

*The Sixth Annual*  
*Houston Early Music Festival*



*February 10-16, 2018*

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Dear Lovers of Early Music in Houston!

We know first-hand, from our “Harvey” experience and other emergency situations in Houston before, how consistently robust and resilient we are as America's fourth-largest city. Serving as the Chair of our 2018 Houston Early Music Festival Consortium, it is easy to witness this same determination and spirit among our local early music organizations, ensembles, artists, and leaders.



Despite the compounded challenges Houston’s arts community now faces, the commitment that provides high-quality cultural events in Houston remains remarkably sound. Your continued support of early music organizations and events in Houston is equally as impressive.

My special thanks go out to all involved whose tireless efforts bring this exceptional, collaborative early music festival to life each year.

Our sixth annual festival consists of diverse programs and stellar performers. Of particular note, this year, is our new addition of an emerging ensemble, *La Speranza*, featuring early classical chamber music. And please, join us for the 10:00 am masterclass on Monday, February 12 at the University of Houston's Moore School of Music led by world-renown violinist, Rachel Barton Pines, sponsored in part by Houston Early Music and the A. I. Lack Masterclass Series.

In Celebration of Early Music in Houston,

Deborah Dunham  
Executive Director  
Houston Early Music  
Chair, 2018 Houston Early Music Festival Consortium

# Schedule of Events

**Saturday, February 10, 2018 — 8:00 PM**.....**Handel & Pergolesi**  
Stude Concert Hall at Rice University

***Mercury: The Orchestra Redefined***  
Antoine Plante, conductor  
Dominique LaBelle, soprano  
Daniel Taylor, countertenor

**Sunday, February 11, 2018 — 6:00 PM**.....**Handel's Violin**  
Christ the King Lutheran Church

***Trio Settecento***  
Presented by Houston Early Music

**Monday, February 12, 2018 — 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM**.....**Violin Masterclass with Rachel Barton Pine**  
Moore School of Music Room 120, University of Houston

Presented by Houston Early Music  
Made possible through the A. I. Lack Master Series

**Monday, February 12, 2018 — 7:30 PM**.....**Choral Music from the New World**  
The Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham

***Piping Rock Singers***  
Kevin Clarke, director

**Wednesday, February 14, 2018 — 7:30 PM**.....**Mozart's Clarinet Quintet: A Match Made in Music**  
The Gallery at Midtown Arts and Theater Center (MATCH)  
3400 Main Street

***La Speranza***

**Friday, February 16, 2018 — 7:30 PM**.....**Esther & Jonah**  
Zilkha Hall  
Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

***Ars Lyrica Houston and Bach Society Houston***  
Matthew Dirst and Rick Erickson, directors  
Jennifer Bates, soprano  
Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, countertenor  
Eduardo Tercero, tenor



# Parking Information

## **Stude Concert Hall**

Enter at Entrance 18 off of University Blvd.

West Lot 2 (parking lot on your right) is available for self parking for up to \$12, or drive up to the intersection and turn left for valet service.

## **Christ the King Lutheran Church**

Free parking is available at the church as well as across the street in the Greenbriar Lot for \$2.

## **University of Houston, Moores School of Music**

Enter at Entrance 16 off of Cullen Blvd and turn left into Lot 16. Metered parking is available in Lot 16 B.

## **Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Church**

Free parking available on site.

## **Midtown Arts and Theater Center (MATCH)**

Street parking is available after 6:00 PM on Travis St. You can also Mid Main Garage (across from MATCH) at 3505 Travis Street for up to \$15.

## **Hobby Center for the Performing Arts**

Parking is available in the Hobby Center Garage (330 Bagby Street) for \$12 or the Theater District Garage (509 Rusk St) for \$12.



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# Handel & Pergolesi

**Saturday February 10, 2018 – 8:00 pm**  
**Stude Concert Hall at Rice University**

## **Mercury: The Orchestra Redefined**

*Antoine Plante, Conductor*  
*Dominique Labelle, Soprano*  
*Daniel Taylor, Countertenor*

**George Friderich HANDEL (1685-1759)**

***Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6, No. 5 in D Major, HWV 323***

I. Maestoso

II. Allegro

***"O, Lovely Peace" from Judas Maccabeus, HWV 63***

***Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6, No. 5 in D Major, HWV 323***

III. Presto

IV. Largo

***"Se il cor ti perde" from Tolomeo, HWV 25***

***Concerto Grosso in D major, Op. 6, No. 5 in D Major, HWV 323***

V. Allegro

VI. Menuet, Un poco larghetto

***"To thee, thou glorious son of worth" from Theodora, HWV 68***

***"Scherzano sul tuo volto," from Rinaldo, HWV 7***

INTERMISSION

**GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESÌ (1710-1736)**

***Stabat Mater, P.77***

1. Stabat mater dolorosa
2. Cuius animam gementem
3. O quam tristis et afflicta
4. Quae moerebat et dolebat
5. Quis ost homo
6. Vidit suum dulcem natum
7. Eia, mater, fons amoris
8. Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
9. Sancta mater, istud agas
10. Fac, ut portem Christi mortem
11. Inflammatum et accensus
12. Quando corpus morietur – Amen



Welcome to the Houston Early Music Festival 2018! I hope you will take the opportunity to discover more early music this upcoming week. Our colleagues from La Speranza, Ars Lyrica, Bach Society Houston, Piping Rock Singers and Houston Early Music are working hard to present many great early music concerts to Houston audiences as a part of the sixth annual Houston Early Music Festival, tonight through Friday.

For our contribution, Mercury is presenting a concert that features Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. This piece holds a special place in my heart, as it's one of the first Baroque works I truly fell in love with. I discovered it when I was 15 years old, studying in a jazz music festival in the south of France. On a balmy Sunday morning, one of my roommates, who was a trombonist, played a recording of this amazing choral work. Although I can't recall his name, the glorious music he played deeply impressed me, and inspired me to seek out more Baroque music. This led to my lifelong love of Baroque music, and eventually to the founding of Mercury.

Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is a setting of a Latin poem that dates from the Middle Ages. *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, or "sorrowful Mother standing", speaks of the pain suffered by the Virgin Mary while she watches as her Son is crucified, dying an agonizing death. The imagery is strong and symbolic, and the text is so very poignant. Pergolesi's music, composed while he was dying in a Franciscan monastery, makes the poetry stronger, and the poetry in turn makes his music transcendent. To balance out tonight's program, we are also performing music from Handel, composed around the same time. The concerto grosso, or grand concerto, features the orchestra and punctuates some of Handel's most beautiful duets from operas and oratorios.

I am so glad to be performing tonight with Dominique Labelle and Daniel Taylor. This is my first time working with these two artists, both of whom are renowned performers of Baroque music. It will be a treat to perform this music with these great soloists and our great orchestra. Thank you for coming to tonight's concert, and I hope this is just the first of a wonderful week of music experiences for you!

Antoine Plante, Artistic Director  
*Lynn Wyatt Chair*



Welcome to our February concert! We are especially pleased to launch this year's Houston Early Music Festival along with Ars Lyrica, Bach Society, Houston Early Music, Piping Rock Singers, and La Speranza. The Early Music Festival has become a destination for music aficionados everywhere. I hope you will take advantage of this unique opportunity to hear the exceptional music presented over the next two-weeks.

Special thanks to our concert sponsors this evening, Houston Endowment and City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, and to all our Mercury contributors. Mercury remains an extraordinary music ensemble renowned for its inspired programming thanks to the generosity of its individual supporters. As Mercury faces ongoing financial challenges from the impact of Hurricane Harvey, please consider making a fully tax-deductible donation so Mercury can continue to present music to the Houston community. Consider becoming a Patron Society member to enjoy exclusive benefits year-round.

Be sure to secure your tickets for March when Mercury presents Bach's remarkable *St. Matthew Passion* at Stude Concert Hall. Enjoy the performance!

Lloyd Kirchner, Board President



## **Orchestra Personnel**

Antoine Plante, Artistic Director  
*Lynn Wyatt Chair*

### **Violin I**

Jonathan Godfrey, concertmaster  
*sponsored by Randy & Cathy Crath*  
Joanna Becker  
Hannah Watson  
Sean O'Neal

### **Violin II**

Oleg Sulyga, principal  
*sponsored by Mrs. Andrew Wilkomirski*  
Eugeniu Cheremoush  
Rachel Shepard  
Gabriel Maffuz-Anker

### **Viola**

Yvonne Smith, principal  
Matthew Carrington  
Kathleen Carrington

### **Cello**

Beiliang Zhu, principal  
Keiran Campbell\*

### **Violone**

Deborah Dunham, principal

### **Organ and Harpsichord**

Mario Aschauer

### **Theorbo**

Paul Morton

### **Bassoon**

Nate Helgeson

\*Juilliard fellow, 2017-2018

## ***About Mercury***

Founded in 2000, Mercury offers performances of a broad repertoire of music on period instruments and has garnered critical acclaim around the world. The orchestra performs more than 50 concerts a year, including a seven-concert Downtown series at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater which features distinctive programs like multi-media collaborations American Skies and last year's audience favorite Bach & Piazzolla and world-class concerts with guest artists like mezzo-soprano Susan Graham and early music specialist and conductor Harry Bicket. Mercury extends its reach outside the formal concert hall with its Neighborhood Series, bringing casual, affordable and intimate hour-long performances to four Houston neighborhoods. Mercury is redefining the orchestra's role in the community under the artistic leadership of Antoine Plante. Through its vibrant and inspiring performances, award-winning education programs, and world-class music on period instruments, Mercury is celebrating its commitment of making the power and passion of music accessible to all.



### ***Antoine Plante, Artistic Director***

*Lynn Wyatt Chair*

Praised by audiences and musicians alike for his conducting verve and innovative programming, Antoine Plante has garnered praise for bringing music to life. "Plante led his orchestra, the choir and the soloists in an impressive account of the Requiem: authoritative, vigorous, emotionally intense, at times utterly gripping," writes Charles Ward of the Houston Chronicle.

Plante is a founder of Mercury, a Houston, Texas-based orchestra that has experienced remarkable audience growth over its sixteen-year history. In that capacity, Plante has become known for his deftness in balancing a great works repertoire with lesser-known and unknown pieces. His exciting musicality has made him an audience favorite, as evidenced by Mercury's fast-growing audience. He is also a passionate supporter of classical music education and has led

Mercury's educational outreach program, a significant effort that includes classroom music education in underserved schools, master classes for school orchestras, and performances for school children.

Plante is extremely versatile. At ease with the great romantic and modern composers, he also loves to perform Classical and Baroque music with period instrument orchestras. Experienced in directing orchestral pieces as well as staged works, he has conducted several operas and ballets. He collaborated with noted French director Pascal Rambert to produce a modern staged version of Lully's *Armide*, which was performed to critical acclaim in Paris and Houston. He worked with Dominic Walsh Dance Theater to create a score for Dominic Walsh's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. An innovative artist, he premiered the multimedia production of "The Crimson Prince of Venice: Vivaldi vs. Paganini," a fully staged production where the orchestra and soloists lead the drama.

