

AN EASTER MESSIAH

Saturday, April 2 at 7:30pm

Zilkha Hall

Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

6:45 PM: Pre-Concert Lecture

Featuring Michael Marissen, author of *Tainted Glory*
in Handel's Messiah: The Unsettling History of the World's
Most Beloved Choral Work

MATTHEW DIRST

Artistic Director

On behalf of the board, staff, and musicians of Ars Lyrica Houston, welcome to An Easter *Messiah*. We're delighted this evening to be presenting our first complete performance of this great masterwork, in collaboration with the Orpheus Chamber Singers, with whom we'll be performing the work again tomorrow evening at the Dallas City Performance Hall.

We have a number of special guests to welcome this evening, including conductor and Gramophone Award winner John Butt plus an array of stellar soloists. Michael Marissen, author of *Tainted Glory in Handel's Messiah: The Unsettling History of the World's Most Beloved Choral Work* (2014) gives a pre-concert lecture in Zilkha Hall at 6:45 pm in advance of the 7:30 pm performance.

Subscriptions for next season are now on sale. Please take home a copy of the brochure for Ars Lyrica's 2016/17 *Fables & Follies* and return the order form soon, since the best ticket prices and perks are available to those who subscribe early.

One more program remains on our 2015/16 season: *Summer Zephyr* on Friday, June 3 featuring the incomparable John Holiday singing Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate*. Don't miss this memorable program, which also includes a W. F. Bach harpsichord concerto featuring yours truly and Vivaldi's Summer Concerto, as realized by recorder virtuoso Kathryn Montoya.

With warm thanks for your continued patronage and support—enjoy the program!



MATTHEW DIRST
Artistic Director

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

Matthew Dirst, *Artistic Director*

PRESENTS

Melissa Givens, *soprano*

Jay Carter, *countertenor*

Aaron Sheehan, *tenor*

Curtis Streetman, *bass*

John Butt, *conductor*

Elizabeth Blumenstock, *concertmaster*

THE ORPHEUS CHAMBER SINGERS

Don Krehbiel, *Artistic Director*

Messiah, HWV 56

(1742)

A Sacred Oratorio

Music By George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Libretto by Charles Jennens (1700–1773)

PART ONE

Sinfonia (Overture)

Accompagnato—Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (*Isaiah 40: 1-3*)

Tenor Air

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry moutain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (*Isaiah 40: 4*)

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (*Isaiah 40: 5*)

Bass Accompagnato

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts: Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. (*Haggai 2: 6-7*) The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, whom you delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. (*Malachi 3: 1*)

Alto Air

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (*Malachi 3: 2*)

Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (*Malachi 3: 3*)

Alto Recitative

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us. (*Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23*)

Alto Air and Chorus

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God! (*Isaiah 40: 9*) Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (*Isaiah 60: 1*)

Bass Accompagnato

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (*Isaiah 60: 2-3*)

Bass Air

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (*Isaiah 9: 2*)

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. (*Isaiah 9: 6*)

Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony")

Soprano Recitative

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. (*Luke 2: 8*)

Soprano Accompagnato

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. (*Luke 2: 9*)

Soprano Recitative

And the angel said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." (*Luke 2: 10-11*)

Soprano Accompagnato

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: (*Luke 2: 13*)

Chorus

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men." (*Luke 2: 14*)

Soprano Air

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. (*Zechariah 9: 9-10*)

Alto Recitative

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (*Isaiah 35: 5-6*)

Alto & Soprano Air

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. (*Isaiah 40: 11*) Come unto Him, all ye that labor, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (*Matthew 11: 28-29*)

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. (*Matthew 11: 30*)

INTERMISSION

PART TWO

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (*John 1: 29*)

Alto Air

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (*Isaiah 53: 3, 6*)

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (*Isaiah 53: 4-5*)

Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed. (*Isaiah 53: 5*)

Chorus

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53: 6*)

Tenor Accompagnato

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: (*Psalms 22: 7*)

Chorus

"He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him." (*Psalms 22: 8*)

Tenor Accompagnato

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart: He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort him. (*Psalms 69: 20*)

Tenor Arioso

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (*Lamentations 1: 12*)

Tenor Accompagnato

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken. (*Isaiah 53: 8*)

Tenor Air

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. (*Psalms 16: 10*)

Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory. (*Psalms 24: 7-10*)

Tenor Recitative

Unto which of the angels said He at any time: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" (*Hebrews 1: 5*)

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship Him. (*Hebrews 1: 6*)

