

PRESENTS



***Messiah***  
**American Bach Soloists**

**American Bach Choir**  
**Jeffrey Thomas, conductor**

A Mondavi Center Special Event  
Saturday, December 20, 2008 • 7:30 pm  
Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center, UC Davis

There will be one intermission.

Support provided by John and Lois Crowe.

*Congratulations to Jeffrey Thomas and the American Bach Soloists on  
their 20th Anniversary Season. We are grateful for our long time collaboration!*

—Don Roth, PH.D., Executive Director

*The artists and your fellow audience members appreciate silence during the performance. Please be sure that you have switched off cellular phones,  
watch alarms, and pager signals. Videotaping, photographing, and audio recording are strictly forbidden. Violators are subject to removal.*

# MESSIAH

(First Foundling Hospital version, 1750)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

## AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS

## AMERICAN BACH CHOIR

Jeffrey Thomas, conductor

Tamara Matthews, soprano  
Ian Howell, countertenor  
Aaron Sheehan, tenor  
Jesse Blumberg, baritone

### Violins

Elizabeth Blumenstock  
*Andrea Guarneri, Cremona, 1660.\**  
Cynthia Albers  
*George Craske, London, circa 1840;*  
*after Guarneri del Gesu, Cremona,*  
*early 18th century.*  
Tekla Cunningham  
*Johannes Ulricus Eberle, Prague, 1807*  
Andrew Davies  
*Augustine Chauppy, Paris, 1749.*  
Joseph Edelberg  
*Anonymous, 18th century French.*  
Cynthia Miller Freivogel  
*Johann Paul Schorn, Salzburg, 1715.*  
Lisa Grodin  
*Paulo Antonio, Milan, 1736.*  
Tyler Lewis  
*Anonymous, Brescia, circa 1580.*  
Maxine Nemerovski  
*Timothy Johnson, Indiana, 1999;*  
*after Stradivari models, Cremona,*  
*17th century.*  
Cynthia Roberts  
*Lorenzo and Tomaso Carcassi, Florence,*  
*1760.*  
David Wilson  
*Timothy Johnson, Hewitt, Texas, 2007;*  
*after Stradivari, Cremona, 17th century.*  
Alicia Yang  
*Richard Duke, London, 1762.*  
*\*The 1660 Andrea Guarneri violin played*  
*by Ms. Blumenstock is made available to*  
*her through the generosity of the*  
*Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra Period*  
*Instrument Trust.*

### Violas

David Daniel Bowes  
*Richard Duke, London, circa 1780.*  
Daria D'Andrea  
*School of Gioffredo Cappa, Turin, 1758.*  
Katherine Kyme  
*Anonymous, German, 18th century.*  
Aaron Westman  
*Dmitry Badiarov, Brussels, 2003;*  
*after 18th-century Italian models.*

### Violoncellos

William Skeen (continuo)  
*Anonymous, Italy, circa 1685.*  
Paul Hale  
*Grubaugh and Seifert, California, 1988;*  
*after Stradivari.*  
Elisabeth Reed  
*Anonymous, Italy, 1685.*

### Contrabasses

Steven Lehning (continuo)  
*Anonymous, Austria, circa 1830.*  
Christopher Deppe  
*Neuner & Hornsteiner, Germany,*  
*circa 1880.*  
Kristin Zoernig  
*Joseph Wrent, Rotterdam, 1648.*

### Harpichord

Corey Jamason  
*Willard Martin, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania,*  
*1990; after François Blanche, Paris,*  
*circa 1730.*

### Organ

Steven Bailey  
*John Brombaugh & Associates, Oregon,*  
*1980.*

### Trumpets

John Thiessen (solo)  
*Rainer Egger, Basel, 2005, after Leonhard*  
*Ehe III, Nuremburg, 1748.*  
Kathryn James Adduci  
*Rainer Egger, Basel, 2006, after Leonhard*  
*Ehe III, Nuremburg, 1748.*

### Timpani

Kent Reed  
*Anonymous, England, circa 1840.*

### Oboes

John Abberger  
*H. A. Vas Dias, Georgia; after Thomas*  
*Stanesby, Sr., London, England, circa 1700.*  
Debra Nagy  
*Randy Cook, Basel, 2004; after Jonathan*  
*Bradbury, London, circa 1720.*

### Bassoons

Kate van Orden  
*Peter de Koningh, Hall, Netherlands,*  
*1986; copy of Prudent, Paris, circa 1770.*  
Charles Koster  
*Levin & Ross, 1992; after Eichentopf,*  
*Leipzig, circa 1725.*

### Sopranos

Jennifer Brody  
Michelle Clair  
Tonia D'Amelio  
Julia Earl  
Elisabeth Engan  
Susan Judy  
Allison Z. Lloyd  
Cheryl Sumsion  
Jennifer Elaine Young

### Altos

Jesse Antin  
Dan Cromeenes  
Elisabeth Eliassen  
Linda Liebschutz  
Katherine E. McKee  
Amelia Triest  
Delia Voitoff-Bauman  
Heidi Waterman

### Tenors

Edward Betts  
Daniel Hutchings  
Andrew Morgan  
Mark Mueller  
Colby Roberts  
John Rouse  
Sam Smith

