



A Concert in Memory of the Rev. Dr. Charles Brown

February 22, 2025, 2:00 pm

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Denton, Texas

This concert will honor the memory of the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Brown, who inspired his friends, students and fellow musicians with his **Fantzi hats**:

*I did not come here to cover your ears with paper
nor did I come here to paper your eyes with words
I came here to lift the low bubble in your laughter
from the troublesome sea of your dreams
and watch it envelop your music
and tighten the loosening strings
until some chance dissonance
brings it to the mouth of a never meant stream
on the ocean of the not yet seen...*

Charles S. Brown

Rev. Dr. Charles S. Brown died on July 14, 2024. He was 86 years old. He earned the Bachelor of Music degree from Westminster Choir College, the Master of Music, Doctor of Musical Arts degrees and the Performers Certificate from the Eastman School of Music. He was an international Fulbright scholar to Vienna, Austria, where he studied with Anton Heiller and Isolde Ahlgrim. Following that year, he served as University Organist at Arizona State University for three years, before becoming Professor of Organ and Harpsichord at the University of North Texas, where he would cement an illustrious career.

In addition to his teaching legacy, Dr. Brown pursued graduate studies in theater at UNT and Texas Woman's University. After graduating from Brite Divinity School, he was ordained into the ministry of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and served as pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas. Among several projects, Dr. Brown explored the meeting of music, theater and theology as constituting a "trifocal" view of the origins and practice of Christian worship.

The Rev. Dr. Charles S. Brown, M Div, FAGO, ChM, enjoyed a long career teaching harpsichord and organ at the University of North Texas, producing many students who have contributed substantially to the organ world. In addition to his teaching, Charles served the American Guild of Organists as Dean and Education Projects Coordinator of the Dallas Chapter, and National Councilor for Education. He was active as a church organist and choirmaster, a concert organist, an amateur actor, a playwright, and a researcher of early music. His play, "Mon Cousin," in which he played Johann Walther, was presented with great success over the years to many musical groups. He served as Co-Founder and Director of the Denton Bach Society. Upon retirement as a Minister, he moved back to Dallas, briefly teaching a course in Sacred Music at the University of North Texas.

Charles was appreciated for his imaginative teaching, his keen intuitive nature, his innovative ideas, his vast knowledge, and his creative, hopeful spirit. He was loved for his unassuming modesty and his willingness to give many extra hours to his students. He contended that worship should come at significant personal cost. He gave richly, and will be deeply missed by many students, friends, and colleagues.

Program

Chorale "Gloria sei Dir gesungen" Lenora McCroskey, conductor
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Final chorale from BWV 140
[All are invited to sing]

Opening Remarks Hildegard F. Rainbow

"Bist Du bei mir" Members of the DBS Treble Choir
attr. to G.H. Stoezel (1690-1749) Matt Carlson, conductor
arr. A. Nagoski, ed. Carlson

Three Chorale Preludes Lenora McCroskey, organist
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Nr. 3: O Welt, ich muss dich lassen
Nr. 7 Gott, du frommer Gott
Nr. 6 O wie selig seid ihr doch, ihr Frommen

Chorale: "Weicht, ihr Trauergeister" Lenora McCroskey, conductor
J. S. Bach Final chorale from BWV 227

Cantata BWV 158: "Der Friede sei mit dir," for Easter Tuesday
J. S. Bach Recitativo. Aria con Corale. Recitativo. Choral.

Performers

David Grogan, baritone; Ellen Lovelace, violin; Charles Lang, violoncello;
Carl Ferré-Lang, contrabass; Susan Ferré, continuo organ
Choir: Esther Andrews (A), Peggy Capps (S), Matt Carlson (B), Rachel Coyle (S), Beverly
Hoch (S), Lenora McCroskey (A), Robby Napoli (T),
Hildegard F. Rainbow (A), Sue Smith (A)

When I, as a freshly baked Assistant Professor of Music Education, first arrived in Denton at the then NTSU School of Music in 1976, it did not take long before Charles Brown, then Chair of the organ department, asked me to help him form a "Denton Bach Society." He did not need to ask twice, and before you know it, he had recruited enough singers to start our first concert rehearsal in late September 1976 and to sing our first concert in November 1976.

One of the first cantatas we prepared was "Wachet auf," a cantata we performed with great enthusiasm but not necessarily with the refinement that later became such an important focus of a group of volunteer singers whose mission was to bring Bach's choral works as well as those of his contemporaries, fore-bearers, and those who followed him, to the attention of the larger Denton area community. Charles was especially interested in bringing stylistically authentic performances to the attention of our audiences. At that time, you see, early music was not the mainstay of many college music programs that it has become today.

In 1981, Charles decided to leave academic music making and, along with it, the Denton Bach Society to pursue the study of, first, acting and, later, theology. But the choral group he had started kept going; initially, with guest conductors--Susan Ferré was one of them--and then, from 1982 to 2015, with Henry Gibbons, Professor of Choral Studies at what became UNT in 1988. Jump forward to now: As we come close to celebrating 50 years of Denton Bach Society, Charles' legacy lives on in what, at this point, has turned into The Denton Bach Treble Chorale. Most of our current singers never knew Charles but are grateful for him nonetheless because without his enthusiasm, vision, and knowledge at the inception of DBS, we would not be here to celebrate and remember him today.

Thank you, Charles!

Hildegard F. Rainbow