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**MAESTRO MASAOKI SUZUKI'S ESTEEMED BACH COLLEGIUM JAPAN  
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES MARCH 18 AT 8:00 P.M.  
AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

**BERKELEY, February 3, 2006** – Cal Performances presents early music ensemble **Bach Collegium Japan**, led by celebrated organist, harpsichordist and conductor **Masaaki Suzuki**, **Saturday, March 18 at 8:00 p.m.** at First Congregational Church. Returning after its Bay Area debut at Cal Performances in 2003, Bach Collegium Japan brings 10 of its instrumentalists for an all-Bach program featuring Maestro Suzuki at the harpsichord. The program begins with one of Bach's four surviving orchestral suites, Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, influenced by French dance of the period. Harpsichord Concerto in D minor follows. Written with powerful notes and dramatic trills, the work was inspired by one of Bach's violin concertos. The program continues with one of Bach's best-known violin concerti, Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, illustrating Bach's most tender side. With the harpsichord in a prominent role rather than its usually supportive position, the concert concludes with Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major. "Suzuki and his ensemble deserve to take their place in the front rank of today's early music performers," heralds *American Record Guide*.

**BACH COLLEGIUM JAPAN**

**Bach Collegium Japan** (BCJ) was founded in 1990 by Masaaki Suzuki, who remains its music director, with the purpose of introducing Japanese audiences to the great works of the Baroque period. As the name of the ensemble indicates, the primary focus is on the works of J.S. Bach and those composers of German Protestant music who preceded and influenced him, such as Buxtehude, Schütz, Schein and Böhm.

BCJ is comprised of both Baroque orchestra and chorus, and its major activities include an annual concert series of Bach's cantatas and a number of instrumental programs. In addition, BCJ presents major works such as Bach's *Passions*, Handel's *Messiah*, Monteverdi's *Vespers*, and smaller programs for soloists or small vocal ensembles. BCJ is based in Tokyo and Kobe but performs throughout Japan. For many of its projects, the group has collaborated with

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European artists such as Max von Egmond, Nancy Argenta, Christoph Prégardien, Peter Kooy, Monika Frimmer, Michael Chance, Kai Wessel, and Michael Schopper.

In 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach's death, BCJ extended their activities to appearances at major festivals in Santiago de Compostela, Tel Aviv, Leipzig, and Melbourne. In 2001 and 2002, BCJ enjoyed great success on tour through Italy and Spain. BCJ made appearances at the Bach Festival in Seoul, Korea and at the Ansbach Festival & Schleswig Holstein Festival in Germany during the summer of 2005.

Recording awards include the 29<sup>th</sup> Mobil Music Award (1999), Cannes MIDEM Award (1999) for Bach's *St. John Passion* and Japan's 24<sup>th</sup> Ongakuno-tomo Award 2000. Recording for the Swedish record label BIS, BCJ released 22 CDs of Bach's *Church Cantatas* in August 2003. "The performances are, to my ears, of unmatched excellence," says *Gramophone* magazine.

### **MASAAKI SUZUKI**

Born in 1954 in Kobe, Japan, **Masaaki Suzuki** began playing the organ at age 12 for church services every Sunday. After graduating from the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music with a degree in composition and organ performance, he continued to study harpsichord and organ at Sweelink Conservatory in Amsterdam under Ton Koopman and Piet Kee. Having achieved Soloist Diplomas in both of his instruments in Amsterdam, he was awarded second prize in the Harpsichord Competition (Basso Continuo) in 1980 and third prize in the Organ Competition in 1982 in the Vlaanderen Festival at Bruges, Belgium.

Since his return to Japan, he has not only given many concerts as organist and harpsichordist all over the country, but has organized an acclaimed concert series at the chapel of Shoin Women's University in Kobe, where a French classical organ built by Marc Garnier is installed.

Meanwhile, Masaaki Suzuki has acquired an outstanding reputation not only as an organ and harpsichord soloist, but also as a conductor. Since 1990 Suzuki has been the musical director of Bach Collegium Japan; as such, he works regularly with renowned European soloists

and ensembles. Suzuki has won an enviable reputation for his interpretation of Bach's cantatas for the BIS label. In addition to his undertaking with BCJ, Suzuki is recording Bach's complete harpsichord music also for BIS.

Since 1983 Suzuki has given organ concerts in France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Austria and other countries every summer. In the autumn of 2004, he appeared at the Academy of Ancient Music, and in March of 2005, he performed at the Netherlands Bach Society. Suzuki has received numerous awards for his musicianship, including the 42<sup>th</sup> Mainichi Newspapers' Art Award and the Shoichi Tsuji & Anna Miura Memorial Academic Prize 2003, Japan. He teaches at Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music as a professor of organ and harpsichord.

#### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Bach Collegium Japan** on **Saturday, March 18** at **8:00 p.m.** in First Congregational Church are priced at **\$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu).

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Cal Performances' 2005/2006 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Saturday, March 18 at 8:00 p.m.**

**First Congregational Church**  
Dana St. at Durant Ave., Berkeley

*Music Before 1850*

**Bach Collegium Japan**

**Masaaki Suzuki**, music director and conductor

**Program:**

Bach/Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor

    Harpichord Concerto in D minor

    Concerto in D minor for Two Violins

    Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major

**Tickets:** \$42.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.

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