### Basses

John Kendall Bailey  
John Bischoff  
Hugh Davies  
Thomas Hart  
Raymond Martinez  
James Nicholas Monios  
Chad Runyon  
David Varnum

## PROGRAM NOTES

**W**ithin the decade that followed Handel's composition of *Messiah* in 1741, nearly a dozen different casts and configurations of vocal soloists were employed by the composer during those first 10 years of what would become a never-ending history of performances worldwide. In each case, and for the remaining years of Handel's life, he made revisions to his score that made the best use of the particular talents of his solo singers. While it is certainly true that Handel's arrangements and transcriptions of arias that were employed for the work's premiere in Dublin (1742) were due to the inadequacy of some of the singers at his disposal there, all subsequent revisions sought to show both the artists and the work in their best light. Customizing a musical work for the sake of the performers was not uncommon. In fact, it was not unheard of for an operatic vocalist (of necessarily considerable reputation) to carry along his or her favorite arias from city to city, insisting that they be incorporated into otherwise intact and singularly composed musical works for the stage. This indulgence was not as unreasonable as one might first assume.

The operatic style during Handel's day has since become known as *opera seria*, a term that literally means "serious" opera and that was devised to mark the differences between those works and *opera buffa*, comic operas that were the outgrowth of *commedia dell'arte*. There were strict conventions within *opera seria*, including the utilization of the *da capo*, or A-B-A, format for arias. *Secco* recitatives, accompanied only by *continuo* (harpsichord and violoncello), were used to reveal plot details and to introduce the arias (or, rarely, duets) that would illuminate the emotions of whichever character would sing them.

But there were also non-musical conventions of equally practical importance. In most cases the singer would exit at the end of an aria; hence the term "exit aria." Even Hanna-Barbera's cartoon character Snagglepuss often utilized this strategy: "Exit, stage left!" Of course, the primary reason for this theatrical device was to solicit applause from the audience for the singer (although some of the approval might just as well have been intended for the composer). And each principal singer would fully expect to sing a number of arias in a variety of moods; lamentation, revenge, defiance, melancholy, anger, or heroic virtue were common sentiments. The texts of the arias were rarely longer than four or eight lines, and rather generic, so it was more or less reasonable that a singer could substitute a favorite aria from another work so long as the general emotion was appropriate.

Other traditions further supported this kind of expected artistic license. In most cases, final arias within any opera of the period were always awarded to the most important singer, not the most important character. This sort of deference to the talent made a great deal of sense as, during Handel's day, the singers themselves were as much of an attraction to the audience, if not more so, as might have been the composers and their works. So, in Handel's implementations of various casts of *Messiah* soloists, he made redistributions of the workload to be fair or, in some cases, to be flattering to the members of any particular roster.

When surveying all of the versions of *Messiah*, it is very interesting to look first at the assignment of the final aria, "If God be for us." Although originally composed for soprano, even for the premiere he altered the key so that it could be sung by the contralto, Susanna Cibber, a singing actress that Handel found to be

tremendously compelling. Over the next few years he continued to assign that "status" aria to her until 1749, the year before the first performance of *Messiah* in London's Foundling Hospital. In this case it was awarded to a *treble*, or boy soprano, perhaps as a prescient indication of discussions that were underway to bring the oratorio into that venue. And the following year, in 1750, it was again transposed down a few keys so that it could be sung by the most recently arrived operatic star, the great Italian *castrato* Gaetano Guadagni (1728-1792). Only for the last performance of *Messiah* conducted by Handel in 1754 was the final aria heard as it was first composed, for soprano.

London's Foundling Hospital, a home "for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children," was established in 1739 in the Bloomsbury area. Its founder, Thomas Coram (1668-1751), was a sea captain and had spent a number of his early years in the American colonies. Following a career as a successful London merchant, he turned his attention to philanthropy and, in particular, rescuing homeless, abandoned children. At that time, charity and philanthropy had become not only critically essential to the survival of Londoners as a whole, but had also gained an oddly self-serving functionality as part of the fantastic expansion of London and the greater English empire.

The rate of growth of London during the 18th century was exponential. About three-fourths of Londoners had been born elsewhere. Its culture was as diverse as the most modern 21st-century city. London offered opportunities and wealth to the industrious and ambitious, as well as a thriving underworld, anonymity, and meager subsistence to criminals and the unskilled. Its hierarchical systems of social status were engrained, accepted, and treasured, despite the fact that the 18th century offered all Londoners the chance to upgrade their places and stations within that cosmopolis. Ironically, though, even those who were able to buy into higher levels of society through their successes as merchants were as eager as the blue-blooded aristocracy to maintain whatever distinctions of social status could be maintained. The wealthy typically lived in five-story townhouses while the lower classes (those not housed as servants in the top floors of the elite's homes) lived in terribly unhealthy and cramped hovels. During most of the 1700s, Londoners were subjected to dreadful pollution, reprehensibly unsanitary conditions, and mostly unbridled crime.

Many of those poor conditions were the result of the preponderance of manufacturing industries within London's commercial organism. About a third of London's population was employed by manufacturing ventures, and the resulting pollution had turned the Thames River into, literally, a sewer. Still, this flourishing business culture helped increase overseas trade at least threefold during the century, and the spoils were global political power and domestic wealth. But the victims of all this were the children. Many lived only a few short years, and still others were abandoned to live on their own in the filth, smoke, and mire of London's poor quarters.

