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CALIFORNIA BACH SOCIETY
Paul Flight, Artistic Director

presents

“WEIHNACHTSHISTORIE”
(Story of the Nativity)

Music for the Nativity from 17th Century Germany
for double choir, strings, cornetti, and sackbuts

WITH THE WHOLE NOYSE :
Stephen Escher and Joyce Johnson-Hamilton, cornetto
Richard Van Hessel, Sandy Stadtfeld, Ernie Rideout, sackbuts
Herbert Myers, curtal

“**Absolutely stunning!**”—Larry Marietta, Music Program Director, First Congregational Church, Berkeley, on the performance of Monteverdi program, March 2010

Friday, December 3, 2010, 8pm at First Unitarian Universalist Church,
1187 Franklin Street (at Geary), San Francisco

Saturday, December 4, 2010, 8pm at All Saints' Episcopal Church,
555 Waverley Street (at Hamilton), Palo Alto

Sunday, December 5, 2010, 4pm at St. Mark's Episcopal Church,
2300 Bancroft Way (at Ellsworth), Berkeley

Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance
Tickets at the door: \$30 (discounts for advance purchase, seniors, and students)

(415) 262-0272 / <http://www.calbach.org> / info@calbach.org

Palo Alto, November 5, 2010 —The California Bach Society brings the holidays alive with the radiance and grace of Johann Rosenmüller's *Weihnachtshistorie* (History of the Nativity) -- a glorious program of choral music for the Nativity from 17th century Leipzig. The 30-voice chorus performs music for double choirs in the Venetian style, often alternating with choirs of brass and strings.

In addition to strings and continuo, the society is joined by **The Whole Noyse**, an early music wind ensemble, featuring cornetti, sackbuts and curtal. Cornetti are the precursors of the modern trumpet, the sackbut developed into the trombone, and the curtal is a wooden double reed instrument, the ancestor of the modern bassoon.

Johann Rosenmüller was a shining star of mid-17th century Leipzig. After graduating from the University of Leipzig, he studied in Italy bringing back the Italian musical tradition to northern Germany, which had been isolated by religious wars in the early 1600's. He was appointed organist at the Nikolaikirche in 1651 and was expected to succeed Tobias Matthias at the Thomaskirche upon the elder musician's retirement. A personal scandal in 1655 resulted in his flight to Italy, where he spent much of his musical life in Venice at St. Mark's and at the Ospedale della Pietà orphanage. In his last years, he was able to return to Germany, where he served at the court in Wolfenbüttel. Although his music is not well known to contemporary audiences, Rosenmüller was a sophisticated and masterful composer. He was experienced in vocal and instrumental composition and integrated both in his work. His works can be highly descriptive in a unique and flamboyant way that still maintains the integrity of the music.

Notes from Artistic Director Paul Flight

Director Paul Flight is thrilled to present Rosenmüller's rarely performed compositions to Bay Area audiences:

*"Weihnachtshistorie, or The Story of the Nativity, is a loose narrative formed of sacred compositions by Rosenmüller, arranged in the order of the gospel story. First compiled in this fashion by Konrad Junghänel, *Weihnachtshistorie* was recorded by Junghänel's ensemble, *Cantus Cölln* in 2004. I have wanted to perform this work for a number of years, and this 40th anniversary season seemed the perfect time for the California Bach Society. Since this is not a published piece, I have constructed our own version. Research into archives to locate the music and the transcription for our choir has been a major project, consuming my time for most of this past summer. Brian Clark helped with the editing process, working from microfilm of the original manuscripts from the repository of Rosenmüller's work in Berlin's Deutsche Staatsbibliothek. Brian provided modern scores of many of the pieces on our program. He also suggested one of the most interesting pieces, *Siehe, eine Jungfrau ist schwanger*, which to our knowledge has never been recorded or recently performed."*

Please turn to **page 3** for Biographies of director, chorus, and The Whole Noyse.

Please turn to **page 4** for the program and for a taste of the program notes.

Biographies

Artistic Director **Dr. Paul Flight**, a noted choral conductor, teacher and singer, is in his fifth 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. In addition, he is the appointed Artistic Director of Schola Cantorum San Francisco, and the Founding Director of Chora Nova.

