News Release

MERCURY CELEBRATES 20th ANNIVERSARY WITH 2020-2021 SEASON

(Houston, TX) February 5, 2020: Mercury Chamber Orchestra surveys its twenty-year history with a look towards its future in a celebratory 2020-2021 season, crafted by Artistic Director Antoine Plante. Featuring Baroque and Classical favorites, the ensemble will recreate some of its earliest concerts while also performing some masterpieces for the first time. Each concert—performed on period instruments—is a dynamic and fresh experience, revealing new ways for audiences to engage with the arts.

Mercury kicks off its 20th Season with our annual Free Community Concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Experienced by thousands of people each year at Houston’s premiere outdoor concert venue in Hermann Park, this season’s concert, “Vivaldi’s Four Seasons,” will be a multi-media jubilee of one of the classical world’s most popular pieces and a perennial Mercury audience favorite. This concert is made possible in part by the Miller Outdoor Theatre Advisory Board.

Mercury’s Downtown Series, at the Wortham Center’s Cullen Theater, is comprised of seven distinctive concerts running from October through May. Mercury opens the series with a Beethoven anniversary concert, featuring the composer’s monumental Violin Concerto in D major and Seventh Symphony, part of a week-long festival that will feature not only the Downtown concert, but also a pre-concert dinner, smaller recitals, a film screening and a masterclass – all celebrating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth.

In November, Mercury recreates one of its earliest concerts – A Day in Paris: 1743 – featuring Baroque works by French composers Rameau, Couperin and Leclair. In December, Mercury brings to life music of the early holiday music of the Americas – from Appalachians to the St. Lawrence River. In the January, Mercury performs a multi-media concert spanning a century of the string quartet – featuring Beethoven’s final quartet, the Grosse Fugue, Debussy’s sparkling quartet and Shostakovich’s dramatic Eighth String Quartet – each expanded for full string orchestra.

In February, it’s a concert of wind concertos by Bach and Vivaldi along with other Baroque music featuring early music specialists Nate Helgeson on bassoon and Priscilla Herreid on oboe. In March, Mercury performs audience favorites from the past twenty years including Mozart’s Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A Little
Night Music). Mercury concludes the season with a 20th Anniversary Grand Finale with a celebration dinner and J.S. Bach’s B-minor Mass -- the first time the orchestra has undertaken this masterpiece.

Now in its ninth year, Mercury’s Neighborhood Series offers intimate, hour-long concerts in four exceptional locations across Houston - Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Midtown’s MATCH, and the Dosey Doe Big Barn in The Woodlands. Designed to inspire and energize all who attend, these concerts are highly accessible and intimate. The first program, “Tango Quartet” (Oct 22-25), is a special anniversary concert featuring the music that brought together Mercury’s four founders – the tango. A blockbuster holiday program, “A German Baroque Christmas” (December 17-20), offers a family-friendly concert that celebrates the German Baroque tradition from Bavaria to Brandenburg. Closing out the Neighborhood Series is “Bach, Holst, Grieg” (April 8-11), a delightful program of works curated by concertmaster Jonathan Godfrey spanning the Baroque to the Romantic.

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FULL 2020-2021 SEASON DETAILS BELOW:

**FREE COMMUNITY CONCERT**

Vivaldi’s Four Seasons  
Saturday, September 5, 2020, 8 PM  
Miller Outdoor Theatre

**DOWNTOWN SERIES**  
All concerts at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater, 8 PM

**CONCERT 1**  
Beethoven 250th – A Celebration  
October 10, 2020  
Jonathan Godfrey, Violin

BEETHOVEN:  
Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61  
Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92

**CONCERT 2**  
A Day in Paris: 1743  
November 21, 2020

RAMEAU:  
Cantata Orphée, RCT 27  
“Air de la Folie” from Platée  
LECLAIR:  
Violin Concerto in D minor  
COUPERIN:  
Leçons de ténèbres

**CONCERT 3**  
An Early American Christmas  
December 5, 2020

A festive holiday concert featuring the music of the early Americas on Baroque instruments.

**CONCERT 4**
Beethoven's Grosse Fugue
January 9, 2021

BEETHOVEN: Grosse Fugue, Op. 133
SHOSTAKOVICH: Chamber Symphony in C minor, Op. 110a
DEBUSSY: String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

CONCERT 5
Bach & Vivaldi
February 13, 2021
Nate Helgeson, Bassoon
Priscilla Herreid, Oboe

J.S. BACH: Concerto for Violin and Oboe in C minor
VIVALDI: Bassoon Concerto RV 545

CONCERT 6
Mozart & Mendelssohn
March 27, 2021

MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik (A Little Night Music)
C.P. E. BACH: Sinfonia in B minor
MENDELSSOHN: String Symphony in F major

CONCERT 7
Bach's B-minor Mass
May 22, 2021
20th Anniversary Grand Finale

J.S. BACH: Mass in B minor, BWV 232

NEIGHBORHOOD SERIES

VENUES:
MFAH, where Mercury's music sets the mood for contemplating the lush paintings of the Baroque gallery in the 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, where music lovers get the complete Texas treatment at the Big Barn - a 165-year-old tobacco barn approximately thirty miles north of Downtown Houston. The space features incredible acoustics and delicious southern-style meals.

CONCERT 1
Tango Quartet
Bandoneonist Denis Plante joins Mercury for a special anniversary program of tango featuring the music of Piazzolla and more.

Midtown (MATCH): Thursday, October 22 at 7:30 PM
Memorial (Memorial Drive Presbyterian): Saturday, October 24 at 2:30 PM
Museum District (MFAH): Saturday, October 24 at 6:30 PM or 8:30 PM
The Woodlands (Dosey Doe): Sunday, October 25 at 7 PM

CONCERT 2
A German Baroque Christmas
Reflect on the season with a concert of beautiful holiday music from Bavaria to Brandenburg.

Midtown (MATCH): Thursday, December 17 at 7:30 PM
Memorial (Memorial Drive Presbyterian): Saturday, December 19 at 2:30 PM
Museum District (MFAH): Saturday, December 19 at 6:30 PM or 8:30 PM
The Woodlands (Dosey Doe): Sunday, December 20 at 7 PM

CONCERT 3
Bach, Holst, Grieg
Concertmaster Jonathan Godfrey curates a program of chamber works from the Baroque to the Romantic that will delight.

Midtown (MATCH): Thursday, April 8 at 7:30 PM
Memorial (Memorial Drive Presbyterian): Saturday, April 10 at 2:30 PM
Museum District (MFAH): Saturday, April 10 at 6:30 PM or 8:30 PM
The Woodlands (Dosey Doe): Sunday, April 11 at 7 PM

All programs, artists, dates, venues, and prices subject to change.

SUBSCRIPTION AND TICKET INFORMATION

Subscription sales for Mercury’s 2020-2021 season are available immediately, offering savings up 20% off single tickets. Subscribers receive the best seats at the best prices, free ticket exchange privileges, and additional discounts on single tickets.

Single tickets will be available August 12, 2020.

For more information or to order a subscription, please call Mercury’s Patron Services Team at 713-533-0080, Monday through Friday from 10 AM to 4 PM; or visit Mercury’s website at mercuryhouston.org.

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 19th 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 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 collaboration with The Juilliard School’s Historical Performance Program for the fourth 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, 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 visit www.mercuryhouston.org

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