In the face of such undeniable misery, the wealthy could hardly turn a blind eye. During an era of destitution, depravity, and victimization, the beliefs of the Latitudinarian branch of the Church of England were timely assertions that benevolent and charitable deeds, rather than (or at least in addition to) the formalities of church worship, were essential to the quality of the moral state of the individual. Only by engaging in acts of compassion and by the establishment of a supporting relationship with the less fortunate could their plights, their suffering, and the terrible waste of human life be acceptably mitigated and tolerated.

Thus, charity became fashionable. Merchants supported charities that in turn supported the working class. They needed healthy workers in great numbers to keep their machines well-oiled and their industries thriving. Consumers were needed on the other side of the coin, so the maintenance of the lower classes was in the best interest of those entrepreneurs. The kingdom itself needed to be defended at sea and abroad, so healthy battalions had to be provided.

By supporting the less fortunate and encouraging their strength and independence—to a degree—those who had newly acquired wealth could gain prestige and propriety while nurturing their economic self-interests. To have a “bleeding heart” was especially in vogue among London’s upper-class women. Their ever-increasing opportunities to fashion socially relevant activities led quite naturally to their involvement in charities, which in turn substantiated their refinement, respectability, and moral rank. William Hogarth (1697-1764), the great English painter, satirist, and cartoonist, called this transformative time “a golden age of English philanthropy” and one of the greatest results of it was the Foundling Hospital.

In 18th-century London, the term “hospital” was applied to institutions for the physically ill as well as the mentally ill, and to organizations that, through hospitality, supported particular factions of London’s population including sailors, refugees, penitent prostitutes, and destitute children. To a great degree, the efforts of Coram, assisted by Hogarth and Handel, firmly established the Foundling Hospital as one of England’s most long-lived and admirable benevolent institutions. Even before the buildings were completed—a process that took 10 years from 1742 to 1752—children were first admitted to temporary housing in 1741. No questions were asked, but overcrowding quickly led to the establishment of rules for acceptance. The requirement that children be aged no more than two months was relaxed by the House of Commons in 1756 so that children up to 12 months would be accepted. During the next few years, more than 15,000 infants were left at its doors. Even within the Hospital, though, more than two-thirds of them would not survive long enough to be apprenticed during their teenage years.

In the same year that the Foundling Hospital accepted its first charges, Handel composed *Messiah*. Charles Jennens, the librettist for *Messiah*, had probably made the suggestion to Handel that the premiere of the work might take place in Dublin as a charity event. In fact, on March 27, 1742, *Faulkner’s Dublin Journal* published an announcement that:

“For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer’s Hospital in Stephen’s Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel’s new Grand Oratorio, call’d the *Messiah*...”

The previous decade or so had been quite unpleasant for Handel. He had begun to suffer financial difficulties, and by the early 1730s, his professional life was simply unraveling. He was nearly bankrupt and had fallen very much out of the critical favor of the aristocratic public for which he had composed his Italian operas. They were expensive to produce and not accessible enough for his audience. But, in fact, Handel himself was the object of what must have felt like brutal betrayal by his patrons, his audience, and even his musicians. For the first half of his life, Handel had led a charmed existence. He seems to have waltzed into one happy

situation after another, in which he enjoyed the patronage of royalty, the aristocracy, and the culture-seeking population at large. He was unexaggeratedly a national hero, despite his non-domestic origins. He had lived in extravagant estates, kept the most celebrated artists, writers, and musicians in his closest circles, and profited—although, not necessarily financially—from the tremendous favor that was bestowed upon him by an entire empire. His unprecedented success was so irreproachable that he was, without a doubt, completely unprepared for what amounted to a staggering fall from grace. But what emerged in 1741-42 was a work that would transcend the boundaries of musical forms, subject matter, social and cultural expectations, and, eventually, the bitterness of his rivals. And it would restore “the great Mr. Handel” to the revered status that he had enjoyed decades before.

The first performance of *Messiah* took place on April 13, 1742, in Dublin’s new music hall on Fishamble Street, and was a tremendous success. The review that appeared in *Faulkner’s Dublin Journal* proclaimed: “Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear.”

Performances in subsequent years took place in London, but those were met with less enthusiastic receptions. *Messiah* had blurred the distinctions between opera, oratorio, passion, and cantata, and perhaps some Londoners found this to be a fundamental fault. So it is fascinating to note that when the *function* of *Messiah* was returned to that of a work presented for the benefit of charities, and when the venue was restored to an ecclesiastical structure rather than a theater, the oratorio took hold of its permanent place in the hearts of audiences, then in London and now throughout the world.

For at least one year before the first Foundling Hospital performance of *Messiah* in 1750, Handel was involved with the charity, probably drawn to it through his associations with Hogarth and the music publisher John Walsh (1709-1766), who had been elected a governor in 1748. On May 4, 1749, Handel had made an offer, which was gratefully accepted, to present a benefit concert of vocal and instrumental music to help in the completion of the hospital’s chapel. The hospital reciprocated with an invitation to Handel, which he declined, to become one of its governors. On May 27, Handel directed a performance (in the unfinished chapel) of excerpts from his *Fireworks Music*, *Solomon*, and the newly composed *Foundling Hospital Anthem*, “*Blessed are they that considereth the poor and needy*” (Handel’s last work of English church music). The “Hallelujah” chorus from *Messiah* was the final work, a premonition of what was in store for the following year. Royalty were in attendance.

