwest Florida Symphony, and the Modesto Symphony. Her international appearances include a recital at the Organs of Ballarat Festival in Australia with concert organist Pavel Kohout, and performances of David Lang's *Little Match Girl Passion* with San Francisco Lyric Opera in Denmark. In 2015, Ms. Paulino made her debut at the Festival Mozaic in San Luis Obispo, singing Bach's *B Minor Mass* under the direction of Scott Yoo. In San Francisco, she performed the world premier of *Terra Nostra*, an oratorio by composer Stacy Garrop for soloists and chorus, under the direction of Bob Geary. This season, she makes her debut at Stanford University, singing a recital of Haydn's *Arianna a Naxos* and songs with fortepianist Elaine Thornburgh. Ms. Paulino is on the faculty at the annual San Diego Summer Choral Festival and maintains an active teaching studio in the East Bay.

Mezzo-soprano **Danielle Sampson** is an avid performer of Baroque, classical, and contemporary music. Last season's highlights included a gala performance with Pacific MusicWorks, Praetorius' *Christmas Vespers* with Early Music Vancouver, and collaborations with Amaranth String Quartet to perform works for voice and strings. Danielle performed with the Boston Early Music Festival in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* (Melanto) and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (La Virtù, Pallade), and with Early Music Vancouver in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (the Sorceress) and Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. She performed as Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina* with Black Box Baroque in April, and appeared with Liaison, Nash Baroque Ensemble, and Jarring Sounds for the 2016

Berkeley Early Music Festival. Danielle has sung with the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, American Bach Soloists, California Bach Society, San Francisco Symphony Chorus, and San Francisco Bach Choir, among others. She is a founding member of the guitar/voice duo Jarring Sounds (with Adam Cockerham), and performs with Cappella SF, the new Bay Area octet Gaude, and Seattle's Byrd Ensemble. She earned her BM at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music, and her MM at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Danielle currently resides in Seattle.

Mark Bonney has been called "a tenor with a perfect voice for Baroque music ... with silken tone, great clarity of diction, seemingly effortless breath control, plenty of power, and dazzling vocal agility." Currently based in London, he performs all over Europe and in the United States. In the San Francisco Bay Area, he was a soloist with the American Bach Soloists Academy, California Bach Society (Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*) Chora Nova (Handel's *Acis and Galatea*), Marin Baroque, the Albany Consort, and the San Francisco Bach Choir. Mark is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he studies with Gary Coward and has participated in master classes with Elly Ameling, Emma Kirkby, Olaf Bär, Julius Drake, Roger Vignoles, and Richard Egarr, among others. He coaches with Eugene Asti, Max van Egmond, and Nicholas Mulroy. Mark began his musical training as a treble in the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys. He went on to study voice as well as political science at Stanford University. He was an intern with the California Bach Society during his senior year. He is an alumnus of the American Bach Soloists Academy and the Franz Schubert Institute, a renowned *Lieder* course in Austria.

Bass-baritone **Marc Pantus** is at home in opera as well as oratorio repertoire. Last season he sang Bach's *Magnificat* with the renowned ensemble Vox Luminis, Don Profondo in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims* with the Dutch National Opera, and a series of Schubert *Lieder* programs with renowned pianist Rudolf Jansen. Marc regularly sings the bass arias and the role of Christ in both *St. John* and *St. Matthew* Passions for sold-out audiences in the Netherlands. Highlights of this current season include Mendelssohn's *Paulus*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, the *St. Matthew Passion* in the historic Bergkerk in Deventer, and performances with the Dutch National Opera. His solo-CD *Harry: Heine in Holland*, featuring *Lieder* written by Dutch composers on German texts by Heinrich Heine, received four stars in the highly regarded Dutch/Belgian CD review magazine *Luister* and five stars in the national newspaper *Trouw*. Together with pianist Shuann Chai, Marc will perform the *Lieder* from his CD at the Piano Club in Berkeley on Sunday, October 23. Mr. Pantus studied with Udo Reinemann and Meinard Kraak at the Utrecht Conservatory of Music and the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. At the Steans Institute for Young Artists in Chicago, he studied with Thomas Allen, Christa Ludwig, Barbara Bonney, Elisabeth Söderström, and Roger Vignoles.

Berkeley's premier youth choir, **Kairos** has offered comprehensive vocal music education to children ages 6 to 15 for over twenty five years. On stage here today are members of its top groups, The Aphaia and Agape choruses. In addition to performing at the all-Kairos winter concert each December, Aphaia and Agape choristers sing at the Junior Bach Festival and other events throughout the year, are a regular guest at KPFA radio, and present a fully staged musical play every spring, showcasing educationally rich stories such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. In recent years, Kairos has toured Norway, Denmark, Italy, Greece, and Austria. Kairos founder and conductor Laura Kakis Serper received her degrees in Music Education and Voice Performance from University of the Pacific Conservatory of Music as well as Westminster Choir College and Aspen Music Institute. Her Greek heritage inspired the name of Kairos Youth Choir and its choruses. Ms. Kakis Serper is also the Director of Choral Music at The Crowden School, and is a former artistic director of San Francisco Boys Chorus. She was recognized at the California State Senate for her excellent musical service to the community through Kairos Youth Choir programs.

Concertmaster of the period orchestra, **Carla Moore** is one of America's foremost Baroque violinists acclaimed for her stylish and virtuosic playing. A First Prize winner of the Erwin Bodky Competition for Early Music, she is co-concertmaster of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and concertmaster of

Portland Baroque Orchestra. Carla is founder and co-director of Archetti Baroque String Ensemble, which recently released its first CD on the Centaur label.

Carla has served as concertmaster and performed as soloist with Pacific MusicWorks, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica, Musica Angelica, Baroque Orchestra of Colorado and American Bach Soloists. As a chamber musician, she has recorded seven critically acclaimed CDs with the ensemble Music's Re-creation and three with Voices of Music. Her videos with Voices of Music have been viewed by millions worldwide on YouTube.

Residing in Oakland, California, Carla teaches baroque violin at the University of California, Berkeley. Carla received her undergraduate training from the University of Southern California and earned a Master's of Music with Distinction from Indiana University's Early Music Institute where she studied with Stanley Ritchie.

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