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**AWARD-WINNING AKADEMIE FÜR ALTE MUSIK BERLIN  
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES WITH A CONCERT OF BAROQUE MASTERS  
INCLUDING VIVALDI, BACH AND OTHERS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 12 AT  
BERKELEY'S FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

**SIGHTLINES: PRE-CONCERT TALK BY UC BERKELEY MUSICOLOGIST REBEKAH AHRENDT  
ON SATURDAY, APRIL 12 AT 7:00 P.M. AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

**BERKELEY, March 4, 2008**—Praised as “kinky, quirky, quick,” and “staggeringly good,” (*Los Angeles Times*), the German early music group **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** returns to Cal Performances on **Friday, April 12, at 8:00 p.m.** in a **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** concert featuring a rich landscape of Baroque instrumental music: a concerto by **Antonio Vivaldi**; an **Alessandro Marcello** concerto for oboe; a concerto for viola da gamba by **Johann Gottfried Graun**; an overture by **Philipp Heinrich Erlebach**; and the keyboard version of **J. S. Bach's** Concerto in D minor, BWV 1052. The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin (its friends and fans sometimes shorten its name to “Akamus”) began as a rebellious group of young East German musicians and has risen to the heights of traditional-instrument fame through their energetic playing, daring programming, and thoughtful interpretation.

**PROGRAM**

The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin will open its Berkeley performance with Antonio Vivaldi's (1678–1741) Concerto for Strings in G minor, RV 156. Whereas some 230 of Vivaldi's concerti are for solo violin and orchestra, this is one of 40 or so that fall into a category called *concerto à quattro* or *concerto ripieno* (literally, “stuffed concerto”). This label indicates that it is written for full string section and no soloist. This style of string concerto typically dates from the early 1700s, when Vivaldi was associated with Venice's music school *Ospedale della Pietà*. The most unusual feature of this particular concerto is that all three movements are written in the same key of G minor.

The Concerto in D minor for Oboe, Strings and Continuo (with ornaments by J. S. Bach) was written by Alessandro Marcello (1669–1747), transcribed by Bach for manual organ and published in 1717 as a keyboard concerto (BWV 974). However, for years the underlying work was ascribed to Vivaldi, and the piece was sometimes played in C minor. Alessandro Marcello and his better-known brother Benedetto were raised in Venice and trained as lawyers. Alessandro was a diplomat and through his travels became a collector of musical instruments; many pieces from his collection now reside in Rome's National Museum of Musical Instruments. In his travels he also absorbed many musical influences, and his instrumental works reflect his understanding of French, Italian and German music of his day.

Johann Gottlieb Graun (1702?–1771) came from a musical family, and his brother Carl Heinrich is well known as a composer of opera. His Concerto for Viola da Gamba is a transitional piece of music, departing from the Baroque style and moving into the rococo style or *style galant*. It is surprising that this forward-looking piece of music employs the viola da gamba, an instrument that was going out of style at about the time the piece was written, for its solo voice.

Though Philipp Heinrich Erlebach (1657–1714) was a thoroughly German composer, his Overture V in F major from VI Overtures was written emulating French style (The piece's full name translates as "Six Overtures, accompanied by suitable Airs, after the French style and manner, prepared and established by Philipp Heinrich Erlebach."). Its initial movement is a French-style overture (in this case the word means a larger instrumental work rather than an introduction to a ballet or opera) and is followed by several "Airs," or short French dances, some of which are barely a minute long.

Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685–1750) Concerto in D minor (BWV 1052) is the subject of some debate among scholars as to whether it was originally written for keyboard and later arranged for violin and orchestra, or vice versa. Both versions survive, and the version played by the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin is the keyboard version. Material from its various movements appears in other later Bach works, including several cantatas. The music is much like organ music, in that the right-hand part is demanding and the left hand accompaniment is

relatively simple; the music is also less contrapuntal than much of Bach. All movements in the concerto are in minor keys, which is unusual for a Baroque concerto and which results in a particularly melancholy effect.

