

# Baroque Chamber Orchestra performs music of Bach

*Artistic director Frank Nowell plays the harpsichord*

By Heather Jarvis  
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Summit Music and Arts presents its final concert of the 2015-16 season on Sunday, March 20 at 4 p.m. Musicians from the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado will be performing "Portraits of Bach" — a glimpse into the personality of Johann Sebastian Bach through musical excerpts and brief readings from his letters. The orchestra will perform on period instruments, joined by mezzo-soprano Leah Creek Biesterfeld and reader/host Gary McBride, and musical selections come from three of Bach's collections, "Notebook for Anna Magdalena," "The Well Tempered Clavier (48 Preludes and Fugues)," and "A Musical Offering." Musicians from the orchestra include Matthew Dane, Baroque violin; Allison Edberg Nyquist, Baroque violin; Emily Bowman, Baroque viola; Sandra Miller, Baroque cello; and Frank Nowell, harpsichord. Artistic director of the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado Frank Nowell answered a few questions before the show.

**Summit Daily News:** Where do you draw your inspiration from when it comes to your music?

**Frank Nowell:** A lot of my inspiration comes through collaborating with my musical colleagues. I love working closely with other musicians to put together a musical piece or program. The interpretation we come up with together, based on everyone's ideas, is richer and deeper than what I can do by myself. Our Baroque orchestra thrives on collaboration, and it's a hallmark of our music-making that I find exhilarating.

**SDN:** What is your first strong memory of knowing you wanted to be a performer?

**FN:** When I was 3 years old, I was in awe of the large pipe organ at my family's church, and I knew I wanted to make those incredible sounds. After that, I seemed destined to play keyboard instruments — first piano, then organ as a teenager, and eventually harpsichord, my favorite instrument. I also encountered Bach's music at an early age, which had a profound impact.

**SDN:** Where would you like to see yourself in five years?

**FN:** Our orchestra recently celebrated our 10th anniversary, and we did a lot of brainstorming about the future of our group. We have



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

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dreams of making more recordings and videos, doing concert tours and appearing on a national festival. In five years, I hope we will be achieving some of those goals.

**SDN:** What advice would you give to aspiring musicians?

**FN:** I'm a big believer that people

have a calling in life — something they are meant to do. If you feel called to music, then absolutely follow where that leads and then look for what the unique expression of your musical self will be. The painter Robert Henri said, "Do whatever you do intensely. The artist is the man who leaves

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the crowd and goes pioneering."

**SDN:** What can people expect from the concert next week?

**FN:** We are interweaving short pieces by Bach with readings from his life — letters, newspaper accounts and the like. They provide glimpses of Bach as a husband, father and musician. To me, they make Bach more human. His genius can seem a little daunting, so it's good to remember he was quite human. The music itself is mostly from "A Musical Offering" and the "Notebook for Anna Magdalena." "The Notebook" was kind of a private family songbook for Bach's wife, who was a soprano, and his sons. This was a family that enjoyed making music together. "The Musical Offering" was a collection of canons Bach wrote for Frederick the Great; some say it's his musical testament.

**SDN:** What are you most looking forward to with the concert?

**FN:** I always love to play anything by Bach — it feels like a privilege. We are looking forward to playing in Summit County again, sharing the music with our audience and making new friends.

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