

CONTACT: Sara Obuchowski  
707-546-7097 ext.218  
sara@santarosasympphony.com

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release, October 27, 2010

### **“Glorious Songs: An All-Bach Christmas Celebration” Dec. 9, 10 & 11 Santa Rosa Symphony, Sonoma County Bach Choir and 4 soloists perform Bach Cantatas for the season**

(SANTA ROSA, CA) — Continuing a tradition, the Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma County Bach Choir present “Glorious Songs: An All-Bach Christmas Celebration” to enliven the holiday season. The Donald and Maureen Green Orchestra/Choral Series begins on Thursday, December 9 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Windsor, continues on Friday, December 10 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Petaluma, and on Saturday, December 11 at the Santa Rosa High School auditorium. All concerts begin at 8 p.m. and all seats are \$20.

Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director Robert Worth conducts members of the orchestra and the Sonoma County Bach Choir with guest soloists **Carol Menke**, soprano; **Bonnie Brooks**, mezzo-soprano; **Brian Staufenbiel**, tenor; and **Hugh Davies**, baritone. Bach’s choral works express the exuberance, piety, peace and jubilation of this sacred season—from the first Sunday of Advent to the visit of the Three Wise men.

The musical program features Cantata BWV 62: *Come now, Saviour of the Gentiles*, on the occasion of First Sunday of Advent; Cantata BWV 91: *All praise to Thee, Jesus Christ*, on the occasion of Christmas Day; Cantata BWV 16: *Lord God, we give Thee praise*, on the occasion of New Year’s Day; and Cantata BWV 65: *From Sheba to Thee shall men come forth*, on the occasion of Feast of the Epiphany. New this year is the Santa Rosa High School venue which was chosen because of its excellent acoustics and high audience capacity.

This choral series is underwritten by the Donald and Maureen Green Foundation.

Purchase tickets for “Glorious Songs: An All-Bach Christmas Celebration” through the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or online at [www.santarosasympphony.com](http://www.santarosasympphony.com).

\* \*

**Photos of soloists Carol Menke, Bonnie Brooks, Brian Staufenbiel, Hugh Davies and conductor Robert Worth are available upon request.**

(CALENDAR LISTING and SOLOISTS’ BIOS follow)

**Heading:** Classical Music

**What:** *Glorious Songs: An All-Bach Christmas Celebration*  
The Donald and Maureen Green Orchestral/Choral Series

**Who:** Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma County Bach Choir under the direction of Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director Robert Worth

**Soloists:** Carol Menke, soprano; Bonnie Brooks, mezzo-soprano; Brian Staufenbiel, tenor; and Hugh Davies, baritone.

**Time:** 8 p.m.

**Program:**

Cantata BWV 62: Come now, Saviour of the Gentiles (Occasion: First Sunday of Advent)

Cantata BWV 91: All praise to Thee, Jesus Christ (Occasion: Christmas Day)

Cantata BWV 16: Lord God, we give Thee praise (Occasion: New Year’s Day)

Cantata BWV 65: From Sheba to Thee shall men come forth (Occasion: Feast of Epiphany)

**Venues:**

**Thursday, December 9, 2010**

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church  
8400 Old Redwood Hwy, Windsor

**Friday, December 10, 2010**

St. Vincent de Paul Church  
35 Liberty Street, Petaluma

**Saturday, December 11, 2010**

Santa Rosa High School Auditorium  
1235 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa

**Tickets:** \$20 general seating. Call the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or purchase online at [www.santarosasympphony.com](http://www.santarosasympphony.com).

### **Robert Worth, Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director**

Robert Worth was Professor of Music and Choral Director at Sonoma State University from 1983 until summer 2010. He currently directs the Sonoma County Bach Choir and is the founding music director of the Sonoma County Choral Society, a university-community partnership which fosters the performance and appreciation of choral music in the northern Bay Area.

In addition to his work in the field of choral music, Worth has a specialty in Kodály musicianship training, and for ten years ran the ear training program at SSU. He is a composer and arranger of both choral music and jazz, and his vocal jazz arrangements have been performed by many groups throughout California and beyond.

Worth received his B.A. in music at SSU in 1980, and earned his M.A. in musicology at UC Berkeley. He has received numerous community and university honors, including Sonoma State University's Outstanding Professor Award for 1996-97 and Distinguished Alumni Award for 2007-08. After completing numerous collaborative projects with the Santa Rosa Symphony, he was named to the position of Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director in 2002.

### **Sonoma County Bach Choir**

The Sonoma County Bach Choir, under the direction of Robert Worth, is a group of 50-60 singers specializing in the music of the Baroque period, with special emphasis on Johann Sebastian Bach. For further information about the Sonoma County Choral Society and the other ensembles under its umbrella, visit [www.sonomachoral.org](http://www.sonomachoral.org).

