

BOSTON BAROQUE

Media Contact:
Emily Kirk Weddle, Boston Baroque
eweddle@bostonbaroque.org
617-987-8600
For Immediate Release:

Boston Baroque introduces the X-tet, Boston's premier period string chamber ensemble

Inaugural performances will take place on March 20th in the intimate acoustics of Fraser Performance Studio

BOSTON, MA—Boston Baroque is proud to introduce its first-ever period string chamber ensemble, the X-tet. The inaugural performances will take place on March 20th at 6:30pm and 8:30pm in the intimate acoustics of Fraser Performance Studio at WGBH in Boston. A unique opportunity to hear Boston's most celebrated musical artists performing in a chamber setting, the group's premiere program will feature masterworks by Haydn and Mozart.

"I am ecstatic for the inaugural performances of the X-tet," said Executive Director Jennifer Hughes, "as this opens up so many opportunities for Boston Baroque to perform in new venues and settings uniquely suited for chamber music." Music Director Martin Pearlman commented, "I'm delighted that Boston Baroque is able to expand its offerings with this chamber music ensemble. These concerts will showcase the virtuosity and versatility of our wonderful musicians."

Drawing membership from Boston Baroque's world-renowned orchestra roster, this performance features core members Christina Day Martinson, Jesse Irons, and Sarah Darling, violin, Jason Fisher, viola, and Michael Unterman, cello. The concert will be performed "in the round" with the musicians in the center of the room and the audience seated around them. The program features Haydn's String Quartet, Op. 20, No. 4 in D Major and Mozart's String Quintet No. 4 in G minor.

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) is considered to be the "Father of the String Quartet" as his seminal compositions helped to establish the genre as it is known today. Composed in 1772, with influences from the "Sturm und Drang" German art movement, the Op. 20 quartets are imbued with a Romantic Era dramatic flair and volatility. Haydn's innovation was treating each instrument's voice equally, in contrast to earlier structures that often favored the first violin by dominating the main themes. Haydn's String Quartet in D Major is the fourth in Op. 20, and is

filled with many contrasts, from a calm, pastoral theme in the first movement, a minuet in the Hungarian Gypsy style in the third movement, and an effervescent finale.

The String Quintet No. 4 in G minor by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) showcases an agitated, impassioned, and melancholic expressiveness, alternating with moments of heartbreakingly serene and tragic eloquence; which, suddenly, finish in a lilting and carefree elegance. The work jumps between a darker theme and a lighter theme, weaving this polarity across movements. Mozart indulged his love for the viola by scoring the work for two violas, and by emphasizing the rich inner voices of the quintet, further disrupting the traditional roles of string instruments and ensembles. The work, composed in 1787, was created at a time in Mozart's life that was personally filled with illness, desperation, and sadness, further contributing to the tension found throughout.

Single tickets for the X-tet performances are \$50, and can be purchased online at bostonbaroque.org or by calling the Boston Baroque offices at 617-987-8600.

ABOUT BOSTON BAROQUE

The six-time GRAMMY® nominated Boston Baroque is the first permanent Baroque orchestra established in North America and, according to *Fanfare Magazine*, is widely regarded as “one of the world’s premier period-instrument bands.” The ensemble produces lively, emotionally charged, groundbreaking performances of Baroque and Classical works for today’s audiences performed on instruments and using performance techniques that reflect the eras in which the music was composed.

Founded in 1973 as “Banchetto Musicale” by Music Director Martin Pearlman, Boston Baroque’s orchestra is composed of some of the finest period-instrument players in the United States, and is frequently joined by the ensemble’s professional chorus and by world-class instrumental and vocal soloists from around the globe. The ensemble has performed at major music centers across the United States and performed recently in Poland for the 2015 Beethoven Festival, with sold-out performances of Monteverdi’s *Vespers of 1610* in Warsaw and Handel’s *Messiah* in Katowice.

Boston Baroque reaches an international audience with its twenty-five acclaimed recordings. In 2012, the ensemble became the first American orchestra to record with the highly-regarded UK audiophile label Linn Records, and its release of *The Creation* received great critical acclaim. In April 2014, the orchestra recorded Monteverdi’s rarely performed opera, *Il Ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*, which was released on Linn Records and received two nominations at the 2016 GRAMMY® Awards.

Boston Baroque's recordings have received six GRAMMY® Award Nominations: its 1992 release of Handel's *Messiah*, 1998 release of Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, 2000 release of Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, 2015 release of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, and 2018 release of Biber's *The Mystery Sonatas*.

High-res photos available for download online:

<https://baroque.boston/press-kit>

ABOUT MARTIN PEARLMAN, FOUNDING MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

Boston Baroque founder, music director, and conductor Martin Pearlman is one of this country's leading interpreters of Baroque and Classical music on period and modern instruments. In addition to Boston Baroque's annual concert season, Mr. Pearlman tours in the United States and Europe and has produced twenty-six major recordings for Telarc and Linn Records. Mr. Pearlman's completion and orchestration of music from Mozart's *Lo Sposo Deluso*, his performing version of Purcell's *Comical History of Don Quixote*, and his new orchestration of Cimarosa's *Il Maestro di Cappella* were all premiered by Boston Baroque.

Highlights of his work include the complete Monteverdi opera cycle, with his own new performing editions of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*; the American premiere of Rameau's *Zoroastre*; the Boston premiere of Rameau's *Pigmalion*; the New England premieres of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Alceste*; and the Beethoven symphonies on period instruments. Mr. Pearlman is also known for his internationally acclaimed series of Handel operas including *Agrippina*, *Alcina*, *Giulio Cesare*, and *Semele*. He made his Kennedy Center debut with The Washington National Opera in Handel's *Semele* and has guest conducted the National Arts Center Orchestra of Ottawa, Utah Opera, Opera Columbus, Boston Lyric Opera, Minnesota Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony and the New World Symphony. Mr. Pearlman is the only conductor from the early music field to have performed live on the internationally televised GRAMMY® Awards show.

Mr. Pearlman grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, where he received training in composition, violin, piano, and theory. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, where he studied composition with Karel Husa and Robert Palmer. In 1967–1968, he studied harpsichord in Amsterdam with Gustav Leonhardt on a Fulbright Grant, and in 1971 he received his Master of Music in composition from Yale University, studying composition with Yehudi Wyner and harpsichord with Ralph Kirkpatrick. In 1971, he moved to Boston and began performing widely in solo recitals and concertos. From 2002–2016, he was a Professor of Music at Boston University's School of Music in the Historical Performance department.

Recent compositions by Martin Pearlman include his comic chamber opera *Tristram Shandy*, 3-act *Finnegans Wake: an Operoar!*, as well as *The Creation According to Orpheus*, for solo piano, harp, percussion and string orchestra. He has also composed music for three plays of Samuel Beckett, commissioned by and premiered at New York's 92nd Street Y and performed at Harvard University in 2007.