Nearly one year later, on May 1, 1750, Handel performed *Messiah* in the (still not quite finished) chapel. That day can be seen as the most significant day in Handel’s career. The benefit concert’s success was extraordinary. More than 1,000 people crowded into the space, and more were turned away. Massive public attention to the event, coupled with unequivocal approbation for the oratorio, served Handel well and generated new commitment on the part of the London audience to uphold Handel and his oratorios as the great beacons of English music that they are. He became a governor of the hospital; since more than £1,000 had been raised by his performances, the fee required of governors was waived. In subsequent years, the Foundling Hospital continued to rely upon annual performances of *Messiah* for significant income.

The most significant musical aspect of the 1750 Foundling Hospital version of *Messiah* is the reworking of the aria, “But who may abide.” Gaetano Guadagni had arrived in London at the age of 20 in 1748, as part of an Italian opera company. The music historian Charles Burney (1726-1814) wrote about Guadagni:

“His voice was then a full and well toned counter-tenor; but he was a wild and careless singer. However, the excellence of his voice attracted the notice of Handel, who assigned him the parts in his oratorios of the *Messiah* and *Samson*, which had been originally composed for Mrs. Cibber...”

Handel composed a new middle section of the aria, taking advantage of Guadagni’s bravura vocal technique as well as his apparently considerable low notes. Two other arias were also reworked for Guadagni: “Thou art gone up on high” and “How beautiful are the feet.” Recent evidence seems to indicate that the alto arrangement of “How beautiful are the feet” was only an afterthought. For the May 1, 1750, performance, Handel had six soloists (female soprano, boy treble, female contralto, male *castrato* counter-tenor, tenor, and bass). But two weeks later, on May 15, when the work was offered for a second time especially to those who were turned away a fortnight before, the soprano must have fallen ill. Emergency reassignments were put in place, and the alto arrangement of “How beautiful are the feet” was one of them. In all fairness, however, it might have been that Handel was so pleased with Guadagni’s singing that he took that opportunity to give the singer another one of the oratorio’s “gem” arias.

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### **Handel’s Hallelujah Chorus: To Stand or Not To Stand...**

Perhaps the best-known and widely accepted concert “tradition” is standing for the *Hallelujah* chorus. Legend has it that King George II leapt to his feet when he heard it during one of the work’s first performances in London. Because no person could remain seated while the King stood, the entire audience rose with him. Some credit this anecdote as the origin of the “standing ovation.”

But a closer look at the facts reveals that there is no evidence that the King ever attended such a performance. The first written account of the story appeared in 1780, more than 35 years after the cited performance, and it was written by someone who admits to not having witnessed the King’s presence himself. However, the King was known to attend such events incognito. So he, in fact, at least *might* have been there.

If he was in attendance, there is much speculation as to why he stood at all. Theories range from the reverent to the simply unflattering: he might have been stretching his legs, relieving his gout, leaving for the bathroom, or suddenly awakened by the chorus’ *forte* entrance. But the general opinion is that his own sense of obeisance compelled him to stand upon hearing the majestic and undeniably enthralling music of the *Hallelujah* chorus.

The custom is common in English-speaking countries, but essentially unknown in all others. Many have objected, in more contemporary eras, to the distastefully imperialistic implications of following the King’s lead in this manner. After all, the general audience only stood because they *had* to do so. But others are quick and well justified to point out that Handel’s *Messiah* is certainly the most well-known and universally enjoyed major work in the Baroque oratorio genre—if not among all “classical” music works—and that standing as a group, in the name of tradition, unites the audience with the performers for a few minutes in a most energizing way.

No matter how convincingly some can argue that this “tradition” is rooted in untrustworthy hearsay, you have only to look at the performers when you stand at that wondrous, thrilling moment: you will see their smiles and their spirits lifted even higher, knowing that millions upon millions of people have stood at that very same moment in music, and in virtually every corner of the world. Even Haydn stood with the crowd at a performance in Westminster Abbey. It is said that he wept and proclaimed of George Frideric Handel, “He is the master of us all.”

### **A Simple Primer on Early Instruments...**

Several decades ago, a movement began in the classical music industry to perform music on the instruments that were used during the composer’s lifetime. Unquestionably advanced by the advent of CD recordings in the early 1980s, this marriage of scholarship and style became known as “historically informed performance practice.” But it encompasses more than just the proper choice of instruments for the performance of music from the Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical eras. Fine points of expression, articulation, and even the way instruments are tuned play a large role in what you are hearing tonight.

Probably for most of us it is the use of these beautiful and, in most cases, truly antique and priceless instruments that brings the most unique quality to these performances. Rather than cataloguing all the well-founded and essential reasons to use period instruments for this music, it is even more compelling to consider why the use of *modern* instruments would cheat us of the experience a composer like Handel meant to give to us.

