

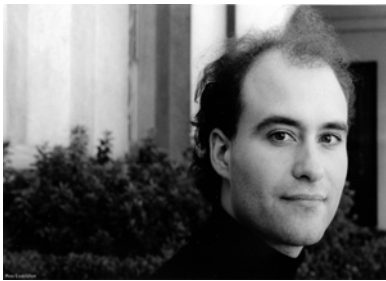
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Antoine Plante announces Mercury Baroque's 2007-08 Season



HOUSTON— Artistic Director and conductor Antoine Plante is delighted to announce Mercury Baroque's 2007-08 season. As he wraps up another year of delivering quality performances to Houston audiences, Plante is planning one of Mercury Baroque's most dynamic and challenging seasons yet. Next season, Plante sets his sites on big name hits and lesser known composers. He brings special guest artists to Houston and collaborates with artists from right here at home. Mercury Baroque performs concerts in a variety of venues, from chamber music to opera. This fall, the ensemble returns to the Wortham Center for the Downtown Concert Series. Subscriptions are now on sale for Mercury Baroque's exciting seventh season.

"This season is packed with some of baroque's best music. I know that concertgoers won't go home hungry," says Plante.

On **October 20**, the season opens with the thrilling rush of **Water Music**. Baroque composers found wonderful inspiration in water, creating pieces that ranged from the dramatic to the toe-tapping. For this concert, the Mercury ensemble lends its refreshing sound to Rebel's *Les Elements*, Telemann's *Water Music* and Handel's *Water Music*. On **December 14**, the Houston Chamber Choir joins the Mercury orchestra for **Messiah**, a moving tribute to the holiday season. Plante has selected the uncut "1743 Convent Garden" version, providing audiences the opportunity to hear Handel's masterpiece as it would have sounded when it was first performed. Afterwards, Mercury invites concert-goers to celebrate with Plante and the musicians at the annual Christmas fundraising party. On **February 15**, Mercury's concertmaster and founding violinist, Jonathan Godfrey, shares his love of concertos in **A Vivaldi Valentine**. The concert features Mercury musicians showing off their solo talents in an entire evening of Vivaldi. On **March 28**, Les Voix Baroques joins Mercury for **Missa Commemorationis**. The concert is a rare opportunity to hear one of Mercury's favorite composers, Caldara, with the pure sound of a baroque singing group. The event marks the return of critically acclaimed counter-tenor Matthew White to the Houston stage—all the way from Plante's home town of Montreal. For the final show on **May 17**, Mercury will stage Purcell's opera **Dido and Aeneas**. Full of the passion and drama of the baroque period, and this time in English, the opera promises to be the highlight of the season. Plante will team up with one of Houston's most beloved arts groups to tell this famous tale of love and death.

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, and he will tour Ecuador again this summer.

Mercury Baroque Chamber Orchestra has performed baroque music on period instruments for Houston audiences for the past six 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 seventh season call 713-533-0080 or visit www.MercuryBaroque.org

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Photo of Conductor Antoine Plante. Photo credit Linda Gilbert
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