Under his leadership, Mercury has grown to be an important arts organization in Houston, offering over 50 concerts per season in many different venues, making great music accessible to the whole community.

Plante has been invited to perform as guest conductor for the San Antonio Symphony, Oregon Bach Festival Orchestra, Chanticleer, Ecuador National Symphony Orchestra and Atlanta Baroque.



### **Dominique Labelle, Soprano**

Throughout her career, soprano Dominique Labelle has fearlessly plumbed the technical and emotional depths of music, turning in performances of "almost alarming ferocity" (San Francisco Chronicle), possessed of "conviction but without exhibitionism" (De Telegraf), that have "the audience hanging on every note" (Boston Globe). Her passionate commitment to music-making has led to close and enduring collaborations with a number of the world's most respected conductors and composers, such as Iván Fischer, Nicholas McGegan, Jos van Veldhoven, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Yehudi Wyner. She also treasures her long association with the late Robert Shaw. Dominique first came to international prominence as Donna Anna in Peter Sellars' daring production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, set in Spanish Harlem, which she performed in New York, Paris, and Vienna.

Most recently, Labelle was honored at the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale's annual Winter 2017 Gala for extraordinary artistic contributions, performed at Göttingen International Handel Festival's opening Galakonzert, and released an album, *Mi Palpita Il Cor* with Musica Pacifica. *Photo credit: Lino Alvarez*

Visit Dominique at [www.dominiquelabelle.com](http://www.dominiquelabelle.com) | [schwalbeandpartners.com/dominique-labelle-soprano](http://schwalbeandpartners.com/dominique-labelle-soprano)



### **Daniel Taylor, Countertenor**

Recognized as "Canada's star countertenor" and "Canada's most prolific recording artist", Daniel Taylor has received invitations from the world's preeminent early and contemporary music ensembles, appearing in opera (Metropolitan Opera, Glyndebourne, San Francisco), oratorio (Gabrieli Consort, Monteverdi Choir/English Baroque Soloists, Bach Collegium Japan, Les Arts Florissants), and symphonic works (Cleveland, St. Louis, Lisbon, Philadelphia, Tonhalle Zurich, Toronto, and Gothenburg,).

An exclusive recording artist for Sony Classical Masterworks, Daniel Taylor's discography of more than 100 recordings includes the 2017 Juno Award nominated *Four Thousand Winter* with the Trinity Choir, and its companion release *The Tree of Life*. Other recorded highlights include Bach Cantatas with Monteverdi Choir/Gardiner, Handel's *Rinaldo* with

Bartoli/Academy of Ancient Music/Hogwood, and a CD/DVD of Bach's *Mass in B minor* with the Ensemble Orchestral Paris/Nelson.

Mr. Taylor is Head of Early Music and Professor of Voice at the University of Toronto, and is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Choir and Orchestra of the Theatre of Early Music, which he founded in 2002. *Photo credit: Marie-Reine Mattera*

Visit Daniel Taylor at [www.theatreofearlymusic.com](http://www.theatreofearlymusic.com) | [www.schwalbeandpartners.com/daniel-taylor-countertenor](http://www.schwalbeandpartners.com/daniel-taylor-countertenor)



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**Saturday, February 24, 2018 • 7:30 pm**

**Tickets: [HoustonChamberChoir.org](http://HoustonChamberChoir.org) 713.224.5566**

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Before Handel collected his twelve concerti grossi into a single published collection, his Op. 6 (1740), several of the concertos had served him as overtures or entr'acte music. The movements of his Op. 6, N° 5 aptly serve that function here because Handel himself used this concerto as the overture to his Ode for St. Cecilia's Day. The term concerto grosso means "big concerto" or just "big group," and the genre is defined by its focus on different combinations of selected instruments within the larger ensemble. The six movements in this concerto thus feature different alternations of performing forces to create contrasts of texture, timbre, and sonority. Thus, for example, the opening and third movements feature a solo violinist versus the full ensemble; the second movement introduces the instruments section by section in its fugal exposition (first violins, second violins, and then violas and continuo); the fourth movement distinguishes a trio of soloists (two violins and cello) within the larger ensemble; and the fifth movement turns that larger ensemble into a soloist en masse with concertato writing (that is, rapid-fire, repeated notes) in all of the parts above a driving bass line.

The four Handel duets divide evenly between opera (Tolomeo and Rinaldo) and oratorio (Judas Maccabeus and Theodora), and they also illustrate early, middle, and late phases of Handel's career. In spite of the different genres and the span of time that they cover, the duets show a consistency in Handel's dramatic use of them: each illustrates a key moment or central relationship within the larger plot. In Judas Maccabeus, the Israelitish Man and Woman, singing "O, Lovely Peace" and standing for the Israelites as a whole, celebrate their final victory over the Seleucid enemy within a story that emphasizes the importance of acknowledging God's power in the deliverance of His people. This sort of victory and reflection was keenly felt by Handel's English audience because Judas Maccabeus premiered shortly after the British defeat of what seemed an existential threat: Scottish forces led by the Young Pretender to the British throne, Bonnie Prince Charlie—a Catholic, no less. In contrast to the gently pastoral air of "O, Lovely Peace," "Se il cor ti perde," the duet from Tolomeo, strikes a mournful and anxious tone, with its insistently active bass accompaniment. Tolomeo, the king of Egypt and his beloved wife, Seleuce, face defeat in a power struggle that threatens their rule. In this touching farewell made in the face of their anticipated death, they promise never to forget one another.

Tolomeo and Seleuce, however, prevail according to the custom of 18th-century opera seria and its happy endings. By contrast, Theodora and Didymus, characters in an oratorio about Christian faith and martyrdom, experience a different fate. Theodora, a 4th-century noblewoman of Antioch, is cast into a brothel because her faith prohibits her from offering sacrifices to pagan gods. Didymus, a Roman soldier and secret convert to Christianity, finds her and gives her his armor so that she may escape in disguise. Recognizing his sacrifice, Theodora sings "To thee, thou glorious son of worth" while he responds with "To thee, whose virtues suit thy birth." To finish their story, Theodora is momentarily freed, but she ultimately rejects this freedom and is martyred with Didymus—after they sing a second duet to immortality (not included on the program). The brightly exuberant "Scherzando sul tuo volto," sung by Rinaldo and his betrothed, Almirena, is happier stuff, in which the lovers declare their mutual devotion. The moment is especially poignant because Almirena is then suddenly borne away by the magical powers of her rival for Rinaldo's affections, the sorceress Armida.

The list of composers who have set the Stabat mater—Josquin Desprez, Lassus, Palestrina, Vivaldi, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti (separately!), Mozart, Rossini, Schubert, Verdi, Kodály, Poulenc, Virgil Thomson, Arvo Pärt—testifies to its spiritual power and historical significance. Dating to the 13th century, this Franciscan hymn to the Virgin Mary recounts her compassionate suffering as she witnesses Christ's crucifixion. The text and an added plainchant melody were later incorporated into the Roman Catholic liturgy to be sung during Mass on the feast day of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows (September 15), but its dozens of polyphonic settings reflect its broader devotional and concert uses across several centuries.

Pergolesi's setting, which he composed at the very end of his brief life (he was just 26 when he died), is often described as his finest work. Working not within the longstanding Roman choral tradition but instead in a newer Neapolitan and opera-influenced style, Pergolesi wrote his Stabat mater for just two soloists (soprano and alto) and strings. The result is a setting and style that the 18th-century composer and tradition-minded historian, Giambattista Martini, found to be too operatic for church music: where Martini wanted erudite counterpoint, Pergolesi supplied arias whose expressive language is closely similar to what we hear in Handel's duets, but

whose forms are through-composed settings suited to their selections of Latin text. Pergolesi's innovative style of church aria avoids operatic virtuosity, but similar to opera, it clearly and even forcefully communicates a central affect. For example, the slow, searing quality of overlapping dissonances in the opening movement ("Stabat mater dolorosa")—first in the strings during the ritornello and then when the soprano and alto enter—vividly paint the picture of Mary's aching sadness as she stood at the foot of the cross. The following movement ("Cuius animam gementem"), an energetic andante, portrays the specific pain that Mary feels with its repeated two-note staccato motif evoking the sword tip that pierces her soul. Further on, the mention of the cause of all this, the sins of mankind ("pro peccatis suæ gentis"), inspires aggressive, angry music; the call directed to Mary to let us feel the wounds that Christ feels ("Sancta Mater, istud agas") brings forth a music of persuasive insistence; and our desire to bear the weight of Christ's death upon ourselves ("Fac ut portem Christi mortem") is plainly funereal in its austere dotted-note unisons and piercing vocal leaps.

Martini, in judging Pergolesi by the standard of earlier masters of vocal polyphony, thought his Stabat mater as too light, too modern. Without that standard in our minds, we can appreciate not only the distinctive design of arias that Pergolesi created, but also the variety of affects that they could pour out. The piece is of such quality that we remember Pergolesi's early death and wonder—as we also do of Purcell, Mozart, or Schubert—at what he might have composed had he lived longer.

©Gregory Barnett



**Garrick Ohlsson Plays Beethoven**  
Friday, March 2, 8:00 PM  
Stude Concert Hall,  
Shepherd School of Music

Featuring four of Beethoven's  
most beloved masterpieces

Sonata in C Minor, Op. 13 "Pathetique"  
Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57 "Appassionata"  
Sonata in C Major, Op. 53 "Waldstein"  
Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2  
"Moonlight"

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with a calmly commanding  
presence."  
*The Independent*

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Mercury is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston and Harris County through the Houston Arts Alliance and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Houston Early Music presents

# Handel's Violin

**Sunday, February 11th, 2018, 6:00 PM**  
**Christ the King Lutheran Church**

***Trio Settecento***

Rachel Barton Pine, violin  
John Mark Rozendaal, violoncello  
David Schrader, harpsichord

PROGRAM

**Sonata in C Major, Opus 5, no. 3** – Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)  
*Adagio – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro – Allegro*

**Sonata in G Minor, HWV 364a** – Georg Friedrich Handel (1685-1759)  
*Larghetto – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*

**Sonata in A Major, HWV 361** – G. F. Handel  
*Andante – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro*

INTERMISSION

**Sonata in C Major, Opus 2 no. 3** – Francesco Maria Veracini (1690-1768)  
*Ritornello – Largo e nobile – Capriccio quarto – Aria rustica*

**Fantasy in C Major, HWV 490** – G. F. Handel

**Sonata in D Major, HWV 371** – G. F. Handel  
*Affetuoso – Allegro – Larghetto – Allegro*

**5:15 PM**

Pre-Concert talk by Trio Settecento artists

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

“We are now arrived at a memorable era for the violin, tenor [viola], and violoncello; when the works and performance of the admirable Arcangelo Corelli (1653 – 1713), rendered them respectable, and fixed their use and reputation, in all probability, as long as the present system of Music shall continue to delight the ears of mankind. Indeed, this most excellent master had the happiness of enjoying part of his fame during his mortality; for scarce a cotemporary musical writer, historian, or poet neglected to celebrate his genius and talents; and his productions have contributed longer to charm the lovers of Music by mere powers of the bow, without the assistance of the human voice, than those of any composer that has yet existed. Haydn, indeed, with more varied abilities, and a much more creative genius, when instruments of all kinds are better understood, has captured the musical world in, perhaps, a still higher degree; but whether the duration of his favour will be equal to that of Corelli, who reigned supreme in all concerts, and excited undiminished rapture full half a century, must be left to the determination of time, and the encreased rage of depraved appetites for novelty.”