Instruments have evolved and grown over the centuries, mostly because composers would present new challenges to instrumentalists, and therefore to those who built their instruments. When a composer like Bach or Beethoven would write the most difficult passages that would tax the limits of an instrument’s responsiveness, within a decade or so instrument builders found a way to accommodate the challenges. In the Baroque period, musical phrases were made up of strong and weak notes, falling on strong and weak beats within a bar. When a violinist would move the bow in a downward stroke across a string, the sound was stronger than when the bow would be moved in an upward direction. But eventually the lengths of musical phrases grew, and more notes were meant to be played in a connected way, leading much further down the line to a phrase’s focal point. Accordingly, the bows for stringed instruments were then made to create the same amount of sound whether the bow was moving up or down. And of course concert halls grew in size, so instruments were made to play louder. In the 20th century, some composers required sounds that acoustic instruments simply could not produce; hence the genre of electronic music.

One of the most exciting sounds we hear from these “early instruments,” however, is the inherent tension during the most climactic moments in a musical work. If you haven’t already done so, find a recording of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony played by an orchestra of period instruments, and listen to the most dissonant or loud moments. You’ll be glad to hear the instruments being pushed to their limits, and you just might find the ease and aplomb with which modern instruments and their players perform the same passages to be lack-luster by comparison.

Finally, a short note about antiques and reproductions...while it is not uncommon to find violins and ’cellos that are more than 300 years old being played in orchestras like ours, very few surviving antique wind instruments are still playable. Consequently, period wind instruments are almost always *copies* of originals.

The following libretto is adapted from the printed word-book for the first London performances of Messiah in 1743, and incorporates Handel's own designations of part headings, scenes, and movement headings.

## Messiah AN ORATORIO

Set to Musick by George-Frideric Handel, Esq.

### PART THE FIRST

#### SINFONY

#### SCENE I

##### RECITATIVE, accompanied - Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her Warfare is accomplish'd, that her Iniquity is pardon'd. 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*)

##### SONG - Tenor

Ev'ry Valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry Mountain 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*)

#### SCENE II

##### RECITATIVE, accompanied - Bass

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once a little while, and I will shake the Heav'ns 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, ev'n the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (*Malachi 3:1*)

##### SONG - Alto

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*)

#### SCENE III

##### RECITATIVE - Alto

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Emmanuel, GOD WITH US. (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23*)

##### SONG - Alto & 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. O thou that tellest good Tidings to Zion, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (*Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1*)

##### RECITATIVE, accompanied - Bass

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*)

##### SONG - Bass

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*)

#### SCENE IV

##### PIFA

##### RECITATIVE - Soprano

There were Shepherds abiding in the Field, keeping Watch over their Flock by Night. (*Luke 2:8*)

##### ARIOSO - Soprano

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*)

##### RECITATIVE - Soprano

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 Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (*Luke 2:10-11*)

##### RECITATIVE, accompanied - Soprano

And suddenly there was with the Angel a Multitude of the heav'nly 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*)

#### SCENE V

##### SONG - Soprano

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Sion, 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*)

##### RECITATIVE - Alto

Then shall the Eyes of the Blind be open'd, and the Ears of the Deaf unstopped; then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb shall sing. (*Zechariah 35:5-6*)

##### SONG - Alto & Soprano

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. Come unto Him all ye that labour, come unto Him all ye 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. (*Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-29*)

##### CHORUS

His Yoke is easy, his Burthen is light. (*Matthew 11:30*)

—Intermission—

## PART THE SECOND

## SCENE I

## CHORUS

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

## SONG - Alto

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 the Hair: He hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting. (*Isaiah 53:3; Isaiah 50:6*)

## CHORUS

Surely he hath borne our Grievings 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 ev'ry one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the Iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53:6*)

## RECITATIVE, accompanied - Tenor

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*)

## RECITATIVE, accompanied - Soprano

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 69:21*)

## SONG - Soprano

Behold, and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto his Sorrow! (*Lamentations 1:12*)

## SCENE II

## RECITATIVE, accompanied - Soprano

He was cut off out of the Land of the Living: For the Transgression of thy People was He stricken. (*Isaiah 53:8*)

## SONG - Soprano

But Thou didst not leave his Soul in Hell, nor didst Thou suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption. (*Psalms 16:10*)

## SCENE III

## SEMICHORUS

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. 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 of Hosts: he is the King of Glory. (*Psalms 24:7-10*)

## SCENE IV

## RECITATIVE - Tenor

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*)

## SCENE V

## SONG - Alto

Thou art gone up on High; Thou has led Captivity captive, and received Gifts for Men, yea, even for 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*)

## ARIA - Soprano

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

## CHORUS

Their Sound is gone out into all Lands, and their Words unto the Ends of the World. (*Romans 10: 18*)

## SCENE VI

## SONG - Bass

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*)

## SCENE VII

## RECITATIVE - Tenor

He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in Derision. (*Psalms 2:4*)

## SONG - Tenor

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. Hallelujah! (*Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16*)

## PART THE THIRD

## SCENE I

## SONG - Soprano

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And tho' Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the Dead, the First-Fruits of them that sleep. (*Job 19:25-26; 1 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. (*1 Corinthians 15:21-22*)

## SCENE II

## RECITATIVE, accompanied - Bass

Behold, I tell you a Mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trumpet. (*1 Corinthians 15:51-52*)

## SONG - Bass

The trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and We shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must put on Immortality. (*1 Corinthians 15:52-54*)

## SCENE III

## RECITATIVE - Alto

Then shall be brought to pass the Saying that is written; Death is swallow'd up in Victory. (*1 Corinthians 15:54*)

## DUET - Alto and Tenor

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. (*1 Corinthians 15:55-56*)

## CHORUS

But Thanks be to God, who giveth Us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (*1 Corinthians 15:57*)

## SONG - Alto

If God is 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 maketh intercession for us. (*Romans 8:31 and 33-34*)

## SCENE IV

## 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 Honour, and Glory, and Blessing. Blessing and Honour, Glory and Pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. (*Revelation 5:12-14*)

## CHORUS

Amen.