Soprano Air

Thou art gone up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even from Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them. (*Psalms 68: 18*)

Chorus

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. (*Psalms 68: 11*)

Soprano Air

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (*Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15*)

Chorus

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. (*Romans 10: 18; Psalms 19: 4*)

Bass Air

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed. (*Psalms 2: 1-2*)

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. (*Psalms 2: 3*)

Tenor Recitative

He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh them to scorn; The Lord shall have them in derision. (*Psalms 2: 4*)

Tenor Air

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (*Psalms 2: 9*)

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. (*Revelation 19: 6, 16 and Revelation 11:15*)

PART THREE

Soprano Air

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. (*Job 19: 25-26*) For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (*I Corinthians 15: 20*)

Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (*I Corinthians 15: 21-22*)

Bass Accompanato

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (*I Corinthians 15: 51-52*)

Bass Air

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. (*I Corinthians 15: 52-53*)

Alto Recitative

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (*I Corinthians 15: 54*)

Alto & Tenor Duet

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (*I Corinthians 15: 55-56*)

Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (*I Corinthians 15: 57*)

Soprano Air

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (*Romans 8: 31, 33-34*)

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Revelation 5: 12-14*)

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Bethany Ring		Del Howard	
Audra Methvin		David Thompson	
Lara Wasserman		Barret Radzuin	
Lauren Stroh		Jason Awbrey	<i>bass</i>
Katrina Burggraf-Kledas	<i>alto</i>	Andrew Dittman	
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Laura Warriner Bray		Ronnie Mayfield	
Elizabeth Knight		Charlie Moore	
Nicolas Garza			

ARS LYRICA HOUSTON

Matthew Dirst, *Artistic Director*

MESSIAH ORCHESTRA PERSONNEL

Elizabeth Blumenstock	<i>violin I</i>	Deborah Dunham	<i>violine</i>
Maria Lin		Kathryn Montoya	<i>Baroque oboe</i>
Hae-A Lee-Barnes		Anne Leek	
Kirsten Yon		Kevin Hall	<i>Baroque bassoon</i>
Alan Austin	<i>violin II</i>	Adam Gordon	<i>natural trumpet</i>
James Andrewes		Wes Miller	
Alana Youssefian		Craig Hauschildt	<i>timpani</i>
Andrés Gonzalez		Richard Savino	<i>theorbo</i>
Erika Lawson	<i>viola</i>	Matthew Dirst	<i>organ</i>
Suzanne Lefevre		John Butt	<i>conductor/ harpsichord</i>
Barrett Sills	<i>cello</i>		
Karen Hall			

With thanks to the Moores School of Music, University of Houston, for use of its John Phillips Florentine-style harpsichord and Bennett-Guittari continuo organ, to St Philip Presbyterian Church for providing rehearsal space for this program, and to Bach Society Houston for the loan of its timpani. Thanks as well to Deborah & James Dunham, Joyce & David Fox, Kathryn & Brendan Godfrey, Marcia & Doug Koch, and Dick & Eleanor Viebig for providing accommodations to Ars Lyrica artists.

PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel had the good fortune to spend most of his career working in London, which in the early 18th century was the largest, most cosmopolitan city in Europe—the perfect destination for a musical entrepreneur who aspired toward success in the theater especially. When Handel arrived in London in 1710, he had already written dozens of Italian solo cantatas, major sacred works in Latin, even a few operas and oratorios. He quickly established his credentials as a composer and impresario, and was for many years the toast of English society, even music master to members of the royal family.

Yet despite the successes of *Rinaldo*, *Giulio Cesare*, and other of his Italian operas, Handel's audience evolved over time, with upper-class spectacles gradually giving way to middle-class entertainments. The turn towards oratorio in the 1730s, due partly to the waning fortunes of Baroque *opera seria*, offered other advantages as well. Oratorio proved both cheaper to produce than opera and more effective politically; grandiose works like *Israel in Egypt* endowed their venerable stories with both imperialist ambition and national pride. The English oratorio was eminently suited, in other words, to Handel's time and place: the genre is outwardly pious but inwardly alive with limitless opportunities for colorful display. The dramatic sweep of opera but none of its convoluted plotlines—what was not to like?

