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NEWS RELEASE

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“Young Masters: Bach and Handel 1707” November 18, 19 & 20

**Santa Rosa Symphony, Sonoma Bach Choir
and 4 soloists perform unique Baroque concert**

(SANTA ROSA, CA) — The Santa Rosa Symphony and the Sonoma Bach Choir present their annual choral collaboration to open up the holiday concert season. The Donald and Maureen Green Orchestral/Choral Series begins on Friday November 18 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Petaluma, continues on Saturday November 19 at St. Eugene’s Cathedral in Santa Rosa, and on Sunday November 20 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Windsor. All concerts begin at 8 p.m. and all seats are \$20.

In this unique pairing of two composers at the apex of their powers, Santa Rosa Symphony Choral Director Robert Worth conducts members of the orchestra and the Sonoma Bach Choir with guest soloists **Carol Menke**, soprano; Jenni Samuelson, soprano; **Karen Clark**, mezzo-soprano; **Scott Whitaker**, tenor; and **Hugh Davies**, bass.

Bach and Handel were born in 1685 and each was 22 years old in 1707. They were both brilliant at that age, writing some of their finest and most exciting music. Handel was composing in Rome, Bach in Mühlhausen, Germany. The four works to be presented are all Psalm settings, and they balance each other by alternating sacred seriousness and joyful, exuberant moods. On the program are: HANDEL: Laudate pueri Dominum (Psalm 113); BACH: Cantata No. 131 – *Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr* (Psalm 130); BACH: Cantata No. 196 – *Der Herr Denket an uns* (Psalm 115: 12-15); HANDEL: Dixit Dominus - Psalm 110

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

Purchase tickets for “Young Masters: Bach and Handel 1707” through the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or online at www.santarosasympphony.com.

Photos of soloists Carol Menke, Jenni Samuelson, Karen Clark, Scott Whitaker, Hugh Davies and conductor Robert Worth are available upon request.

(CALENDAR LISTING and SOLOISTS’ BIOS follow)

Heading: Classical Music

What: *Young Masters: Bach and Handel 1707*

The Donald and Maureen Green Orchestral/Choral Series

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

Soloists: Carol Menke, soprano; Jenni Samuelson, soprano; Karen Clark, mezzo-soprano; Scott Whitaker, tenor; and Hugh Davies, bass.

Time: 8 p.m.

Program:

HANDEL: Laudate pueri Dominum - Psalm 113

BACH: Cantata No. 131 – *Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr* - Psalm 130

BACH: Cantata No. 196 – *Der Herr Denket an uns* - Psalm 115: 12-15

HANDEL: Dixit Dominus - Psalm 110

Venues:

Friday, November 18, 2011

St. Vincent de Paul Church

35 Liberty Street, Petaluma

Saturday, November 19, 2011

Santa Rosa High School Auditorium

1235 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa

Sunday, November 20, 2011

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

8400 Old Redwood Hwy, Windsor

Tickets: \$20 general seating. Call the Santa Rosa Symphony Patron Services Office (707) 54-MUSIC [546-8742], or purchase online at 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 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 Bach Choir

The Sonoma 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.

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.

Jenni Samuelson, soprano

Jenni Samuelson has performed in over 25 lead roles with companies throughout the country including the San Francisco Opera Center, Western Opera Theater, Eugene Opera, Opera San Jose, Cinnabar Theater, Chicago Light Opera Works and The Skylight in Milwaukee. Her signature roles include: Susanna (*The Marriage of Figaro*); Musetta (*La Boheme*); Rosina (*The Barber of Seville*); Despina (*Così fan tutte*); Adina (*The Elixir of Love*); Nanetta (*Falstaff*); Phyllis (*Iolanthe*) and Johanna (*Sweeney Todd*). Concert appearances have been equally varied and include: *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* by Villa Lobos; *Dona Nobis Pacem* by Vaughn Williams; Bach's *B Minor Mass*, *Magnificat* and *Christmas Oratorio*; Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Mozart's *Requiem* and *C Minor Mass*; Monteverdi's *Vespers* and *Gloria* and Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*. She has performed with the Carmel Bach Festival, San Francisco Chorale, Sonoma Bach Society, Merced Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony and Brookline Chorus in Boston.

She is an active recitalist and consummate chamber musician having performed many works including the Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*; Bach's *Coffee Cantata*; Berio's *Folk Songs* and the world premiere of *Return Receipts* by Amanda McTigue and Jeff Langley. Samuelson received her

Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Northwestern University in 1997, and was a three-time regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

Karen Clark, mezzo-soprano

Karen Clark's rich mezzo-contralto is acclaimed world wide in repertory spanning medieval to 21st Century. Critics from *The South China Post*, the *New York Times*, and *San Francisco Chronicle* have described her as "a mezzo of more dramatic difference: graceful and impassioned," "strong, pure, and passionate," "striking with an astonishing range of expressive subtlety." She has appeared on prestigious concert series programs throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia in Utrecht, Köln, Royaumont, and Hong Kong with the outstanding chamber ensembles of Rifkin/Bach Ensemble, Ensemble Sequentia, Boston Camerata, and Waverly Consort. In oratorio, such as Handel's *Messiah*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, and Bach's *Mass in B minor*, she has performed in New York's Avery Fisher Hall, Town Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and the Pierpont Morgan Library. With Joshua Rifkin and the Bach Ensemble, Clark sang the entire *Mass in B minor*, in New York, Kansas City, and Bressanone, Italy. She is recorded on the New Albion, Erato, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Opera Omnia, Musical Heritage Society, and Focus labels. She holds degrees from the Indiana University School of Music and has taught in the music departments of Swarthmore College and Princeton University. Karen lives in Sonoma County and is adjunct faculty at Sonoma State University and University of Southern California.

Scott Whitaker, tenor

Scott Whitaker is an active concert singer, based in the San Diego area. For the past twenty-nine years, he has performed and recorded a broad range of repertoire, from 12th century organum and salsa to film soundtracks by John Williams, from Renaissance polyphony to the avant-garde polyphony of Pierre Boulez, under whose direction he appeared as soloist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has extensive concert performance experience both as a soloist and ensemble singer. He toured as soloist throughout the United States with the Greg Smith Singers and across Japan with the Roger Wagner Chorale. He has appeared at such diverse festivals as the Nakamichi Baroque Festival, the Adirondack Festival of American Music, and "Tage Alter Musik" in Regensburg, Germany. In the San Francisco Bay area, he is known for numerous performances with the American Bach Soloists, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, the 17th century chamber ensemble Magnificat, as well as with the Santa Rosa Symphony.

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.