For the last 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 UC Berkeley, directing the Music Department's top choral ensembles. He conducted an operatic double-bill production of Gustav Holst's *Savitri* and Darius Milhaud's *Les malheurs d'Orphée* for Mills College.

A renowned countertenor, Paul Flight has performed works by John Adams, Leonard Bernstein and Unsuk Chin with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Berkeley Symphony, and the Norwegian State Opera. In 2003, he sang the title role in Philip Glass's *Akhmaten* for Oakland Opera-Theater. He made his debut at the Kennedy Center in 2008, singing the first countertenor role in Adams' *El Niño*, and in August 2010 he made his debut at the Edinburgh Festival, in the third countertenor role.

Dr. Flight received his doctorate from Indiana University, where he studied conducting with Robert Porco. His research focused on Venetian composer Giovanni Croce (1557-1609). He has recorded a program featuring the music of Croce for *Harmonia*, a nationally syndicated radio show. He recently appeared as a guest on KALW radio's performing arts program, *My Favorite Things*.

The **California Bach Society**, a 30-voice chamber chorus, has established a reputation for its interpretations of Renaissance and Baroque choral music. Specializing in historically informed performances since 1998, the choir has shared the stage with such early music luminaries as Magnificat and members of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and was a featured concert presenter at the 2000 Berkeley Early Music Festival.

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. A fine voice coach, Dr. Flight has attracted talented singers, and his sensitive direction has brought new definition to the choir. A recent reviewer from San Francisco Classical Voice wrote, "Flight has made of the choral group a professional ensemble capable of every expressive nuance and glorious ensemble sound."

The Whole Noyse is celebrating its 25th year as one of the country's leading early brass ensembles. The group plays European instrumental music from the 15th through 17th centuries. The Whole Noyse performs on modern reproductions of cornetts, sackbuts and curtal, instruments that made up the primary professional wind group of the 16th and 17th centuries. In concert, they can be heard performing on cornetts, sackbuts, curtal, recorders, flutes, crumhorns, shawms, slide trumpet, gittern, violin, and viola.

Performances by The Whole Noyse throughout Europe and North America have been enthusiastically received. The group has collaborated with some of North America's most respected early music ensembles, including Magnificat, The King's Noyse, The Newberry Consort, and Sex Chordae Consort of Viols, as well as a number of choirs, including the Vancouver Cantata Singers, Pro Coro Canada, San Francisco Choral Artists, and AVE. This year, the 400th anniversary of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, The Whole Noyse is scheduled to participate in more than 15 performances of the work in cities all over the US and Canada, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Vancouver, Calgary, and Honolulu.

Program:

(all pieces by Johann Rosenmüller, except where noted)

Magnificat in c minor	a magnificent eight-part composition, dating from Rosenmüller's residency in Venice.
Siehe, eine Jungfrau ist schwanger	an old German hymn celebrating the Annunciation, in six vocal parts.
Verbum caro factum est	a duet for two sopranos and continuo by Schütz, from <i>Kleine Geistliche Konzerte</i>
O nomen Jesu	from <i>Kernsprüche</i> (1648), four vocal parts.

Interval

Es waren Hirten auf dem Felsen	a fine example of Rosenmüller's talent, see below.
Ein Kind ist uns geboren	From Schütz' <i>Kleine geistliche Konzerte</i> , for four vocal parts.
Christus ist mein Leben	Work in three parts, commemorating St. Stephen's Day (December 26)
Liebe Herre Gott, wecke uns auf	Soprano solo
Gloria in excelsis/ Das Wort ward Fleisch	impressive work for six voices and full orchestra

More about *Es waren Hirten auf dem Felsen*:

The work begins with a lively and dancelike introduction, in which a brass choir alternates with strings. The story unfolds in a dramatic fashion with soloists and choral sections alternating, interwoven with elegant and complex instrumental segments. The narration is sung by a tenor, accompanied by strings and continuo. A soprano sings the part of the angel with a simple continuo accompaniment. The chorus breaks out with "Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe" (Glory to God in the highest), a majestic chorale. The final section, "Lob, Ehre sei Gott (Praise and honor)", is preceded by a stately instrumental segment with alternating brass and strings.

More program notes available on request.

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