The great English connoisseur Charles Burney offered this assessment of the achievement of Arcangelo Corelli in his *General History of Music* (1789). Burney’s judgment stands as sound and relevant to this day. Of Corelli’s *Opus V Sonatas*, Burney had this to say: “Corelli’s *Solos*, as a classical book for forming the hand of a young practitioner on the violin, has ever been regarded as a most useful and valuable work, by the greatest masters of the instrument. I was told by Mr. Wiseman at Rome, that when he first arrived in the city, about twenty years after Corelli’s decease, he was informed by several persons who had been acquainted with him that his *opera quinta*, on which all good schools for the violin have been founded, cost him three years to revise and correct. Tartini formed all his scholars on these solos; and Signor Giardini has told me, that of any two pupils of equal age and disposition, if one was to begin his studies by Corelli, and the other by Geminiani, or any other eminent master whatever, he is sure that the first would become the best performer.”

As an up-and-coming musical genius, George Frederick Handel spent two formative years based mainly in Rome from 1706 through 1708, working with Arcangelo Corelli who was then at the height of his powers. Thus the Corellian forms, techniques, and ethos that shaped the course of instrumental music through the entire eighteenth century were absorbed by Handel directly from the source at first hand, an audible connection in all of Handel’s violin sonatas.

In 1730 a set of twelve sonatas attributed to George Frederick Handel appeared in a publication with a title page in French and bearing the name of the prestigious Amsterdam printer Jeanne Roger. In 1732 the collection was reissued under the name of Handel’s London publisher, the famously sloppy and unscrupulous John Walsh, and it included works certainly not composed by Handel. However, two of the collection’s finest sonatas, HWV 361 and 364a, are firmly attributed to Handel, and both appear in an autograph manuscript of 1725-6 now housed at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Veracini’s *Opus 2 Sonate Accademiche* of 1744 pay lavish tribute to Corelli’s *Opus 5*, slyly referring to the masterpiece in both its large scheme and in delicate details. Similar to Corelli, Veracini divides his twelve sonatas into two sets of six, the first set in each case dominated by the fugato textures of the *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata), and the second featuring the dance types characteristic of the *sonata da camera* (chamber sonata). Veracini also matches Corelli’s key sequence piece for piece: in both opuses the first sonata is in D Major, the second in B Flat Major, the third in C major, and so on right through to the twelfth sonatas in D Minor. However, Veracini’s sonatas are much more developed from their Corellian counterparts in terms of the length of movements, ambition of gesture, and the technical and tonal demands on the performers. Additionally, the longer arcs of narrative in Veracini’s sonatas that are supported by innovative structures of motivic development and balanced repetition anticipates Classical sonata form. The affect, movement, and contour of the opening gesture of Corelli’s *Opus 5 #3*, one of his most beloved lyric creations, are subtly recalled in the *Largo, e nobile* of Veracini’s *Opus 2 # 3*.

The paths of Handel and Veracini crossed numerous times; In 1735 Handel heard a performance of Veracini’s opera, *Adriano in Siria*; and in 1741 Veracini was performing a concerto between the acts of Handel’s *Acis and Galatea*.

The formidable *Sonata in D Major* of 1749-50 was Handel’s last piece of chamber music. Its brilliance and nobility place it in a class by itself and earn its status as one of the composer’s most beloved works. Handel himself seems to have thought highly of it, as he reuses the shimmering last movement of this work in his oratorio, *Jephtha* (1751) at the dramatic moment of the appearance of an angel.



**Trio Settecento's** passionate and authoritative interpretations renew the pleasures of hearing beloved music from the Age of Enlightenment while also revealing the delights of new discoveries. Imagination, vigor, technical polish and historical insight have made the Trio's performances appealing to audiences and critics alike. Performing on antique instruments of rare beauty and expressive power, these three virtuosi breathe life into musical masterpieces that capture the dramatic intensity of the Italians, the poetic gestures of the French school, and the profound humanism of J.S. Bach.

Trio Settecento's 'Grand Tour' recordings for Cedille Records survey 17th- and 18th century chamber music of four nations (Italy, Germany, France, and England). Said Classical North Carolina, "This is the finest recorded set of historically-informed Baroque period recitals that I have ever encountered." Wrote Gramophone of *An Italian Sojourn*, "There isn't a piece that doesn't impress." Praised Strings magazine of *A German Bouquet*, "The music is lovely, and the playing exceptional." For *A French Soirée*, *The Strad* found the Trio had "ravishing form...Magic moments abound." Of *An English Fancy*, Listen magazine said there are, "eighty minutes of labyrinthine delights here in which to lose yourself." In 2015 Cedille Records released the Trio's complete recording of Francesco Maria Veracini's monumental Opus 2, 'Sonate Accademiche'.

Trio Settecento was formed after Rachel Barton Pine, John Mark Rozendaal and David Schrader came together in 1996 to record the complete violin sonatas of George Frederick Handel. Critical acclaim for that disc led to period-instrument recitals throughout the U.S., including their New York debut at the Frick Collection in 2006 and their 2007 Boston debut presented at Jordan Hall under the aegis of the Boston Early Music Festival. The Trio has appeared as a featured ensemble at the Boston Early Music Festival, the Frick Collection, the Chicago Early Music Festival, Columbia University's Miller Theatre, Dumbarton Oaks and Houston Early Music, the Indianapolis Early Music Festival, and the Chamber Music Societies of Detroit and Buffalo. *Photo by Janette Beckman*

Violinist **Rachel Barton Pine** has an extraordinary gift for connecting with people. Recognized as a great interpreter of classical works, her performances combine a scholarly fascination with research with an innate gift in communicating emotional nuances. Audiences are thrilled and uplifted by her dazzling technique, lustrous tone, and infectious joy in music-making. She plays with passion and conviction and her work as a philanthropist continues to inspire the next generation of artists.

Pine has appeared as soloist with many of the most prestigious orchestras, including the Chicago, Montreal, Atlanta, and Baltimore Symphonies, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Overseas, she has performed with the Vienna, New Zealand, Iceland, and Budapest Symphonies; the Royal Scottish and Belgian National Orchestras; the Mozarteum, Scottish, and Israel Chamber Orchestras; the Royal, Calgary, and Russian Philharmonics; and the Netherlands Radio Kamer Filharmonie. She has worked with renowned conductors Charles Dutoit, John Nelson, Zubin Mehta, Erich Leinsdorf, Neeme Järvi, Marin Alsop, Plácido Domingo, and Semyon Bychkov. Her festival appearances include Marlboro, Ravinia, and Salzburg.

Pine holds prizes from leading competitions, including a gold medal at the 1992 J.S. Bach International Violin Competition in Leipzig, Germany, making her the first American and, at age 17, the youngest performer to win this honor. Other top awards came from the Queen Elisabeth (Brussels, 1993), Kreisler (Vienna, 1992), Sziget (Budapest, 1992), and Montreal (1991) international violin competitions. She won the prize for interpretation of the Paganini Caprices at both the 1993 Paganini International Violin Competition in Genoa and the Sziget Competition.



“One of the rare mainstream performers with a total grasp of Baroque style and embellishment” (*Fanfare*) and “a most accomplished Baroque violinist, fully the equal of the foremost specialists” (*Gramophone*), Pine has been involved in historically-informed performances of early music since age 14. Named to the Board of Directors of Early Music America, she has collaborated with many leading artists including David Douglass, Elizabeth Wright, Marilyn McDonald, Gesa Kordes, Temple of Apollo, and the Chicago Baroque Ensemble. She made her debut on the viola d’amore with Ars Antigua in 2007 and on the rebec in 2009 with the Newberry Consort in concert in Chicago and at the Madison Early Music Festival.

Ms. Pine plays a rare violin was made by Nicola Gagliano in 1770 which has survived in almost completely original condition.

**John Mark Rozendaal** specializes in teaching and performing stringed instrument music from the Baroque and Renaissance eras. As founding Artistic Director of the Chicago Baroque Ensemble, Rozendaal performed and led seven seasons of subscription concerts, educational programs, radio broadcasts, and recordings for the Cedille and Centaur labels. Rozendaal served as principal ‘cellist of The City Musick, and Basically Bach, and has performed both solo and continuo roles with many period instrument ensembles, including the Newberry Consort, Orpheus Band, King’s Noyse, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, and Soli Deo Gloria’s Chicago Bach Project. In addition to his work with Trio Settecento, Rozendaal performs as a member of Brandywine Baroque Ensemble and LeStrange Viols. Rozendaal’s viola da gamba playing has been praised as “splendid” (*Chicago Tribune*) and “breathtaking” (*Sun-Times*).

A dedicated teacher, Rozendaal is in demand as a workshop instructor and often joins the faculties of the Viola da Gamba Society of America Conclave, Viols West’s annual workshop, Amherst Early Music, Madison Early Music Festival, and the Music Institute of Chicago’s annual Baroque Festival. Rozendaal teaches private lessons and Viola da Gamba Dojo classes at his studio in Manhattan.

Mr. Rozendaal’s ‘cello was made by an unknown maker in Tyrol in the eighteenth century.

Equally at home in front of a harpsichord, organ, piano, or fortepiano, **David Schrader** is “truly an extraordinary musician... (who) brings not only the unfailing right technical approach to each of these different instruments, but always an imaginative, fascinating musicality to all of them” (Norman Pelligrini, WFMT, Chicago). A performer of wide ranging interests and accomplishments, Schrader has appeared with the Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and Colorado Symphonies, and appeared as a soloist at four national conventions of the American Guild of Organists (1984, 1994, 1998, and 2006). He has also performed at the prestigious Irving Gilmore Keyboard Festival (playing separate concerts on organ, harpsichord, and clavichord) and at the Ravinia Festival; Aspen Music Festival; Oulunsalo Soi Music Festival in Oulu, Finland; Michigan Mozartfest; Boston Early Music Festival; Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival; Connecticut Early Music Festival; Manitou Music Festival; and as soloist and conductor at the Woodstock (Illinois) Mozart Festival.

A resident of Chicago, Schrader performs regularly with Music of the Baroque, the Newberry Consort, and Bach Week in Evanston. He has also appeared with The Chicago Chamber Musicians, Contempo (f.k.a. the Contemporary Chamber Players), the Chicago Baroque Ensemble, and The City Musick. He is a frequent guest on WFMT’s “Live From WFMT” series of broadcast in-studio performances and a founding member of Baroque Band, Chicago’s period-instrument orchestra. Schrader is on the faculty of Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts. For nearly thirty years, he has been the organist of Chicago’s Church of the Ascension.

