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Mercury Baroque Presents Handel's Messiah!



Ana Treviño-Godfrey, Soprano, and
Jonathan Godfrey, Concertmaster
Photo by George Hixson

December 11th, 8:00pm – Highlights from Handel's Messiah
December 12th, 8:00pm – The Complete Handel's Messiah
December 13th, 2:00pm – Handel's Messiah in The Woodlands

Houston, TX – Mercury Baroque, one of the nation's leading period instrument orchestras presents Handel's iconic Messiah in two performances at Houston's Wortham Center, Cullen Theater on December 11th and 12th at 8:00pm. These two performances mark the beginning of Mercury Baroque's annual presentation of Handel's Baroque masterpiece using instruments original to that period. This year, the skilled musicians of Mercury Baroque collaborate with the equally talented voices of the Bach Choir. Renowned

singers Ana Treviño-Godfrey, Sarah Mesko, Zachary Wilder, and Tyler Duncan will sing the featured solos in the Messiah. The Friday, December 11th performance will feature the most beloved highlights of Handel's Messiah, while the December 12th performance will be of the complete work. Mercury's popular pre-concert lectures with Dr. Yvonne Kendall will begin at 7:15pm in the Green Room prior to each performance. Tickets for the Messiah range from \$25 to \$52 and can be purchased online at www.mercurybaroque.org or by phone at 713-533-0080.

"It is a rare treat to hear the Messiah in its complete form and it is especially rare to hear it performed on period-instruments", says Antoine Plante, Artistic Director of Mercury Baroque. "When compared to modern instruments, period-instruments help produce a more pure and powerful sound that lends itself perfectly to works like the Messiah. It creates a much more energetic and moving listening experience for the audience." According to Plante, "The intimacy of the Cullen Theater is the perfect venue for the Messiah. It allows the audience to connect more closely with the music as opposed to it being drowned out in a larger hall." Pastor Dave Peterson, of Houston's Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, will make his directorial debut, guest conducting the famed Hallelujah Chorus during the December 11th performance.

Originally composed in 1741, Handel's Messiah is divided into 3 parts: The Birth, The Passion, and The Aftermath. As is with Mercury's December 11th performance, most holiday performances include only the first part of the Oratorio plus the famous Hallelujah Chorus from the end of the second part. Mercury's December 12th performance, however, will be of the complete work, lasting approximately two hours and forty minutes plus two intermissions. The Sunday, December 13th performance at The John Cooper School Performing Arts Center will be Mercury Baroque's first performance in The Woodlands. Mercury Baroque last performed Handel's Messiah during 2007/2008 season.

Mercury Baroque has been a dynamic member of the Houston arts community since 2000. Founded as a chamber ensemble, the group has grown into a Baroque orchestra performing a full subscription season of concerts in downtown Houston and touring both domestically and internationally. The organization continues to pursue its goal of building a strong tradition of Baroque music performance in Houston, starting with its educational outreach programs designed to train the city's future musicians and create the audience of the future. Although Mercury is focused on bringing the best Baroque to Houston, the ensemble has toured to other countries as well, including two tours to Quito, Ecuador. In September, 2010, Mercury will revive its popular performance of Lully's opera Armide in Paris. The 2010/2011 season will be Mercury's important 10th Season.

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