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For Immediate Release



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## Musical Flavors of Argentina, Germany, Italy, England and more abound in Mercury's 2017-18 Season

Houston, TX – Mercury Artistic Director **Antoine Plante** and Executive Director **Brian Ritter** announce the orchestra's seventeenth season today. Beginning August 31, 2017, and featuring a vibrant mix of composers from various countries and a diverse range of works, the 2017-18 season offers something for music lovers of all ages. Piazzolla's mesmerizing *Libertango*, a multi-media infused *Vivaldi's The Four Seasons*, traditional English Carols, Corelli's joyful *Concerto Grosso, Op. 6 No. 4*, Bach's beloved *St. Matthew Passion*, and an original staged performance focusing on the life and works of Clara Wieck Schumann are just a few of the incredible works that will be performed.

Houston's premiere period instrument ensemble continues to perform in top venues around the city. Through its flagship seven-concert Downtown Series at The Wortham Center, free community concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, the multi-venue Neighborhood Series at the Museum of Fine Arts, MATCH, Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, and Dosey Doe in The Woodlands, and its University of Houston Clear Lake (UHCL) concert series, Mercury continues to be accessible to its ever-growing audience.

Artists appearing with Mercury this season include violist **James Dunham**; sopranos **Dominique Labelle, Hannah Lu, Lauren Snouffer** and **Mary Wilson**; mezzo-sopranos **Meg Bragle** and **Cecilia Duarte**; countertenor **Daniel Taylor**; tenors **Derek Chester, Nicholas Phan**, and **Eduardo Tercero**; basses **Mark Diamond, Michael Kessler**, and **Michael Sumuel**; directors **Tara Faircloth, Carole Nelson**, and **Betsy Cook Weber**; the **Houston Boy Choir**; **Houston Symphony Chorus Chamber Ensemble**; **Luna Tango**; and **Tango Boreal**. Mercury's concertmaster **Jonathan Godfrey** also appears as soloist.

The ensemble also continues its collaboration with the world-renowned Juilliard School, introducing Houston to the next generation of great period performance musicians through its Mercury-Juilliard Fellowship. Joining Mercury this season will be cellist **Keiran Campbell**, and violinist **Augusta McKay Lodge**.

Season tickets go on sale August 14 at <http://tickets.mercuryhouston.org/>

### **The 2017-18 Season**

#### **SEASON KICK-OFF**

**BACH & PIAZZOLLA**

**Thursday, August 31, 2017, 8:00 PM, UHCL**  
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston

**Saturday, September 2, 2017, 8:00 PM, Miller Outdoor Theatre – Free Community Concert**  
(Sponsored in part by the City of Houston through the Miller Outdoor Theatre Advisory Board)  
6000 Hermann Park Drive in Hermann Park, Houston

J.S. BACH Selections from Die Kunst der Fuge (The Art of Fugue) BWV 1080

PIAZZOLLA:

Libertango; Organito; La Muerte del Ángel; Milonga del Ángel;

Double Concerto for bandoneon, guitar and string orchestra, "Hommage à Liège";

Milonga; Tango; Escualo

DENIS PLANTE:

Tango Romance, Ciudad

Luna Tango, Tango Boreal, special guests

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Mercury says goodbye to summer and welcomes the coming 2017-18 season with two concerts. Revel in the experience of Bach's gripping and romantic Die Kunst der Fuge; exciting, soulful, and passionate music from the master of Tango followed by two compelling works from renowned contemporary Canadian composer Denis Plante.*

## **DOWNTOWN SERIES**

One of five performing arts complexes in a seventeen-block area, the Cullen Theater, located in the two-block. Gus S. Wortham Theater Center, has been home to Mercury's Downtown Series since 2006.

501 Texas Avenue, Houston

### ***BRAHMS & MENDELSSOHN***

**Saturday, October 7, 2017, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 5 "Reformation"

BRAHMS Symphony No. 2

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*One great evening, two amazing works - Mendelssohn's tempestuous and triumphant Symphony No. 5 and Brahms' cheerful Second Symphony.*

### ***HAYDN & MOZART***

**Saturday, November 18, 2017, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

HAYDN Symphony No. 22, "The Philosopher"

HAYDN Symphony No. 49, "The Passion"

MOZART *Sinfonia concertante*, K. 364

Jonathan Godfrey, violin

James Dunham, viola

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*Haydn's best-known symphony, No. 22 and his dark-hued No. 49, share the stage with Mozart's only complete surviving work in the sinfonia concertante genre.*

### ***CORELLI'S CHRISTMAS CONCERTO***

**Saturday, December 9, 2017, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

MOZART Exsultate, jubilate, K. 165

MOZART Laudamus te from Great Mass, K. 427

MOZART Agnus Dei from Coronation Mass, K. 317

BACH Aria from Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248

CORELLI Christmas Concerto, Op. 6, No. 8

HAYDN Christmas Symphony

Lauren Snouffer, soprano

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*Celebrate the season of Christmas as only Mercury can!*