### **AKADEMIE FÜR ALTE MUSIK BERLIN**

In 1982 in the East German Republic, artistic creativity in classical music was a timid, top-down affair dominated by national orchestras and conservative thinking. In this stifling environment, a bold group of young musicians gathered to explore the renascent world of historically informed performance on period instruments, and in 1984 the **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** (literally, the “Berlin Academy for Old [or Ancient] Music”) began presenting independent concerts in the Berlin Schauspielhaus. The group quickly garnered the attention of the German and international music communities, and in 1986 was invited to play in the Tage der Alten Musik (“Ancient Music Days”) in Herne, West Germany, under the patronage of the West German broadcasting agency. In 1987, the Akademie released its first recording simultaneously in the East (on the Eterna label) and the West (on Capriccio). With the reunification of Germany in 1990, the group’s renown spread farther and faster. Akademie now appears in the major concert halls of Europe and has toured Asia, the Middle East and the Americas. Its first visit to the United States was in 2005.

Critical praise follows the group wherever it goes. The *Los Angeles Times* raved that “Everything was played with fire, flair, a hard percussive ferocity and daredevil virtuosity.” The *London Times* has called Akamus a “crack ensemble” and said the group’s performance of the Bach D minor concerto (a piece slated for the group’s Berkeley performance) “left one speechless with admiration.”

That ensemble quality may be attributable to the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin’s unusual democratic organizational structure in which all members participate in the artistic decisions of the whole group. In some performances, the role of concertmaster moves from one violinist to another depending on the piece. This structure not only affects the group’s operations, but can be noticed in its sound. “Democracy makes for truly exciting performances, with players as likely to challenge one another as to accompany meekly or collaborate politely,” noted the

*New York Times* in a 2005 review. “Individual performers step forward in surprising ways, as with string players adding percussion by banging bow on wood or strings.”

Since 1987, the Akademie has appeared on dozens of recordings. Its discs have won several *Diapason d’Or* awards from French critics, the Gramophone Award (UK), the Edison Award (the Netherlands), and the Deutscher Schallplatten-Preis (Germany), and the group has been nominated for an American Grammy. Akamus now records exclusively for the Harmonia Mundi France label. It has appeared in concert or recordings with a diverse array of celebrated artists including Cecilia Bartoli, René Jacobs, Reinhard Goebel, Ton Koopman, Andreas Staier, Marion Verbruggen, Catherine Mackintosh, Monica Huggett, Ivan Monighetti and the RIAS-Kammerchor under Marcus Creed.

The roster of musicians in the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin expands and contracts to suit the needs of the works it presents. For its 2008 North American tour, the ensemble is comprised of **Georg Kallweit**, violin and concertmaster; **Kerstin Erben**, **Edburg Forck**, **Thomas Graewe**, **Uta Peters**, **Verena Sommer** and **Dörte Wetzl**, violins; **Clemens-Maria Nuszbaumer**, **Sabine Fehlandt** and **Anja Regine Graewel**, violas; **Jan Freiheit**, viola da gamba; **Werner Matzke**, violoncello; **Walter Rumer**, double bass; **Xenia Löffler**, oboe; **Christian Beuse**, bassoon; and **Raphael Alpermann**, harpsichord.

#### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** on **Saturday, April 12 at 8:00 p.m.** in **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** are priced at **\$48.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org).

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior

and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m.**

**Sightlines**

**First Congregational Church of Berkeley**

Dana Street at Durant Avenue, Berkeley

**Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin** concert pre-performance talk by UC Berkeley musicologist **Rebekah Ahrendt**. Sightlines is a continuing program of pre-and post-performance discussions with artists and scholars, designed to enrich the concertgoer's experience. These events are free to ticketholders.

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**Saturday, April 12 at 8:00 p.m.**

**Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin**

**First Congregational Church of Berkeley**

Dana Street at Durant Avenue, Berkeley

**Program:**

Vivaldi/Concerto for Strings in G minor, RV 156

Marcello/Concerto in D minor for Oboe, Strings and Continuo (with ornaments by J. S. Bach)

Graun/Concerto for Viola da Gamba

Erlebach/Ouverture V in F major, from VI Ouvertures, 1693

Bach/Concerto in D minor, BWV 1052

**Tickets: \$48.00**, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net); and at the door.