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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 8, 2009

## Antoine Plante announces Mercury Baroque's 2009-10 Season



HOUSTON— For its ninth season, Mercury Baroque brings an exciting slate of concerts to the Wortham Center, Cullen Theater. With the distinctive sound of period instruments, Mercury Baroque uncovers the original beauty of Baroque masterpieces and lesser-known treasures.

"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 Saturday, **October 10**, with *Royal Fireworks* as Mercury Baroque lights a fuse to Handel's Royal Fireworks. The evening will be an opportunity to experience the genius of Handel and his ability to create grand works.

A Mercury audience favorite, *Les Voix Baroques* returns to join Mercury for *Generation Purcell* on Friday, **November 20** to celebrate the birthday of English composer Henry Purcell. Conductor Antoine Plante, who was named "Ultimate viola da gamba player" by the Houston Chronicle will step down from the podium to join Canadian singing group, Les Voix Baroques on the viola da gamba.

On Friday, **December 11**, the Bach Society Choir joins the Mercury orchestra for *Hallelujah Messiah* as they ring in the holidays with highlights from Handel's masterpiece. The following night, Saturday, **December 12**, experience the rarely presented uncut version of *Messiah*.

For Valentine's Day, Mercury teams with Dominic Walsh Dance Theater to remount their popular opera-ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, presented on **February 11, 13 and 14**.

Experience some of the Vivaldi's most famous concertos on Saturday, **March 27**, with *L'Estro Amonico: The Genius of Harmony*. The Mercury strings will dazzle in Vivaldi's groundbreaking work.

For the final performance on Saturday, **May 15**, Mercury presents *Classical in the Raw*. The ensemble will present a refreshing take on Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and Beethoven's Symphony No. 1.

Also, for the first time, Mercury Baroque presents their student concert *The Adventure of Baroque Music* to the public. Through narration and music, the adventure follows two children on their quest to find the plants needed to make oboe reeds. Along the way, the children meet colorful characters from Baroque history. Tickets are only \$12 for children and adults. This will take place on Saturday **May 8**, at 10am.

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With his eight's 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 Lully's *Armide*, 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 ninth's season call 713-533-0080 or visit [www.MercuryBaroque.org](http://www.MercuryBaroque.org)

Five and six Concert Subscriptions for Mercury Baroque's 2009-2010 Season are \$100 - \$210. Senior discounts are available.

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*Mercury artists Ana Treviño-Godfrey, Jonathan Godfrey and Antoine Plante  
Photograph by George Hixson  
Additional photos available by request*