### ***LOVING CLARA SCHUMANN***

**Saturday, January 13, 2018, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

CLARA SCHUMANN:

Er ist gekommen; Warum willst du and're fragen; Ich stand in dunklen Träumen;

Oh weh des Scheidens; Liebst du um Schönheit;

Sie liebten sich beide

ROBERT SCHUMANN:

Er der Herrlichste; Ich kann's nicht fassen; Du Ring an meinem Finger;  
Nun hast Du mir den ersten Schmerz getan; Seit ich ihn gesehen; Anfangs wollt' ich fast verzagen;  
Morgens steh' ich au und frage; Meine Rose; Schöne Wiege meiner Leiden

BRAHMS Wir wandelten

Soloists To Be Announced

Tara Faircloth, director

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*Be sure to get your tickets for this scintillating staged performance around the life and works of Clara Wieck Schumann and her relationships with Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms.*

### **HANDEL & PERGOLESI**

**Saturday, February 10, 2018, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

PERGOLESI Stabat Mater

HANDEL Opera arias and duets, Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 5

Dominique Labelle, soprano

Daniel Taylor, countertenor

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*Lose yourself in an incandescent journey through a beloved selection of operatic flavored emotional works by two Baroque masters, culminating with one of the most popular of all settings of the Stabat Mater. Joining Mercury are two internationally renowned interpreters of Baroque music, Canadians soprano Dominique Labelle and countertenor Daniel Taylor.*

### **BACH'S ST. MATTHEW PASSION**

**Saturday, March 10, 2018, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

J.S. BACH St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244

Nicholas Phan, tenor – Evangelist

Mary Wilson, soprano

Meg Bragle, mezzo-soprano

Derek Chester, tenor

Mark Diamond, bass - Jesus

Houston Boychoir

Caroline Nelson, director

Houston Symphony Chorus Chamber Ensemble

Betsy Cook Weber, director

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*One of the greatest pieces of inspirational sacred music ever written. Joining Mercury in the performance of Bach's magnificent work are celebrated Houston-based artistic director Caroline Nelson and director Betsy Cook Weber, five acclaimed singers, the Houston Boychoir and members of the Houston Symphony Chorus.*

### **VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS**

**Saturday, May 12, 2018, 8:00 PM, Wortham Center**

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

PURCELL Suite from The Fairy Queen

Denis Plante and Antoine Plante, creators

Antoine Plante, conductor

Pre-Concert Lecture 7:15 PM Location TBA

*Director and creator of two Mercury audience favorites, Bach and Piazzolla (2016) and The Crimson Prince (2015), Denis Plante returns with a new concert. Mercury presents an exciting, multi-media concert featuring two incredible works by Vivaldi and Purcell. Come be transported to a whimsical world of fairies and magic!*

### **NEIGHBORHOOD SERIES**

Mercury's Neighbor Series features short, affordable concerts performed in intimate atmospheres at four unique venues across Houston:

Mercury's music sets the mood for contemplating the lush paintings of the Baroque gallery in the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH) Beck Building, home to Mercury since 2006. Located in one of Houston's largest arts and culture hubs, the Historic District between Midtown, Rice University and the Med Center;

MATCH, the newest venue in Mercury's Neighborhood lineup, located in the thriving hotbed of culture, creativity and foodie favorites that is known as Midtown;

MDPC, a multi-sensory experience of sight and sound set in a simply gorgeous location in the west side of Houston. The stunning stained glass of the chapel at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church is a vibrant backdrop, adding to the concert experience;

Dosey Doe in The Woodlands. Music lovers get the complete Texas treatment at Dosey Doe's Big Barn location - a 165-year-old tobacco barn approximately thirty miles north of Downtown Houston. The space features incredible acoustics and delicious southern-style meals.

### **BACH & MENDELSSOHN**

**MFAH, Museum District Saturday, October 14, 2017, 7:00 PM**

**Dosey Doe, The Woodlands, Sunday, October 15, 2017, 7:00 PM**

**MDPC Memorial Drive, Saturday, October 28, 2017, 2:30 PM**

**MATCH, Midtown Thursday, November 2, 2017, 8:00 PM**

MENDELSSOHN Octet in E-Flat major, Op. 20

BACH Toccata and Fugue in D minor for Solo Violin, BWV 565

BACH Passacaglia in C minor for String, BWV 582

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Enjoy an uplifting evening with Mendelssohn's youthful Octet, and two works by one of the most important composers of all time.*