English audiences responded with great enthusiasm, as did certain blueblood poets. In July 1741 Charles Jennens, who had provided Handel with a couple of oratorio libretti already, wrote to the great composer to propose a new work, one based on the prophesy and fulfillment of the Christian messiah. Handel seems to have needed no further encouragement: he wrote out and scored his first draft of the work in late August and early September of the same year. After wildly successful performances in Dublin and London in the 1742 and 1743, respectively, he returned to the work repeatedly in the 1750s, when it became the conclusion of his annual Lenten oratorio offerings. And the rest, as they say, is history: *Messiah* has been part of the Western canon ever since.

Unusually for a Handel oratorio, *Messiah* lacks a plot, though it does have plenty of vivid musical description: the angels' breathless yet majestic announcement of Christ's birth in the "Glory to God" chorus, for example, or the breakneck string figuration in the bass air "Why do the nations so furiously rage together." Jennens' libretto weaves together passages from the Old and New Testaments to great effect, but its focus is on the nature of Christ more than the events of his life. Cobbled together from the words of Isaiah and other prophets, the Psalms, Paul's letters, plus bits of the Gospels and Revelations, *Messiah* examines in its three parts Jesus's earthly manifestation, his suffering and eventual triumph, and the implications for humanity at Judgment Day.

As such, *Messiah* put forward a strong case for Orthodox Christianity during a time when the English church felt the need to answer the threat posed by Deists and unbelievers of all stripes, whose numbers had increased substantially thanks to the Enlightenment. Its rapturous reception must have given more than one preacher cause for envy. Today every national culture that values *Messiah* interacts with it differently, though enough of its original intent remains to animate scholarly conversation about the work's multiple messages. Such is the power of this composer's art, which conveys in a more efficient way than perhaps any of his contemporaries the essence of a vast array of emotions.

Is this what makes us return to this work with such astonishing regularity? The unbridled joyfulness of "For unto us a child is born," the deep poignancy of "He was despised," the awesome power of the "Hallelujah" chorus—it's difficult to imagine these words sounding any other way. And yet, Handel's own recycling of musical material ("For unto us" began life as an Italian duet, on a secular text) suggests that he viewed music as a more plastic art, one that resists the museum cage of the "masterwork" tradition.

Our *Messiah*, I would argue, has become equal parts oratorio and ritual. Its annual reenactment would please Handel the impresario but likely baffle Handel the composer. Because it resonates somewhere deep within our collective psyche, however, *Messiah* is always worth the journey, even if—or perhaps because—we know every note by heart.

© MATTHEW DIRST *Artistic Director*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



John Butt, two-times Gramophone Award winner, is Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort. His career as both musician and scholar centres on music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but he is also concerned with the implications of the past in our present culture. Author of five monographs, Butt has written extensively on Bach, the baroque, the historical performance revival and issues of modernity.

His discography includes eleven recordings on organ and harpsichord for Harmonia Mundi (France) and eleven recent recordings for Linn Records. Highlights, as conductor of Dunedin, include the award-winning recordings of Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's Requiem (which was also nominated for a Grammy Award), together with significant recordings of Bach's Passions, Mass and Brandenburg Concertos, and Handel's *Acis* and *Esther*. His recording of Bach's Magnificat, in the context of Bach's Christmas Vespers service was released in November 2015 and, in March 2016, Bach's Violin Concertos (with Dunedin's leader, Cecilia Bernardini) will be released.

John Butt been appointed an FBA and a FRSE, and has been awarded the Dent Medal of the Royal Musical Society, and the RAM/Kohn Foundation's Bach Prize. In 2013 he was awarded the medal of the Royal College of Organists, together with an OBE.



American soprano **Melissa Givens** moves and excites audiences and critics alike with a rich, powerful tone, crystalline clarity, and intelligent musical interpretations. Especially noted for her expressiveness and elegance on the stage, she's been hailed as a singer whose music making is "consistently rewarding" and "a pleasure to hear." Givens is also an extremely versatile artist, regularly performing repertoire from the Baroque era through music of the 21st century. A writer for Classical.

Net marveled, "Melissa Givens has a voice you imagine coming from the goddess Erda" in a review of *Sing Freedom!*, Conspirare's 2012 recording of spirituals on the Harmonia Mundi label. Recent performances include Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and appearances with Houston Camerata, the Sam Houston State University Symphony, the Woodlands Symphony, and the Boulder Bach Festival.

Currently on the voice faculties of Sam Houston State and Texas Southern Universities, she remains in demand on concert series throughout the United States and abroad, and counts Ars Lyrica Houston and the Grammy[®] winning Conspirare: Craig Hella Johnson and Company of Voices as frequent collaborators. Her solo appearances on their major label releases have received enthusiastic reviews. She can also be heard on her solo CD, *let the rain kiss you*.



