

For Immediate Release



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**Acclaimed Actor David Rainey
Joins Mercury
in the Theatrical Premiere of “Four Seasons”**

**A modern fairy tale of life and love with an unexpected twist
Inspired by and featuring the music of
Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*, Purcell’s *The Fairy Queen* & Rameau’s *Adoration du Soleil***



Jonathan Godfrey, concertmaster, in character

Houston, TX – Mercury brings the 2017-18 season to a close with “Four Seasons”, a dramatic staged production from the creative minds of Artistic Director Antoine Plante and musician/composer Denis Plante merging words, music and imagination. Well-known Houston actor David Rainey, resident member of The Alley Theatre and Artistic Director of The Landing Theatre Company, joins the orchestra in the lead role for the three-performance theatrical premiere at the Hobby Center’s Zilkha Hall on Saturday, June 16th and Sunday, June 17th.

The two-act work draws its music and inspiration from Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons*, one of the earliest and most well-known examples of program music (instrumental music with an additional element of meaning, or narration). Vivaldi famously provided written accompaniment in the form of poems for his four concerti - something unusual for the time.

Influenced by Vivaldi’s poetry and Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” Denis Plante’s original short play, “Fairies’ Dowries,” serves alongside the music as foundation for the production in which Rainey stars as fictional retired aerospace engineer, Walden Walker.

Co-creators Antoine and Denis Plante have combined this stirring tale of imagination and romance - the story of the four seasons of Walker’s life - with Vivaldi’s timeless evocation of the seasons,

English composer Henry Purcell's nuanced and dazzling work, *The Fairy Queen*, and French composer Jean-Philippe Rameau's exquisitely beautiful *Adoration du Soleil* to craft a luminous musical fairy tale enjoyable by all ages.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons

Saturday, June 16, 2018 at 2:30 PM & 8:00 PM

Pre-concert Lecture at 7:15 PM

Sunday, June 17, 2018 at 2:30 PM

Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center

Antonio VIVALDI *The Four Seasons*

Jean-Philippe RAMEAU *Adoration du Soleil*

Henry PURCELL Suite from *The Fairy Queen*

David Rainey, Actor

Jonathan Godfrey, Concertmaster

Antoine Plante, Conductor and Co-creator

Denis Plante, Director and Co-creator

Mercury musicians

This concert is made possible in part by the Houston Endowment and the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

ABOUT DAVID RAINEY



David Rainey is the Executive Artistic Director of The Landing Theatre Company and has been an Alley Theatre Resident Company Member since 2000. Nationally, he has performed for Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, the National Actors Theatre, the Guthrie Theatre, Joseph Papp Public Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Acting Company, New York Shakespeare Festival, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Ford's Theatre, Asolo Theatre Company, Dallas Theatre Center, Resident Ensemble Players, Shakespeare Festival LA, Crossroads Theatre Company, Stark Naked Theatre Company, the Houston Grand Opera, among others. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he was recipient of the Drama Division's highest honor, the Michel and Suria Saint-Denis Prize. Since then he has received numerous awards and nominations for acting and directing.

ABOUT JONATHAN GODFREY



A founding member of Mercury, violinist Jonathan Godfrey has served as Concertmaster and violin soloist since the orchestra's inception. A graduate of Rice University, Mr. Godfrey is currently Assistant Concertmaster of the Houston Grand Opera and Houston Ballet Orchestras. Mr. Godfrey has performed with many ensembles including the Houston Symphony, the Houston Bach Society, the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, and the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra. He has also served as Concertmaster of the Sinfonietta Cracovia, The Houston Grand Opera Orchestra, The American Radio Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra X, and the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra. He has concertized in the US and abroad, performing solo and chamber music recitals in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Interlochen, and Kansas City, as well as Guanajuato, León, Monterrey, and Santiago, Mexico; Yokohama, Kyoto, Matsumoto, Sapporo, Date, and Tokyo, Japan; and Quito and Ambato, Ecuador. A music educator as well, Mr. Godfrey has taught for twenty years, including positions on the violin faculty of both the Interlochen Arts Camp and the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory. Mr. Godfrey plays on the first of

a set of instruments to be made specifically for Mercury by violinmaker Dorian Barnes. This instrument was generously donated to Mercury by the Kirchner family.

ABOUT DENIS PLANTE, DIRECTOR AND CO-CREATOR



The creator of previous Mercury multi-media events “Bach and Piazzolla”, and audience-favorite, “The Crimson Prince”, Denis Plante has long been a partner in Mercury’s creative endeavors. His unusual career as a performer and composer has made him the bandoneón artist in Canada, and an exceptional figure in contemporary tango on the world scene. Denis is frequently invited to perform as a soloist with symphony orchestras or chamber-music ensembles. A spiritual son of Astor Piazzolla, he has enriched the bandoneón repertoire with dozens of works capturing the essential pulse of the tango. He has recorded seven CDs of his work, composed two operas and a ballet, and has been awarded the title of Creator of the Year by Quebec’s Art Council and an Opus prize for best Global album.

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. Co-founded by Artistic Director Antoine Plante, and now in its 17th 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.

In addition to performances in multiple venues throughout the Houston area, 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.

Following Hurricane Harvey, Mercury's 2017-18 Flagship Downtown Series takes place at Stude Concert Hall at Rice University and Zilkha Hall at The Hobby Center while the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater is being renovated. Mercury's Neighborhood Series continues in the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH) Beck Building, MATCH, Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, and Dosey Doe in The Woodlands.

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 (TCA), the Wyatt Foundation, the Ting Tsung and Wei Fong Chao Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Of recent import is a Hurricane Harvey Relief Grant from the TCA, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Mellon Foundation and State of Texas, awarded to the ensemble to assist in the recovery of the business interruptions due the Hurricane Harvey this fall.

For additional information on Mercury, its upcoming events and concerts, directions to the venues, and to learn more about its recordings, please visit www.mercuryhouston.org

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