## HISTORY

Houston Early Music, formerly the Houston Harpsichord Society, is a chartered, non-profit organization whose purpose is to further the appreciation and performance of early music. As the city’s only organization dedicated to covering the large historical span of early music in all its forms, Houston Early Music epitomizes a movement that has swept the world of classical music: we offer performances of vocal, instrumental, and chamber music from both the European tradition and other world cultures using historically appropriate instruments and techniques.

Houston Early Music is one of the oldest early music presenting organizations in the nation. Formed in 1965 as a group of harpsichord aficionados that met to perform for each other, it has grown to become an organization that provides performance opportunities for major early music artists from around the world. Officially incorporated in 1968, we will observe our Fiftieth Anniversary during the 2018-2019 concert season.

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Photos by Patrick O'Connor

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# Violin Master Class

**Monday, February 12, 2018**  
**10:00 AM -12:00 noon**  
**A.I. Lack Master Class**  
**RACHEL BARTON PINE, violin**

**University of Houston, Moores School of Music, Room 160**  
Free and open to the public.



Please see pages 15-16 for Ms. Barton Pine's biography.

Today's performers are:

*Cheng Wei Hsieh*

*Yannis Eberhard*

*Brian Howe*

*Claire Neiderberger*

This event is made possible in part by funding from Houston Early Music.



# Choral Music from the New World

Monday, February 12, 2018 — 7:30 PM  
The Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham

## Piping Rock Singers *Kevin Clarke, director*

<i>Ave, Regina coelorum</i>	Anónimo Música Colonial Archive, manuscrito 9-106
<i>O sacrum convivium</i>	Juan García de Salazar 1650-1710
<i>Circumdederunt me dolores mortis</i>	Juan Gutierrez de Padilla 1590-1664
<i>Missa a cuatro voces</i> Kyrie – Gloria	Juan Matias de Rivera 16??-17??
<i>Cristus factus est</i>	Hernando Franco 1532-1585
<i>Qui habitat</i>	Pedro Bermúdez 1558-1605
<i>Cristus factus est</i>	Hernando Franco 1532-1585
<i>Missa a cuatro voces</i> Credo – Sanctus – Benedictus	Juan Matias de Rivera
<i>Ave sanctissima Maria</i>	Anonymous Guatemala City, Cathedral Archive, Music MS 4
<i>Missa a cuatro voces</i> Agnus Dei	Juan Matias de Rivera
<i>O Sacrum convivium</i>	Francisco Guerrero 1528-1599
<i>Magnificat Octavi Toni</i>	Hernando Franco 1532-1585
<i>Versa est in luctum</i> <i>Vidi turbam magnum</i>	Juan Gutierrez de Padilla
<i>Resuenen los Clarines</i>	Manuel de Zumaya 1678-1756

## The Piping Rock Singers

<b>Soprano</b>	<b>Alto</b>	<b>Tenor</b>	<b>Bass</b>
Michelle Girardot	Alys Dyke	Karl Lothmann	John Kearin
Nini Marchese	Anne Leek	David Paxton	Anthony Larson
Chalon Murray	Laura Lisk	Ryan Rogers	Timothy Motte
Catherine Schaefer	Catherine Woodruff	Henry Windham, III	Adrian Rodriguez

Kevin M. Clarke is the artistic director of the Piping Rock Singers, a semi-professional group that specializes in Medieval and Renaissance music. He is also on the faculty of Saint Nicholas School where he is building a boychoir and girlchoir program on the English model.

He has served as director or assistant director for treble choirs at St. John The Divine, Houston; St. John's Anglican Church, Saint Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands; Washington National Cathedral, Washington DC; Bristol Cathedral, College Green, Bristol, England; St. Mary's Catholic Church, Greenville, South Carolina; Church of the Incarnation, Dallas; Saint Nicholas School, Houston; and St. Theresa Catholic Church and School, Sugar Land.

Dr. Clarke's choirs have sung in residence at Chichester, Wells and Lincoln Cathedrals, and have been invited numerous times to sing the daily services in residence at Westminster Abbey. His choral background includes working with Malcolm Archer, Sir David Willcocks and George Guest and served as Interim Director for the Texas Boys Choir for their 2006 National Spring Tour.

Dr. Clarke has performed as an organ recitalist in North America, Mexico, the Caribbean, Italy, Great Britain and Germany, where he performed the world premiere of Hans-Dieter Karras' *2nd Symphony for Orchestra and Organ*. He represented the United States in several international festivals including the Cervantino Festival International, the Morelia International Organ Festival and the Caen International Organ Festival. He will perform as part of the Bruckner Festival in Linz, Austria and at Notre-Dame de Paris in 2018.

Dr. Clarke has composed several commissioned choral pieces, brass arrangements, and video soundtracks, and has produced and played in numerous concerts. As an orchestral conductor, he has led many major choral works including works of Bach, Mozart, Haydn and the Texas premier of Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*.

Dr. Clarke's recent recordings feature music of the English Cathedral tradition sung by the Church of the Incarnation Chancel Choir on the Pro Organo label; *Trumpet Tunes*, an organ CD on the Prospect label; and recordings for the Albany label. His newest release on the Pro Organo label – *A Sacred Romance* – is a recording of French organ music and an all-Bach recording in 2011 was recorded on the Fisk organ at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. A recording of Anton Bruckner's 9th Symphony transcribed for organ will be released in 2017. Dr. Clarke has been heard on EWTN, NPR, WRR Dallas and OrganLive, a streaming audio station dedicated to the music of the classical organ. Several of his compositions have been published by St. James's Press. This recording is his eleventh to date.

Born in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Dr. Clarke taught himself to play organ until after several years of playing, he began studies with George Kent and Steven Martorella. Dr. Clarke obtained his Bachelor of Music degree from Rhode Island College and his Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory in Boston where he studied with Frank Taylor and Yuko Hayashi. During that time, he was organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Providence, Rhode Island. He coached with Dr. Jesse Eschbach in French organ technique and style, as well as in improvisation with Dr. George Baker. In 2002, Dr. Clarke was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas.

In 2008, he accepted the position of organist and choirmaster at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Greenville, South Carolina, where he developed a liturgical music program for an 8,000-member parish. The program implemented the documents of *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Liturgiam authenticam* "reform of the reform."

In 2010, the Clarke family moved to the Houston to be Music Director of St. Theresa Catholic Church in Sugar Land, Texas where he directs a large sacred-music program for adults and children. Dr. Clarke lives in Sugar Land, Texas with his wife Elizabeth; children Lucy and Hugh; and dogs Kasper and Lexi. In his spare time, he bikes, builds model ships, works with his children on a scale model railroad and likes to sail on Galveston Bay.



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#### **NOTES ON THE PROGRAM**

In 1620 a small ship landed a party of settlers on the shores of what would become Plymouth. They built 20 by 20-foot houses made of wood planks and struggled to survive the brutal New England winter. Roughly 2500 miles to the southwest, a thriving culture of polyphony, chant and secular devotional songs had already existed for 100 years and was being performed in stone cathedrals rivaling their sister cathedrals in Spain. This showed all signs of continuing for another hundred years.

In what is today's Mexico and Guatemala, a western musical tradition of polyphony quickly evolved after the Spanish conquest of Middle America. In the culture of the indigenous population musicians were held in high esteem for they were not only charged with providing entertaining and ritual music but were also the story tellers and keepers of the oral history. They were quick to adapt to the music brought by Cortez's minstrels, and later the church, so that by 1532 formal choir schools were formed and music training in chant and polyphony was established. So successful were these efforts that Motolinía, one of the first missionaries arriving 1524, writes in his *Historia de los Indios: These Tlaxcaltecas have greatly enlivened the divine service with polyphonic music written for voices and for groups of instruments. They have two choirs which alternate with each other singing the divine service. Each choir has more than twenty singers; they have also two groups of flutists who accompany these choirs, .....which imitate the sound of the organ.*

It is true that liturgical books and music manuscripts were imported to this region from Spain and this was a source of works Palestrina, Victoria and Allegri, to name few continental composers, whose works have been found in manuscripts in Guatemala. Perhaps less known is that 220 books were published in Mexico in the sixteenth century. Of these, thirteen contained music.

Tonight's concert represents works from four of these manuscripts and span some 200 years of polyphonic music in Mexico and Guatemala. They are:

- The Franco Codex of the Cathedral of Mexico ca. 1611
- Two Mexico City Choir books of 1717

## Música Colonial Archive

### The choir books of Puebla Cathedral

While the music spans the period of the early Renaissance to the mid Baroque, the sound of the music is reserved and reflects the belief that sacred music should be separate from the secular world. On the continent we see the adoption of operatic musical figurations and elaborate fugues, concerti and other forms in the instrumental vein. Here we hear more subtle changes and embellishments as we move from the sixteenth to the early eighteenth-century.

The subject material of these books can be put in five main categories: Masses, Magnificats, Hymns, Villancicos and music for Holy Week. We find several sets of the Ordinary of the Mass in the books and that we find many versions of the Magnificat, the Canticle for Vespers, mostly by Franco. Villancicos are poems or non-liturgical texts set to music and used in processions or devotional settings such as for Our Lady of Guadalupe. We see little of motets for the church year. Is this because we have lost the sources of these works or was chant a more integral part of the liturgical rites? Polyphony was used for the most sacred times of the liturgical year. Perhaps polyphony can best imprint the deep pain and emotion of the Holy Week events.

To create some structure to tonight's performance we have chosen two centerpiece works, the Mass for 4 Voices by Rivera and the Magnificat on the 8<sup>th</sup> tone of Franco. You will hear how these works may have been heard in the context of a fictional liturgy. An Introit, Gradual and Tract will be sung between the mass movements.

Little is known of Rivera who's four-voice mass appears in the Música Colonial Archive along with a five-voice mass that was mistakenly attributed to Allegri. The work is written in a syllabic fashion with a modest use of imitation.

A good deal more is known about Hernando Franco. His collection of Magnificats can be found in the Franco Codex. Housed in the cathedral of Mexico's library, the manuscript was commissioned by archbishop Fray Garcia Guerra in 1611. Juan Hernández, Franco's successor as chapelmaster, presented the work to the cathedral chapter July 5, 1611. The manuscript contains 16 settings of the magnificat, two for each mode. Unfortunately, the mode three settings have been lost.

Franco was born in 1532 in the village of Garrovillas near the Portuguese border. At the age of 10 he became a choirboy in the Cathedral of Segovia. After his tenure as a choirboy he studied at the University of Salamanca. The chair of the music department – a man named Mateo Arévalo Sedeña – left Spain to be provisor of the Mexico City Cathedral. Around 1554, Franco had become chapelmaster of the Cathedral of Guatemala, and was called by Sedeña in 1575 to become chapelmaster of the Cathedral in Mexico City. He died on 28 November 28, 1585 and is buried behind the Viceroy's seat in the main chapel of the cathedral. Tonight's performance is of the second more festive version of the eighth tone magnificat. We hear the text in traditional alternatum between chant, the odd verses, and polyphony, the even verses.