Jay Carter has gained recognition as one of the nation's finest countertenors. A frequent collaborator with period and modern ensembles, Carter is recognized as a leading interpreter of late Baroque repertoire. Recent appearances include Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with the American Bach Soloists and the Choir of St. Thomas Church, Handel's *Messiah* with the National Symphony, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Handel's *Saul* with Musica Vocale and the Kansas City Baroque

Consortium, and the North American Premiere of John Tavener's *Lament for Jerusalem* with the Choral Arts Society of Washington. In recent seasons he has appeared with acclaimed conductors Nicholas McGegan, Ton Koopman, John Scott, and Matthew Halls.

He received a Masters in Music from the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music, and received his undergraduate degree from William Jewell College where he studied voice with Arnold Epley. He lives in Liberty, Missouri with his family, and serves as Artist-in-residence at William Jewell College.



Grammy Award winning tenor **Aaron Sheehan** has quickly established himself as one of the leading American tenors of his generation. His voice is heard regularly in the U.S. and Europe, and he is equally comfortable in repertoire ranging from oratorio and chamber music to the opera stage. His singing has taken him to many festivals and venues, including Tanglewood, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, the Concertgebouw, the Metropolitan Museum of Art,

Théâtre des Champs Elysées, the early music festivals of Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Tucson, Washington, D.C., and Madison. Known especially for his Baroque interpretations, Aaron has made a name as a first-rate singer of oratorios and cantatas. He has appeared as soloist in concert with Boston Early Music Festival, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Tafelmusik, San Juan Symphony, American Bach Soloists, Handel and Haydn Society, Boston Baroque, North Carolina Symphony, Charlotte Symphony, Carmel Bach Festival, Ars Lyrica, Baltimore Handel Choir, Pacific Chorale, Tempesta di Mare, Pacific Music Works, Opera Lafayette, Aston Magna Festival, Bach Collegium San Diego, Tragicomedia, and Les Voix Baroques.



American bass **Curtis Streetman's** artistry has been presented in some of the world's major concert halls and opera houses. Operatic performances include appearances at The Salzburg Festival, opera houses in Vienna, Bilbao, Dortmund, Halle, Naples, and Victoria. Recent debuts include performances in Geneva, Basel, and at The Theatre Champs-Elyseée in Paris. Other venues include Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Vienna's Musikverein in performances of Handel's *Radamisto*. Streetman

made his Kennedy Center debut with The National Symphony in Handel's *Messiah*, and performed Schumann's Goethe's *Faust* with The Cleveland Orchestra.

Recording credits include Monteverdi's *Vespers* for Musical Heritage Society, Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Romanciero Gitano* for New World Classics, Charpentier *Christmas Cantatas* for Naxos, Handel's *Ricardo Primo* on Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, and Andrew Parrott's recording of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*.



Elizabeth Blumenstock is a long-time concertmaster and soloist with the San Francisco Bay Area's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and American Bach Soloists, and is concertmaster of the International Handel Festival Orchestra in Göttingen, Germany. In Southern California, Ms. Blumenstock is Artistic Director of the Corona del Mar Baroque Music Festival. Her love of chamber music has involved her in several accomplished and interesting smaller ensembles

including Musica Pacifica, Galax Quartet, Ensemble Mirable, Arcadian Academy, and Live Oak Baroque. She has appeared with period orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout the United States and abroad, and has performed for the Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, Los Angeles Opera, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Oulunsalo Soi festival in Finland, and the San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, among many others. With over 90 recordings to her credit, she has recorded for harmonia mundi usa, Deutsche Grammophon, Virgin Classics, Dorian, BMG, Reference Recordings, and Koch International. An enthusiastic teacher, Ms. Blumenstock teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the American Bach Soloists Festival and Academy, the International Baroque Institute at Longy, the Valley of the Moon Music Festival, and starting in fall 2016, will teach for the Juilliard Historical Performance program. Ms. Blumenstock plays a 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin built in Cremona, Italy, on generous loan to her from the Philharmonia Baroque Period Instrument Trust.



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 Marburg 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.



Donald Krehbiel is the Founder and Artistic Director of Orpheus Chamber Singers, a 24-voice professional chorus in Dallas, Texas, and Director of Music and Organist at First Unitarian Church of Dallas for the past 25 years, conducting two adult choirs and administering a vibrant program of volunteer and professional musicians. He has also served as adjunct choral director at Southern Methodist University and prepared the Dallas Symphony Chorus for a Carnegie Hall concert and

grammy-nominated recording under the direction of maestro Jaap van Zweden.