**THE AMERICAN BACH SOLOISTS** ("ABS") are delighted to announce their wonderful 20th Anniversary Season. Annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*—in the spectacular settings of Grace Cathedral and the Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts—continue to be an immensely popular "must-see" northern California holiday tradition. And ABS' 2009 Subscription Concerts will begin with performances of the work that earned these splendid accolades from the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "The American Bach Soloists' performance of the *Mass in B Minor* was a model of what the early music movement can offer at its best: a thoughtful, passionate rendition of great music, attuned both to the stylistic characteristics of the past and to the artistic requirements of our own time." Then, enjoy some of ABS' finest musicians in solo and ensemble performances that *Gramophone* magazine has called "superbly musical...wonderfully suave...fresh, different." Wrap it up with a spectacular Handel's *Fireworks Celebration* in May, and it's a season like no other.

American Bach Soloists are honored and proud to have been an important part of northern California's rich cultural ecology for 20 years, and they thank the patrons, grantors, and especially the hundreds of ABS musicians that have brought us to this milestone. They are the spirit of American Bach Soloists. Recognizing opportunities to embrace, inform, and enlighten the aesthetic interests of our community, the organization is excited to announce a number of new musical offerings including free tickets for K-12 educators and free 24/7 streaming audio of its celebrated recordings.

Named "the best American specialists in early music" by *The Washington Post*, American Bach Soloists was founded in 1989 with the mission of introducing contemporary audiences to the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach through historically informed performances. Under the leadership of Co-founder and Music Director Jeffrey Thomas, the ensemble has achieved its vision of assembling the world's finest vocalists and period-instrument performers to bring this brilliant music to life. Critical acclaim has been extensive: *Wall Street Journal* named ABS "a flawless ensemble" and praised "a level of musical finesse one rarely encounters"; *San Francisco Classical Voice* declared, "There is nothing routine or settled about their work. Jeffrey Thomas is still pushing the musical Baroque envelope"; and the *San Francisco Chronicle* recently extolled the ensemble's "divinely inspired singing."

The first ABS concerts were given at St. Stephen's Church in Belvedere—where the ensemble still serves as Artists-in-Residence—but by its fifth season, ABS had added regular performances in San Francisco and Berkeley. As the audience increased, the artistic direction expanded to include Bach's purely instrumental and larger choral masterpieces, as well as music of his contemporaries and that of the early Classical era. The American Bach Soloists present an annual subscription series with performances in Belvedere, Berkeley, Davis, and San Francisco. Their annual holiday performances of Handel's *Messiah*—presented each December before capacity audiences since 1992—have become a northern California tradition.

In conjunction with ABS' 15th anniversary season in 2003-04, Thomas announced the *Bach Cycle*, an ambitious plan to present all of Bach's major oratorios, including two *Passions*, the oratorios for Christmas and Easter, and the *Mass in B Minor*; the violin

and harpsichord concertos, Brandenburg concertos, and orchestral suites; the major cantatas from Bach's years in Mühlhausen, Weimar, and Leipzig; and the sonatas and suites for violin, flute, cello, and *viola da gamba*. The Chorus of the American Bach Soloists has shone in repertoire from the Baroque and early Classical eras. With the inception of the Choral Series in 2004, these fine singers have been featured on programs exploring more than five centuries of choral music. To acknowledge this splendid work, the American Bach Soloists announced in 2006 a new name for its choral ensemble: American Bach Choir.

In addition to its regular subscription season, the American Bach Soloists present an annual *SummerFest* chamber music festival each July, featuring concerts, lectures, recitals, and related events presented in Belvedere, Davis, and San Francisco. The ensemble has been presented at some of the world's leading early music festivals, and has also made appearances in Santa Fe, Pittsburgh, Singapore, and Hong Kong. In 1998, in conjunction with the Fifth Biennial Berkeley Festival & Exhibition, ABS established the American Bach Soloists & Henry I. Goldberg International Young Artists Competition as a way to foster emerging musicians who wish to pursue a career in early music. To ensure the broadest scope in this endeavor, the focus of the competition is changed from year to year, attracting musicians from around the globe. The first competition, in 1998, was for harpsichord. Violin took the spotlight in 2000, followed by flute and oboe in 2002. The competition was postponed in 2004, and in 2006, the focus was voice. The winner of the Laurette Goldberg First Prize in 2006 was countertenor Ian Howell, and in 2008, when the Young Artists Competition was for Baroque violinists, Andrew Fouts and Johanna Novom shared the First Prize.