The opening piece tonight is a setting of the Marian hymn *Ave regina coelorum*. It is sung during the Lenten season. Tonight's setting, taken from the Música Colonial Archive, utilizes chromatic alterations to the harmony and ascending ut, re, mi motifs. The composer is unknown. The Música Colonial Archive of the Cathedral of Antigua, Guatemala is an expansive work, which includes several masses from continental composers including Palestrina, Victoria, and Allegri in addition to composers working in the New World. It also houses a large collection of villancicos, texts with sacred topics but sung in Spanish.

The text *O sacrum convivium* is the antiphon for the Magnificat on the feast of Corpus Christi. Tonight we have two placements of text by two composers. The first appearance is by Antonio Salazar and is a fine representative of the double choir music composed in Mexico. While from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, the work uses some traditional sixteenth century counterpoint with battaglia figuration and antiphonal counterpoint reminiscent of the Gabrieli's.

Antonio Salazar was born in Spain around 1650 and was a prebendary in Seville before moving to Mexico. On July 11, 1679 he was appointed chapelmaster of the Cathedral of Puebla. He was very productive in Puebla where the archives hold some six Latin hymn motets, a five-voice Magnificat, and an office for the dead, an eight-voice Salve Regina, and four Villancicio cycles by Sor Juana de la Cruz.

Salazar was appointed to the Cathedral of Mexico City after winning a competition set up by the cathedral chapter. In addition to his salary of 500 pesos, he was given copy assistance and sufficient music paper. It was also

understood that his compositions would be preserved in the cathedral archives. He immediately set to work on composing the Villancico cycles by Sor Juana. By 1702, he had composed numerous hymns, a Te Deum and other ceremonial music. It was during this time that the cathedral acquired a new organ from Spain by the organ builder Jorge de Sesma. He produced many fine students including one Manuel de Zumaya. By January 1710, Salazar's health and eyesight was failing. He asked the chapter to release him of his duties and to continue teaching from his home. He died in 1715.

Pedro Bermúdez was born in 1558 in Granada, Spain. After fighting with a choir member, Bermúdez was dismissed from his position of chapelmaster in Antequera and returned to sing in the Royal Chapel in Granada. In 1595, he was invited by the new bishop of Cusco, Peru to follow him to the New World and become his chapelmaster. After seven weeks in Peru, he decided to sail to Guatemala. It was here in the cathedral that he composed most of his music. At the invitation of the chapter of the Cathedral in Puebla he traveled to Puebla to become the chapelmaster. Shortly after arriving, Bermúdez died in late 1605 at the age of 47.

*Qui habitat* is the Tract for the first Sunday in Lent. Bermúdez' setting of Psalm 90/91 alternates between the chant and polyphonic settings of the text. In many cases during this period, the polyphony would be in a faux-bourdon form. Here the composer is more generous in his use of imitation, passing notes and a more free form of writing.

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla was born around 1590 in Málaga Spain. In 1620 he moved to Puebla Mexico. More than 700 of his compositions including numerous Villancicos survive in the cathedral archive. His style of composition is in the *stile antico* of the Renaissance. He was appointed chapelmaster of the cathedral in 1628. During this period the Cathedral in Puebla was a more important religious center than Mexico City. His *Circumdederunt me dolores mortis* is written for the Introit on Septuagesima and is also an antiphon for the office of the dead. It is very much in the high Renaissance style as is indicative of the subtle text painting found in his works. His *Versa est in luctum* and *Vidi turbam magnum* are also included in tonight's performance as a further study in his composition style.

*Resuenen los Clarines* is an eight-part Villancico by Zumaya. Villancicos are a form of popular vocal music derived from Medieval dance forms. Around the middle of the sixteenth century Villancicos began to be associated with religious secular poetry and popular religious devotions. The structure of *Resuenen los Clarines* centers on an eight-part antiphonal refrain with imperfect tempus and prolation rhythm, and a perfect tempus and prolation middle section. This rather elaborate refrain is coupled with three verses. When performed in a grand procession, the piece was probably a very colorful display of sound combined with non-orchestral, "ethnic" instruments of the period.

Manuel de Zumaya was a choirboy at the Cathedral of Mexico City and a student of Antonio Salazar. Born around 1678, Zumaya studied organ after completing his service as a choirboy. He was made cathedral organist and a priest in 1700. He cultivated his linguistic and literary skills, becoming fluent in Italian and published an original play titled *El Rodrigo*. A new viceroy – Don Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y Silva – was appointed in January 1711. The viceroy was a devotee of Italian opera and commissioned Zumaya to translate Italian libretti and write new music to them. Zumaya's first opera, *La Parténope*, was produced in the viceregal palace on May 1, 1711 to celebrate the Saint's day of Philip V. This is the first known opera in Mexico and the first opera to be performed in North America. Only the libretto survived.

In 1736, a plague reduced the size of the choir and in September, the Dean of the cathedral was made Bishop of Oaxaca. Zumaya followed him to Oaxaca and stayed there the remainder of his life. He died in 1754.

#### Further reading:

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-Note by Kevin Clarke



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# A Match Made in Music

Wednesday, February 14, 2018 — 7:30 PM

The Gallery at Midtown Arts and Theater Center, Houston (MATCH)

## ***La Speranza***

Thomas Carroll, clarinet

Joanna Becker and Nadia Witherspoon, violins

Yvonne Smith, viola

Francis Koiner, cello

## PROGRAM

**String Quartet in b minor, Op. 33 no. 1** — Franz Joseph Haydn

*Allegro moderato* — *Menuetto: Allegro di molto* — *Andante* — *Finale: Presto*

**String Quartet no. 14 in G Major, K. 387** — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Allegro vivace assai* — *Menuetto* — *Andante cantabile* — *Molto allegro*

## INTERMISSION

**Quintet in A Major for Clarinet and Strings, K 581** — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Allegro* — *Larghetto* — *Menuetto* — *Trio I* — *Trio II* — *Allegro con Variazioni*

**La Speranza** is a group of string and wind players that explore and illuminate the connection between music and wellness through their chamber music performances on historical instruments. Founded in 2016 by Yvonne Smith and named after the Italian word for “hope”, La Speranza seeks to promote physical and emotional healing through their historically informed performances. In their first season, La Speranza appeared on the Memorial Classical Music Series and Houston Methodist Crain Garden Series. They also performed at Midtown Arts and Theater Center, Houston (MATCH), Christ the King Presbyterian Church and several support groups. Their 2017-2018 season, called "Mentors Inspire!", focuses on the role of mentors in our physical and emotional wellness through the works of Franz Joseph Haydn and his colleagues. The musicians of La Speranza, all connected to Houston by work or residence, are historical performance specialists and active performers in the United States and Europe.



With a sound described as “beautifully warm” (Herald Times) and “sweet and agile” (New York Times), period clarinetist and instrument builder **Thomas Carroll** performs extensively throughout North America and Europe on historical instruments. He holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory, Indiana University, and The Royal Conservatoire of The Hague, where his major teacher on early clarinets and chalumeaux was Eric Hoeprich.

Internationally, Thomas has performed under such directors as Christophe Coin, Richard Egarr, Philippe Herreweghe, Jos van Immerseel, Alessandro Moccia, and David Stern; and has performed at numerous festivals as an orchestral and chamber musician including Oude Muziek Utrecht, Muziekzomer Gelderland, Young Euro Classic, Festival de Saintes, and Musica Antiqua Brugge in venues ranging from the Kozerthaus in Berlin to the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. He has been featured as

a concerto soloist with Lyra Baroque, Ensemble ad Libitum, and Grand Harmonie to critical acclaim. In North America, Thomas is the principal clarinetist with Boston-based Grand Harmonie and Houston-based Mercury: The Orchestra Redefined, and frequently collaborates with other early music specialists on the east coast including the Clarion Music and Handel and Haydn Societies and Boston Baroque. He has given faculty chamber recitals and guest lectures and masterclasses on both coasts and at the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival. Thomas is currently on the faculty of the Brookline Music School and maintains a private studio.

An interest in instrument mechanics and acoustics has led Thomas to a secondary career as an instrument builder and extensive research into 18th and 19th century wood treatment and seasoning. He studied woodworking and instrument construction with Linda Shortridge, Rob Turner, and Paul Beekhuizen, and builds chalumeaux, baroque, and classical clarinets, and basset instruments for use in historically-informed performance ensembles.

*Photo credit: Teddie Hwang*



Violinist **Joanna Becker** received her Bachelor’s Degree from Yale College and her Master’s Degree from the Shepherd School at Rice University, where her principle teachers were Sergiu Luca and Ken Goldsmith. She pursued additional studies in performance and musicology at the Mannes College of Music and Hunter College, in New York City. In Houston, she performs regularly with Mercury, the Orchestra Redefined, and the Texas New Music Ensemble, among other orchestral and chamber ensembles. Joanna had the honor of participating in the Da Camera Young Artist Program in 2012. She teaches violin students of all ages in her private studio and at the YES Preparatory School. Before moving to Houston, she played for five years in the New Haven Symphony and was faculty at the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven. She has performed around the United States as well as in

Europe and South America. *Photo credit: Fair Star Photography*



Bulgarian-born violinist **Nadia Lesinska Witherspoon** has garnered an exceptional career spanning continents and genres. As a specialist in baroque violin technique, Nadia performs throughout the country, and is a frequent guest with Ars Lyrica Houston, Austin Baroque, Bach Society Houston, Houston Baroque, Mercury Baroque, and Viols of Houston. She can be heard on five commercial recordings, including Handel’s Op.6 Concerti Grossi, Vivaldi’s L’Estro Armonico, and Rameau’s Les Indes Galantes with Mercury Baroque, Colonna’s Psalmi ad Vesperas with the Houston Chamber Choir, and Ars Lyrica’s GRAMMY-nominated recording of Hasse’s Marc Antonio e Cleopatra. As a modern violinist, Nadia’s credits include the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, Los Angeles Pops Orchestra, and San Juan Capistrano Symphony. An active recitalist and chamber musician, Nadia can be heard throughout the year in her own concert series and as a collaborator with many of Houston’s

top musicians. In addition to classical music, Nadia is also a frequent jazz violinist and fiddler. A graduate of Chapman University, Nadia’s teachers included Paul Manaster and Todor Pelev. She received her period performance training from Oberlin’s Baroque Performance Institute and from studies with Jann Cosart, Marc Destrube, Marilyn McDonald, and Cynthia Roberts. Nadia resides in Houston with her husband, viola da gamba player Jordan Witherspoon. *Photo credit: Fair Star Photography*



Based in Houston, Texas, **Yvonne Smith** is an accomplished performer on modern and historical violas. She appears regularly with Bach Society Houston, Mercury, La Follia Austin Baroque, and Ars Lyrica Houston and gives several solo performances of Baroque repertoire every season. Her career was featured in the May 2017 issue of Early Music America's EMAG in the article "Early to Rise".