In addition to his career in choral music, he has also enjoyed a career as tenor soloist and chorister, performing with noted early music ensembles in the southwest as well as the Robert Shaw Festival Singers and The Carmel Bach Festival. In 2010 Mr. Krehbiel was presented two awards for excellence in church music: *The Ruth Clark Award* from The North Texas Association of Unitarian Universalist Societies, and the *Soli Deo Gloria Award* from Perkins School of Theology.



Orpheus Chamber Singers is a professional chamber choir of 25 mixed voices in Dallas, Texas. Driven by the highest standards for choral performance, Donald Krehbiel has assembled a group of 24 of the finest singers, many of them recognized soloists, blending them into a richly satisfying ensemble capable of mastering music of every period. Now in its 21st season, Orpheus sets the standard for choral singing in the area and regularly receives critical acclaim for its exquisite sound and polish.

Repertoire includes diverse styles of music from around the globe and commissions of outstanding new works. The ensemble has made numerous guest appearances and outreach to area schools in addition to its regular concert series. Orpheus has four commercial recordings: A Sound of Angels, Night Sounds, a compilation of works from live performances, A World of Sound, and Gifts of Christmas. With performances of nearly 900 works, Orpheus has become known for passionate performances of traditional and innovative chamber choral music.

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ABOUT ARS LYRICA

Founded in 1998 by harpsichordist and conductor Matthew Dirst, Ars Lyrica Houston presents a diverse array of music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments. Its local subscription series, according to the Houston Chronicle, “sets the agenda” for early music in Houston and it also appears regularly at major festivals and conferences, including the 2014 Berkeley Early Music Festival & Exhibition. Ars Lyrica’s distinctive programming favors Baroque dramatic and chamber works, and its pioneering efforts have won international acclaim: the ensemble’s world première recording of Johann Adolf Hasse’s Marc’Antonio e Cleopatra, hailed by Early Music America as “a thrilling performance that glows in its quieter moments and sparkles with vitality,” was nominated for a Grammy Award® for Best Opera 2011. Both the Hasse recording and Ars Lyrica’s recording of Domenico Scarlatti’s comic intermezzo La Dirindina feature 2013 Cardiff Singer of the World Jamie Barton, who returns for a program with the ensemble during the 2015/16 season. Details about Ars Lyrica’s latest recordings and upcoming programs can be found at www.arslyricahouston.org.

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**BACH
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April 24, 2016 | 6:00 pm

EASTER VESPERS

JS Bach: *Easter Oratorio*, BWV 249

Bach Choir and Orchestra Houston

St. Philip Presbyterian Church

4807 San Felipe Street, Houston, TX 77056

No Ticket Required, Pre-concert Lecture

Reception following Vespers

May 8, 2016 | 7:30 pm

CHAMBER MUSIC

Jennifer Lane, *alto*, presents three Bach solo cantatas

Christ the King Lutheran Church

2353 Rice Blvd., Houston, Texas 77005

Ticket Required

See full information at www.bachsocietyhouston.org
or call 713-400-0514.

Bach Society Houston is funded in part by a grant from the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

Sunday, April 24th, 2016, 4:00 PM

The Baltimore Consort



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*The Food of Love—Songs, Dances
and Fancies for Shakespeare*

Pre-concert talk at 3:15 PM

First Christian Church, 1601 Sunset Blvd., 77005

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Just Gettin' Started

*A Night of Jazz
with the
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Christian McBride Trio*

Sunday, May 22, 2016
4:00 pm

Cullen Theater, Wortham Theater Center
501 Texas Avenue, Houston, TX 77002

Tickets:
HoustonChamberChoir.org
713-224-5566

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ARS LYRICA'S NEXT PERFORMANCE:

SUMMER ZEPHYR

Ars Lyrica's 2015/16 season comes to a close with a program celebrating the warm and sometimes unpredictable winds of summer. Virtuoso flights of fancy abound on this program, which features Vivaldi's *Summer*, J. S. Bach's *Harpsichord Concerto in D Minor*, W. A. Mozart's *Exsultate, Jubilate*, and three outstanding soloists.

SOLOISTS



John Holiday
countertenor



Kathryn Montoya
Baroque oboe and recorder



Matthew Dirst
harpsichord

FRIDAY, JUNE 3 AT 7:30 PM

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts