
For Immediate Release: July 28, 2009.

Mercury Baroque's Season Opening Fireworks!



Mercury Baroque
Photo by George Hixson

Mercury Baroque will open its exciting 2009/2010 Season with a bang as they light a fuse to Handel's Royal Fireworks. On Saturday October 10th at 8:00pm Mercury will present their season opening performance at the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater. Headlining the performance is Handel's famed Royal Fireworks—a masterpiece from the high baroque. Mercury will also perform a solo Recorder Suite by Telemann, the Bach Orchestral Suite No.4 and give the Texan premiere of a Sinfonia by J.F. Fasch. Tickets for the performance range from \$20-\$47 and can be purchased online at the Mercury Baroque website, by phone at 832-251-0706, or at the performance.

For this stirring performance, Mercury Baroque, led by Artistic Director Antoine Plante, will expand on its core ensemble, being joined by the best Baroque musicians from around the country in order to recreate the grandeur of Handel's Royal Fireworks. Most notably, the horns used in the performance will be rarely heard natural horns, which, accurate to the Baroque period and unlike their modern cousins, have no valves. All note differentiation is done with the lips and hand movements inside the bell of the horn. It is a special opportunity for Houston to hear these rarely performed instruments that add such a pure and unique sound to Baroque music. This fresh and crisp sound is what Mercury Baroque has become known for over the past nine seasons.

For its Texan premiere, Mercury Baroque will perform a rare Sinfonia in G minor by German Baroque composer Johann Friedrich Fasch. Fasch, the Kappelmeister of Zerbst, was a very highly regarded composer and important link between the Baroque and Classical periods. However, none of his music was printed during his lifetime and much of his output has been lost. Mercury's premiere performance of his Sinfonia in G minor is a part of an international resurgence in the popularity of his works. Bach's energetic fourth Orchestral Suite, BWV1069, opens the performance. The five movement suite begins with a powerful overture that is rich with brass and timpani. Elegant dances comprise the rest of the suite up to a rousing and energetic finale with orchestral fireworks of its own. Kathryn Montoya, solo Recorder, will display her virtuosity and artistry in Telemann's Suite for Recorder and Strings in A minor, TWV55a2. Like the Bach, the Telemann Suite is also composed of a series of contrasting dances culminating in a stately Polonaise.

Mercury Baroque has been a dynamic member of the Houston arts community since 2000. Founded as a chamber ensemble, the group has grown into a Baroque orchestra performing a full subscription season of concerts in downtown Houston and touring both domestically and internationally. The organization continues to pursue its goal of building a strong tradition of Baroque music performance in Houston, starting with its educational outreach programs designed to train the city's future musicians and create the audience of the future. Although Mercury is focused on bringing the best Baroque to Houston, the ensemble has toured to other countries as well, including two tours to Quito, Ecuador. In September, 2010, Mercury will revive its popular performance of Lully's opera Armide in Paris.