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Antoine Plante announces Mercury Baroque's 2008-09 Season



HOUSTON—Artistic Director and conductor Antoine Plante is delighted to announce Mercury Baroque's 2008-09 season. As he wraps up another year of delivering quality performances to an ever-growing audience, Plante has planned another dynamic season.

"The upcoming season is filled with works by outstanding Baroque masters. With every performance, Mercury will continue to feed the appetites of our loyal subscriber base as we delight and attract new music enthusiasts," said Plante. "The ensemble will transport audiences back to the Baroque era, playing on period instruments to experience the music as it was heard when it was first performed."

All performances are at 8 p.m. in the Wortham Center Cullen Theater.

The season opens on Friday, **October 3**, with *The Essence of Mercury* and the beauty of **Handel's Opus 6** presented by the heart of the Mercury ensemble—the strings. The evening will be an opportunity to experience the genius of Handel and what many consider to be the peak of his instrumental work.

On Saturday, **December 13**, the Mercury Chamber Choir joins the Mercury orchestra for *Magnificat*. The voices, trumpets and Mercury Baroque strings provide bright color and joyous text in an uplifting holiday concert of **Bach's** masterpiece, **Magnificat in D major**.

Experience some of the Bach's most famous concertos on Saturday, **February 14**, with *Birds, Bees and Brandenburg*. Immerse the senses with rousing horns, muscular rhythmic energy, spirited optimism and joy from start to finish with the beloved melodies of **Bach's** complete **Brandenburg Concertos**.

A Mercury audience favorite, Les Voix Baroques returns to join Mercury again for *Baroque Voices* on Friday, March 20 for **Buxtehude's Membra Jesu Nostri**, a chamber music concert of stunning German vocal works. For this intimate concert, conductor Antoine Plante steps down from the podium to join Canadian singing group, Les Voix Baroques on the viola da gamba.

For the final performance on Saturday, **May 16**, Mercury presents *Lully's Armide* featuring the New York Baroque Dance Company. Founded by Catherine Turocy, the New York Baroque Dance Company delighted audiences and critics during the performance of Jean-Philippe Rameau's one-act ballet-opera, *Pygmalion*, in 2007.

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With his seventh season as artistic director of Mercury Baroque, Plante continues to build upon his reputation for innovative programming and musical excellence. In the past year, Plante led Mercury in the fully-staged performance of Rameaus' *Pygmalion*, and in concerts of Bach, Vivaldi and other Baroque masters. He often joins the ensemble on the viola da gamba in their chamber music concerts. Recently, Plante conducted the National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador and the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra.

Mercury Baroque has performed Baroque music on period instruments for Houston audiences for the past seven years. The ensemble's highly imaginative programming brings music to all types of audiences and venues, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and The University of Houston at Clear Lake and regularly collaborates with other performance groups. The ensemble does not limit itself to concerts—it presents a fully staged opera each season.

To purchase a subscription to Mercury Baroque's exciting eighth season call 713-533-0080 or visit www.MercuryBaroque.org

Five Concert Subscriptions for Mercury Baroque's 2008-2009 Season are \$100 - \$210. Senior discounts are available.

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Mercury violinists Andrés González and Oleg Sulyga
Photograph by George Hixson
Additional photos available by request