Yvonne is a dedicated chamber musician who has appeared with numerous ensembles and festivals in both modern and historical contexts, including a residency at the Cedar Valley Chamber Music Festival (Cedar Falls, IA). Additionally, Yvonne studied at the American Bach Soloists Academy and the Berwick Academy at the Oregon Bach Festival and worked with Elizabeth Blumenstock, Marc Destrube, Adam LaMotte, Robert Mealy, and Rachel Podger, among others.

Born in Ames, Iowa, Yvonne began piano lessons with her mother at the age of three and began studying the viola at her elementary school in upstate New York at the age of 9. She earned her Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees in Viola Performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University under the tutelage of Joan DerHovsepian and James Dunham.

In addition to several performances with La Speranza, Yvonne's 2017-2018 season includes performances and a recording of clarinet quintets of Brahms and Mozart as well as appearances with the Grant Park Orchestra, Houston Grand Opera, Mercury, Bach Society Houston, Ars Lyrica Houston, and La Follia Austin Baroque, American Bach Soloists (San Francisco), and Britten Pears Baroque Orchestra (UK). *Photo credit: Fair Star Photography*



**Francis Koiner** is an active performer, teacher, and clinician in the Houston area. Ms. Koiner regularly performs with Mercury, the Orchestra Redefined; Kingwood Chorale and Chamber Orchestra; and also serves as principal cellist with both Clear Lake Symphony and Pasadena Philharmonic. She has also performed with the Houston Gilbert and Sullivan Society and the Symphony of Southeast Texas, among others. Before moving with her husband to Houston, she performed in New York with the Cornell Contemporary Chamber Players, the Cornell Festival Orchestra, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Tri-Cities Opera, Ithaca Opera, and the Binghamton Philharmonic.

As an instructor at San Jacinto College-Central and in her home studio, as well as teaching in clinics in the Houston area, teaching and sharing her love of the cello hold an important place in Ms. Koiner's life. She has teacher trained at the Chicago Suzuki Institute, the DFW-WOW Suzuki Institute in Dallas, and the Central Pennsylvania Suzuki Institute. As a

Masters student at Rice University, Ms. Koiner instructed non-major cello students. She attended the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival in Brunswick, Maine, as the performing and teaching assistant to Marc Johnson of the Vermeer Quartet. Ms. Koiner's past teachers include Elizabeth Simkin, Desmond Hoebig, Christopher French, and Norman Fischer, and she earned a B.M., summa cum laude, from Ithaca College in 1999 and an M.M. from Rice University in 2004. She studied at Bowdoin with Steven Doane and Rosemary Elliot of the Eastman School of Music and has performed in master classes for David Ying and the Ying Quartet.

Ms. Koiner splits her time as a musician with her role as a homeschooling mother to her two daughters, 9 and 6. *Photo credit: Fair Star Photography*

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Matches take many forms. An affluent husband and wife fund and support a brilliant composer. A master musician meets his musical equal and is inspired not only to pay homage to such a person but to dedicate an entire oeuvre of work to him. A young composer finds a like-minded soloist to inspire him to write some of the most enduring works of the 18th century. A soloist refuses to compromise simply because of the limitations of his instrument, finding a luthier willing to build him something completely new. All of these matches share two things: a desire to strive for something beyond what can be accomplished by only one person, and music itself. While loftier mythological figures such as Orpheus and Euripides remain at the pinnacle of relationships forged in music, these 18th century professional and transactional matches were no less inspired, changing the course of Viennese classical music and laying the first bricks in place for the edifice that would become the revered musical canon for later generations.

Composed in 1781 and dedicated to the Grand Duke Paul of the Russian Empire, *Joseph Haydn's Op. 33* quartets have remained a staple of the string quartet repertoire since their first publication by Artaria. Nicknamed the "Russian" quartets, the apocryphal soubriquet has more to do with the dedicatee than the actual content of the set of quartets. The composition of these quartets came after a period of relative silence in the genre from Haydn, who from 1772 to 1781 had been occupied with serving as the musical director for the operas at the Esterhazy palace, both for conventional singers and marionettes. Given the relative speed with which Haydn's last forays into the quartet genre had produced a volume of work in the form of the Op. 9, 17, and 20, the anticipation for more quartets from the master composer was palpable from the publishing houses, a sentiment that Haydn capitalized upon when advertising his new works, making sure to state that he had not composed any works in the genre in a decade. The Christmas Day premiere of the quartets at the house of Grand Duchess Maria Feodorovna, wife of the Grand Duke, was an immediate success and canonized the quartets as exemplary works in the young genre.

The first of these quartets sets the stage for the trickery that runs through the entire set. The opening movement begins in the ambiguous tonality of D-major, before settling into the real key of b-minor. The second movement "Menuetto" takes the form of a decidedly un-danceable scherzo, a technique that would later influence Haydn's student Beethoven in the composition of his early symphonies, in a break with tradition. It is here that Haydn experiments with the bariolage that would permeate his later Op. 50/6 "Frog" Quartet. As if looking backwards, the third movement Andante takes the tempo of a proper minuet, but in a truly experimental Haydnian fashion, plays with the expectations of the listener and stretches the proportions of the movement as well as the harmonic framework, leading to extended periods of tonal ambiguity unheard of in 1780s Vienna. The rollicking finale breaks with the traditional fugues that Haydn used to end his Op. 20 quartets in rapid displays of virtuosity, shimmering arpeggios in the upper strings, and a thrilling conclusion.

The composition and subsequent publication of the Op. 33 Quartets coincided with the arrival of 26 year old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in Vienna. The young composer was so taken with the set of quartets, that he wrote a set of six which he dedicated to Haydn himself, cementing the camaraderie between the two men and elevating the genre of the quartet from merely novel to sublime. The pair would perform in quartets together with Haydn playing the first violin part and Mozart playing the viola, and Mozart made possible the admission of Haydn into the Viennese Freemason society, though Haydn rarely attended after his initiation. While much has yet to be uncovered as to their relationship, it is clear the two men held each other in high esteem. Mozart's dedication of the six "Haydn" quartets to their namesake leaves no room for interpretation of the composer's admiration for the older composer.

"A father who had decided to send his sons out into the great world thought it his duty to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man who was very celebrated at the time, and who happened moreover to be his best friend. In the same way I send my six sons to you [...] Please then, receive them kindly and be to them a father, guide, and friend! [...] I entreat you, however, to be indulgent to those faults which may have escaped a father's partial eye, and in spite of them, to continue your generous friendship towards one who so highly appreciates it."

Haydn's mutual admiration and gratitude for Mozart's dedication and the quartets themselves is evidenced in a letter to the composer's then-estranged father Leopold.

"Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name; he has taste, and, furthermore, the most profound knowledge of composition."

The first of these "Haydn" quartets in G-major, composed in 1782 and nicknamed the "**Spring**" *Quartet* showcases not only Mozart's immense talent for chamber music composition in a composer who at that point had been hoping for a job as a court director and operatic composer, but also the young composer's puckish, impetuous desire to break with tradition in the most ostentatious ways while still reverently holding up the work of the composers who had come before him. The chromaticism and remote tonal excursions that permeate the "Spring" quartet come in the form of extended chromatic passagework in the opening movement, extended ascending chromatic melodic fragments in the Menuetto with accompanying displaced accents to emphasize the chromatic notes, and the adventurous tonal layout of the slow movement. It is however in the finale where Mozart's meticulously inventive mind is at its most free. A four note subject begins the fugal finale which oscillates between chamber music and purely symphonic music in its scope, and most certainly served as the prototype for Mozart's final "Jupiter" symphony composed during the summer of 1788. One does not have to stretch the ear too much to hear all of Mozart's personality and aspirations in this quartet: the chromatic passages in the first and second movement call to mind the meandering chromatic lines of his operatic female leads such as "Don Giovanni's" Donna Elvira, while the finale's orchestral texture shows a mature composer of purely instrumental music that hints at what would follow.

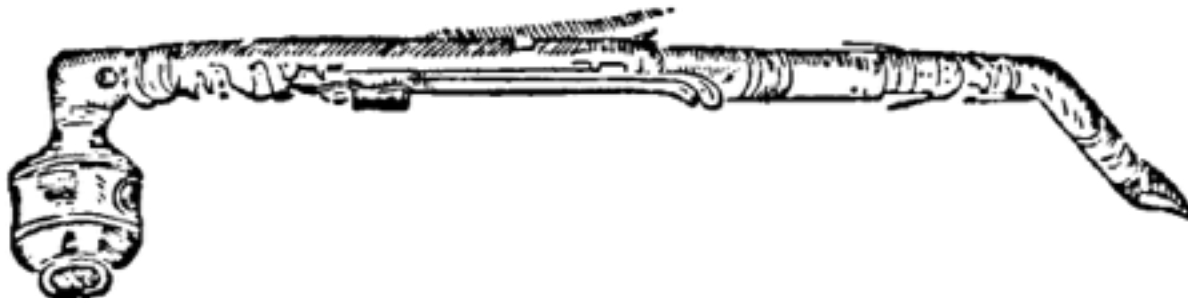
Mozart's collaboration with and admiration for the Viennese clarinetist Anton Stadler resulted in some of the most sublime music written for the instrument. In the music written for Stadler, we see Mozart's portrayal of Stadler as a man, as well as Mozart's own personal humor and vivacious spirit, coupled with a tenderness and sensitivity that few composers before or after could claim. Completed in September 1789, the **Quintet for clarinet and strings** was premiered by Anton Stadler on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December of the same year, with a repeat performance on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April of the following year. From an advertisement for a previous concert in 1788, we know that Stadler had in his possession an instrument capable of playing two whole tones below the compass of the regular clarinet. Court instrument maker Theodor Lotz constructed Stadler's "invented clarinet." While this means that Stadler had an instrument capable of descending to low C, little more of the instrument's design can be ascertained from this description. However, a later description of Stadler's instrument in 1801 by Freidrich Bertuch states that the last quarter of the length of the instrument "is fitted with a cross-rib from which, the projecting bell flares outward." This description, coupled with a crudely drawn woodcut from a 1794 concert in Riga (see illustration) leaves little doubt as to the design of Stadler's instrument. It is most likely for this instrument, that Mozart penned Stadler's Quintet.

Given that the score no longer exists (along with the score of the Concerto K. 622 and Stadler's personal instruments, the score was inside a suitcase that Stadler pawned in 1800), a close examination of first publications by André and Arataria reveals little more than suggestions as to how the work was originally performed, particularly in reference to notes in the "basset" register of the clarinet. The first publications of the work in its original configuration (as is also the case for the Concerto) transpose numerous passages up an octave to compensate for the lack of basset notes on the regular clarinet. However, an 1809 arrangement of the work for clarinet and piano shows several low basset notes (a C and a D), which suggest the presence of additional basset passages throughout the work. An examination of the clarinet part shows several awkwardly written passages where a transposition down an octave would make more sense, particularly in the series of three octave arpeggios in the first movement, as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> variation in the 4<sup>th</sup> movement.

