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**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS
PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA PERFORMING
HANDEL'S *MESSIAH* AT ZELLERBACH HALL,
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 7:00 P.M.**

**Director Nicholas McGegan leads an historically informed concert
featuring international soloists and the Philharmonia Chorale**

BERKELEY, November 18, 2011—The renowned early music ensemble **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra**, led by music director **Nicholas McGegan**, will present **George Frideric Handel's** beloved oratorio *Messiah* on **Saturday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**. The orchestra employs instruments and performance practices authentic to Handel's time but "their playing laces precision with a heady dose of abandon. ... McGegan presides with genial vigor, encouraging and enjoying the extravagance" (*Boston Globe*). The ensemble will be joined by soloists **Dominique Labelle**, soprano; **Daniel Taylor**, countertenor; **Thomas Cooley**, tenor; and **Nathaniel Watson**, baritone. The **Philharmonia Chorale**, the orchestra's 24-member chorus directed by **Bruce Lamott**, will sing the oratorio's choral sections.

Handel (1685–1759) completed *Messiah* in 1742, and since then it has become the composer's best-known work. Intended for performance during Lent and Easter, *Messiah*—subtitled "A Sacred Oratorio"—has in modern times become an Advent and Christmas-season mainstay. Built on a biblical English-language libretto created by Charles Jennens, *Messiah* has long been performed in theaters in spite of its sacred subject matter. The oratorio's makeup evolved even during Handel's lifetime, making historically accurate performance challenging, but Handel scholar McGegan is uniquely suited to the task: in 2009 he conducted *Messiah* in venues worldwide to mark the 250th anniversary of Handel's death.

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

The **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra** has presented historically informed Baroque, Classical and early-Romantic music on original instruments since its founding in 1981 by

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harpsichordist and early music pioneer **Laurette Goldberg**. Music director McGegan has led the orchestra since 1986. In addition to its annual subscription concert series in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra regularly tours nationally and internationally. Throughout its history the orchestra has collaborated with a diverse group of artists including composer Jake Heggie, choreographer Mark Morris, early music gambalist Jordi Savall, recorder player Marion Verbruggen, violinist Monica Huggett, and singers Susan Graham, David Daniels, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson and Isabel Bayrakdarian. The orchestra has its own professional chorus, the Philharmonia Chorale, founded in 1995 and directed by Bruce Lamott. The orchestra and chorale have performed on a number of occasions at Cal Performances, most recently in September 2011 with Mark Morris's dance production of *Dido and Aeneas*.

THE ARTISTS

Nicholas McGegan has been music director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorale for more than 25 years. A leader of the movement to present historically informed concerts, he is known among musicians and listeners for his ability to balance scholarship and curatorial responsibility with enthusiasm and joy. He was born in England, educated at Cambridge and Oxford, and has taught at Royal College of Music in London. In addition to his tenure with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, McGegan served as artistic director of the International Handel Festival in Göttingen, Germany from 1991–2011; as principal conductor at the preserved 18th-century theater in Drottningholm, Sweden, from 1993–1996; and has guest-conducted orchestras and opera companies worldwide. His discography numbers greater than 100, including the world premiere recording of Handel's *Susanna* (which garnered a *Grammophone Magazine* award and a Grammy nomination). McGegan is also credited with the first performance in modern times of Handel's *Gloria*. He has won the Halle Handel Prize, an honorary professorship at Georg-August University in Göttingen, and in 2010 was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) "for services to music overseas." More information can be found at www.nicholasmcgegan.com.

Soprano **Dominique Labelle** was born in Montreal and trained at McGill and Boston Universities. She came to international prominence as Donna Anna in Peter Sellars's 1987 production of *Don Giovanni* set in Spanish Harlem. Known for her interpretations of the works

of Handel, Mozart and Bach, Labelle is also drawn to contemporary music, having sung and recorded works by Shostakovich, Britten, Harbison, Barber and others. She has appeared on concert and opera stages in Montreal, Seattle, Lexington, Boston, Göttingen, Budapest, Washington DC, Amsterdam and other cities.

Daniel Taylor, countertenor, is professor of voice at University of Ottawa and founder, artistic director and conductor of the choir and orchestra of the Theatre of Early Music in Toronto. An active performer and recording artist, he has appeared on concert, recital and opera stages worldwide, including appearances with the Metropolitan, San Francisco and Canadian Operas, and has made more than 80 recordings ranging from Bach cantatas to a pop opera with the Dalai Lama and Salman Rushdie.

Tenor **Thomas Cooley**'s repertoire spans more than four centuries and includes works by Monteverdi, Handel, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, as well as works by Romantic and 20th-century and contemporary composers, including Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Britten, Penderecki and Henze. Born in Minneapolis and trained in the United States and Germany, Cooley has appeared in concert halls, opera houses and recital stages in Europe, Asia and the United States, and has recorded works by Handel, Vivaldi, Cherubini and Mozart.

Nathaniel Watson, baritone, has sung with most of the leading early music ensembles in North America, and with symphony orchestras in Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Montreal and other cities. He has also performed more than 35 opera roles and appears frequently on CBC and on Radio-Canada in recital. He has recorded and/or premiered works by contemporary composers, including Samuel Barber, Philip Glass, Andrew Imbrie, Claudio Spies, Miriam Gideon and Scott Lindroth.

Bruce Lamott has directed the Philharmonia Chorale for more than a decade. He first performed with the orchestra in 1989 as continuo harpsichordist for Handel's *Giustino*, and spent 30 years with the Carmel Bach Festival as performer, lecturer, education director and director of choruses. He holds graduate degrees in musicology from Stanford University and has been on

faculty at UC Davis. He now teaches at San Francisco University High School, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and in the San Francisco Opera's Merola Program.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan**, conductor, performing **Handel's *Messiah*** on **Saturday, December 10**, in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$30.00, \$48.00, \$64.00, \$78.00, \$86.00 and \$95.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; 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.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three 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 \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988; press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Saturday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

Early Music

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra

Nicholas McGegan, conductor

Dominique Labelle, soprano

Daniel Taylor, countertenor

Thomas Cooley, tenor

Nathaniel Watson, baritone

Philharmonia Chorale

Bruce Lamott, director

Program:

Handel/*Messiah*

Tickets: \$30.00, \$48.00, \$64.00, \$78.00, \$86.00 and \$95.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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