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***Water Music* opens Mercury Baroque's coolest 2007-08 Season**



HOUSTON—Mercury Baroque splashes into its 2007-08 season with ***Water Music*** on Saturday, Oct. 20 at 8 p.m. at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater.

Houstonians can quench their thirst for quality early music and some of the biggest hits of the Baroque era. The evening opens with Handel's suite of the same name.

"Sometimes called the Andrew Lloyd Weber of his day, Handel was hugely popular and *Water Music* is one of his most famous works. Even those new to classical concerts are sure to recognize and enjoy this refreshing piece of music," said Antoine

Plante, Mercury Baroque artistic director and conductor.

Legend goes, Handel composed the piece hoping to get back in the good graces of King George I. Written for an elaborate garden party, the piece was performed as guests and musicians floated down the river Thames on a barge.

Mercury Baroque will pull out all the stops for this concert. The orchestra features musicians from all over the country, and an especially impressive wind section. With natural trumpets and horns, and period oboes, bassoons and flutes, the clear resonance of the Mercury Ensemble will transport you back to that garden party, the rousing suites of dances, and the cool rush of the *Water Music*.

For the rest of the evening, conductor Antoine Plante has chosen a perfect complement to *Water Music*, Rebel's *Les Elements*.

"Much more unusual, but just as beautiful, the orchestral piece begins with one of the most striking and innovative notes in the Baroque era," said Plante. "The striking overture, called Chaos, sounds like something from this century, not Rebel's time."

In 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. Recently, Plante conducted the National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador and the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra.

Mercury Baroque has performed music on period instruments for Houston audiences for the past six years. Plante regularly collaborates with other performance groups and presents a fully staged opera each season.

To purchase tickets, call 713-533-0080 or visit www.MercuryBaroque.org. *Water Music* tickets are \$22-\$49. Senior discounts and group rates are available. Season tickets are available for as little as \$100.

Photo credit: George Hixson

Clockwise: Deborah Lugo, Mercury Baroque executive director; Antoine Plante, artistic director and conductor; Jonathan Godfrey, concertmaster; Andres Gonzalez, violinist, Oleg Sulyga, violinist