The work itself is in four movements, an allegro in A, slow movement in D, and minuet and variations in A. The clarinet here is presented completely in its element, and Mozart's writing allows the clarinet a dual role as soloist and accompanying player. The clarinet is completely integrated into the dense musical tapestry that Mozart weaves, and the part writing shows Mozart's deeply intimate relationship with the instrument, and Stadler's playing. Where the clarinet was just beginning to gain equal footing in the orchestral woodwind world, Mozart's

writing shows a complete knowledge of the true capabilities of the instrument presenting it as an instrument with a personality, singing over the strings one moment, somber and restrained in the lowest register the next. One can only wonder at the confidence Mozart must have had in both the instrument and performer in composing such a sublime work, and it is with that in mind that we humbly offer our performance.

*Notes by Thomas Carroll*



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**Save the Date!**

**Thursday, April 19 — 7:00 PM  
Bach & Friends  
San Jacinto College, Pasadena**

**Saturday, June 2 — 7:30 PM  
Beethoven's Septet  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Bellaire**

**[www.la-speranza.com/calendar](http://www.la-speranza.com/calendar)**



*la speranza*



# Esther & Jonah

Friday, February 16, 2018 — 7:30 PM  
Zilkha Hall, The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

## Ars Lyrica Houston and Bach Society Houston

*Matthew Dirst and Rick Erickson, Directors*

*Jennifer Bates, Soprano*

*Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, Countertenor*

*Eduardo Tercero, Tenor*

### PROGRAM

#### **Jonah** — Samuel Felsted (1743-1802)

Overture: Allegro – Andantino – Allegro

Recitative: Voice of God/Narrator	<i>Jonah, arise!</i>
Air: Jonah	<i>Out of the deep</i>
Air: Jonah	<i>Billows foam around my head</i>
Recitative: Narrator	<i>The Lord commands</i>
Air: Jonah	<i>My God and King</i>
Recitative: Voice of God	<i>Jonah, arise</i>
Air: Jonah	<i>Lord, I obey</i>
Recitative: Narrator	<i>Repent, ye men of Nineveh</i>
Chorus: Ninevites	<i>Have mercy, Lord</i>
Recitative: Narrator	<i>God saw their works</i>
Chorus:	<i>Tune your harps</i>

#### **Esther** — George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Overture: Andante – Larghetto – Allegro

##### **Scene I**

Recitative: Officer/Haman	<i>'Tis greater far to spare, than to destroy</i>
Air: Haman	<i>Pluck root and branch from out the land</i>
Recitative: Officer	<i>Our souls with ardor glow</i>
Chorus: Persians	<i>Shall we the God of Israel fear?</i>

##### **Scene II**

Recitative: 1 <sup>st</sup> Israelite	<i>Now persecution shall lay by her iron rod</i>
Air: 1 <sup>st</sup> Israelite	<i>Tune your harps to cheerful strains</i>

Chorus: Israelites  
Recitative: 2<sup>nd</sup> Israelite  
Air: 2<sup>nd</sup> Israelite  
Chorus: Israelites

*Shall we of servitude complain?  
O God, who from the suckling's mouth  
Praise the Lord with cheerful noise  
Shall we of servitude complain? (reprise)*

### **Scene III**

Recitative: 3<sup>rd</sup> Israelite  
Chorus: Israelites  
Air: 3<sup>rd</sup> Israelite  
Chorus: Israelites

*How have our sins provoked the Lord!  
Ye sons of Israel, mourn  
O Jordan, Jordan, sacred tide!  
Ye sons of Israel, mourn (reprise)*

## **INTERMISSION**

### **Scene IV**

Recitative: Esther/Mordecai  
Air: Mordecai  
Recitative: Esther  
Air: Esther  
Chorus: Israelites

*Why sits that sorrow on thy brow?  
Dread not, righteous Queen, the danger  
I go before the King to stand  
Tears assist me, pity moving  
Save us, O Lord*

### **Scene V**

Recitative: Ahasuerus  
Duet: Esther/Ahasuerus  
Air: Ahasuerus  
Recitative: Esther  
Air: Ahasuerus  
Recitative: 1<sup>st</sup> Israelite  
Chorus: Israelites  
Arioso: 3<sup>rd</sup> Israelite  
Chorus: Israelites

*Who dares intrude into our presence  
Who calls my parting soul from death?  
O beauteous Queen, unclosethose eyes  
If I find favour in thy sight  
How can I stay, when love invites?  
With inward joy his visage glows  
Virtue, truth, and innocence  
Jehovah crown'd with glory bright  
He comes, He comes*

### **Scene VI**

Recitative: Ahasuerus/Esther  
Recitative: Haman  
Air: Esther  
Recitative: Ahasuerus  
Air: Haman  
Chorus: Israelites

*Now, O Queen, thy suit declare  
Turn not, O Queen, thy face away  
Flatt'ring tongue, no more I hear thee!  
Guard, seize the traitor  
How art thou falln' from thy height!  
The Lord our enemy has slain*

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

The English oratorio, arguably Handel's greatest invention, enjoyed a leisurely genesis. During his years in Rome (1707–1710), Handel composed at least two oratorios in Italian for private patrons and aristocratic audiences. His first English oratorio came about thanks to similar circumstances during his 1718–1719 service to James Brydges, Earl of Chandos, whose grand estate at Cannons (near London) boasted a musical court second only to that of the royal family. As Paymaster General for the King's forces during the War of Spanish Succession, Brydges had acquired great wealth, which he spent lavishly on musicians, writers, painters, architects, and artisans of all kinds. As composer in residence at Cannons with an expert ensemble at his disposal, Handel created signature works, including the "Chandos" Anthems and the masques *Acis & Galatea* and *Esther*. The latter, after multiple revisions, came eventually to be regarded as Handel's first English-language oratorio.

During the late seventeenth century, the Old Testament heroine Esther had become a popular figure; Jean Racine's 1689 drama is but one of many literary precursors to Handel's oratorio. The biblical Book of Esther is essentially a morality tale about a Hebrew woman who becomes Queen of Persia and saves her people from destruction. An essential text for both the Jewish festival of Purim and English "Thanksgiving" (Guy Fawkes) Day, Esther served as a useful political allegory in 1718: its oppressed Jews were analogous, in Handel's England, to persecuted Catholics, one of whom may have been penned its libretto. Alexander Pope, an unapologetic Catholic then in residence at Cannons, surely had some input; some of his verse ended up in the libretto for *Acis & Galatea*. In any case, Esther traces the fortunes of a Jewish orphan who has somehow become the second wife of Ahasuerus, King of Persia, whom her kinsman Mordecai serves.

The oratorio opens with Ahasuerus' powerful minister Haman (the evil locus of much Purim mischief), who takes great offense at Mordecai's refusal to bow before him. Haman's threat to exterminate all Jews in Persia, vengefully echoed by the Chorus of Persians in Scene I, contrasts sharply with Jewish rejoicing in Scene II over Esther's newfound status as queen. Joy gives way to sorrow in Scene III, as the Jews process Haman's horrifying decree; the shift from grateful servitude to imminent slaughter gave Handel perfect material for strong musical contrasts. Esther finally appears in Scene IV, where she learns the tragic fate of her people. Mordecai prevails upon her to make intercession with her husband the King, despite the grim prohibition (on pain of death) for unwanted approaches to Ahasuerus. Risking her own life, Esther goes to see the King, whose love for her trumps all archaic courtly customs. Scene V thus includes considerable rejoicing on the part of the Israelites, whose God delivers them through the good graces of both Esther and Ahasuerus. It remains only to dispatch the villain, whose brief plea for mercy in Scene VI falls on deaf ears. The final chorus, the grandest movement in the work, celebrates Haman's death with a righteous fist-pump worthy of the Psalmist: "The Lord our enemy has slain," indeed.

One compositional problem in such a work is the role of the chorus, which plays the part of murderous Persians in Scene I and doomed Israelites in Scene III. Handel took his cue from the great French dramatists of the previous age, who insisted on the absolute unity of singing with action, without concern for later shifts in these same actors' roles. The chorus is thus something of a chameleon in *Esther*, just as it is in Handel's other English oratorios, the Bach passions, and countless later choral works.

Handel revisited *Esther* multiple times, including one famous 1732 performance with the Children of the Chapel Royal at the Crown & Anchor Tavern in the Strand, which was given "in still life," according to Johann Mattheson—that is, in a series of vivid tableaux, presumably with costumes and painted backdrops. The Bishop of London the Dean of the Chapel Royal were not amused; they banned the use of boys in subsequent theatrical productions. Undeterred, Handel moved his oratorio performance to the same theaters he used for operas, henceforth presenting them as concert pieces, without any stage action or scenery. *Esther* ultimately became a three-act oratorio on the model of his other late works, though one whose drama became more muddled at each revival, it seems. One contemporary complaint against one of these late performances objects to Handel's use of Italian soloists, whose lousy English "might as well have been Hebrew." This evening we present the original 1718 version of the work.

By the late 1730s, Handel's London public wanted virtuosic singing but with stories that promoted virtue, devotion, even piety. England's venerable choral tradition encouraged the production of oratorios that mingle arias with choruses—unlike Baroque opera seria, where the focus is exclusively on arias. The oratorio proved a durable vehicle for Handel and for English musical culture in general. Theatre owners now made money during the Lenten season, when opera was prohibited, and the beau monde now enjoyed musical entertainment throughout the season. The same culture of consumption that surrounded opera also applied to oratorio: Handel labored to create new works each season, rotating a few favorites in and out of the annual lineup to take advantage of those that proved popular. His formula gave his growing English public what they wanted: pretty arias, tuneful instrumental music, soaring choruses, plus a healthy dose of either religion or idealized history.

In 1775 in Kingston, Jamaica, Samuel Felsted wrote the oratorio *Jonah*, thus creating the first oratorio from the “new world.” The work, in twelve movements, is scored for three solo voices (God, Jonah, and a Narrator), violins, oboe, continuo, and choir. *Jonah* was premiered in Kingston in 1775; its first performance in New York was in 1788 and in Boston in 1789. Felsted himself was not only organist at Parish Church of Saint Andrew in Kingston, but was also an artist, inventor, botanist, and a poet (the libretto, unattributed, is probably his). In 1771, he was admitted to the American Philosophical Society, to which Benjamin Franklin also belonged.

Late eighteenth-century Kingston was a prized British colony that supported musical and theatrical activities. It had a rich cultural life, including visits from repertory groups from New York and London.

*Jonah* is a rather brief work, but it includes arias, recitatives, and choruses to tell the familiar Bible story of Jonah and the whale. The orchestration is by Boston native Bryan Jones, whose Master’s thesis focused on this work, and is further based on the work of Thurston Dox. Today’s performance is almost certainly a Houston premiere for Felsted’s *Jonah*.