### **Carol Menke, soprano**

Lyric soprano Carol Menke began her musical studies at the piano with her mother at age five, and at age eight started flute lessons. She entered college with aspirations of a career as a flautist. However, participation in a voice class led to recognition of her superb vocal gifts. Following graduation from CSU, attendance at the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien, Austria, confirmed her passion for the Art Song genre. The young singer was heard in performance many times at the Schuberthaus in Vienna during this period of study with Elly Ameling, Jörg Demus and Norman Shelter. Menke later completed her Master's Degree in Vocal Performance.

Her performances have won the accolades of music critics and orchestral conductors who have commented on her "silvery bright.... illuminating voice" and "appealing sweetness of tone." Menke maintains a full schedule as teacher and choral conductor. At Santa Rosa Junior College, she teaches voice and music theory classes. The Santa Rosa Children's Chorus has thrived and achieved high praise during Menke's tenure as artistic director. Her leadership of the choir at the Church of the Incarnation in Santa Rosa as well as *Cantiamo Sonoma*, a distinguished chamber choral ensemble, has served to enrich the musical environment of the area.

### **Bonnie Brooks, mezzo-soprano**

Mezzo-soprano Bonnie Brooks has been performing in Sonoma County and the San Francisco Bay Area for over twenty years. She has appeared extensively in opera and oratorio and has performed principal roles with Pocket Opera, Cinnabar Opera Company, Northbay Opera, Sonoma City Opera, and Redwood Lyric Theater. In July 2010, she was mezzo-soprano soloist with the Budapest Monteverdi Chorus performing at the St. Matthias Church in Budapest, Hungary.

Brooks has performed in contemporary operas by Gian Carlo Menotti: *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (the Mother), *The Medium* (Mrs. Nolan), and most recently *The Consul* (Mother) and in Benjamin Brittain's *The Turn of the Screw* (Miss Jessel). Other favorite roles include Venus in Offenbach's *Orpheus and the Underworld*, Dorabella and Marcellina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and *Le Nozze Di Figaro*, The Marquise of Berkenfield in Donizetti's *La Fille Du Regiment* and Carmen in Bizet's *Carmen*. Brooks was also a member of the San Francisco Opera Chorus for 12 years. She has also been the alto soloist with the Sonoma County Bach Choir, the Santa Rosa

Symphonic Chorus, the St. Helena Chamber Singers, the College of Marin Community Chorus and the St. Cecelia's Choir and Incarnation Orchestra.

Brooks received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Kenyon College in Ohio and studied voice at the Mozarteum Conservatory of Music in Salzburg, Austria. She is a well-known and respected vocal instructor and coach, with her private studio located in Sebastopol. She is co-founder, former board member, and current member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

### **Brian Staufenbiel, tenor**

Tenor Brian Staufenbiel has appeared at the Boston Early Music Festival, the Rochester Bach Festival in New York State, the Sherbrooke Summer Music Festival, and sings frequently throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. He is well known for his dramatic interpretation of the Evangelist role in Bach's *Saint Matthew and Saint John Passion*, as well as his gruesome depiction of the Roasted Swan in Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Staufenbiel is a voice faculty member and the artistic director of the opera program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. With his 2006 production, he was awarded first prize in the National Opera Association Opera Competition.

In addition to live performance, Staufenbiel has recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Koch International Classics, and Helicon Records music by Alessandro Stradella, Heinrich Schütz, Lou Harrison, and Paul Bowles. His most recent recording includes the world premiere recordings of tenor arias from Lou Harrison's opera *Young Caesar* and the *Saint Cecilia Mass* (Kleos records). Staufenbiel holds a doctorate degree in vocal performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music.

### **Hugh Davies, baritone**

Hugh Davies was born and educated in England, and started his singing career as a boy chorister at St. Albans Abbey under the direction of Peter Hurford and Simon Preston. While a student at Cambridge University, he was a Choral Scholar at King's College, where the director of music was David Willcocks.

As a professional singer based in London, he appeared with Glyndebourne Opera and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, and performed as a soloist with leading choirs and orchestras throughout Europe. He was a member of the Monteverdi Choir, the Schütz Choir and the John Alldis Choir, and made many recordings and broadcasts on television and radio.

After teaching music in Australia for two years, Davies moved to California in 1986. He now sings in the San Francisco area both as a soloist and as a member of several professional ensembles, and has appeared with groups such as Theatre of Voices, the American Bach Soloists, the California Bach Society, Magnificat, the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Sonoma County Bach Choir and the Albany Consort.

###