The American Bach Soloists discography contains 17 discs on the Koch International Classics, Delos International, and American Bach Soloists labels, including six volumes of Bach cantatas, many performed one on a part. The ensemble's critically acclaimed disc of Bach's *Mass in B Minor* has been called a benchmark recording and a "joyous new performance" (*The Washington Post*). One of their recent offerings is a historically significant version of Handel's *Messiah*, recorded live during performances in 2004 at the Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis, and released in 2005 on the Delos International label.

Other recent releases on Delos include Six Concerti Grossi Op. 6 by Arcangelo Corelli with recorder virtuoso Dan Laurin and celebrated violinist Elizabeth Wallfish, and a disc of Harpsichord Concertos by J.S. Bach featuring harpsichordist and ABS competition winner Michael Sponseller. In 2007, the entire catalogue of ABS' critically acclaimed recordings of cantatas, Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Transcriptions of Italian Music, Haydn Masses, and other works was re-released on iTunes, Magnatune.com, Amazon, CD Baby, and ABS' own excellent and resourceful web site, which also feature free streaming audio of most titles. The same year brought two new and much-anticipated releases: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*. Future releases include Bach's Violin Concertos featuring Elizabeth Blumenstock and Ian Howell's debut CD of works by Bach, Handel, and Domenico Scarlatti.



Jeffrey Thomas is Artistic and Music Director of the American Bach Soloists, with whom he has directed and conducted recordings of more than 25 cantatas, the *Mass in B Minor*, *Musical Offering*, motets, chamber music, and works by Schütz, Pergolesi, Vivaldi, Haydn, and Beethoven. *Fanfare* magazine has praised his series of Bach record-

ings, stating that "Thomas' direction seems just right, capturing the humanity of the music...there is no higher praise for Bach performance." He has appeared with the Baltimore, Berkeley, Boston, Detroit, Houston, National, Rochester, Minnesota, and San Francisco symphony orchestras; with the Vienna Symphony and the New Japan Philharmonic; with virtually every American baroque orchestra; and in Austria, England, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Mexico. He has performed at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Spoleto USA Festival, Ravinia Festival, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Berkeley Festival and Exhibition, Boston Early Music Festival, Bethlehem Bach Festival, Göttingen Festival, Tage Alte Musik Festival, E. Nakamichi Baroque Festival in Los Angeles, Smithsonian Institution, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music's "Next Wave Festival." He has collaborated on several occasions as conductor with the Mark Morris Dance Group.

Before devoting all of his time to conducting, he was one of the first recipients of the San Francisco Opera Company's prestigious Adler Fellowships. Cited by *Wall Street Journal* as "a superstar among oratorio tenors," Thomas' extensive discography of vocal music includes dozens of recordings of major works for Decca, EMI, Erato, Koch International Classics, Denon, Harmonia Mundi, Smithsonian, Newport Classics, and Arabesque. Thomas is an avid exponent of contemporary music, and has conducted the premieres of new operas, including David Conte's *Gift of the Magi* and *Firebird Motel*, and premiered song cycles of several composers, including two cycles written especially for him. He has performed *lieder* recitals at the Smithsonian, song recitals at various universities, and appeared with his own vocal chamber music ensemble, L'Aria Viva.

Educated at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Manhattan School of Music, and Juilliard School of Music, with further studies in English literature at Cambridge University, Thomas has taught at the Amherst Early Music Workshop, Oberlin College Conservatory Baroque Performance Institute, San Francisco Early Music Society, and Southern Utah Early Music Workshops; presented master classes at the New England Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, SUNY Buffalo, Swarthmore College, and Washington University; been on the faculty of Lehigh University; and been artist-in-residence at the University of California, where he is now professor of music (Barbara K. Jackson Chair in Choral Conducting) and director of choral ensembles in the Department of Music at UC Davis. He was a UC Davis Chancellor's Fellow from 2001 to 2006. The Rockefeller Foundation awarded him a prestigious Residency at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center at Villa Serbelloni in 2007 to work on his manuscript "Handel's *Messiah*: A Life of Its Own."



**Tamara Matthews** (soprano) performs in all classical genres; opera, chamber music, Baroque repertoire, recitals, solo with orchestra, and recordings. She has rapidly risen to international status with debuts in France, Italy, Spain, Israel, Singapore, Mexico, Canada, and Hong Kong, as well as many major venues in the U. S. Matthews made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1994 as first prize winner of the Musica Sacra Bach

Vocal Competition. International debuts for Matthews include the Orchestre Philharmonique du Strasbourg (Strauss *Vier Letzte Lieder*, Wagner *Liebstod*); Violetta (*La Traviata*) with the Festival Lyrique-Belle Ile en Mer; Haifa (Israel) Symphony; a concert tour and recording with the Orchestra of New Spain; and *Messiah* with the Singapore Symphony. Matthews' recent American concert performances include appearances in Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, and Alice Tully Hall, with the Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Houston Symphony, Knoxville Symphony, and Los Angeles Master Chorale. With more than 15 recordings, Matthews' discography includes a performance of the music of Spanish composer Courcelle; the Bach *Magnificat* and Vivaldi *Gloria* with the Boston Baroque Orchestra; soprano soloist in Bach's Mass in B Minor, *Christmas Oratorio*, *St. Matthew Passion*, and the *St. John Passion*. In addition to a busy performing career, Matthews teaches and conducts master classes regularly at festivals and seminars. She has been on the faculties of Swarthmore College and Westminster Choir College as a professor of voice, and is currently a professor at Furman University in South Carolina.