### **AN ENGLISH BAROQUE CHRISTMAS**

**MATCH, Midtown Thursday, November 30, 2017, 8:00 PM**

**MDPC, Memorial Drive, Saturday, December 2, 2017, 2:30 PM**

**MFAH, Museum District Saturday, December 2, 2017, 7:00 PM**

**Dosey Doe, The Woodlands, Sunday, December 3, 2017, 7:00 PM**

TAVERNER Motets

TALLIS Motets

PURCELL Songs, Hymns, Fantasias and Sonatas

DOWLAND Songs

TRADITIONAL English Carols

Hannah Lu, soprano

Cecilia Duarte, mezzo-soprano

Eduardo Tercero, tenor

To Be Announced, bass

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Join in the spirit of the season with Mercury's An English Baroque Christmas.*

### **SPLENDORS OF ITALIAN BAROQUE**

**MATCH, Midtown, Thursday, April 12, 2018, 8:00 PM**

**MDPC, Memorial Drive, Saturday, April 14, 2018, 2:30 PM**

**MFAH, Museum District Saturday, April 14, 2018, 7:00 PM**

**Dosey Doe, The Woodlands, Sunday, April 15, 2018, 7:00 PM**

VIVALDI Concerto for Two Violins and Cello, Op. 3, No. 11, RV 565

LOCATELLI Concerto Grosso, "The Tears of Ariadne"

CORELLI Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 4

VIVALDI Concerto for Cello, RV 407

SAMMARTINI Concerto Grosso, Op. 11, No. 5

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Vivaldi, Locatelli, Corelli, Sammartini! - Need we say more?*

### **UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE (UHCL)**

The University of Houston-Clear Lake's Bayou Theater is the premier performing arts center and concert venue for the greater Clear Lake area.

2700 Bay Area Blvd., Houston

## **BRAHMS & MENDELSSOHN**

**Friday, October 6, 2017, 8:00 PM, UHCL**

MENDELSSOHN Symphony No. 5, "Reformation"

BRAHMS Symphony No. 2

Antoine Plante, conductor

*One great evening, two amazing works - Mendelssohn's tempestuous and triumphant Symphony No. 5 and Brahms' cheerful Second Symphony.*

## **SPLENDORS OF ITALIAN BAROQUE**

**Friday, April 13, 2018, 8:00 PM, UHCL**

VIVALDI Concerto for Two Violins and Cello, Op. 3, No.11, RV 565

LOCATELLI Concerto Grosso, "The Tears of Ariadne"

CORELLI Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 4

VIVALDI Concerto for Cello, RV 407

SAMMARTINI Concerto Grosso, Op.11, No. 5

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Vivaldi, Locatelli, Corelli, Sammartini! Need we say more?*

## **VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS**

**Sunday, May 13, 2018, 2:00 PM, UHCL**

VIVALDI The Four Seasons

PURCELL Suite from The Fairy Queen

Denis Plante and Antoine Plante, creators

Antoine Plante, conductor

*Mercury presents an exciting, multi-media concert featuring two incredible works by Vivaldi and Purcell. Come be transported to a whimsical world of fairies and magic!*

## **ABOUT MERCURY**

Innovation, accessibility and dynamism are just three of the distinguishing characteristics of Mercury, the critically acclaimed Houston-based period instrument ensemble that continues to redefine the orchestra experience. Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> season, Mercury celebrates the power of music – from the Baroque period and more - serving the Houston community and beyond through teaching, sharing and performing with passion, intimacy and excellence.

Founded by conductor and Artistic Director Antoine Plante and three friends in 2000 with the goal to enrich and entertain Houston audiences with an exciting repertoire of Baroque music performed on period instruments, the ensemble gradually expanded its vision to offer fresh, original performances of a broader repertoire, and integrated multi-media, unique dance, costume and narrative elements into its programs. In 2013, the ensemble rebranded itself.

In addition to performances in multiple venues throughout the Houston area, including its flagship series at Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, Mercury continues to invest in the community. It offers free community performances annually, including the community concert at The Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, and the public concerts in the Crain Garden at Houston Methodist Hospital. Recognized for its award-winning education outreach programs comprising classroom music education and performances in Houston area schools, Mercury also presents master classes for school orchestras. Active in the recording scene, to date, Mercury has released eight albums on its own label, featuring works by Corelli, Mozart, Schubert, Rameau, Vivaldi, Piazzolla, and Handel.

Mercury continues its new collaboration with The Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program for the second year. The Mercury-Juilliard Fellowship initiative encourages the development of talented young instrumentalists and fosters a strong relationship between two major players in America's period instrument performance scene, as well as introducing Houston audiences to the next generation of great period performance musicians.

Mercury gratefully acknowledges the following organizations and corporations for their ongoing support: the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment Inc., Texas Commission on the Arts, the Wyatt Foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fung Chao Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Additional information on Mercury, its events and concerts, directions to the venues, and to learn more about its recordings, please [www.mercuryhouston.org](http://www.mercuryhouston.org)