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Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen *countertenor*  
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Saturday March 3, 2018

Spring gala at the historic Esperson building

## **Jonah Soloists**

*Voice of God* — Jennifer Bates

*Jonah* — Eduardo Tercero

*Narrator* — Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen

## **Esther Soloists**

*Officer* — Cody Arthur

*Haman* — Christopher Besch

*1<sup>st</sup> Israelite(ten)* — Cody Arthur

*2<sup>nd</sup> Israelite(sop)* — Renée Rybolt

*3<sup>rd</sup> Israelite(alto)* — Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen

*Esther* — Jennifer Bates

*Mordecai* — Eduardo Tercero

*Ahasuerus* — Alexander Scheuermann

## **Orchestral Personnel**

*natural trumpet* — Wes Miller

*Baroque oboe* — Kathryn Montoya

*natural horn* — Paul Avril

James Wilson

*Baroque bassoon* — Benjamin Kamins

*violin 1* — Kurt Johnson

Maria Lin

Oleg Sulyga

*violin 2* — Alan Austin

Kirsten Yon

Hae-a Lee

*viola* — James Dunham

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## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Soprano **Jennifer Bates**, a Maine native, enjoys a multifaceted career in the opera, concert and recital worlds. Recent engagements include the role Pepik in the NY Philharmonic production of *The Cunning Little Vixen*, multiple appearances with NY City Opera, Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* with the American Symphony Orchestra, and as the featured soloist at the Bach Vespers Cantata Series just steps from Lincoln Center for ten years. Highlights of previous seasons have included performances at Carnegie Hall, singing Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* with the New England Symphonic Ensemble, and many European engagements, including Elgar's *The Kingdom* with Maestro Leonard Slatkin and the Philharmonia in the prestigious Three Choirs Festival, Haydn's *Creation* with Robert Tear at the Dartington International Summer Festival, Fauré's *Requiem* with Sir David Willcocks at Royal Albert Hall, and Verdi's *Requiem* at Windsor Castle. As a recitalist, she has performed in multiple venues in the US and abroad, including a tour of Great Britain performing Britten's Holy Sonnets of John Donne, as well as at the French Embassy in Washington D.C.



Countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen** has quickly been identified as one of opera and early music's most promising rising stars. In 2017, he was named a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, First Prize Winner of the Houston Grand Opera Eleanor McCollum Competition, a Sara Tucker Study Grand recipient from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation, and numerous other prizes. This season, he is a member of the Houston Grand Opera Studio – the first countertenor in the Studio's history – and next season, he will continue his training by joining the San Francisco Opera as an Adler Fellow. This season at HGO, he performed in productions of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and Strauss' *Elektra*. Additional performances of the season include engagements with American Bach Soloists, The Dallas Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and recitals around the United States. In summer 2018, his first commercial recording will be released—the world premiere recording of Kenneth Fuchs' "Poems of Life" with the London Symphony Orchestra (Naxos). *Photo by Shannon Langman*



Tenor **Eduardo Alberto Tercero**, a native of Panama City, Republica de Panama, is described as a "dashing" performer by the *Houston Chronicle* and was also listed in *Symphony Magazine's Guide to Emerging Artists*. As a concert artist his credits include the World Premiere of Nicholas of Myra by Robert Nelson in the role of Marcus, Piacere in the Houston Premiere production of Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verita*, Adamo in the Houston Premiere production of *Il Primo Omicidio* by Scarlatti, Messiah by G. F. Handel with the Des Moines and La Cross Symphony Orchetras, Houston Chamber Choir and Bethany (KS) and Augustana (IL) Colleges, Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine 1610* with Ars Lyrica Houston in conjunction with both the Houston Chamber Choir and Orpheus Chamber Singers of Dallas and his Houston Symphony debut as the Narrator in Copeland's *Lincoln Portrait*. Most recently he has appeared in the World Premier production of *O Columbia* with the Houston Grand Opera, Music Box's production of *Godspell* in the role of John the Baptist/Judas, the Houston Premiere production of Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* with A Bit of a Stretch productions and as lead ensemble member of

the Premier production of *Defy Gravity: A Stephen Schwartz Songbook* with Standing Room Only productions. A longtime member of the Houston Chamber Choir under the direction of Robert Simpson, he will be making his season debut with Cantare Houston under the baton of Amy Solberg this coming season. He is a frequent soloist for Ars Lyrica Houston under the baton of Dr. Matthew Dirst and Mercury Baroque under the baton of Antoine Plante. He can also be heard in the Newport Classics' recording of *Cassanova's Homecoming* by one of America's leading composers, Dominick Argento, and is the tenor soloist for the World Premiere recording of Giovanni Paolo Colonna's *Psalmi ad Vesperas (1694)* now available from MSR Classics. He can be seen next in the role of Franky in *Forever Plaid*.

Soprano **Renée Rybolt** fulfills her musical life as a vocalist, teacher, and choir director in the Houston area. Renee's love of choral music led her to the position of Director of Choral Ministry at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Bellaire, Texas. She also teaches private voice lessons in the Katy area. Renée received her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Saint Joseph's College and Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from Southern Illinois University. She is thrilled to be in her seventh season as a member of Bach Society Houston.

**Cody Arthur**, tenor, is a Masters candidate at the University of Houston. He has sung in choruses for Handel's *Messiah* and *Dettingin te deum*, the Requiems of Fauré and Verdi, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Howells' *Hymnus Paradisi*, and Bach's *B minor*



Mass. On the operatic stage, Cody has sung the title role in *Albert Herring*, Prince in *The Love for Three Oranges*, Samuel Parris in *The Crucible*, and roles in Gluck's *Armide*, *L'amico Fritz*, and *L'enfant et les sortilèges*. Cody received his Bachelors in Voice Performance from The University of Mississippi.

Tenor **Alexander Scheuermann** is a native of Merritt Island, Florida who now lives and works in Houston. Recent operatic roles include Laurie in *Little Women*, with Opera in the Heights, Donald in *Gallantry*, with the Maguire Theatre, Le Jeu in *Les Plaisir de Versailles*, with Ars Lyrica, The Barber in *Man of La Mancha* and Giuseppe in *La Traviata* with Central City Opera, and Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* at the Moores Opera House. Concert work includes performances as a soloist with Bach Society Houston, the Three Texan Tenors, the Lone Star Lyric cabaret series, and lieder recitals across Houston. This summer Alexander will join the Crested Butte opera festival as a Studio Artist where he will perform the role of Dr. Caius in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Alexander holds a BM in voice performance from Florida State University, an MM in voice performance from The University of Houston.

Bass-baritone **Christopher Besch** has appeared as a soloist at various venues across Europe and the United States. He has been heard recently at the Leipzig Bach Festival with Bach Society Houston, as Mars in the American premiere of Handel's *Parnasso in Festa* with the American Bach Soloists, and Peter Gray in the world premiere of *What Wings They Were: The Case of Emeline* with Houston Grand Opera (HGOco). With over sixty solo opera roles and oratorio appearances in his performing repertoire, Mr. Besch has worked with such noted conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Jeffrey Thomas, and the late Lorin Maazel.



Ars Lyrica Founder & Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst** is the first American musician to win major international prizes in both organ and harpsichord, including the American Guild of Organists National Young Artist Competition (1990) and the Warsaw International Harpsichord Competition (1993). Widely admired for his stylish playing and conducting, the *Dallas Morning News* recently praised his "clear and evocative conducting" of Handel's *Alexander's Feast*, which "yielded a performance as irresistibly lively as it was stylish." Dirst's recordings with Ars Lyrica have earned a Grammy nomination and widespread critical acclaim. His degrees include a PhD in musicology from Stanford University and the *prix de virtuosité* in both organ and harpsichord from the Conservatoire National de Reuil-Malmaison, France, where he spent two years as a Fulbright scholar. Equally active as a scholar and as an organist, Dirst is Professor of Music at the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, and Organist at St Philip Presbyterian Church in Houston. His book *Engaging Bach: The Keyboard Legacy from Marpurg to Mendelssohn* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2012. He is also the editor of *Bach and the Organ*, which appears in the Bach Perspectives series from the University of Illinois Press in early 2016.



**Rick Erickson** is the Director of Bach Society Houston and Cantor at Christ the King Lutheran Church. He is also Instructor in music at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University. A native of Wisconsin, Rick holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Superior, from which he also received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2009, the Master of Music Degree in Organ Performance and Literature and the Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music, where he also served for four years on the faculty of Improvfest. Rick has appeared as a conductor, church music lecturer, and hymn festival leader throughout the United States, and in Germany, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand. He has performed for conventions of the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, among other music events. He has recorded for Naxos, JV Recordings, and Media 1517. This past summer Rick led the Bach Choir in performances in Germany, including at the Leipzig Bach Fest, becoming the first professional American choir to perform as part of this prestigious event. Prior to coming to Houston, Rick served for 22 years as Director of the celebrated Bach Vespers series in New York.

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## ***Artful Women HONOREE***

Robin Angly



This season it seems especially appropriate that we honor some of Houston's leading female philanthropists, especially those who are longtime members for the Ars Lyrica family. Our fourth concert thus honors Robin Angly, whose advocacy and generous support of many of Houston's leading cultural organizations has been crucial to artistic growth, financial sustainability, and long-term impact in the community.

Music has been a big part of **Robin Angly's** life since childhood. She grew up in a household that exposed her to singers like Joan Sutherland, Ella Fitzgerald and a lot of Bach; she began with piano lessons at the age of five, then at fourteen, voice lessons at Aspen Music Festival. Robin has sung with the Houston Grand Opera, the Houston Symphony Chorus and has a philanthropic passion to support the arts, the opera, and the symphony. Robin and her husband Miles Smith have both served on the Board of Directors of Ars Lyrica Houston, an organization whose mission they hold close to their hearts. Both Robin and Miles are excited to be a part of the process of bringing to fruition in November 2019 the organization's first fully staged Baroque opera, *Handel's Agrippina*.

### ***Words of Congratulation***

"When we met Robin in 2003, she was portraying the voice of God in Britten's *Noye's Fludde* at St. Philip Presbyterian Church. Ever since, we have jokingly called her "God." According to Oxford and Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, a "god" is "a greatly admired or influential person" and "a person of supreme value." It is clear to us that this title has stuck because it is completely appropriate and deserved! Thank you for changing and improving lives. We love you, Robin!" – *Sonja Bruzauskas & Houston Haymon*

"Robin and her husband Miles graciously open their beautiful home for functions by Ars Lyrica and other charitable organizations. We are actively involved in Ars Lyrica, only because they invited us to an excellent house concert there." – *Brendan & Kathryn Godfrey*

"Robin is a remarkable asset because of her entrepreneurial creativity, passion for cultural advancement, desire to give, and enthusiasm." – *Jim Crownover*

"Robin has been one of the most loyal supporters of the Moores School of Music and the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts. Her passion for music, and for educating students of the next generation on the beauty of music—and the way she turns that passion into action—makes her a philanthropist of the highest order. We will always be grateful." – *Andrew Davis*

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