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**ARS LYRICA HOUSTON ANNOUNCES**

**2019/20 SEASON “NATIONAL TREASURES”**

***Highlights include The New York Baroque Dance Company, the 14th annual New Year’s Eve celebration, a multimedia production celebrating Francisco Goya, and a solo harpsichord recital by Artist Director Matthew Dirst***

***Season explores iconic moments in diverse European cultures***

Houston, TX, April 1, 2019— Ars Lyrica Houston, the Grammy nominated early music ensemble, celebrates its 15th-year anniversary with the announcement of the 2019/20 season entitled “National Treasures.” This season explores iconic moments in diverse European cultures, from Venice in the late 17th century through Madrid in the early 19th century. With a range of musical styles and genres accompanied by dance, visual art, and dramatization, this season illuminates defining moments in French, Italian, English, German, and Spanish cultural history.

 ***Dancing at the Palais*** opens the season with a full Baroque orchestra of strings and winds plus the return of **The New York Baroque Dance Company** with **Catherine Turocy** as artistic director. This program includes instrumental suites from two vibrantly colorful French Baroque operas, both first seen at the Palais-Royal in Paris. Period choreography, paired with period instruments, recreates a refined artform that was *de rigueur* throughout Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. The suites featured on this program include the American premiere of dance music from André Campra’s *Hésione* plus suites from *Les Indes Galantes* by Jean-Philippe Rameau. A pioneer in historical choreography, dance technique, and stage movement, Turocy has directed numerous highly acclaimed productions of Baroque operas in the US and in Europe. She returns to Houston during the 2020/21 season for a new production of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, Ars Lyrica’s second full-length Baroque opera.

The season continues with ***Handel in Love***. Amorous duets, arias, and instrumental works mix freely on this tribute to the Baroque era’s finest musical dramatist. A truly cosmopolitan figure, George Frederic Handel combined a sturdy German musical heritage with sophisticated Italian training, in works that remain emblematic of his adopted English home. Soloists for this program include soprano and Rice University graduate **Joanna Latini**, tenor **Richard Trey Smagur** of the Houston Grand Opera Studio, and Baroque oboe virtuoso **Kathryn Montoya**.

On New Year’s Eve 2019, Ars Lyrica celebrates the legacy of Antonio Vivaldi and his Venetian predecessors with ***Venetian Carnival***, a program of flamboyant concerts for flute, violin, and multiple instruments. Featured artists include Baroque flautist **Colin St-Martin** and Baroque violinists **Elizabeth Blumenstock** (longtime concertmaster of Philharmonia Baroque) and rising star **Alana Youssefian**. This festive evening begins with a three-course dinner and concludes with a lively post-concert party.

The turbulent environment of the Spanish artist Francisco Goya takes center stage in the production of ***Goya’s World: Reflexión y Revolución****.* This multi-media event includes projections of Goya’s artwork alongside performances of lively instrumental and vocal music by his contemporaries, including works by Francisco Courcelle, Fernando Sor, Vincente Garviso, as well as one of Luigi Boccherini’s guitar quintets. “Francisco Goya was a man of contrast and conflict. In his paintings he depicted all aspects of late 18th and early 19th century Spanish life: the leisure class enjoying a day on the banks of the Rio Manzañeras, a traditional bullfight, a tavern brawl, common people dancing a bolero or fandango, poverty, military might, royal majesty (albeit sometimes as a parody) and, most deliberately, the horrors of war”, says curator and guest director **Richard Savino**. A guitarist and lutenist, Savino is joined by mezzo-soprano **Cecilia Duarte** and a string ensemble led by violinist **Adam LaMotte**.

As a special treat offered exclusively to full-season subscribers and guests, Artistic Director **Matthew Dirst** performs a recital entitled ***Bach on Harpsichord*** at the Shepherd School of Music’s Duncan Recital Hall at Rice University. This exceptional event, the first Ars Lyrica program in many years to spotlight Dirst as a solo artist, features Bach’s iconic “Italian Concerto” and two of his most sumptuous French dance suites for harpsichord.

The season finale, entitled ***Bach Goes Greek***, brings the full ensemble to the stage along with six outstanding singers for an evening of Bach cantatas with characters drawn from Greek mythology. Bach and his librettist turned the legendary competition between Phoebus (Apollo) and Pan into a lively singing contest, one Ars Lyrica recreates in modern dress for its 2019/20 season finale*.* **Tara Faircloth** directs Bach’s comic masterpiece and Matthew Dirst conducts. This program features soprano **Dominique McCormick**, countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**, tenors **Derek Chester** and **Christopher Bozeka**, and baritones **Thomas Glass** and **Mark Diamond**.

Subscriptions for Ars Lyrica Houston’s 2019/20 season are on sale now. To purchase tickets or view the season brochure, please visit [www.arslyricahouston.org](http://www.arslyricahouston.org) or call the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts Box Office at 713.315.2525 (Press 4 for Ars Lyrica Houston).

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.

**For high-resolution images and artist bios, please use this link: http://bit.ly/ALH1920**

**Ars Lyrica Houston’s 2019/20 Season: National Treasures**

**Season Calendar**

***Dancing at the Palais***

**Featuring The New York Baroque Dance Company**

Friday, September 20, 2019 at 8:00 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

7:15 pm pre-concert lecture with Catherine Turocy (New York Baroque Dance Company) and John Powell (University of Tulsa)

* André Campra, Suite from *Hésione* (ed. John Powell)
* Jean-Philippe Rameau, Suites from *Les Indes Galantes*

***Handel in Love***

**Featuring Joanna Latini, soprano; Richard Trey Smagur, tenor; Kathryn Montoya, baroque oboe**

Saturday, November 23 at 7:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

* *Cecilia, vogli un sguardo* for soprano, tenor, and strings, HWV 89
* “As steals the morn” from *L’Allegro,* *il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, HWV 55
* Oboe Concerto in G Minor, HWV 287

***Venetian Carnival***

**Featuring Elizabeth Blumenstock & Alana Youssefian, violin; Colin St-Martin, traverso**

Tuesday, December 31 at 9 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

* Pre-Concert Dinner at Hobby Center’s Diana Restaurant at 7:30 pm
* Venetian Carnival Concert at Zilkha Hall at 9:00 pm
* Post-Concert Party at Hobby Center’s Diana Restaurant at 10:30 pm

***Goya’s World: Reflexión y Revolución***

**Featuring Richard Savino, guitarist & guest director; Cecilia Duarte, mezzo-soprano; Adam LaMotte, violin**

Saturday, February 22 at 7:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

***Bach on Harpsichord***

**Featuring Matthew Dirst, harpsichord**

Saturday, March 14 at 6 pm

Duncan Recital Hall, Shepherd School of Music at Rice University

* “English” Suite No. 2 in A Minor, BWV 807
* Concerto in the Italian Style, BWV 971
* Partita IV in D Major, BWV 828

***Bach Goes Greek***

**Featuring Dominique McCormick, soprano; Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen, countertenor; Derek Chester & Christopher Bozeka, tenor; Thomas Glass & Mark Diamond, baritone**

Saturday, May 16 at 7:30 pm

Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts

* *Phoebus & Pan*, BWV 201
* *Tönet ihr Pauken*, BWV 214