**Ian Howell** (countertenor), noted for his "polished sound, clear resonance, and powerful enunciation" by *San Francisco Classical Voice*, has performed on major concert stages across the U. S., Europe, Mexico, Canada, Japan, and Taiwan. Howell recently took First Prize at the American Bach Soloists International Solo Competition and Third Prize (which resulted in his Carnegie Hall debut) at

the Oratorio Society of New York's competition. This Blacksburg, Virginia, native can be heard with the all-male chamber choir Chanticleer on one DVD and seven CDs, including the Grammy-winning *Lamentations and Praises*, and the Grammy-nominated *Our American Journey*. Howell has appeared in Handel's *Hercules and Semle*, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Concert appearances include Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, and Monteverdi's *Vespers*. Future engagements include performances with the American Bach Soloists, Portland Baroque Orchestra, and a debut recording with the American Bach Soloists. Howell has given master classes and lecture/demonstrations across the country. He graduated in 2006 with a master's degree in Early Music, Song, and Chamber Ensemble offered jointly by the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the Yale School of Music.



**Aaron Sheehan** (tenor) is part of a new generation of Early Music vocalists that performs in projects ranging from Medieval to 20th-century music. His voice has been described by *Opera News* as "sinuous and supple," and the *Boston Globe* says he "sings with musical charm and vocal aplomb." He has appeared as soloist with Tragicomedia, Concerto Palatino, New York Collegium, American Bach Soloists, Handel

and Haydn Society, Aston Magna Festival, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Clarion Music Society, Boston Cecilia, American Opera Theater, Intermezzo Chamber Opera, and the Lyra Concert Baroque Orchestra. His singing has taken him to many festivals, including Tanglewood, Boston Early Music Festival, Regensburg Early Music Festival, Washington Early Music Festival, and Monadnock Summer Music Festival. Aaron has recorded and toured the U.S. and Europe with Paul Hillier's ensemble, Theater of Voices, with which he still performs, Blue Heron Renaissance Choir, Fortune's Wheel, and La Donna Musicale. Sheehan's recent engagements include the role of Ivan in the Boston Early Music Festival production of Mattheson's *Boris Gudenow*, the role of Enea in *Didone*, the role of Pastor in a recording of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and a recording of Lully's *Thésée* with BEMF. Upcoming engagements include a tour of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, *St. John's Passion* at the National Cathedral, one on a part Bach cantatas with the American Bach Soloists, and the role of Amour in Lully's opera *Psyché* with the Boston Early Music Festival. Sheehan teaches voice at Wellesley College and Brown University.



**Jesse Blumberg** (baritone) is an artist equally at home on opera, concert, and recital stages. Last season he created the role of Connie Rivers in Ricky Ian Gordon's world premiere opera *The Grapes of Wrath* at the Minnesota Opera and Utah Symphony and Opera. For his performance in the title role of Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* with Opera Vivente, the *Baltimore Sun* raved, "Blumberg commanded the

stage, physically and vocally...lighting up the hall with his every appearance." He has previously appeared with American Bach Soloists, the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, and Sacred Music in a Sacred Space. During the 2005-2006 season, Blumberg presented an *On Wings of Song* recital with pianist Martin Katz for the Marilyn Horne Foundation, which has since been heard around the nation on various radio broadcasts. He made his Alice Tully Hall debut in the world premiere of Lisa Bielawa's new song cycle, *The Lay of the Love and Death*. He and pianist Thomas Bagwell gave a recital of songs by Hugo Wolf at the Austrian Embassy, which the *Washington Post* described as "no less than revelatory." Blumberg has participated in young artist programs at the Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Ravinia Festival, and Chicago Opera Theater, and has toured with the Waverly Consort and the Mark Morris Dance Group. He was awarded first prize in the 2007 International Hilde Zadek Singing Competition in Vienna as well as first prize in the 2007 National Federation of Music Clubs Young Artist Auditions. In the summer of 2008, he performed the world premiere of *Green Sneakers*, a song cycle for baritone and string quartet by Ricky Ian Gordon, at the Vail Valley

Music Festival. Blumberg received a Master of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is also the founder and artistic director of the Five Boroughs Music Festival, a new concert series in New York City.



**John Thiessen** (trumpet) has performed with American Bach Soloists for nearly 15 years, and appears as soloist and principal trumpet with early music ensembles in the U.S. and Canada, including Tafelmusik, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Boston Early Music Festival, and Boston Baroque. Highlights this season include Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Mass in B Minor*, and numerous

cantatas; Handel's *Messiah*, *Ode to St. Cecilia*, *L'Allegro*, and *Water Music*; and recitals throughout the U.S. and Canada. Thiessen is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and King's College, University of London, and the recipient of grants from the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council for studies in the U.K. He recently presented master classes at the Juilliard School and University of Texas, is an adjunct faculty member for Carnegie Hall's Academy program, and has taught for baroque institutes at Oberlin College and the Longy School. Thiessen has recorded extensively for Sony Classical Vivarte, Telarc, EMI, BMG, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, London Decca, Analekta, CBC, and Denon, and is heard on the recent film *Casanova*. In addition to his performance activities, he serves as the Executive Director of the American Bach Soloists.

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